

Elder Wilson Thompson

EMBRACING A SKETCH OF HIS,

Life, Travels & Ministerial Labors

IN WHICH IS INCLUDED A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE OLD
ORDER OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES

EDITED BY HIS CHILDREN

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Tom Adams

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PREFACE

Preface to First Edition

In these pages is presented a brief outline of the life of that eminent saint and gospel laborer, Elder WILSON THOMPSON, whose praise is in many churches.

The work is the product of the elder's own pen, and the following is a statement of its Contents as given in his own peculiar style: "A biographical sketch of the life and travels of Wilson Thompson, containing his views of many texts of Scripture, points of doctrine thought to be mysterious, and some matters of controversy, together with a very concise history of the old order of regular Baptist churches in the West, especially those of which he has been a member, or of which he had the privilege, from time to time, to serve as their pastor or called minister."

The reader will not look upon this volume as "a literary production of great merit", for the writer never had the advantage of a scholastic education. It is simply an unpretending narrative of ministerial labors by one whose only learning was to know his Bible through.

Born of humble parents, at a time when schools were few, especially in country districts, it was not to be expected that the son of a poor backwoodsman could acquire the learning of the schools, whether literary or theological.

He was, however, early introduced into the school of Christ, where both head and heart were taught and trained in the best of all knowledge, and himself fitted, in an extraordinary degree, for future usefulness.

In this school he continued to his dying day, an humble yet earnest scholar. He shrank not from a personal application of the rule of discipleship as laid down by our divine Master: "Whosoever will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." He was ever more anxious to know his Lord's will, however painful, that he might do it, than to listen to the suggestions of the natural feelings when they would incline him to seek ease and comfort.

Without pledging the reader to a belief in all the theological views of our deceased parent, we will be excused this humble eulogium on one whose memory is sacred to our hearts. "Few in any age of the church, since the days of the apostles, have labored more unselfishly to promote the cause of true and undefiled religion than has our father-Elder Wilson Thompson."

Commending this little volume to the candid and indulgent consideration of the friends of the deceased, among whom it will chiefly be circulated, we feel no hesitation in saying, that to them as well as to us—"He being dead yet speaketh."

HIS CHILDREN.

Preface to the Fourth Edition

We earnestly commend this, the fourth printing of the Autobiography of Wilson Thompson, to God's children everywhere. If ever one has felt the love of God in his heart, he will rejoice and weep with this man of God in his joys and trials and sorrows as they are set forth in the pages of this unusual book. Elder Thompson walks throughout its pages, preaching the glorious doctrine of salvation through Christ in so forceful a manner that the reader feels to know him personally. So many who have read and re-read the book in years past have remarked the fascination with which they absorbed the narrative

and the powerfully-delivered messages of Elder Thompson. He is God's servant, prayerfully and faithfully seeking in all his trials revelation from his God, and paying tribute to the One Who called him by His grace.

In addition to the value of this book as a written record of the dealings of God with one of His servants, and its intrinsic value as a journal of the religious questions of his day, it is also valuable and interesting from a historical standpoint and reads in places like excerpts from the diaries of Daniel Boone or Simon Kenton, both of whom were of the Baptist faith, and in whose lifetime Elder Thompson lived. He was a skilled woodsman in his own right and a hunter, as well as a pioneer farmer, and a wide traveller for his day. Further, as his children have indicated in their excellent preface to the other printings, he was unschooled, but self-taught. His vocabulary is astounding, and his articulate expression refreshingly trenchant.

As we read Elder Thompson's account of his life and ministry, we stand in wonderment and awe at the Lord's leading and directing of this inquiring servant. He stands courageously in defense of the gospel of the Son of God, fearlessly declaring it in the face of opposition from within and without. God's seeking children will rejoice as they read of his labour in the kingdom of God and the singular blessings which attended his efforts.

Elder Thompson lived in a time of great upheaval and trouble in the church and in a time of great change in our country's population and settlement. The issues for which he stood were made clear to him in that troubled day by his God. Many of those issues again trouble Israel, and while our first source of guidance is the Bible itself, we can thank God for the courage and insight of many of our forefathers, who not only saw the issues at stake, but also had the courage of their convictions to speak them out in their own day and to set them down in print for us to read. Once again, after one hundred years, this book is a very timely proclamation and warning to the church of the living God.

Of such men as Wilson Thompson, the words of Isaiah speak:

“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.”

This book as Elder Thompson wrote it, is an honouring tribute to the great God he served with untiring love and diligence. To read the book through is to gain some of the strength and wisdom of one of the most able and truly gifted of God's ministering servants – Wilson Thompson.

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CHAPTER ONE

Ancestry, Birth, Early Childhood, and Education

When the memoirs of a man are preserved in book form, the reader is very apt to inquire, "Of what stock or blood was he? To gratify this solicitude, I answer: I have learned that my great-grandmother was an English lady, and that she married a Welshman, whose name was Jones. Whether this marriage took place before they came to America or after, I have not learned; but all their children were born in America. I have no knowledge of any more than five of them; and, most likely, there were no more. At all events, of those who lived to maturity, two were sons, and three were daughters.

James, the eldest son, lived to old age. Although poor, he was, nevertheless, comfortable and respectable, and was a beloved member of the regular Baptist church for many years before his death.

Thomas, the other son, became somewhat wealthy; he raised a large family, and died in a good old age. He also was an esteemed member of the Baptist church.

Nancy, one of the daughters, was remarkable for being a good singer and poetess and for her knowledge in the Scriptures and divine things. As a sister in the church she was highly esteemed. She married a man by the name of Whitaker, raised a respectable family, and died in old age.

The other two daughters, Mary and Jane, were my grand-mothers, my father and mother being cousins. Mary, the elder of these two, married a man by the name of McDonnell, by whom she had one son. Her husband died, and she then married a raw Irish Presbyterian by the name of James Wilson, by whom she raised a family of girls. These all married. Elizabeth, the oldest, married Joseph Holman; Nancy married Charles Reynolds; Mary married William Wilson; and Rebecca, the youngest, married Gloss Thompson, my father.

Jane Jones, my other grandmother, (my father's mother) first married a man by the name of Lee, by whom she had a son and a daughter. The son became the celebrated Baptist minister whose praise was in many of the churches, and who was known as Elder James Lee. The daughter married Bethuel Riggs, who also became a Baptist minister of note. After the birth of these two children Elder Lee died, and Jane, the widow, married Gloss Thompson, a cross-blood of Scotch and German, and my father was the first child of this marriage.

So, friendly reader, you see the blood of England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and Germany mingles in my veins, yet I myself, and parents, and grandparents, except my mother's father, were natives of America. All of them stood firm in the American cause during the Revolutionary struggle.

After the independence of the United States was achieved, my father and his next brother, Lawrence, left their native state, North Carolina, and spent one year (perhaps A. D. 1786) as pioneers in the dense forests of Kentucky, among the wild beasts and savage Indians. I have often sat spellbound while hearing my father relate the many dangers and hairbreadth escapes of his border life, and those of the Revolution.

After spending about one year in Kentucky, he returned to North Carolina and married Rebecca Wilson, and, shortly after, again moved to Kentucky. So, in the fall of 1787, he, and all his father's family, and all my mother's father's family, also, came to dwell in the forests of what the Indians called

“the bloody land”, where my parents passed through many of those thrilling alarms and trying privations incident to border warfare and to the settling of Kentucky in particular.

I was the first born of my parents, and my birth took place on the 17th day of August, A. D. 1788, in Woodford County, at Hillsborough, Clear Creek. But my first recollection of anything was of Madison County, not far from Richmond, on the waters of Silver Creek. The whole family of my race, down to my own parents, generally lived to an old age. They died at ages varying from seventy to eighty years, except my father’s mother, who lived to one hundred and four years.

This sketch may suffice as to my blood, parentage, and My ancestors were all of the old stock of regular Baptists, with but few exceptions. One of my mother’s sisters was a Methodist, but her father, who came to America from “Emerald Isle” a Presbyterian, became a Baptist many ears before his death. My father was raised and christened (as sprinkling was called) in the Church of England, became Baptist before my recollection, and filled the office of a deacon from my first memory until his death, which occurred in fifty-fourth year of his age. My mother was about four ears younger, and died about four years after him.

Now I shall proceed more particularly to narrate my own history. As stated above, I was born on the 17th day of August, A. D. 1788, the first child of my parents. It was thought that both mother and child must immediately die. The friends were called in, and Elder James Lee, my father’s half-brother, being then a young preacher, was requested to engage in prayer. During his prayer, by some special impulse access at the throne of grace, he received such full assurance that, rising from his knees, he boldly said to all present that the child would be a man for God, to preach the gospel of His grace. He then gave special charge to my father respecting my education. This conviction of his never subsided, but continued undiminished, and he often spoke of it to various persons, and at different places, always with the same assurance. All this, however, was kept from me until after I began to preach.

I was not sent to college, for I suppose my father did not feel able to send me from home and pay my board and tuition fees. As a further drawback to my education, I must add, that the country being new and thinly settled, the little schooling I received was obtained by walking morning and evening, over a very hilly pathway, a distance of about four miles. By the time I was able to walk this far to school, I was also able to work at home. Father having lost two tracts of land by the bad titles of Kentucky, and, about this time having bought new lands in the green woods, my labor was much needed in the opening of a farm. And so the little schooling I could get was only a few days at a time. Yet, in this scattering way, I picked up a little knowledge of spelling, reading, arithmetic, and English grammar. Nothing was perfected. I acquired only a mere smattering of either. In those days teachers had but little qualifications and were distinguished for bad habits in reading, and worse, if possible, in pronunciation. When I commenced preaching I could not read a chapter nor a hymn intelligently. The little learning I have, I got by myself without a teacher, except books; and, being poor, and having a family to support by the labor of my own hands, my opportunity for study and improvement was exceedingly limited, and, of course, my progress tardy.

I know but little of my childhood worth recording. Neither of my parents had made any profession of vital Christianity at the period of my birth. I grew up like other “backwoods” boys. In my infancy my father and mother both professed vital religion and became members of a regular Baptist church. My father, moreover, was a deacon of the church. Among the earliest events of my recollection was seeing him pass around the bread and wine at the Lord’s Supper. I have heard him and Mother relate one event that was truly strange to them. It was this: My father became deeply impressed on some point of Scriptural doctrine, which called up imperfectly to his memory some text in point, but the precise

words and the connection of the text, he could not remember. He turned to his Bible, but after a long and fruitless search for the passage he gave it up, concluding that there was no such text. Having closed the book, he sat with it in his hands. When I came to his knees, I took the book and opened it, turning the leaves as it lay on his lap, and when I had placed my finger on a certain spot, he looked at the place and there the long-sought text. This was when I was a little infant and had no knowledge of the use of books or letters. These, with some other similar events, I have heard my parents and relate, but all occurred before my memory, and I nothing of them until after I began to preach.

CHAPTER TWO

Early Religious Impressions

I BELIEVE my mind was more or less impressed with the importance of religion from my first recollection. I had a dread of death and fears of future misery, that betimes would harrass me very much; but, I am now convinced that these early exercises were the effect of education. My father's house was a home for the preachers, and was called a "Baptist Tavern". Meeting was often held there, and then the Baptists from a large boundary would come, Father being a deacon and regarded as having a special gift in discipline, prayer, and exhortation, and, withal, one of the best of singers and what was called a fireside preacher. He was able in the Scriptures, sound in faith, social in his manners, and interesting but not assuming in conversation. He attended all the associations and other large meetings and visited many of the churches. Consequently, his acquaintance became general, and his doors were always open to receive all that came. So I heard much about religious subjects, and, perhaps, this will account for the early impressions of my mind. I am very sure, from a retrospect of those early impressions, that they were just of that character which a carnal heart and a defiled conscience might be expected to have, under such circumstances as I have related. These impressions are what the Arminian world calls religion-such as they can get and lose at pleasure.

The abundance of religious conversation which I heard early impressed my young mind with the awful realities of a future state, the miseries of the wicked, and kindred subjects; so I resolved to do good, get religion, and thus get clear of future miseries, and at last reach a happy heaven. These were my views, and a firm resolve to attend to this matter by and by, and attend to it well, gave me some ease and a kind of resting-place. Although all the religious conversation I had ever had (and that was not a little) was on salvation by grace alone, yet I had no just conceptions of that plan. While I felt very partial to the Baptists, I had never learned one idea of their system of grace, but was building all my hope upon the good works which I intended to perform.

Thus spent I my youth, until I was about eleven years old. About this time my father, having lost his second tract of land, resolved to leave the State of Kentucky, where land-titles were so uncertain, and move to the North-Western Territory, now the State of Ohio. In prosecution of this resolve, he, with his family and effects, started for the Little Miami, where he had previously been to look out a location. Leaving Madison County, we all came safe to Campbell County, Kentucky, near the mouth of the Licking River. My grandfather, for many years, had been laboring under an asthmatic affection which had so reduced his strength that he became entirely unable to provide for, or indeed to do anything for, himself or family. My mother being their youngest child, and both of them being now quite old, they had quit keeping house, and were living with Father and Mother, and, of course, moved with them. When we came to Licking River the word came to them that the Indians had broken out afresh in the Territory and that the settlers were then in forts and stations. Some of them had been killed, and horses, cattle, etc., had been stolen; hence, great alarm pervaded the country. My grand parents became alarmed, my mother became tired, and, under these circumstances, Father was induced to stop for a year in Campbell County, Kentucky. One Major Leach, who had settled a station on Licking River, died about this time, and General James Taylor, the proprietor of the town of Newport, Kentucky, settled the affairs of the estate, and transacted the business for the widow Leach, and finally married her. My father rented this station and land for one year. The family suffered much with chills and fever during

that short period. A small Baptist church was constituted near the station, and Father, Mother, Grandfather and Grandmother became members of it. Father was the deacon. They built a log meeting-house on the bank of the Licking River, and a revival and ingathering of the church followed. A goodly number were added by baptism, and, the country being new, some Baptists moved in, and became members by letter.

I was now, as already stated, about eleven years old. The thoughts of death, of judgment, and future punishment, with an increased force and terror, oppressed my mind; and now my resolve to do better after awhile gave me no relief. I therefore solemnly resolved within myself to set about the work in good earnest and never give it up until I knew I had obtained the pardon of all my sins, and then live clear of sin the remainder of my days and be a good, exemplary, straight-walking Christian. Thus would I have no fears of death, hell, or judgment, but would be prepared for heaven at all times. All this I verily thought I could obtain by repentance, prayer, diligence, obedience, and a persevering continuance in well-doing. Do good and be good; then do good and keep good. I believed that God was good, and that He would love and save all who would repent, do good, pray, and love Him. These I would do, for I never once thought but what I could do all these things. So I began, and although I was at a loss for words, and could not pray fluently, yet I thought I should improve from practice. For a time I seemed to get along but poorly, and sometimes thought of giving it up; but the fears of death and hell would come on me with such terrific shocks, that I would go at it again.

Continuing for some months in this way, I found that I was gaining ground—that I had got much better. I had prayed often and frequently, I had repented with sorrow for my sins, I had ceased to do evil, was very precise in my walk and conversation, and I had refrained from playing with other boys, especially on the Sabbath day, as we called the first day of the week. All these things I had done so faithfully, that I concluded God did now love me and would save me, and I felt very happy. I continued in this frame for a time, and resolved never to sin again, but live holy the remainder of my days. I had not lived long in this perfect way, until I began to get tired. Then I thought that as I was young, and, perhaps, might live to be old, it was a gloomy prospect to spend a whole long life in this irksome way, and never see any pleasure in youth or manhood. Yet, I reflected again, although I was young I might die, and that would be an awful event if I should now go back into sin again.

While these things were agitating my mind, the love of sin pulling me back, and the fears of death and judgment prompting me forward, an event occurred which was rather singular. I heard my mother and my aunt talking of the death of one of my cousins, who had lately died, and they seemed doubtful whether she had crossed the line of “accountability” or not. I have no recollection of ever hearing until then anything about infant purity, or the line of accountability that infants must cross before they can be lost. I understood these women to express this idea. I felt at once a very deep interest in the doctrine, and a thought occurred to me at once: “Perhaps I have not yet crossed this line; if so, all my religious exercises and doings have been premature, and I am safe under the covert of infant purity and non-accountability.” This set me on a close search for this line, but I could not find it. I could not read, but supposed if I could I should soon find it; for I perceived that Father always went to the Scriptures for information on all subjects of a religious nature, and I supposed that this was one, and that it was made plain in that Book. The difficulty might be solved if I could only read! But this I could not do, and I was too backward to ask my parents, or any other person, about it. Still my anxiety continued, and whenever the Bible was read in my hearing, I listened and watched to hear something on this subject.

It was not long until I heard the chapter read which tells of Christ being found among the doctors and lawyers, when He was about twelve years old, and of His saying to His mother: “Wist ye not that it is

time I was about my Father's business?" This settled my mind. I inferred from this saying that about twelve years of age was the line, and then, and not until then, was it necessary to begin a religious course of life. By this rule, taken as I supposed, from the example of Christ, I found that all my trouble and labor were premature by about one year, and this decided my mind at once to drop all my religion, and spend that year in taking my fill of sin, while yet an infant and in a safe condition, not yet having passed the line of accountability, and, of course, not accountable for anything that I might do, while on the infant side of that line. This course I did pursue, as far as I dared go in sin, profane language, and all boyish vices, so as to keep clear of paternal correction. I went with a greediness, perhaps almost unparalleled; for believing that all was safe with me, I went into sin with a rush. My parents were very strict in family discipline, and I not only feared the rod, but even the frown of my parents would almost break my heart. I verily thought my parents were the best people living on earth. So I continued until I had entered into my thirteenth year.

Here it is necessary to explain that my father had, during this time, purchased a small farm a little up the Licking, above the station. My grandfather and grandmother were both dead, being about seventy-five years old at the time of their decease. We now lived on the east bank of Licking River, Campbell County, and Father still talked of moving to the Territory.

About this time, a powerful work of grace broke out in the neighborhood. This great work spread out upon the hills and upland settlements with great power, and among persons of different ages, including quite a number of young people down to eleven or twelve years of age. The work was powerful, and continued for a length of time. The country was but thinly settled, and that in patches or small settlements, yet many were added to that church, which was called the Mouth of Licking.

During this revival my fears became more terrific than ever before. I reflected on the past. I thought that perhaps I had been mistaken about the line of accountability, and that I was really accountable for laying down my religion and for all the sins that I had committed since. Nay, more, one year had nearly past since I was twelve years old, and I had promised never to sin after I was that age; but I had disregarded this promise! I thought that God was now very angry with me, and perhaps would not receive my repentance, nor hear and answer my prayers. I thought that I had forfeited His confidence, and now, if ever I gained it again, it must take a long time, require many prayers, deep repentance, and the performance of many good works. I was ashamed and afraid to begin, but I knew of no way to obtain God's favor and the pardon of my sins, but to begin again, and pursue the same course I had pursued so successfully before. This plan I adopted, feeling, however, less confident of success, but resolved to be more vigilant than ever; and although the time might be longer, and the effort require more repentance and prayer than before (as my sins had greatly multiplied), yet I would persevere and faithfully perform my part. And so, I hoped, a God of mercy would finally be pacified and pardon and accept me. With these views and feelings, I commenced, as I thought, in good earnest, determined to watch every evil and avoid it, and do all I thought would please God.

I began by abandoning all my former evil words and ways, and by praying often-every day and night before I went to sleep, and every time I awoke during the night, and in the morning before I arose. I forsook all bad boys, and was especially observant of what was called the Sabbath. I continued in this way for some time. I finally began to compare myself with the members of the church, especially with the young converts, and found myself fully as good, if not even better than any of them. Indeed, I could detect some foolish act, or vain laugh, or unbecoming levity in them all, which I condemned, and of which I thought I was clear. I soon fancied that God loved me, and had blotted out all my sins. I

became very happy in these views and resolved that I never would go back into sin again. Yes! I resolved that I would never commit another sin during life!

In this perfect state, as I supposed it was, I continued for some time, and had no fears of death, hell, or any evil, provided I should still continue to do good and abstain from sin. So I continued to grow pleased with my situation, believing that I was in a fair way for heaven. My prayers were good, my course correct; in a word, I was good, and so were my performances, as I then believed. I was sorry to see old professors and young converts doing so many things that were wrong, and I began to think, by comparing myself with them, that but few of them were true Christians. Up to this time I had never heard any preaching or religious conversation, to my knowledge, except among the old regular Baptists; hence, all my prejudices were in their favor. Indeed, I knew nothing about any others. I had heard of Presbyterians, and a few Methodists began to rise, a short distance off, as a new sect; but I knew nothing of their tenets. Yet, strange as it may seem, and young as I was, I was full in their faith. Twice had I obtained religion in their way; once I had fallen from grace, as they call it; and now, the second time, I had attained to what they call, and I thought was, a state of sinless perfection. Once I had fully proved the truth of the saying, so often expressed by them and all others who believe in final apostasy, that if they believed there was no danger of being lost they would take their fill of sin. The terrors of death, fears of hell, and a consciousness of having committed sin are the great prompters of this religion, and whatever can remove these slavish fears leads directly to backsliding. I had so fully tried and proved by experience this natural system of religion, and so fully realized its comforts, that I had no doubts but that all was well and safe with me, if I only continued to be faithful, watchful, prayerful during life. And all this I was determined to be.

I will here state two particular circumstances which I well remember, and which will serve to show, to some degree, my tests of the Christian character and my standard of perfection.

James Johnson, a small, red-haired man, had become a Baptist member, and was one among the best singers that I have ever heard. I will add, that if any man of my acquaintance had a special gift for the edification of the church, it was that man. He often came to my father's, and would sing spiritual songs until he would seem to be almost carried away from the body, all his powers seeming to be enlisted in the sentiment and devotion of the song. I had reckoned on him as being one of my best Christians.

One day, as I was working in the field, I saw him coming, and thought to myself, now I shall hear him sing; but, to my surprise and great mortification, when he came down the hill to the fence, he clapped one hand on the fence, and threw his feet over with a spring. This, in my eye, was so vain and boyish, and betrayed so light an air, that I instantly believed he was no Christian; for I would have crawled over that fence slowly, and with solemn air. So precise was my rule of life, and so exact was I living up to it, I believed that the Christian was a good person, and that his goodness consisted in his acts.

About this time, I well remember, one Sunday morning, Father told me to go and bring the milch-cows from the pasture to be milked. One of the young professors walked with me. I was telling him, as we walked along the bank of the river, how very wicked it was to drive the cows upon Sunday, but as I was under my father, and was bound to obey him, therefore, the sin was not mine but his. As we walked, this young professor took up a flat rock, and threw it edgewise on the ground and stood looking at it bouncing down the bank, until it sprung into the water and sunk. This vain act, on Sunday, proved to me at once that he was no Christian.

I have referred to these cases, to show my standard of a Christian, and of a perfect and sinless life; and I did verily believe that I had attained to that standard, and was fully resolved never to sin again, and so go to heaven when I died. I esteemed my prayers most excellent, and believed surely that God was well

pleased with both them and me. In these exercises I had fully experienced what the Arminian calls religion, as well as Christian perfection, falling from grace, and taking my fill of sin when I believed all was safe, as they often say they would do. All this I understood to be a natural system of religion. I never had learned it from books, for I could not read, neither from preaching, for I never had heard any of them preach, nor from conversation for I never had heard any of them talk on their doctrine. All that I had ever heard was the old order of Baptists, and all my predilections were in favor of them. Yet, with all my opportunities I had not one idea of their spiritual system and teaching, and, without any teacher but nature, I had learned all the Arminian theory and practice throughout.

I have sometimes thought that, perhaps, even after divine or eternal life through grace is imparted, God permits some His children, (for wise purposes of His own, and to better qualify them for the sphere of life that He designs for them), to work through this whole system. I believe, at all events, that in after-life I have found many advantages in these early exercises, for I have had much to do with, and much to suffer from, this class of religionists. And I will say, from my heart I pity them, for I well know their delusion, its apparent plausibility and strength, and how confident it makes them. But to return to my narrative.

About this time, when I was in full sail, and with high anticipations, I learned that on the next Saturday, being, as I think, the first Saturday in May, 1801 or 1802, some young people about my own age were expected to come before church, as candidates for admission and baptism. I felt a strong wish to be at that meeting, to see if they were true Christians; for I fully believed I could tell, seeing I fancied I knew all about it. I went, and heard them relate what was called their “experience”. I sat near and listened closely. At first they spoke of seeing themselves great sinners, and of feeling great alarm, and great sorrow and trouble, and of trying to pray. All this I believed to be right, but then they spoke of feeling worse and worse; their sins grew greater, and still greater, until I thought they seemed at a loss for words to express how bad they were. Their hope of pardon died away, and despair of success by all they could do, cut off every prospect. Their prayers became impure and vile in their eyes. Their very hearts were deceitful and wicked. Their thoughts were presumptuous—in a word, they spoke of themselves as being so desperately sinful in every way, that they could not ‘do anything but what was sinful, and God would be just in His judgment if He should them cut off, even for the sin that spoiled their best performances. In short, I fully understood them to convey the idea, that they got worse and worse, until every hope of ever becoming any better by any effort of their own was entirely gone, and that they lay guilty, helpless, forlorn, and justly condemned, and were exposed to death and hell, and to an eternal banishment from all holy beings, all happiness, and even earth itself. This they were looking for as their justly-merited doom from a just, righteous, and holy God. But here a joy, a hope, a comfort, suddenly sprang up! They were filled with love, joy, and praise, and they felt happy. Their trouble was gone; the world and all around them seemed changed and new, and everything around was showing forth the wisdom, power, and glory of God. The cause of this great change I understood not, for they talked of no progress, except from bad to worse, up to the moment of their “rejoicing in hope”.

I remember of but one question being asked, and that was this: “You speak of being very great sinners; have you now become good, or are you the same great sinners still?” The answer was prompt: “We are still great sinners, and in ourselves we are no better.” This answer decided their case with me, and I had no thought that even one member of the church would lift a hand to receive such sinners into their church. I really pitied the great ignorance of these young people; they would, of course, be rejected, and they ought to have never so exposed themselves as to come publicly before the church to tell how bad they were, and that they were still getting worse instead of better. The moderator, Elder James Lee,

put the vote, and, my dear reader, you can scarcely imagine my surprise, sorrow, astonishment, and abhorrence, when I saw every hand up at once to receive them. I knew that the whole order of Baptists held themselves to be a Christian church, that is, a church of Christians, and, to keep so, they would receive no member into their body but such as give evidence of being a Christian, and as such gain their fellowship. Yet, here, they all voted, with an uplifted hand, to receive members that had made no such pretensions, but, to the contrary, had positively told them that they were not only not good, but still continued to be very great sinners!

This was before I knew anything about those several societies that wish to be regarded as Christian churches, who complain of being rejected at the Lord's Supper by the Baptists, while they do not even pretend that they are churches of professed Christians. Such churches or societies are composed mostly of probation members, or such as have consented to try to get religion or else have been immersed in order to get their sins forgiven or have been sprinkled in infancy on the professed faith of their parents, in order to get within the pale of the church, or had been catechized in order to obtain a membership, etc. All these combinations were at that time unknown to me; therefore, I thought every member of a Christian church was, at least, one that professed to be a Christian, or, in other words, professed to be good; and that giving a full evidence of this to the church was a warrant to their reception and the receiving the right hand of fellowship. Although I believed that any church on earth might be deceived by the false pretensions of designing men, yet these young persons had not deceived the church, for they made no pretensions to goodness. They honestly told them that they had been, and still continued to be, great sinners. Although they were extremely foolish to come to the church to tell how bad they were, and that they were still no better, yet the church was, collectively, acting the willful hypocrite, and was guilty of deceiving these ignorant young people, and pretending a fellowship for them as Christians, when they had honestly told them they were not good, but, on the contrary, great sinners. This convinced me that they were ALL hypocrites, and that there was not a Christian in the church. I knew that a number of them would go home with Father, as Elder Lee was to preach there that evening; and I resolved to watch their words closely, believing that I should hear them express their reasons for receiving those sinners, and so detect their hypocrisy. For I had no idea that one of them could be so ignorant as to even hope that young people were good and fit to be received as members of a Christian church.

When meeting closed, a company started with Father, some on horseback and others on foot. As they walked, I was all attention and felt impatient to hear them speak of the reception of these wicked children. They had not walked far until an old man from north of the Ohio River, by the name of Davies, introduced the subject by saying: "How beautifully them young people passed from law to gospel." The general response from all was, "Yes." Some said: "God has surely ordained and brought praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings"; others said: "It looks like the latter days of time, to hear children of eleven or twelve years of age give such deep and clear relations of experience as to almost surpass, and certainly to astonish the old members." The talk ran on in this way, and so I found, to my utter astonishment, they were all fully satisfied. Indeed there seemed to be no doubts in the mind of any one of them, for all spoke of these experiences in the highest terms of approbation, as being extraordinarily clear; and yet these converts were mere children. I was soon convinced that the church had not acted hypocritically in receiving them, but, on the contrary, they had received them in good faith, according to what they believed to be the best evidence of what they called the new birth.

Although I acquitted the church of dishonesty in receiving them, yet I could see nothing like what I called experience, or Christianity, in all they had said. Their prayers, they said, were bad; their hearts

were wicked and deceitful; their tears and repentance were not such as were availing; all amounted to nothing for justification, or acceptance with God, and, to cap the climax, they were still not good, but great sinners. How such marks as these should be the evidences of a Christian I could not see. In pondering over these things with deep solicitude, I soon became thoroughly convinced that these young people and the church, the preacher, visiting Baptists from other churches, and my parents, were all entirely ignorant of the true Christian character and experience, or else I was so myself; for both could not be right.

This put me upon a most solemn examination and comparison. I set two things down as self-evident axioms that no one could possibly mistake or controvert. One of these things was that a bad person was a sinner; the other was, that a good person was a Christian. Now for a sinner to be converted and become a Christian, was for a bad person to leave off sinning and become good. Here was shown such a radical change—a bad sinful person to become a good righteous person—that it might well be called a new birth. Now to apply these plain facts to the case: I had been a bad youth, a sinner in fact; but I had seen my folly, repented of my sins, and forsaken them; had frequently prayed, had become good and righteous, and had, finally, resolved never to sin again. So now I, who had been bad and a sinner, and had become good, was, of course, a Christian. While, on the other hand, those young converts had met with no change; they were great sinners at the start, and continued so all through; they were still very great sinners—as bad as ever, no better now than at the beginning of their religious career. Surely this comparison must clearly demonstrate me as the Christian and they as the sinners. I tried the case in every possible shape and form in my power. I did not wish to be deceived, or to be a self-deceiver, but to be honest with myself. The contrast was between the good and the bad, the righteous and the wicked, the saint and the sinner, the saved and the lost. Now, they did not even profess to be good, but said that they were great sinners still. I, on the other hand, was the good, the righteous, the saint, while they, upon their own profession, were the sinners, the bad, the wicked. I could not believe that the sinner was a Christian. I felt awful and solemn.

The first remarks of the old man Davies fell with heavy weight on my mind and called up another serious enquiry as to what was law and what was gospel, and what was “passing from law to gospel”. He had said that those young people, in their relation, had shown most beautifully how they had passed from law to gospel. I could not tell what he meant by law, nor what he meant by gospel. I understood them to speak of getting worse and worse all the time, and that they still remained great sinners. How passing from bad to worse could be passing from law to gospel, I could not conceive, unless I should admit that the law was bad and the gospel still worse! This was surely the way they had passed. Still, I could scarcely believe that this was what the old man really meant, and I began to desire greatly to know what was meant by law and gospel, and what it was, in Christian experience, that was called passing from law to gospel. All these things oppressed me sorely. My mind was in a tumult, like a troubled sea, tossed with contending emotions, doubts, fears, hope, assurance, and despair.

Nightfall, finally, began to summon in the congregation; they were now gathering for evening services. Some were singing, others were collecting in small groups for conversation. Religion was the only theme and they all seemed to be full of love and joy and peace. I looked on and beheld their devotion with serious solemnity. These were the very people that, but a few hours before, I had decided to be a band of, hypocrites, believing that there was not one Christian among them. I was not like those who say, “we can agree in the essentials.” No; I plainly saw and felt that the difference between them and me was so essential that if they were right, I was utterly wrong. I knew my own plan and feelings; theirs I did not comprehend. But I knew the difference was so great that both could not be Christians,

any way that I could see. They talked of passing from law to gospel. This still bore heavily upon my mind, for I knew that I understood nothing about what they meant, nor did I comprehend how they could reconcile the paradox of being a great sinner and a good Christian at the same time. I saw and felt that the difference was so essential that one or the other must be a fatal error. Mine was, "Do good and be good, and keep so, by living free from all sin, and so be fitted for heaven." But theirs embraced the great sinner and saved him without his first getting good or doing good and stranger still, he continued to be a sinner. This plan of salvation seemed to me so inconsistent, so paradoxical, so unholy and opposed to virtue, that I could by no means believe it. Indeed, I could not understand it. There was mystery at every point. It was shrouded in darkness, and I could not penetrate it. I was like a vessel driven in every direction by warring elements, and I could find no safe anchorage or port of rest and safety. To increase the solemnity of the closing day, the western horizon was illuminated with almost incessant flashes of vivid lightning. This seemed to portray the power, the majesty and the glory of God, and the responsibility of man.

The preaching, the exhortations, the singing and the prayers, and all the exercises of the evening passed off almost without arresting my attention, because my mind was absorbed with its own meditations. My all was at stake; my religion that I so highly valued, which I believed without doubt was genuine, and in which I had so firmly resolved to persevere till death, in full assurance of heaven, was now in positive contrast with that of the church. And, inasmuch as I was good, and had repented of and forsaken my sins, had turned to God, had frequently prayed, and had resolved never to sin again, (all of which, as a matter of course, must be right and proper), therefore my religion must be good. If so, the Baptists were all wrong, and I knew of no church that was right; for, as I have said above, I had no acquaintance with any other churches. I felt alone and solitary.

In all this time I had not uttered a single word to any one, nor had any one said a single word to me on these matters. I slept but little that night; I was sorely troubled, and still I could not tell why I should be; for every attempt to examine my religion and to compare myself with those who had professed righteousness-yea, to compare myself with bad, wicked sinners, as they had said they still continued to be- only led me to the decision that good was better than bad. But still I could not understand their system. This something they called law and gospel was with them the great matter. The beautiful and satisfying evidence of Christian experience consisted, as they said, in a thorough and correct passing from law to gospel. This was all new matter to me. I could not understand what they meant by the phrase, "passing from law to gospel".

This mysterious phrase, and my entire ignorance of its meaning hung heavily on my mind, troubled and confused me, and I could not get rid of it. In this tortured and perplexed state of mind I continued through the night and the forenoon of the next day. I resolved to attend closely to the preaching on Sunday, for I heard some of them say that they thought Elder Lee was an able minister to divide law and gospel and apply each in its proper place. This I wanted to understand, and I thought that perhaps he might explain it to me. I went to meeting resolved to hear and understand if possible. I went, but I never from that day to this could so much as remember the text, the sermon, or even one idea presented by the preacher, for my mind was so full of my own thoughts that the sermon and all the exercises a the day seemed to be confused, until we repaired to the water for the baptism of the young candidates. This change interested and quickened me, but the earlier service has ever been to me like a half-forgotten dream.

On arriving at the water, I felt a great desire to see the ordinance performed, having no doubt but that it was right. The Licking River was overflowing its banks, and the low bottoms were covered with water.

We descended a bluff and came to a low, narrow level covered with timber, where there was water of sufficient depth. I took my stand at the edge of the water, which formed an eddy in a sort of cove, while beyond the timber rolled the mighty current of muddy water. The scene was solemn and sublime. Elder Lee took the candidates, one after another, first a man, then his wife; next two young persons who were brother and sister, first the brother, then the sister. I knew of no uncommon emotions of my mind, until Elder Lee was leading this small slender girl into the water.

As sudden as thought the whole scene seemed changed to me; a dark, heavy, angry, threatening gloom hung over all within my view. I felt like one forsaken of God and man, and all I could see seemed to frown upon me and bear witness to the justice of my condemnation. The corruptions of my nature, the wickedness and deceitfulness of my heart, the deception of all my supposed goodness, rose painfully vivid before my mind. My righteousness withered and sank into a pool of filthy delusion and presumption. All my flattering prospects were instantly swept away, and I felt like the most loathsome and guilty wretch that lived on earth. I viewed God in his goodness, justice, faithfulness and truth. I saw that He was holy, and that none but holy beings could ever joy Him or be happy in His presence. I felt that I was unholy in every part; therefore, I was miserable and feared that I was forever undone, for my pollution was all of a criminal nature, and not only disqualified me ever to dwell with a holy God and holy saints and angels, but also exposed me to endless misery in that place where hope and mercy could never come. God was just, and, as a judge, truth and righteousness were with Him. His holiness imperatively demanded my punishment.

I do not believe that five minutes had passed away until this whole train of convictions, in vivid and awful array, stood before me; and conscious guilt and a just condemnation, like a mighty load, pressed me down. Feeling that I was too vile and unfit to mingle among Christians, I left the company and the water in despair, ascended the bluff alone, and sought a deep ravine in the wood, expecting there to die alone. While there, a darkness unaccountable seemed to spread itself abroad; and, indeed, it became so dark to me, that I could scarcely see anything around me, while an awful sense of hopeless despair, guilt, and just condemnation oppressed me.

I now believe the darkness of the day, as it then appeared to me, was not at all literal, as no one else saw or felt it. The sun was shining all the time; but my feelings and the state of my mind so affected my nerves as to partially destroy my vision. I then thought that death and judgment were coming suddenly upon me. This apprehension, however, gradually diminished, and, in a great degree, passed away. Still a mournful gloom hung upon whatever I could see, and all seemed to witness the justice of my condemnation. Something that my natural eyes could not behold seemed now to come down, obliquely or slanting from above, like a dark vapor or stream of smoke, ranging backward and upward. The further end was rising higher and higher, until I could~ perceive no end; but the lower extremity seemed to rest between my shoulders, oppressing my heart with a burden guilt. This, in my mind's view, and the feelings of my heart I then thought was a token of God's justice in my condemnation, as a sinner and a rebel, for whom there was no pardon or mercy, but rather that justice was ready to excuse me as a guilty culprit.

I date that moment at the side of the water as the time when I first saw the depth and heinous nature of sin, my own entire depravity, and that loathsome corruption which entirely polluted every work that I could possibly perform. My previous exercises had been prompted mostly by an alarming dread of the consequences of sin and of my own punishment, and when my good works (as I then viewed them) had pacified my conscience, I believed God was at peace with me, and that if I continued to do good and refrained from sinning, I should both live and die in His favor. But from the moment referred to at the

water, sin in itself became exceedingly sinful. My sinful acts, which truly were many, and the great evils which had been my chief trouble before, now appeared as the nauseous and poisonous vapor that exhaled from the mass of corroding corruption which lay imbedded in my very heart and nature, and this mass included the entire man, soul, and body, so that no part or spark of rectitude or holiness could be found in me.

In this view of myself and of sin, and of the pure holiness, truth, and justice of God as a judge, I could see no possible way in which He could maintain His truth and justice and yet justify and save me. I became still more and more impressed with the idea that so depraved and vile a rebel as I was could never enjoy so holy a God, nor such holy society as that in heaven. Therefore, it seemed to me impossible that any other fate than final ruin could await me. I thought that, above all things, I desired to be holy, and, above all things, I was the furthest from it.

In this awful condition I wandered about in the solitary wood and ravine, until the voices and noise of the crowd told me they were dispersing. It then occurred to me that some of my cousins, about my own age, were going to dine with me at my father's, after which they were going home, some twelve miles distant, to be received within the bounds of another church, called "Twelve Mile Church". At this place there was to be a series of meetings that evening and the next day, and I was under promise to accompany them. I thought they would think my absence strange, and probably my parents would be uneasy if I remained longer; so I started for home. The road ran a small distance from my retreat. I soon reached it and, hurrying forward, arrived at home shortly after the company had entered.

After dinner my father said he thought I had better abandon the thought of going with my cousins at that time, and wait until the next church meeting, when he would go with me. I should then, he added, have more time to visit with my cousins. I made no objections to this proposition, for it struck me with great force that all of them were Christians (as they were all professors), and that I was not fit to be in such society. Believing that my father knew all this, I construed it as the cause of his making the proposition.

When the company started they walked up a gradual ascent, hand in hand, and they began singing, in low, soft voices, that beautiful song –

*The glorious day is drawing nigh,
When Zion's light shall come;
She shall arise and shine on high,
Bright as the morning sun.*

I really thought they were on their way to heaven. God was their Father and their friend, and Christians were their brethren and sisters. They were at peace in their minds, and in holy love with each other. All was joy and comfort with them, but I felt I was a condemned rebel, doomed to remediless destruction; and I thought that as these Christians were now leaving me behind and ascending on their way with singing, so at the last great day, they would thus ascend to heaven, leaving me to endure the just punishment due me as a vile sinner.

These reflections filled me with such anguish that I turned my back upon them and walked down the river bank on which the house stood, feeling myself to be the most forlorn and guilty rebel that lived on earth. I wandered down the stream, until I came to a large pile of drifted logs; under the covert of this pile I secreted myself, and then fell upon my knees to pray for mercy. Suddenly the thought rushed upon me, as if an angel had said it: "God is just in your condemnation, and of course He cannot be just in your justification; and now for you to pray for His favor is the same as for you to pray for Him to be

unjust, to tarnish His glory, dishonor His justice, deny His truth, and corrupt the purity of His Divine character and perfections. This would be the most heaven-daring presumption for which a guilty culprit was ever condemned, and for which signal vengeance would be speedily executed.” I shuddered; guilt sealed my lips; I dared not utter a word; I imagined that the drift-logs, around and above me, were about to fall upon and crush me instantly for my awful presumption.

I hurried from my retreat in the most awful state of perturbation of mind. I ascended the river bank, and entered a grove of timber, and there stood in mute despair. The trees, the birds, all around, seemed to look accusingly upon me. I felt that all their accusations were just, and as I felt guilty of all, I dared not even pray for deliverance. The justice of a righteous and holy God, against whom I had sinned, and Who knew all my depravity, still seemed to be before me, like a dark stream proceeding from His judgment seat directly against me, pursuing me wherever I went, and pointing downward between my shoulders to my heart. This was the view of my mind, but it seemed so plain, even to my external vision, that I often turned round suddenly to see it with my eyes, but could not see anything unusual. Yet turn as I might, matter what way, it still seemed behind me. I can never describe my feelings and views as I stood there. I ought that everything around and above me [in short, that all things] seemed to answer the end of their creation, and that, although they were only creatures of time, with no soul, no intelligence, no accountability, yet they espoused the cause of their Creator, and appeared to look accusingly upon me as a vile rebel who deserved neither favor nor pity, but only speedy execution, which everything seemed to demand, and which God’s purity imperiously required to vindicate the holiness of His Divine throne. In this awful state of mind I spent the afternoon, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting, sometimes walking, and sometimes prostrate on the ground. I now believe, if ever my whole heart prayed for mercy, it was at that time. Yet I dared not make a formal prayer; my guilt and God’s justice seemed to forbid it, causing me to tremble at the very thought of attempting to ask God to be unjust when His justice demanded my punishment.

At nightfall I repaired to the house, and soon retired to my bed, but not to sleep. I began to ponder over my helpless condition. I thought my parents, being both Christians, knew that I was a lost sinner, and felt no pity for me, knowing that my condemnation was just. I felt that I was not fit to be with them, nor even to speak to them. Thus, with these awful reflections, I spent the time until morning. I thought if I were but pure, holy, and righteous, then all would be well. Then I could dwell with God and His people for ever. But, alas! this was now out of the question, for I was a most loathsome mass of pollution, and I knew no way by which I should become cleansed. The darkness of the night seemed to add its shade to the gloom of my feelings.

For three days and nights I continued in about the same condition. I have often reviewed it, and have never been able to remember that I had one hopeful thought of my salvation that would be consistent with Divine truth, righteousness, justice and holiness. I dared not ask for it or even desire it, to the dishonor of these. The very thought that I, a guilty culprit, should possess the impudence to ask a holy God dishonor Himself in my behalf, or even to desire such a thing, was alarmingly presumptuous. Yet, if there was any way in which God could be gloriously true and just in saving me-O, let it be shown me, was the incessant breathing of my heart. But I could see no way in which pardon, peace, righteousness, and salvation could ever come to me. My former delusive notions of my goodness looked as awful and presumptuous as any other part of my life. I dared not even hope to obtain God’s favor by such a course; indeed I felt hedged in on every side, and could see no way of possible escape. I felt as though I was suspended on a mere thread, and hourly awaiting my execution.

CHAPTER THREE

From Law to Grace – and Baptism

ON WEDNESDAY afternoon, as I was wandering alone in a wood-lot, reflecting on my desperate condition, I passed by the top of a fallen hackberry tree, which by its limbs formed a thick cluster above and around so as to afford a sort of retreat. I paused a moment, and again the thought struck me that I would enter this recess and once more try to pray. But the demand was again suggested: “Dare you pray to God to do an unjust act?” My mind replied: “No, I dare not do that, but I may confess to God that He is just and righteous in my destruction.” With this thought I entered the clustered top, while the gloom of death seemed to hang heavily on every tree, and all nature seemed clothed with a frown. I felt my execution was now at hand. I fell on my knees, closed my eyes and began my confession: “Lord, Thou knowest that I am an unholy rebel against Thee; I have sinned greatly and am all corrupt and lost; but Thou art just in all Thy judgments, and I am justly condemned by Thy righteous law.” When I had proceeded thus far, I was arrested by the appearance of a bright, glittering shadow, near my right side, which startled me. I raised my head, and opened my eyes, but could see nothing unusual. I again closed my eyes and resumed my confession, but again the same glittering brightness shone forth with increased brilliancy. I started up again and opened my eyes, but nothing unusual appeared. Again I closed my eyes and resumed as before, and again the brightness, with increased luster, appeared the third time, now with such startling brilliancy that I sprang to my feet and gazed in every direction. Nothing, however, of that brightness could be seen, but all the heretofore-gloomy scene was changed. The angry frown was all dissipated, and the wisdom and goodness of God illuminated the scene, and gave all nature a beauty and grandeur that seemed to show forth more of the glorious majesty of the Creator than I had ever before beheld. I was so completely captivated with the scene, and so absorbed in the contemplation of the goodness of God, that I was thoughtless of everything else. I sauntered about, gazing in transports of delight on smiling and instructive nature, and thus I remained, gazing, wondering, and adoring that God Who seemed almost visible in the works of His power, wisdom, and goodness, until I was called to the house.

There was a prayer meeting that evening in the vicinity, and it being time to go, my father and I walked directly on. Soon after we started, the inquiry rushed upon me: “What has gone with all your trouble?” My burden was gone; the stream of justice that had been pursuing my life was withdrawn, and yet I was the same sinner as before! But was all my burden of sin and guilt now removed? or, was it not rather that I was now given up to such insensibility, such heaviness of heart, that I could no longer be grieved on account of my situation? And here I began to retrospect the past three days. I soon found my burden had last oppressed me in the hackberry top aforementioned, where, on my knees, I had confessed God’s justice in my condemnation. At once I inferred that God had shown me my guilty and condemned condition, and had brought me solemnly on my knees, to confess that His judgment was just in my banishment, and that I had no just cause of complaint, nor any ground to reflect upon His righteous decision; hence the honor of His Throne was fully vindicated. This being done, and the glory of God’s attributes all shown to me in the works of His hands, I concluded that I was now left in a hardened, insensible condition, and that my state was now worse than ever before, but that I was too much hardened to feel it. I labored to feel as I had felt, and to see myself again under the load which had heretofore oppressed me; but I could not. Yet I never once thought of this being conversion, but my trouble now was that my former trouble was gone!

In this unhappy condition I continued until the prayer meeting was near the close. Elder John Beal engaged in prayer, and during the time I was on my knees, there came upon me such a feeling of enraptured love for God and His people as I had never before realized. When the prayer was over, all the congregation arose to their feet and began singing. I looked upon them with admiration, for I thought I had never before beheld so lovely a sight, and their voices seemed to me to be tuned with immortality. Although they stood near to me, and I saw them with my eyes, and heard them with my ears, yet, to my mind's view, they seemed to stand vision-like in a majestic line; those nearest a little elevated above the ground, and those more distant rose higher and higher, while the glory of God and the beauty of holiness appeared to shine brilliantly around them, and their sweet singing seemed to echo almost into the heavens. Such divine beauty and holiness I never viewed before in Christians, nor in their worship. I was now completely filled with peace and love, and my mind for the time was happy.

On my way home this state of mind and these feelings left me, and again I relapsed into my former desponding state, seeking for my burden again, and repining because it was gone. In this unhappy state I continued until the next day, when I was alone in a grove. Then the same love for Christians, the same peace and comfort filled my soul and captivated all my affections. In the midst of this sweet delight the following words of the poet, Keble, seemed to fill my inmost heart:

*Keep me, O keep me, King of kings,
Beneath Thine own almighty wings.*

These words enlisted my strongest desires, and carried them up before God, in earnest prayer, that He would so keep me. With this a flash of inward light gave me the first glimpse I had ever known of a mediator between God and man. This glimpse, although it seemed plain, yet was so instantaneously gone, that I could not retain the view.

For several days I continued in this way; sometimes all my mind seemed shrouded in impenetrable darkness, but frequently an inward dart of light in the mind would reveal the way in which God could be just as a Saviour, through the mediation of His Son. Still this darting ray, though often repeated, was so instantaneous that, if I may compare it to temporal things, I would say it was in some degree like a person, on a very dark night, looking out of a window upon the blackness of darkness, when, sudden as lightning, a bright flash instantly darted by, revealing the most beautiful image or scenery ever beheld; but the light was so suddenly gone, and the image so entirely new, he could not so examine it as to describe it, or understand it properly. Although I could not understand how, yet I became convinced that there was a way in which God could save a great sinner by His grace, and still remain a just God, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." My view was so indistinct and so imperfect that I could neither explain it satisfactorily, nor appropriate it to myself. Here I received the first hope that I could claim as a hope. I know of no better way to express or define my hope than this – I hoped I should yet receive a hope. I was yet assured that there was a way, and a glorious way, too, in which God could be just and save a poor guilty sinner; and I hoped I should yet clearly see it.

This gave me some comfort. My mind, with all its powers, seemed to be strained to the very highest pitch to obtain a conception of this glorious plan but it was beyond my reach. I could not see it except in these momentary flashes above described, and they were so sudden and so instantaneously shrouded in thick darkness, that I could not retain a clear conception of it, and so I struggled along. I seemed insensible to my burden of condemnation; it appeared to have left me. Justice did pursue me as before, but hope seemed to be struggling for a mastery over my former despair. In all this interval, from the day I heard the experiences of the young people before mentioned up to this time, I have no

recollection of relating any of my feelings to any one. But about the time of my last exercises, above described, one or two Baptists undertook to talk to me. I said but little, yet they seemed to understand my feelings; this surprised me, for I believed that no other person had ever experienced such feelings and views.

I continued in about this way until the meeting at Four Mile Church, where I was to go and visit my cousins, in accordance with the promise of my father, as mentioned above. On my way to that meeting, as we walked alone, my father introduced the subject of my exercises and insisted that I should tell him of all my feelings. I was greatly embarrassed, but finally I began, and the more I talked the more free I felt to talk, and so in substance I related all my exercises. I remember well how the big, glistening tears coursed down my father's cheeks, as he silently listened to my relation. After I had done, and had answered many questions he propounded, he gave me important advice. Indeed, I shall never forget his impressive exhortations and admonitions, and the warnings which he gave me. He set before me my youth, the many snares and temptations I should have to encounter, set to lure me off into the world, and so bring reproach upon myself and the church, and, above all, on the cause of God and His truth. And I was very young, he said, and had never mingled with the world, to learn its ten thousand snares, baits, and devices, and although he hoped I had been the subject of a gracious work, yet he would rather that I should not join the church at present, but wait until I became older and had time to test my faith, hope, and zeal. In conclusion, he said he would not forbid me, but urged me to examine well the solemn responsibility of making a public profession. This advice, coming from a father in whom I had the most implicit confidence, both as to his knowledge in all these things and his desires for my good, made deep impressions on my young mind. I had always considered the advice of my father as the safest rule of my life; so I pondered this with deep concern and self-examination.

We attended the meeting on Saturday afternoon, and also in the evening; and I must confess that the church, and her order, and her worship all appeared beautiful. I thought it a pleasant and inviting home. I felt that I could take great pleasure in spending all my days in such a frame and in such a place, and with such society as this. My heart and affections were centered there, for these were the people of God, and here His glories shone forth, here His worship was performed, His praise heard, His ordinances practiced, and His truth understood and taught. I wanted to have a home with them, but Father's counsel was before me. I had very little to say to any one, for my mind was laboring under many conflicting emotions, and yet it was on a strain to see the glorious plan of salvation, which at times still shot with such glory and beauty before my mental vision, but which I could not retain for a moment, for a darkness black as night would rapidly approach and conceal it all from my view.

On Sunday the meeting was held in a grove, until we were warned by the lightning and thunder from an approaching dark cloud, of the necessity of seeking shelter from the approaching storm. There was a new two-story house near by, to which the congregation hastened; and there Elder Riggs resumed his sermon. He was a powerful man in exhortation, and at times he was a strong man in doctrine. While he was speaking, the cloud began pouring down torrents of rain; the wind blew furiously, dashing the water through the open cracks of the log house; the lightning in forked flame seemed to almost part the firmament while the roaring thunder, like heaven's awful artillery, belched forth at rapid intervals with deafening roar. The power of the God of the whole earth seemed fully demonstrated. In the midst of this confusion and strife of the elements, the preacher, at the top of his voice, made this appeal: "We are told," said he, "that Christ will come to judge the world in flaming fire, and with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. Now, if He should appear in this cloud, amid the streaming lightning and bellowing thunder, who is ready to meet Him?"

At that instant the light that had so often flashed and darted before my inward eyes, now suddenly shone in me, and continued to shine in its splendor, revealing the fullness of the glory of the Person of Christ, and the mediatorial work He had performed for His people, through the redemption that was in Him, and obtained by Him for His people. God was revealed glorious in all His perfections, His law honored, and His truth and justice fully vindicated, while His grace was richly exercised in the free and full justification of poor, ungodly sinners who believed in His Son. This, to me, was the most transporting joy I had ever beheld. I knew it was the same blessed plan that, during several of the preceding days had been flashing across my mind. Christ was now All! He was truly the way, the truth, and the life, the end of the law, the fullness of the gospel. All I needed, or ever could enjoy, was to be found in Him. All that prevented me from the full enjoyment of His glory, was my being present in the body and absent from the Lord. I was caged in a poor corrupt body, away down here on the earth, while He was above, seated at God's right hand. But I thought, surely He will come again, and then I shall meet Him in the air, having been changed from natural to spiritual, from mortal to immortal. Then I shall be with Him, be like Him, and see Him as He is. This all appeared plain to me, in half the time it takes to write it. I felt fully prepared to respond to the preacher's appeal, and say, "I am ready to meet Him." The awful solemnities of the judgment day had been the most terrifying thoughts that haunted my guilty conscience; and often, at night would I awake from my sleep trembling with alarm and terror, from a dream of the judgment day and of my final separation from God and all holy beings. But now the entire scene was changed. I now felt that in "that day" I should be inducted into the presence of God and all holy beings, to dwell forever in that place where sin, sorrow, pain, and death shall never come. The second coming of Christ seemed to be fraught with the greatest interest to me of anything I could think of in the future. During the remainder of the afternoon and evening my mind was calm, tranquil, and happy; and with an ecstatic feeling of delight, I contemplated the glories of Christ as a mediator, and of the redemption through His blood, of the fullness and freeness of His grace, and of pardon, justification, and eternal life in Him. The glories of the whole plan of salvation through Him occupied my enraptured thoughts, for let me strike whatever cord I may, it led to Jesus. "He was all and in all."

Some of the young converts were there, and we gathered together, and I talked and sang. I gave them my views of the fullness of Christ and His mediation, and of the relation in which He stood to His people. I told them that I believed, when He should "come again without sin unto salvation", the sight of Him would verily lift them up "to meet Him in the air", and being like Him, they should see Him as He is and dwell with Him forever. Thus we enjoyed a pleasant season.

The next morning my views seemed dim. I began to call to mind the question: "Am I really interested in Christ as my Savior?" and then many doubts began to annoy me, and with darkness, as it were, to compass me about. I never have doubted since but that the views I then had of the plan of salvation were correct, and that this was the only way any sinner was or can be saved. But my doubts began then, and have often harassed me since, as to whether I was savingly interested in that plan. In this way I lived, sometimes so obscured in darkness that I could hardly dare to hope, and at other times my views were so bright that I could not doubt.

The next church meeting came on the first Saturday in June, 1801, at the church called the "Mouth of Licking". I went before that church and related to them my reason of hope, and was received as a candidate for baptism. On the next day, which was Sunday, I was baptized by Elder Lee in a small stream filled with backwater from the river. When the elder led me down into the water, he said: "I am now about to baptize one who will stand in my place when my head lies beneath the clods of the

valley.” Many of those present knew that he referred to his expressed convictions uttered shortly after my birth, which they had often heard him speak of since. But I knew nothing of this, and only understood him to speak of the probability of my living after his decease, as I was then only in my thirteenth year, and he was of middle age, something near forty, I presume. When I was raised from the water the first thought that I recollect was, “O! that sinners could but see and feel the beauties of a Savior’s love!” Such a weighty and painful sense of their blind and dead condition came over me that I felt a strong desire to speak of the glorious plan of salvation. I remained silent in language but burst into a flood of tears, and came out of the water weeping like a child. My young friends led me to a private place to change my clothes. When my father’s youngest brother, then a vain young man, came to us, my first impression was to throw my arms around him and tell him of the fullness and worth of a precious Savior. I refrained, however, from speaking, and again my full heart gave vent to a flood of tears, and my uncle walked away.

Now, Christian reader, I have detailed particularly the way I was led in my youth. Do these exercises agree with yours? I believe they have been in some points rather peculiar; but as they were, and in the order in which they came, I have endeavored to relate them. If you can fellowship them as Christian experience, resulting in a good hope through grace, then let God be praised, for it is all of His rich mercy. The plan of salvation through the mediator Jesus Christ, that I then viewed, is still the basis of all the hope of acceptance with God that I have; and if I were as sure that that plan embraced me as I am sure that it is good, I should never doubt again. O! that I could always walk in the light and in the truth, and serve God in newness of the spirit!

CHAPTER FOUR

Impressions to Preach and First Public Exercising

FROM the time of my baptism, when the weight of impressions impelling me to speak of the fullness of Christ and the glories of God as revealed in the riches of His mercy and grace in the plan of salvation, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, had been lightened by a flood of tears, I would occasionally receive similar impressions, and sometimes my mind would become so engrossed at the meetings, and especially at prayer meetings, that I could scarcely refrain from expressing my feelings to the church. In those days it was common to hold prayer meetings among the Baptists; and in that church a portion of every Sunday and Wednesday was devoted to the prayer meeting, at which we attended to the reading of the Scriptures, giving short exhortations, singing, and reading select sermons and commentaries of some approved authors, and generally some one would propose a text, and those present would give their views on its meaning. I am sorry the Baptists have so generally ceased to sustain this useful practice. I have been as much edified by the exercises of the members as by any sermons I ever heard. And then all the different gifts of the members were brought out; and, being so often together, and religious worship being the object of their social meetings, their confidence and brotherly attachments were cultivated and confirmed. One great advantage was derived from this constant exercise of the brethren's gifts, and it was this: When anything prevented the preacher from filling his appointment, the assembly did not disperse without a religious service, for the brethren would proceed with the meeting by prayer and exhortation, etc. As it is now, when a minister fails in his engagement, no member can be prevailed upon even to pray, and all assembled disperse without worship. At these social prayer meetings I have often trembled, as I sat under those weighty impressions to speak. I was but a child and was very timid. I felt myself to be more ignorant than any other member of the church, and I greatly feared if I should speak I might wound the cause of God, or hurt the feelings or consciences of the members, and then I should have to reproach myself. When the meeting had closed, I would feel guilty and condemned, and often would resolve that if I felt those impressions again I would try to free my mind by giving utterance to them. These resolves, however, were only made to be broken, for perhaps, at the next meeting the same thing would be repeated and end in the same way.

For several years I lived a silent member of the church, and never spoke or took part in the church meetings, prayer meetings, or even privately with the members. I very seldom missed a meeting, however, by day or by night. The thought of missing a meeting was then, and is yet, a painful and bitter thought; yet I never spoke to any one unless some one spoke directly to me. Alternate hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, trials and deliverances, darkness and light, formed the checkered scene through which my mind had passed from the beginning of my religious life until I was about the age of nineteen. I was still a member of the same church, and had scarcely ever missed filling my seat; but I had never said a word publicly nor privately on religious subjects unless called upon, and then simply to answer questions.

About this time my exercises in relation to public speaking became more weighty and more constant than ever before. Such a burden oppressed my mind day and night that I lost my appetite for food, my desire for company, and my nights were spent, necessarily, in a restless condition. I now resolved to subdue these impressions by an obstinate determination that I would never make the attempt to preach,

if I should die for it. That which led me to this resolution was the conclusion I had come to, that Satan, through my own wicked heart, was prompting me to attempt public speaking, knowing that in the attempt, through ignorance, I should reproach the cause of God, the church, and myself. I resolved I would die rather than do this, which I should unavoidably do, if I made the attempt at all. And as I was the youngest and the most ignorant male member of the church, I believed, of course, that a God of wisdom would never choose the youngest, and the one that knew by far the least, in His church, to be the teacher of those who could teach him as a father could teach his son.

Still my impressions continued to increase. I was suddenly arrested with a disease called “Gold Plague”, which brought me so low that my friends despaired of my life. Indeed, at one time, my breath seemed to stop, and all the symptoms of death were upon me; the family gathered around my bed, believing that I should never breathe again; my mother sank into a swoon and fell on the floor. Still I had my senses and knew all that took place, but could neither speak nor breathe. I supposed I was dying, but felt as calm and composed as I ever felt; none of the terrors of death were now upon me, but a sweet resignation to the Divine Will, which made me calm and caused my confidence in God to be unshaken. I soon revived, but still no one thought I could live many days. I was led to examine all my state, also my hope and faith. I felt firm and unshaken, but I felt conscious I had been disobedient with regard to my impressions to preach; and, in attributing them to Satan, I thought I had sinned. From these reflections I concluded that if I should ever get well again, and should feel the same weight of mind to preach Christ and Him crucified, I would make the attempt.

I finally recovered slowly. The same impressions followed me, with increased resistance on my part. I examined my abilities on every point, in relation to making the attempt, being the youngest male member in the church. I felt that I could not teach and edify those who were blessed with association in a church having many old and gifted members. I could neither read a chapter nor a hymn without stopping to spell many of the words; I had no knowledge of the meaning of the Scriptures; I was slow in speech, and could not communicate to others the few thoughts I might have; I was a poor, backwoods, ignorant boy, knew nothing of books, and but little of the world. Indeed, I possessed no qualifications at all that are essential to a minister and teacher of the glorious gospel.

About this time a new plan was adopted in conducting our regular weekly prayer meeting: two of the members were appointed to open the meeting by prayer, and, at the close of the service, those who opened that meeting should appoint two others to open the next, and so on. Soon I was named to open the next meeting. During all this time I had never made an attempt, in any public way, nor had I ever said a word to any one about any of my impressions to speak. All this I had kept carefully locked in my own breast, and had labored to conceal all my feelings from every one, and had succeeded. Then I reasoned with myself: “What can I do? I am appointed to open the next meeting; I will not attend that meeting.” This was my first conclusion; but soon I shrank from that responsibility, for to disobey the church, I felt, was to assume a greater responsibility.

It is impossible for me to describe properly the tumult of my mind during that week. The day finally came, and my mind was still unsettled as to what duty was in the case. I was working alone in the clearing of ground; the evening drew on; my mind became still more tossed, and I tried to pray that God would make my duty plain, and enable me to walk in it. I felt that this was a crisis in my life that was to change my relations in the church and in the world. Toward night I abandoned the idea of attending the meeting, and continued to ply my ax to the timber with great energy. When the sun had set, and the dusky shades of evening told that night was at hand, I suddenly dropped my ax, as from

some impulse, and hastily leaving the clearing, was, in a moment more, running on my way to the meeting.

Five miles were to be traveled, and I was on foot; it was then getting dark, and the way was very hilly. I had not made up my mind what course I should take at the meeting; but I seemed hurried onward by some impulse, and ran most of the way. I reached the place in time; and immediately an unusual calmness came over me, and I experienced much peace of mind. I went forward and filled my appointed place with as much composure of mind as, perhaps, I have ever done since. After meeting I felt the pleasure of having a "clear conscience." The next Sunday, when the preacher closed his sermon, he (entirely unexpected by me) requested that I should conclude. I felt free-why it was so I can not tell; and though it surprised me, yet I felt no confusion. I arose and spoke a few words in exhortation, but not longer than two or three minutes then sang a hymn and tried to pray. The meeting closed, and I felt serene and easy.

Soon after I made another attempt at a prayer meeting, but darkness enveloped me, and I was greatly embarrassed and confused. After this I felt much dejected for a time, but was finally relieved; and I also felt encouraged from the consideration that God had left me in darkness just to teach me where my dependence was, and to give me to feel that without Him I could do nothing. After this my mind became tossed about for a time. All was dark and gloomy. Doubts and fears as to the truth of my own interest in the Saviour harrassed me sorely for a time.

It was now a cold time in the church, and some painful difficulties took place. I believe I will narrate one case here, not because it is very peculiar, but in the hope of its being profitable to some churches, and to some individual members, and especially to moderators, whose duty it is to see that no business comes into the church but that which is strictly according to good order. Most of the confusion, discord, division, and strife that has afflicted the churches, within my observation for more than half a century past, may be traced to some disorderly way in which church business was first managed, by bringing other business into the church as though it belonged to it when it did not. Churches should attend strictly to proper rules of order in all cases, and the moderator should remember that the church looks to him to maintain good order, and to see that nothing comes into the church except strictly in accordance with her rules and order. If the case is but a small one, who can tell how great a matter a little fire may kindle? The case referred to was this:

One sister trespassed against another in some small matter of business, and in their talk about it a contradiction came between them. One, an old sister in the church, feeling much aggrieved, went to talk and labor with the other, according to the first step of discipline laid down by the Saviour, in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. During the conversation of the two sisters the husband of the accused stepped in, and he also being a member, the sisters still went on in their conversation. No satisfaction being given by the trespasser, they parted with the breach unhealed. The accuser called on another member, and took him along to take the second step, as directed in the same chapter. While these were with her talking and laboring to effect an agreement, the husband of the accused again came in, but said nothing. No satisfaction could be obtained; the next church meeting came on, and the aggrieved sister told it to the church at the proper time. The church took the matter in hand, and immediately a contradiction came up. The aggrieved sister referred to the one she had taken with her, who came forward and confirmed the truth of what the sister had said. Immediately the other sister called on her husband, who proved the reverse; and so it went on, until a number of palpable contradictions stood before the church, each one of the sisters positively proving both ways by the evidence of members-two against two.

The wheels of the church were at once locked. Some of the members seemed to begin to take sides, some one way and some another. From month to month this matter was worked upon, from morning until night; and still the case grew worse at every meeting. Various rumors were spreading, the church was confused, and it was thought all four of these contradicting members would have to be excluded, as no compromise seemed possible. After several months' confusion had sorely afflicted the church, parties began to appear in the body. At this time the church was strong in numbers and gifts, and as to able disciplinarians it probably was not equaled anywhere; all were earnestly striving to see some way to bring the matter to a satisfactory end, but it appeared all in vain. Serious fears were entertained that the church would rend in pieces. At this crisis a member, a man much esteemed as a sound, orderly brother, who, on account of being a mulatto, had never spoken on church business and had uniformly occupied a back seat, arose tremblingly and said:

"I have attended here every meeting since this difficulty came into the church; I see the church is in great trouble, and can not advance one inch, and is growing worse every month. I know I am so very ignorant that I tremble at the very thought of saying a word, and still the matter that has thrown the church into all this difficulty looks to me as plain as noonday, and has appeared plain to me from the first; and I still think that, if the trouble is as I viewed it, the old brethren would have seen it at once. Under this impression I have remained silent until now. I have gone home from every meeting feeling guilty; and still I have been afraid to speak, for it seems if I do it would be charging the whole church with disorder. This would hurt the feelings of all, which I would be sorry to do. I may be wrong; and still I am so ignorant that it looks plain to me. If the church will bear with me and not take offense, I will relieve my mind; and if I am wrong, please attribute it to my ignorance, and do not think that I mean to accuse the church." The moderator told him to speak his mind freely; it was his privilege, and his speaking would give no cause of offense. Some others spoke to him, encouraging him to proceed.

He then resumed: "By your permission, and emboldened by your promise not to be offended, I will state my mind. I think that all the difficulties that so seriously afflict and confuse this church, and even threaten its destruction, are in consequence of disorder, at the start, in the sister who brought it into the church, and in the church, which took it up in disorder; and these disorders have been the whole cause of all this trouble in the church. I read, 'If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he refuse to hear thee, take one or two with thee, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' The sister went, but the other sister's husband being present a part of the time on both occasions, is now the cause of all these confusions of testimony, so that nothing can be established, for the evidence stands pointedly two against two. Now, dear brethren, do not view me as an accuser of the sister, nor of the church; but if I am wrong, charge it to my ignorance."

Several voices were heard to say: "The brother is right, and the church is wrong." The moderator said: "There can be no doubt of the strict correctness of brother Sumas's view of order, and all this protracted difficulty has been caused by not strictly attending to order. We should all be willing to confess our faults to him, to each other, and to Cod." One member arose and said: "I feel sorry and ashamed to think what a scene of trouble, confusion, and reproach this step of disorder has brought upon the church, and as an expression of our wrong, I now offer a motion to throw the whole matter from the church." This motion was seconded and carried by the church.

The sister who was aggrieved then asked what course she should pursue, as the matter was now public. She confessed her error in the first proceeding, but said she had not seen it before. "The church has done right," she said, "in throwing the matter out; but my difficulty still remains, and it has been made

public, and now what will be the proper course for me to pursue?" The moderator answered: "Begin as though nothing had been done, and then act as directed by the Scriptures." She replied that she would. The other woman, in a passion, withdrew, and her husband followed. This return to order healed all the wound. The husband afterward confessed his fault and was restored. The wife, on the contrary, went into a disgraceful course of life, thus showing that she had been an unworthy member. Churches can never be too careful to observe strict order. After this digression I will now return to my narrative.

The church seemed to be in a cold state; still my mind was greatly troubled. The responsibilities of a minister, and my ignorance and youth, seemed to forbid the idea of assuming so much. I could read but little, but my mind became greatly enamored with the Scriptures. Every leisure moment I had I spent in their study. I read that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." I here concluded that if I was a child of God I surely had some spiritual capacity to understand the Scriptures; and if so, they were revealed for profitable purposes – to teach all points of doctrine, to reprove all errors, to correct all mistakes, and to give all righteous instruction. So, to the man of God the Scriptures were both a perfect guide and infallible standard, and by them he was furnished, in every respect, unto all good works.

I now went to the Scripture, not to prove this or that point of doctrine or practice, but to learn from it both doctrine and practice, and to have my errors reproved and corrected. If I should do more than the Scriptures taught, it was will-worship; if I should do less, it was omission; and if I should do what they forbid, it was transgression. I read and studied, with these views before me, both for doctrine and practice, but did not understand how one part could harmonize with another, for I read by chapters and verses. Finally, I began to see that all the Epistles were letters, written by the apostles to distinct churches, or to some Christian brother or brethren, and were so to be interpreted. In this way I began to see the beauty and harmony of the Scriptures more and more. Now while the divisions of the Scriptures into chapters and verses make it convenient for reference, yet these divisions should not be noticed when we interpret their true meaning. In this way I continued my study, but could not be satisfied as to what was my duty with regard to preaching. When I read of the spiritual gifts, I could not find that I had any of them. I felt willing to be, or do, anything that the Lord would impress upon me, but His will I could not know; hence I could find no rest. My mind was loaded down. My spirits and thoughts were depressed day and night. In ruminating on this subject I was often lost to myself, and, by times, I was insensible of my situation. I was now teaching several classes in vocal music, and in riding around to my appointments, I often became so absorbed in my thoughts that I would arouse myself as from a deep sleep to find myself sitting quietly in my saddle, and my horse grazing along the wayside.

These spells followed me for several years; indeed it has been a peculiarity through my whole life, that when any point of doctrine would fasten itself upon my mind, I would become insensible to all other things, until my mind was in some way relieved from its intense pursuit. It would take volumes to detail all the different exercises of mind through which I passed. Sometimes I was so oppressed with doubts as to my personal interest in the Saviour, that I was almost in despair. At other times my hope was bright and my faith strong. I read, studied, and tried to pray for wisdom to direct me. My mind was in a tumult. I tried hard to banish all thoughts of ever attempting to preach, for the more I examined myself the more I saw of my want of every qualification. I readily concluded that it was the most inconsistent thing that ever entered the brain of any poor mortal like myself, and yet, for my life, I could not get clear of it. The awful responsibilities of the station deterred me; my ignorance and

imperfections forbade me; and my liabilities to err and perhaps to preach some false doctrine, and so bear false witness for God, were so important a matter that I trembled at the idea with dismay.

Finally I commenced closing my schools by prayer, and sometimes I would fall into an exhortation among the scholars until every eye would flow with tears, and the schools would close with sobs and sighs. This was more especially the case at one school, which was situated on Banklick Creek, near the line between the counties of Campbell and Boone. This place was between a church called Banklick, Elder George Hume, then their minister, and a church called Dry Creek, Elder Moses Vickers then their minister. My school was about central between them, and in a place noted for frolicking, dancing, and such other amusements. This place was about twelve or fourteen miles from my father's, where I still lived. Here the most powerful effect was visible, and here my mind was the most interested. My exhortations and prayers at the close of my school became so attracting that old and young gathered in about the time of the closing of school, and would often leave the place shedding tears. My mind became more than ever impressed that I must preach.

The Mouth of Licking Church had moved their location from the river to near the old station, and had built on the ridge, east, about half the way to the Ohio River. Father had also moved from the river, and settled on the branches of Three-Mile Creek, and opened there a new farm. My school was some fifteen miles from my church.

My mind was so deeply engaged and weighed down that my parents became deeply interested about me; they feared some suicidal temptation was upon me. This, however, was not the case, although I often thought I would rather die, if it were God's will, than to try to preach. Neither my parents nor any other person had ever said one word to me on the subject; nor had I ever said one word to any one about my feelings, but had studied and labored to conceal them, and thought I had been successful. My parents, however (as they since have told me), knew that my mind was greatly exercised, and they became alarmed for my situation. I could sleep but little; a pain in my breast, attended with cough and other symptoms of approaching consumption, threatened me. My mind was gloomy, and I said but little, and my strength and flesh were greatly diminished. Trouble of mind, loss of sleep, and no appetite for food, as well as constant study and awful suspense, so preyed upon me that I was miserable indeed.

I will now relate an occurrence which is rather strange, but one which has often deeply impressed my mind; and as I have undertaken to give a complete narrative of my life, and as this occurrence is now vivid in my memory, I will record it as correctly as I can, the reader being at perfect liberty to draw his own conclusions. My parents became so very uneasy on my account, they concluded between themselves that it would be best to have me sleep in their room. To dispel my suspicions as to their reasons, they suggested to me that I should sleep in their room in order to build a fire for them, to which I readily consented. There being but one bedstead in the room, a bed was laid on the floor each night for me to occupy. Here I lay, but slept very little. One night, as I lay, I felt an ardent desire to know the will of the Lord, and to be or do anything that He required of me, if I could but know what that was. I had felt no symptoms of sleep. Some time after midnight the fire having burned down, the room was dark, save a faint gleam from the brands and coals, not sufficient, however, to show the features of a man. A shadowy form approached me, and bending over me, said: "I know your trouble, and your great desire to know what you should do; and I have come to tell you." I replied: "I am troubled; do make my duty plain before me." He replied: "Read two chapters in Matthew, and to every sentence answer, 'I am the man,' and you will soon come to know your duty." At this I suddenly started up to read and to reply as directed.

I felt no alarm or surprise at the occurrence, but was calm and full of confidence in the vision. I arose to a sitting posture, when it occurred to me that if I got up and made a light and went to reading at that time of night, my parents would wake and ask my reasons, and I would have to tell them, and thus my secret would be divulged, for I thought no living being knew anything of my exercises. With these reflections I resolved to lie down until day when I could read and reply alone, and create no suspicions. I lay a few minutes] pondering on the strange event, when the same form stood bending low over me, and repeated the same words verbatim, and then disappeared. I sprang to my feet and went to the fire and began to stir the mouldering brands. The thought of waking my parents and having to tell my secret again occurred, and I sat down in a chair by the fire, which did not blaze; but the stirring of the coals caused the light to shine more brightly than before. I sat some time by the fire with both elbows on my knees, and bent forward with my face in my hands, my face down toward my knees. While sitting in this position the same form again stood near, and bending over my head repeated precisely the same words and disappeared as before. I arose to my feet and made a light, and then stood in a query what to do. I looked at the bed where my parents lay, as I thought, in a sound sleep, but they afterward informed me that they had been watching me all the time. I never felt so anxious to read as now, and to reply to these chapters as directed; but how to do it so as not to be detected by my parents I could not contrive. It was in the winter, and as Father always rose up before day (and it was now about that time) I concluded to build a fire, and then I could read and no one would think it strange. I left the room to get some wood and was at the wood pile when my father came out to me. He made some remarks about the appearance of the morning, and expressed no surprise at my rising so early. We built a fire, and the family getting up gave me no chance to read.

I waited until day began to dawn, and then silently slipped the Bible from its place and left the house. I proceeded to a secret place where I could reply unheard and where none could interrupt me.

As soon as I could see, I read and replied as directed, but could not be satisfied. I read and replied over and over again marking every word and trying to weigh every sentence and view it as spoken directly to me. The work of the minister was evidently pointed out, and great encouragement was given; but false teachers were also spoken of, and to answer "I am the man" to every sentence, left me halting. I had an uncle who lived near by, who at that time was not a professor, but his wife was a member of the same church with myself. The thought occurred to me, "I will go and tell my aunt that I have had a strange dream, and was told to read those two chapters and to answer to every sentence 'I am the man.' I have done so, and am at a loss to know the meaning." I started for her house with as light an air as possible, and entering the door, said in a lively and rather jocular tone: "I had something like a comical dream last night; and somebody told me to read two chapters and answer 'I am the man' at the end of every sentence. This being somewhat singular, I did as directed, but I do not understand the meaning, or rather, whether anything is meant by it." She sat down and said: "Will you read them to me and reply as directed, so that I may hear?" I replied: "I will; provided you promise to tell me when I am done what you think it means, or whether it be only an unmeaning dream." She replied that she would. Having read the two chapters so often that morning, although a poor reader, I now could read these chapters pretty well. I read them in as lively a manner as I could, and replied to each sentence in the same tone of indifference.

Before I was through I saw the tears rolling down my aunt's cheeks, and when I ended she said: "It is enough; and you should not expect anything to be plainer." I was surprised, and asked her with eager impatience: "What is it you I say is so plain; what do you mean?" She said: "You need not think you can conceal your impressions; they are already known to the church. I have known them for a long

time, and your father and mother are much troubled on your account They are uneasy about you. Now with all your labor to hide your feelings, and although no one has said anything to you yet, they are known, and are deeply interesting the church, and their prayers in secret are sent up for you. You will ha to preach the gospel. God has called you to that work, those chapters make it plain enough; and you should hesitate no longer, nor try to conceal it. You are injuring your own health, troubling your parents, and fighting against God. Your gift can not be hid any longer under a bushel, but must come out to the light like a candle on a candlestick. You should fight against the call no longer, for God intends you to go and preach His gospel, and you may as well yield at once, for He will not be disappointed.” While she thus spoke her voice was calm and her countenance mild, but solemn as death, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. I tried to fortify my mind and maintain a stem reserve so as to show no emotions; but I soon found myself in a tremble from head to foot, and the labor to conceal it almost stopped my breath. When she ceased talking, I arose and started to leave the house abruptly, feeling almost breathless; but as I reached the door my feelings found vent in a burst of tears, and in audible sobbings which I could not prevent nor conceal. She followed me to the door and requested me not to be hurt at what she had said; but I made no reply.

I left the house as fast as I could walk, without having any object or any place in view. All seemed strange and unaccountable. I was surprised beyond measure to learn that my exercises were known, when I had told no one and had labored and studied so much to conceal my feelings from all. The positive manner in which she had spoken, coupled with the circumstances, was altogether more than I could comprehend or easily endure. I scarcely knew where I was, or where I was going. I finally found myself about half a mile from my father’s house, and about double that distance from my aunt’s. I was in a deep hollow, covered with a thick grove of timber. The day was pleasant for winter, and the leaves were dry. I stood and studied, and then would walk a few steps.

The events of last night and of the morning stood before me, and I asked myself: “Were they such evidences as ought to determine my course?” This and other queries, and a sense of my own responsibility wore heavily on my mind. Finally, I fell prostrate on the ground, with my face to the earth, and began to plead with the Lord; I prayed Him to give me wisdom to understand His will, and strength to do it, and a heart willing to obey it; and I implored Him to prevent me from dishonoring His cause, or sinning against Him, by running before I was sent, or refusing to go if I were sent. While I was engaged in this petition-to know the mind of the Lord-I felt an unusual nearness and access to God, and at the close of my prayer, before I arose from my prostrate position, I placed the Bible under my head, with the edge of the leaves against my forehead and face. I then breathed the prayer: “O Lord, let the first words that my eyes shall rest upon, when this book opens, show me my duty and make it plain.” With this I raised my hand and face from the book, and these words met my eyes as I opened it: “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” I sprang to my feet and said: “Lord, it is enough.” But in perhaps the space of one minute, the thought rushed upon me: “Now you have made the Bible your fortune-teller, and all this may be wrong, perhaps even sinful. The book had to open somewhere, and that text being the first verse of the sixty-second chapter of Isaiah, and near the middle of the Book, the volume would, of course, be likely to open there, and the first verse beginning with a large capital letter, would naturally attract your eye first; and now are you prepared to take such chance evidence as that?”

At once all was confusion again. I walked a few steps, and then sat down upon a log to read the chapter and its connection. I opened the Book, but could not read, for such a fear seized me the moment I

placed my eyes upon a word in the Book, that I thought some ferocious animal was about to pounce upon me. I would stare around in every direction, but could see nothing that would hurt me. After awhile would get composed, and all sense of fear would leave me, and then I would attempt again to read, but again the alarm would seize me, in spite of all my resolutions to keep calm. I would start and stare around me, and again all my fear would be gone in a minute, and I would then reflect that I had often roamed through the wood, and that, too, at all times of the day and night, without the least fear, and surely there was no cause for any fear now. I deliberately searched all the timber around, and every place where any animal could be concealed, and fully satisfied myself that there was no cause for any fear. These fears I now firmly resolved I would overcome, and conquer all such vain suspicions. With this firm resolve, I looked in the Book; but that moment the alarm again seized me. I found it impossible to read. I would keep my eyes on the Book until my hair would seem to rise on my head, and I would cringe all over, and feel as if I should cry out with fear. When I would look away from the Book, I felt no fear; but the moment I would attempt to read, I became so excited and terrified with alarm that I could not read. I, moreover, changed my place and position, from time to time, but all to no purpose. At length I got on a large log that lay across a deep hollow, or ravine, the log reaching from bank to bank. I went about middle way on this log, where I was fifteen or twenty feet from the ground, but still I could not read. I reasoned every way to fortify my mind with courage and resolution, but all to no purpose. I suppose I spent half the day in this way, and had not read one verse at a time, nor did I know anything that I had read, except the first verse, as quoted above.

Sometime in the afternoon my fears all subsided, and all my impressions left me, and I thought I should never feel any more of them. I now read, and no fears troubled me in the least. I remained in my retreat, and read until about nightfall; I then rose and started to go home, as easy in mind as ever I was; and I willingly indulged the thought that I should never be troubled any more about preaching. When I had walked along the log to the end and had stepped on the ground, the same old impression, like a mighty load, began again to oppress my mind. In spite of all the power that I could rally to throw off the load, before I reached the house, my mind was as deeply weighed down as ever, and my cry inwardly was: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" As if in answer to this prayer, immediately what had transpired the night before and that day would rush upon my mind, saying in effect: "I have told you what to do; and if you disobey it is on your own responsibility." I stopped before I reached the house, and, going into the stable, there pondered over all the strange events which had occurred in the last twenty-four hours. I examined all the evidence in the best way I could, and, as I thought, impartially. But since then I have been convinced that all the powers of my fleshly mind were warring against me, and were starting up every argument to hold me back.

I continued in the stable until near bed-time, and then I went to the house. No one even asked me where I had been all day, or what kept me out so late. I had left at twilight in the morning, and now it was eight or nine o'clock in the evening. I had never thought of food or drink during all that time. Before this day I had never attempted to leave the house, nor my business, without giving notice of my intention. Mother said afterward, that she saw me take the Bible, that she had been awake and had closely watched my motions all the night before, and had been greatly alarm when I sprang from my bed, and again from my chair aroused a light, and looked with a fierce and unnatural look at her bed, and at the book-shelf, and around the room. When I went out for wood, she told Father, and he had followed me as before stated; but she said, when she saw me take the Bible with me in the morning, her fears respecting me all left her, and she never suffered much more about my safety after that, but believed the Lord would both direct and protect me.

I will now pause in my narrative, and make a few explanatory remarks on the events of the last night; for, while I leave the reader to draw his own conclusions, I would wish the facts all stated. I have detailed them as they occurred, but I wish to say that I do not believe I saw, literally, the form mentioned, nor heard the voice with my natural ears. True, the visionary form was seen just as plain as natural eyes could see, with the very dim glimmer of the light in the room; but I believe my eyes were closed each time of the appearance of the form. Neither do I believe the conversation was literal. I never can remember of hearing any voice speak to me, nor my own voice in reply; nor am I sensible that I moved my lips and tongue. My mother also was watching me, and she neither heard nor saw me speak. I have sometimes thought that, perhaps, I was asleep each time, but this I cannot believe. My mind was not in a condition to sleep, and I felt no symptoms of sleep during the whole night, and seemed as conscious as at any other time. I will state here, that notwithstanding the strange and vivid appearance that was presented to my mind, I was not alarmed. Superstitious persons would have been greatly alarmed if, when awake or asleep, they saw such an appearance, in the dark hours of night, standing so near and bending over them. Indeed, it would be likely to startle any person, but it was not so with me. I felt no alarm, no fear, nor surprise, but a calm and composed mind, as if some familiar friend had visited me in my trouble, and had spoken to me.

Although, as I stated above, I am not sensible that my natural ears heard any voice, yet the communication was in distinct words, and delivered in such a mild and sympathetic manner, that I felt an assurance that all he said was true. When he ended his sayings each time, I inwardly rejoiced, fully believing that when I read all would be plain; and I remember of no doubt, as to the reality of the vision, and of my safety in confiding in it, until I had read and replied through both chapters. Then, for the first time, a doubt struck my mind. "Might I not be deceived?" was suggested, and "might it not all be a delusion?" These doubts aroused the most solemn and critical examination that I was capable of, and the result is now before the reader, in words as minutely as I can narrate it, and he may draw his own conclusions. I presume I shall never forget these events; nor dare I to regard the apparition as a dream, or a visionary imagination. These exercises still abide fresh in my mind, and have abode there from that time until now; and I have often referred to them as an evidence of God's dealings with His servants.

The reader, no doubt, feels either a holy desire or a vain curiosity to read the two chapters to which I have so often referred. If so, you will do well to lay down this narrative and take up your Testament, and imagine yourself in my situation, as much as you can, and fix all the powers of your mind to understand, and all the desires of your heart's breathing the prayer: "Lord give me wisdom to understand Thy will and word, and suffer me not to be deceived, but make me willing to be, to do, or to bear anything, according to Thy most righteous will." When you have labored to feel thus, then turn to Matthew, chapters 6 and 10, and you will find the language to which I was told to reply. Now, when you have supposed yourself in my situation, then read, and at the end of each sentence pause and say, "I am the man." Then review, and closely examine, every word, as though all your future life, and your duty toward God and His cause and people, and your own responsibility for future life and death, stood now before you. Observe, you begin to read and reply, not knowing one word of what either of these chapters contains, but believing that they were to decide your case, and fix your destiny for all future life. If you can read them in that way, you may form some idea how I read them, and may be enabled to judge for yourself what the evidence was, or whether it did tell me what to do-for I was told it would do this. Why that fear seized me in the woods, I can not tell. I was accustomed to the woods, and to new settlements where wild animals were abundant, and I never felt the least alarmed.

After these events were passed, my mind was much employed on examining the evidence, and in examining myself, my deficiency in qualifications, and especially in my knowledge of the Scriptures. Often some text, or connection of Scriptures, or points of doctrine, would rush into my mind, and so absorb all my powers, that I would become insensible to everything else. At one time, soon after the above events transpired, I was riding alone, going to my school, when my mind became so led off in other matters, that when I came to myself I was sitting in my saddle, had let go the bridle, and my horse was eating at the side of the road. For a few minutes I could not tell where I was, what I was about, or where I was going. When these spells came upon me, nothing could arouse me until I got through, and then consciousness returned. I always retained the subject perfectly, but I had no control over my mind. I might wish and try to study on a given subject, but could not hold my mind on it; for, before I was aware, I would be engaged again on something else. This followed me by times, more or less, through life.

When I came to myself, at the time I was speaking of, I felt fully satisfied as to what was my duty. It was this: I concluded I would go to Elder Beal, the pastor of the church, who was a bachelor and lived alone, and would tell him all. I expected he could tell me what my duty was. It was not long until I was at a meeting where he was. When I saw him, my heart failed me. He was a very stern man, and I shuddered at the thought of introducing my subject to him. My courage gave out, and I started home with my parents, but my mind was so impressed with my wrong-doing that I could not proceed all the way; so, after riding some distance, I stopped and said to them: "I believe I will turn back and go to Uncle Joseph's to-night."

This uncle was a brother to my father, and a member of the church, and was living on a part of Elder Beal's farm, but Elder Beal had a house for himself alone. I turned about and went back past the meeting-house, for Elder Beal and Father lived at opposite points from the church, and about ten miles apart. I rode on lively and overtook the Elder as he rode alone. When I overtook him he turned to me with a smile, and said: "Are you going home with me?" I replied: "I believe I will." "Well," said he, in a very tender manner, "I am very glad you are, for I have wanted an opportunity to converse with you alone. I am sure that your mind has long been impressed deeply on the work of the ministry, and I want you to tell me all about it. When we reach home you can go into your uncle's house until I do my feeding, then I will call in for you, and we can go to my house. We can talk, and there is none to hear or interrupt."

This surprised me. He spoke so kind and tender, and seemed to regard my secret with respect; but how he knew what my impressions were, and that I wished to keep it all concealed, seemed to me unaccountable. Accordingly, about night, the Elder called for me, and we went into his house. The door being shut and we alone, and after his voluntary pledging never to mention anything that I might tell him without my consent, I began, and substantially gave him the foregoing narrative. At the close of the narration, he replied that it was evident to his mind that I must preach the gospel. Then, in the most tender manner, he exhorted me to give myself to reading the Scriptures, and meditating on, and preaching the word. He said he had promised never to divulge anything that I had narrated without consent, but if I would consent, he would be glad to lay the matter before the church at the next meeting, and thus do what was now his duty. To this I strenuously objected. He labored to obtain my consent, and, after a long time, I yielded, under this view of the matter: My own responsibility was already weighty enough, and now to assume the responsibility of preventing him from doing his duty, was more than I dare do. I came to this conclusion in my mind: "I will release the Elder, and he may do as duty dictates. If he should state it to the church, and she should call me to the work, I will make the

attempt, in obedience to her call. She will, most likely, have the mind of Christ, her husband, and the Spirit that imparts comforts and furnishes all spiritual gifts. And when I try at the brethren's call, and they see that I have no gift for the edification of the body, they will be faithful and tell me, and I will stop. My only alternative is to submit myself to the church, and obey her voice, be it as it may." So I submitted the matter to Elder Beal before the next meeting came.

I called one day at the house of an old man, who had not long before come from New York, by the name of Ebenezer Smith. Both he and his wife had lately joined our church by letter; and both had stated that he (Smith) was a licensed preacher. I only stopped in as for a moment, but the old lady would not consent to my leaving until she had sent out on the farm and called in her husband, as he had some special business with me that she thought would interest me. He came, and at once began to tell me that I had to preach the gospel, and that he was old and I was young, and he felt a great desire for my success in the work. He wanted to caution me against preaching the doctrine of election and predestination, special redemption and unconditional salvation. These were deep mysteries, he said, and, even if they were true, they were unprofitable and dry theories and not proper to be preached to a mixed congregation. These were matters he had wished to caution me about for my own good, as I never could be popular, as a preacher, if I preached those hard points.

This gave me sorrow, and I burst into tears. He asked me if he had hurt my feelings. I told him that I believed he aimed it all for my good, and his age and experience gave him many advantages and qualified him to instruct me, but I must tell him plainly that I was not able to comprehend why, if so large a part of the Scripture was unprofitable and only a dry theory, that God had so clearly revealed these points of doctrine all through the Book and had also declared the whole Scriptures to be profitable. I had never made any calculations upon popularity, but if I should ever attempt to preach, I should feel bound to preach all these points, believing them all to be found in the testimony of God. But I had never told any one that I was going to preach, and I thought it very strange that he should talk to me in that manner; still I was young and very ignorant, and was always willing to be advised by the old. It was not likely that I would ever be a preacher, but if I ever should I must try to preach revealed truth, and, of course, popularity must be disregarded; and that I should feel bound to preach the very opposite to his directions. I thanked him for his interest in my welfare, although I could not understand the propriety of his counsels, nor why he had thought that I should ever preach the gospel. I then left the house and went on my way.

This circumstance was a hard trial to me, because I thought I could not preach the gospel without preaching the very points he warned me against; for, as I understood it, these points were at the foundation of revealed truth, and the gospel could not be preached without them. And for two old Baptists to warn me against preaching what I regarded as essentials, and assert that they were dry and unprofitable speculative theories, that ought never to be put before the public in a mixed congregation, and all this coming from an old New York Baptist, and now a forward member of the same church with me, gave me another sore trial. It set me, however, to searching the Scriptures on all these points.

When the next church meeting came on, Elder Beal arose and laid my case before the church and explained the special impressions of my mind. When he closed his remarks, a number of the old members spoke to this effect: They were glad that the Elder had brought that matter up, for they had long been thinking of it, and had intended to bring it before the church that day, if no other one did; for they knew the whole church had been deeply interested about me. The motion not only to liberate me to preach, but to call on me to speak, preach, or exhort, or exercise my gifts in any way or at any time or place in the bounds of the North Bend Association was then put and carried unanimously. I sat silent

during it all, and at the close I only said: “Brethren and sisters, all of you remember me in your prayers, for I am but a poor, weak child among you.

CHAPTER FIVE

First Months of Preaching

IN A FEW days after this I visited my school on the waters of Banklick. They had heard, by some means, what Licking Church had done in my case, and they insisted that I should have a meeting that evening. I refused, but they still urged me; finally, I consented to have a meeting, not for me to preach, but for religious worship, but if I felt at the time like speaking, I would try. The appointment was circulated, and at candle-lighting the house was crowded. I felt strong impressions to speak. After opening the meeting in perfect calmness of mind, I took a text, and as I have since found the text to be differently understood by able men, and many different constructions put upon it, and that there have been some warm controversies concerning its true meaning, I will here give a synopsis of my first sermon.

The meaning of the text that I then gave I still believe to be the true meaning. The text will be found in John 10:2, 3: "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep; to him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." I began by saying: In the first verse of this chapter Jesus said with a double 'verily' to the blinded Pharisees. (who said they could see) that 'he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but cimbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.' This refers to false Christs and pretenders, who come in their own name, and such these Pharisees would readily believe and receive, as they will still do. False Christs and false teachers are thieves, because they deceive the people, take away the keys of knowledge, and, under a deceptive cloak of will-worship and feigned humility, steal both the confidence and often the money of their deluded followers. They are robbers, because they rob God of His glory, and exalt themselves instead. They are all aspirants, climbing up, and never entering in by the door, but climbing up some other way, by some invention of their own, to get up high, on the outer walls of the sheep-fold; but they enter not into it by the door.

The door here spoken of is the door of prophecy. All the prophets, from Samuel, had pointed out the way by which the true Messiah should enter upon His visible reign, His tribe and His parentage, His place of nativity, His works, and miracles, the rejection of Him by the Jews, the slaughter of children in Bethlehem, and calling Him into Egypt, and His title of Nazarene. All the minutiae of His manifestation to Israel were pointed out as a door by which he should enter into his visible and militant kingdom or sheep-fold. Christ, as the good shepherd of the sheep, entered in at the door of prophecy, according to the words of the prophet: 'Behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand, His arm shall rule for Him, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.' At this way or door of prophecy, which the prophets had described and pointed out, Christ, the good shepherd of the sheep, entered.

John the Baptist, as a porter, was sent before Christ, to open the door or prepare His way before Him, as 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.' He came as a burning and shining light. He declared that He (Christ) should be made manifest to Israel, 'therefore am I come, baptizing with water.' When he baptized Jesus, the Saviour forthwith entered into His public mission. This, John, as a porter to go before the face of the Lord and open the door of prophecy, came to do; he came in fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy, and went forth in the spirit

and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers (or the prophets and saints of old) unto their children (or the saints now, since Christ has come), and the hearts (the understanding and confidence and affections) of the children to their fathers, thus showing a beauty and harmony between the aspirations of the Old Testament saints and prophets, and New Testament Christians. And Christ established the doctrine of the unity of the faith of both old and new, in the shepherd of the sheep, Who entered at the door of prophecy, and which was opened by John, the porter and forerunner.

Christ now is come in at this door, and so is fully distinguished from all others, as the good and true Shepherd of the sheep. He is no hireling to flee when the wolf cometh. No, He layeth down His life for His sheep. He is no thief nor robber like others; for, according to an honest course, 'He calleth His own sheep' – not the property of another, but His own sheep and these not at random but in a special manner, even 'by name'. Nor does He call them in vain or without effect, for 'He leadeth them out' – out of Judaism, out of conditional law, out of Moses' administration and bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. This agrees with the experience of every Christian, of every one who has been a partaker of the heavenly calling. Now, as the Shepherd of the sheep differed from all others in that He entered in by the door of prophecy, as opened by John, the porter, so all His flock or sheep are distinguished from all others; for they enter in by Him Who is 'the way, the truth, and the life.' Christ is the door of the sheep. 'I,' says He, 'am the door of the sheep. By me if any man' (that is a man of any nation) 'enter in,' (into the sheep-fold or gospel church) he shall not fall and be lost; no, 'he shall be saved and shall go in' (into gospel ordinances, promises, church privileges, gifts and graces), and also 'out' of God's works and providences, reap temporal blessings and judgments in the Scriptures, and especially among the types and shadows, the figures under the law. Wherever he goes he 'finds' something to furnish strength and edify him, as 'pasture' does the sheep. This salvation of the sheep is not only deliverance from all that oppose them here, but finally in heaven, with an everlasting salvation, world without end. Amen.

The above is a true synopsis of my first sermon at the house of an old man by the name of Cowgill, who lived near the line then dividing the counties of Boone and Campbell, in the month of February, A. D. 1810, when I was about twenty-one and a half years old. From this time I had meetings and tried to preach in that vicinity one or more times every week. The power of the Lord was manifested in a very glorious manner. Saints were renewed; sinners were awakened; some backsliders were reclaimed, and new converts began to sing and tell what great things the Lord had done for them, and how He had compassion upon them. Elder George Humes, then pastor of the Banklick Church, heard of my evening meetings, and of the good work that was going on, and he came to one of my meetings and insisted that I should visit his church the next Sunday. I finally, after some hesitancy, consented. I had then never attempted to occupy a pulpit or to preach except in the vicinity of the school, and there only in the evening. I felt that I dare not go into a pulpit, that it was too sacred a place for me. I was very timid, and the very thought of attempting to preach before the old and wise men of the church, and before the preachers, did seem to be more than I could endure. But the time came and I went to Banklick.

Just before meeting began, in stepped William Decourcy, sen., and John Griffith, two of the old wise pillars in the Licking Church. How they had heard of my appointments I could not tell, but I felt like as if I could not say one word in the way of preaching. I took Elder Humes out and tried every means I could to get excused, but all to no effect. He went in finally and asked those two old men whether they thought he ought to excuse me, as I was so embarrassed. They would not consent, and he came to me and said I must try. I went into the house but did not enter the pulpit. After opening the meeting in the usual way I took this text: "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." I spoke of the ignorance of all

men by nature, and of the impossibility of their knowing or receiving spiritual things. I then spoke of the renewing work of the Spirit, or the new birth, showing that in this work that which was born of the Spirit is spirit, and is born of God. Of course they being spiritual can understand the things of the Spirit. Hence the judgment of spiritual subjects is referred to those who are spiritual. I felt that I was now speaking to such people, and that I was trying to speak of the things of the Spirit, and I wished them to judge what I said.

The next Sunday I agreed to accompany Elder Humes to his appointment at Dry Run Church, where Elder Moses Vickers was pastor. On the Saturday afternoon before, I had an appointment in the vicinity of my school, which I filled at four o'clock. That evening Father came, but, greatly to my gratification, he had understood the meeting to be at candle-lighting, and consequently did not arrive until meeting was over. This comfort was of short duration, however, as he concluded to remain and go to Elder Humes' meeting next day.

Of all the men on earth, my father stood most in my way. He was generally thought to be equal to any of the ministers in the correct understanding of the Scriptures, and all Divine subjects. He was open, free, and affable in his family, though strict in his discipline; yet I fairly trembled at thought of attempting to preach in his presence. I resolved to hide myself this day, and so avoid being called upon. With this resolve I went toward the house, along with others, but when we reached the place, I remained behind, until all had gone into the room; and as we had not met Elder Humes (as before arranged), I supposed he had not come on, so I slipped into the house, which was crowded, and took a back seat, and bowed down my head until I was hid. Here I sat but for a short time, when I heard my name called. I sat mute, with my head down. My given name was then called. I made no answer. Then an inquiry was started whether or not I was in the house. Some one near me replied that I was. I then raised my head, and both the elders stood up in the pulpit, and asked me to come up. I told them I was comfortably seated. They said I was specially required there, and I must not delay. I arose and went to them. As I came forward, they both sat down, and opening the pulpit door, caught me by the hand and pulled me up and said, that I must not think of avoiding preaching, for the people all expected me to preach, and the word had gone out that I would be there, and to that might be attributed the large congregation. I did all I could to get off, but was finally induced to submit. I arose and introduced worship, and tried to preach. My embarrassment, to a considerable degree, left me, and I enjoyed as much liberty as I ever had enjoyed before. I had an appointment also that evening, but Father went home.

The next Saturday and Sunday was our monthly meeting at Licking Church. This I dreaded, for I felt more embarrassed to attempt to speak here than at any other place; but the time came, and I knew that to refuse was useless. I felt that it would be unreasonable. Having been trying to preach in other places, it would not do now to refuse to preach at home, in the church where my membership was, and by whose license I was liberated to speak, and which controlled me, and, of course, ought to hear me, in order to judge what to do with me. I had never gone forward, even in prayer, more than three or four times, and never spoken but once in church-meeting, and this had been one or two years previous. I now resolved to try. I arose, trembling, and was so embarrassed I had scarcely breath to speak; but after introducing worship, my mind became composed, and I felt much freedom in speaking, and at the close I addressed my young associates, who had all come out to hear me. I became much affected, and when I sat down, the tears were flowing from almost every eye, and sobs could be heard in every part of the house.

Now, I have given the reader an account of my parentage, my experience, my call to the ministry, and the first month of my trial in preaching. The reader may think I have been too prolix. True, I have been somewhat particular and circumstantial, but the purpose was to give the Christian reader a fair opportunity to judge of my case. To him I submit it; but to God alone am I accountable for all at last.

I continued to hold frequent meetings at different places, but especially in the vicinity of my school. Although I had several schools at the same time, yet my mind, in respect to preaching, was specially led to the vicinity of this one, and truly the power of the Lord was gloriously displayed here.

The work of the Spirit was made manifest, in quickening many dead sinners, and comforting mourners, and reviving the drooping spirits of the few old destitute Baptists in the neighborhood, and in reclaiming the backslidden, who had lost the fellowship of the churches. This gracious work was so deep and powerful, that I have seen the whole congregation shedding tears, and scarcely was there one dry eye among them, and I have heard half-smothered sobs heaving from the overloaded hearts of penitents. The work was still, deep, and solemn; countenances in which despair was depicted were the visible tokens of a heavy-laden heart, while the look of calm repose on some generally told of the comfort of those who had tasted that the Lord is gracious.

The rumor of this work spread abroad; and the members of several of the adjacent churches flocked in to our meetings, among them, several of the old ministers, and especially Elder George Humes, with whom I was very free. He was so kind and affable and manifested such a fatherly interest in me, that I lost all my man-fearing embarrassments with him, but the presence of other old preachers and leading members sorely embarrassed me.

I now wonder at young men, in their first attempts in the ministry, being so fearful of old preachers. I am now fully convinced, that they are the very last class of men on the earth that a young preacher need fear, for no other class can, in the same degree, bear and sympathize with them. If the young beginner aims and points aright, the old preacher says: "If he falters and blunders now, he will tell it better by and by; for the root of the matter is implanted in him." If I were now about to commence preaching, I would choose to have my congregation made up of the oldest and deepest ministers and members that could be found, for they can best judge of what I would do if I could, and so bear with my blunders, and sympathize with me in my weakness. I would advise all old ministers to show the kindness and tenderness of fathers to young beginners, but still not in such a way as to promote their vivacity, and if reproof becomes necessary, give it with one hand, but keep a cup of fatherly kindness in the other, and administer that as often as they need it.

But to return to the subject: Before my school-term was out, which continued six months, nearly all of my scholars, with many others, young and old, were baptized, mostly by Elder Humes, of Banklick Church, some at Dry Run, and some at other places. The work spread through much of the State. It had been a long, cold, and trying time for several years, until this work began. Nothing special occurred in my life worth mentioning for some months.

The next, and not the least important, event of my life, I will now mention. On the 24th day of May, 1810, I was married to Mary Grigg, the daughter of Matthew and Ann Grigg. They were natives of Virginia, and, like my parents, they had come among the early emigrants to stem the torrent of difficulties, dangers, and privations incident to the settlement of the wild forests of Kentucky, where the hatchet and scalping-knife of the relentless Indians kept them always on the alert. This Mary Grigg is the same slender little girl, who, in her eleventh year, walked by Elder James Lee into the water to be baptized, when I first saw my natural and total depravity, and my helpless, lost, and justly condemned condition, as a guilty sinner before a just and holy God. This marriage was solemnized by Elder

Bethuel Riggs. I was then in my twenty-second year, just twenty-one years, nine months, and seven days old, and my wife was twenty-one years and thirteen days old. She was born on the 11th day of May, 1789. We were both baptized by the same minister and were both members of the same church, but she was not a member one month before I was baptized. We began the world poor, but how we progressed will hereafter be related. We married because we loved, and were willing therefore to work for our living and for one another. I continued to teach schools of vocal music during that summer.

In September I went to the North Bend Association, held that year at Flower Creek Church, not far from the forks of the Licking River. I had heard Elder John Taylor preach so many years before on the subject of the call to the ministry, and now felt a great desire to hear that subject discussed again, that I might know whether I was called of God or not; for I was still tried with doubts, and indeed these doubts foiled me still. I hesitated very much about going to this association lest I should be called upon to preach; but I finally concluded that those who had heard me try would not say anything about it, for all the old preachers would be there, and all would wish to hear them, and they generally knew nothing of me. I felt resolved, however, that if I was called on I would not attempt it; for the very thought of rising to speak before all those great preachers would almost make me shudder. I went to the meeting but kept still, and took no part in the conversation. I kept a back seat and thought I was safe; still if any of them looked at me, as if noticing me, I felt alarmed. I really suffered from a dread lest I should be found out and called upon to speak before those great preachers. The afternoon was spent in conversation, for many of the old ministers and brethren from different associations, from Ellchorn, Bracken, Long Run, and North Bend were there. It was Elder Taylor's appointment that evening, at the house of a Brother Ashbrook, near Licking River. Elder Taylor, being like a father among them, and being old, and having the reputation of being a very great preacher, the people gathered there to hear him. Elder Scott, of Long Run, a large, stern-looking Irishman from below the mouth of the Kentucky River, and Elder Anderson from Bracken, and many others, were there.

During the evening's conversation I occupied a silent and retired position. Finally, nightfall began to close in; the house became crowded to overflowing; the doorway and even the yard were thronged. I took a seat near the door. For the convenience of those outside, the table for the preacher was set near me. Brother Ashbrook remarked to Brother Taylor that the house and yard were full of waiting people, and that it was time to begin worship. He arose from his seat near the fireplace, and with a searching glance surveyed the assembly for a minute, and then asked: "Is young Brother Thompson in the room?" I drooped my head very low, and was seized with a violent shaking from head to foot. I heard several voices near me saying: "He is here." I heard footsteps approaching me, and directly the hand of Elder Taylor was laid upon my shoulder. I raised my head. He said, "Go and preach." I replied, "I have no appointment here, and I cannot fill yours." He said, "Children, obey your parents in all things." I replied, "I do not think that command applies to this case." He continued by saying, "I am an old man, and you are a young one. I want a seat, and good manners alone would require you to give me yours." I began to try to give him room, by shifting to one side, but the seat was too closely filled. He said, "You cannot make room that way, and an old man must stand unless you will give him your seat." I resolved to rise and go out the door. As I arose from my seat he slipped into it, and said, "Go and preach." I found the door so completely closed up with people that I could not get out. I was near the candle, and every eye was fixed upon me. What to do I could not tell. Elder Taylor had his head down, and he seemed to pay no attention to me.

I concluded to open the meeting by singing and prayer, and then give place. I took up a Rippon's hymn-book, and opened to the hymn, "Ye little flock whom Jesus feeds," etc. I was trembling so much I could

scarcely hold the book or candle still enough to see; nor could I scarcely speak so as to be understood. The hymn, however, being somewhat familiar to me, I made out to get through it. While singing this hymn, the text, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," came with such force and light on my mind that, by the time prayer was concluded, I felt impressed to say something on that text. I read it and began, still trembling. I had said but a few words when Elder John Scott, with his stern looks, left his seat, walked directly facing me to the chair that I had stood behind, and sat down on it. The thought struck me that they were trying to frighten me as much as possible, and I came very near desisting once, but another thought followed it: "If God has graciously given them great spiritual gifts for the edification of the church, both they and the church should be very thankful and very humble for them; and if He has given me any spiritual gift at all for profit to the church, although the least of all, I should not be ashamed of it, nor afraid to use it on any proper occasion when called on." These thoughts rushed upon my mind, while I was trying to introduce my subject. My fear left me, my trembling ceased, and my embarrassment passed away, and I enjoyed unusual liberty.

I tried to set forth the little flock, or the church, and especially the apostles and ministers as a little flock, under the watchful, faithful, and almighty care of Christ, with Whom they stood in all the relations of a flock to the shepherd. I showed that the proper owner of the flock had a personal right to them, and a valuable consideration vested in them, so that the destruction of even one of his sheep would be the loss of so much of his estate, and that this little flock also was related to God as His children, born of Him, and guarded and kept by His power, and that it was His good pleasure to give them the kingdom, not only the church or kingdom of God, with all that appertaineth to it here, but all its glories and beatitudes in the celestial state. I proceeded to say that the Saviour, in the endearing mediatorial office of the good shepherd, stood at all times before His sheep, and for their unspeakable comfort pointed out to them the good pasture of God, saying unto them: "Fear not little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

While I was speaking Elder Scott burst out in a loud cry, and the whole house seemed to be in tears. The effect was so general that when I closed and sat down, Elder Scott arose and spoke a short time, but could not hold on long for weeping. They were, however, tears of joy, springing from a heart overflowing with gratitude. Elder Anderson, who said he had been preaching forty years, arose and attempted to speak, but could stand only a short time; he was so deeply affected that he had to stop and vent his feelings in tears of gratitude and joy. Elder Taylor then arose and read the words of David: "Lord, remember me, now I am old and gray-headed." He spoke with great feeling and energy. He had begun his ministry when quite young, in Virginia, and had come into Kentucky in the early settlement of that state. He spoke of the gracious dealings of God with all His people, through all the days of their life, and that those promises were the never-failing warrants of their faith and hope, and enabled them, in faith and assurance, to come boldly to a throne of grace, even when loaded down with the burden and infirmities of old age, and pray as David did: "Lord, remember me now I am old and gray." He referred to me several times as the beardless boy. This gave me the name of "The beardless boy", by which appellation I was spoken of for some years. I will say that this course of Elder Taylor in putting me forward that night was a severe trial to me, a trial I thought too severe, but still I do believe that it did more to destroy that man-fearing or at least preacher-fearing embarrassment that had so sorely afflicted me, than anything I had before met with. I never felt much of it afterward, still it was so severe I never could take this course with any of my young brethren. From this time I continued to try preach often among neighboring churches, but I took care not to go beyond my bounds of the North Bend Association.

CHAPTER SIX

Journey to Missouri

I WAS now preparing to move my residence to Missouri Territory, and my mind became deeply impressed with a conviction that God had a work for me to do in that country, although I had never seen that part of the world. One of my uncles, with a young family, had moved there a few years before, but he was not a professor of religion.

I knew very little of the country, the manners of the people, or the state of religion there, but from some cause, unknown to me, my mind had become so led out for the people there, that I could see them, in my imagination, gathering in crowds to meeting, while a wonderful reformation was going on among them. To that place I thought God had directed my steps, and thither I felt that I must go; but I thought my wife would not be willing to go so far, and leave all her people. Her parents, and all her brothers and sisters, lived a few miles of each other, and they were nearly all members of the Licking Church. Although several of them were married, yet they were all near each other; so I thought my wife would be unwilling to break off from their society and leave them and go so far off among strangers. To go into a new and strange country, and leave the church, too, where we had both been baptized, and where we had so long enjoyed a home and had formed our first religious attachments, I knew would be hard, and I believed she could not consent to do so. I kept this all to myself, but one day my father told me that an old claim had come upon his land, and it being the third farm that he had lost in Kentucky, he never intended to own another in that state, but had resolved to go to Missouri as soon as he could get ready. This struck me with surprise. I knew of the old title having come on his land, but the talk had been that he would rebut it again. My wife and I went home, and that evening she asked me if I believed my father would really move to Missouri. I replied I did, for I saw that his mind was fixed, and I knew that whenever he had become settled on an object he would not hesitate to perform his resolutions. She then inquired if I wished to go with him. I replied that I did not unless she was willing to leave all her people and go with me willingly. She then said she was, “for,” added she, “your people are my people. Their kindness to me since I have been in the family will render it as hard for me to part from them as from my own. I told her I wished her to study the matter well, that I should not take her against her will, but if after due deliberation she concluded she was willing to go, I would surely go. But I wanted her to take time, and count all the cost of parting with her father, mother, brother, sister, church, and all her associates, and the land of her nativity, and go among strangers. I wished her to think of all these things well, “and then,” said I, “if you say that you are willing, we will surely go.” After some days I asked her; she said she was prepared to say she was willing to go, and, if I so desired, I might prepare for the journey. From that time I believed that God had opened the way in His providence for me to go, and that I should see the work manifested in Missouri. I began to arrange my business accordingly.

The church concluded that, as I was about to leave them, they would call a council, from the several churches, to consider the propriety of having me ordained as a minister before I left them. The council was called and met. The result of their deliberations was to give me general and unlimited license to preach the gospel wherever God, in His providence, should direct, and they recommended me to the churches, and to all whom it might concern, as a licensed preacher. This was approved by the Church at the Mouth of Licking, and by a large council of brethren (elders) from a number of the churches of the North Bend Association of Regular Baptists. I then visited my half-uncle, Elder James Lee, who then

lived near the mouth of Twin Creek, Butler County, Ohio, and I tried to preach a few times while out there.

Soon after my return home, we embarked, to go down the Ohio River, in a flat-boat, having taken our start from above the Little Miami River. There was a small rise of the river, but the water was still too low for fast floating, and we were often detained by wind storms that made the journey both tedious and dangerous.

One circumstance I will here relate: One day, as the wind was blowing fiercely, and as we made a short turn in the bend of the river, we suddenly found our boat entering the white foaming breakers. We sprang to our oars and rowed for life. The boat began to rock from side to side, the water occasionally pouring in upon us through the oar-holes. The boat cracked as if she must soon go to pieces, and there were none but Father and myself to work her, except what help the women could give. This was truly a critical time. The women became faint and gave out, excepting my wife who still plied her oar. Finally, we landed on the shore in safety. Several large trading boats were in sight, and they also landed safely.

From one of these boats, which had been tied up not far us, there came a man, who invited us to go to his boat and drink some cider oil, and so be neighborly while the storm prevented us from traveling. The man seemed to be polite and genteel, so my wife, and oldest sister, and I went with him to his boats. There were two of the large boats lashed together; they lay off from the shore, with their bows up the stream, and their stems had floated around against a cluster of willows. The current was swift, running down under the bow of the boat. A long, slim, round-bottomed canoe lay with one end at the shore, and the other reaching along the bow of the large boat. This canoe was the only passway from land to the boat. The man said the canoe was so very easy to turn over, that I had better stay on shore and hold the canoe steady, and he would go with the ladies to the other end and help them into the boat. I stood on the land holding the canoe steady, while the man led my sister, my wife following them, to the further end, when they all took hold of the bow.

As the man stood in the canoe and was assisting my sister over the bow, his position shoved the canoe up the stream away from the boat's bow, and this caused my wife, who had hold of the boat, to lose her position in the canoe, and, in her effort to regain it, she let go and fell into the river between the canoe and the boat, the current sweeping swiftly und the bow at the time. In falling she threw one hand around and caught a slight hold, with the ends of her fingers, on edge of the canoe, but her feet were carried instantly around under the bow of the boat. I saw it all, and as the man, having failed to get my sister into the boat, still had hold of and could not let her go, I sprang to the further end of canoe, and reaching over the side caught my wife under arms. She was then over her shoulders in water, and her feet were under the bow of the boat. With one strong effort I stood her steadily on her feet in the canoe. All this was the work of a moment. I have always viewed this as a special interposition of Providence. My wife was very heavily clothed, and over all she had a thick cloth riding habit; these were wet and full of water. She lay with her feet from the canoe, down a strong current, and the canoe was so upset, it seems like a special act of Providence, that when I reached out at arm's length and with almost supernatural strength lifted her up, that the canoe did not immediately turn over. We returned to our boat, and, the next day being mild, we proceeded on our journey.

One day as we were floating along, the women, having become tired of being confined to the boat, requested me to take them to shore in the skiff, and let them walk down the shore awhile. My wife and sister got into the skiff, and, as I was rowing them to shore and had come near the water's edge, I saw a deer up in the mouth of a hollow. I let the skiff float down out of its sight, and then landed and the women stepped out. I rowed back to the boat and got my gun, and was returning to shore when I saw

the deer go into the water to swim across the river. I ran the skiff between the deer and the shore, and then pursued it. A hard race ensued; but I soon overtook it and raised my gun to shoot it as it swam; but after snapping several times, I examined and found my powder all wet. I laid down my gun, pursued the animal again, and, after many fruitless efforts to hit it with oar, which I broke, I was left with but one oar to manage skiff. I used this as a paddle, and ran up to the deer, and caught it by the tail, and then by the hind legs, and so raised hinder parts as to plunge its head under water until it became weak; then I took it into the skiff and butchered it. I then returned to the shore, took the women in, and returned the boat with not a little degree of satisfaction, having quite a fair prospect of living for awhile on venison, for the deer was a very fat one.

In addition to this we occasionally had the opportunity shooting wild geese, ducks, and turkeys, which in these are considered dainties. After being about one month on the water we reached the mouth of the Ohio, and crossed the Mississippi, making fast at "Bird's Landing". I here trapped for two pairs of Indian moccasins for Father and myself.

Leaving the women and children in the boat, Father and I started on foot for my uncle's. It was now cold weather, and we had to travel about sixty miles up the Mississippi to Cape Girardeau, and thence about twelve miles to Uncle Benjamin Thompson's. We had sent our horses by land, in the care of my brother Jeremiah and a cousin, John Reynolds. We went to get the horses to move the family on, and a keel-boat, and hands to work it, to take our freight up to Cape Girardeau. When we left the boat it was sunset. I took my gun along with me.

Having been so long confined to the boat, and wearing boots all the time, I felt, on getting on my moccasins, and out on the land, as if I could almost fly, and that I could run that seventy miles in a few hours. We had a new tract to travel; the shrubbery was very thick up the river bottom, and a pathway was opened by cutting off the bushes about six inches above the ground. It soon became dark, and as I went I would hit one foot against one of these stubs and then step on another. At first I would jump and spring, bruising my feet almost every minute, which soon became so very sore that they gave me great pain.

Late in the night we heard very strange noises before us. At first we thought it must be some sort of bugle, used on boats along the river. We walked on, but as we neared the noise Father said it was the noise of swans. I never had seen this species of fowl. At length we came to a large lake pond, where the river had apparently once run, but the channel being changed, the basin was left as a kind of lake. There we beheld an innumerable multitude of various kinds of waterfowl. There were flocks of swan, geese, brant, and various species of ducks. They seemed to be holding a general rendezvous, and all were so merry that the air was filled the mingled notes of the bugle whistles, squalls, and flutters. Some newcomers were coursing round and round in the as if seeking the most favorable place to locate; others, tired of the festivity, would rise and with a splash and farewell yell or squall, leave the water and give room for others. I wanted to shoot at them, but Father reminded me that we could not use them nor get them out of the pond, and it would be wrong to kill any of them for mere sport, seeing we should have to leave them.

We struck a fire and lay down by this lake for a little rest, and as we were tired, we were soon fast asleep. It was not long until a feeling as if I were nearly suffocated with smoke caused me to awake. I found that the fire had communicated with the leaves under Father, as he lay with his back to the fire, and had burned a large place out of his coat. I sprang to him, caught him by the shoulders, shook him and called him loud and sharp. He awoke in sudden surprise, and as we had heard a panther scream as we came up, and the wolves had been howling near us, and foxes had been barking, and withal there

being a dense forest around us, Father supposed that some wild beast had made an attack upon us. He sprang for the gun; I held to his coat, and we had quite a scuffle before I could make him understand what was the matter. He might have put his head through the hole that was burnt in his new cloth coat.

We then left our fire and went on, and a little after daylight reached Harris' Settlement, and as Father had some business with Harris, and moreover he being a Baptist, we took breakfast with him. Having rested a short time and got a description of our way, we then proceeded on our journey. My feet were so bruised with the snags that they were swollen and inflamed very much. Every nail finally came off my toes. In this crippled condition I walked on, but with great pain, and the inflammation of my feet caused some fever and headache. The soles of my feet were much bruised from stepping on the sharp stubs in the night, and I became so thirsty I drank at every brook. In this situation we pursued our way until near sunset, when we entered what was called the "Big Swamp". This was a chain of low, wetlands, interspersed with many large lakes or ponds, cypress swamps, canebrakes, and bayous. This big swamp was from four to eight miles wide, and some three hundred miles long. It ran from the Mississippi River, a little below the town of Cape Girardeau, and extended westward to the St. Francis River near its mouth, as I was told, and hills and cedar cliffs bordered it. All the streams along this region, such as White-water, Castor, Turkey Creek, Bird's Creek, Hub's Creek, Randle's Creek, etc., emptied their waters into this big pond, and were lost in long sloughs of dead, stagnant water. Tradition said that the Mississippi once ran through this place, but had finally forced its way through and formed its present channel, until it connected its waters with those of the Ohio at their present junction. The junction of these rivers had formerly been at the mouth of the Arkansas or S Francis. This, though it be tradition, is by no means at all improbable.

Near sunset we entered this big swamp where it was about four miles wide. We had to walk on logs when we could do so, and much of the way we had to wade in water from ankle to knee deep. It was about dark when we reached the high lands. A negro man overtook us, but refused any reward for taking us to my uncle's. We were very weary, hungry and in much pain. Father's feet were not so badly hurt as mine, but he was wearied in his hips and back. We walked about two miles farther in the night and came to a cabin. We asked for lodging but were refused, with the plea that they were not prepared "to entertain strangers". I told the man we were on foot, had no horses to trouble him, and we could lie on the floor by the fire, and, as to eating, we should not be particular, for if we could get that which was good, and plenty of it, we would be satisfied, as we were very hungry. I grew earnest and determined: "We intend to stay with you," said I, emphatically, "unless you say we shall not, for we are too tired to go any farther if we can help it, and now we await your order." He replied that he had never turned any one out and should not begin to do so now, but I interrupted him and said: "It is enough," and we walked in.

We found Mr. and Mrs. Dunn, for that was their name, to be very familiar and kind people. We soon had a good supper, after which we sat by the bright fire, chatted socially until, at our request, we had our bed prepared on the floor so as to lie with our feet to the fire. We were woodsmen and hunters enough to know that lying with the feet to the fire would generally prevent taking cold. We were soon asleep.

Toward midnight I was aroused by the loud snapping of the boards on the roof of the cabin, and on looking up through the loose boards in the garret, I saw the roof in a flame. I sprang from my bed, gave Father a shake, and halloed "fire! fire! the house is burning!" I threw the door open, and ran up the wall to the top of the house, and began throwing off the poles and burning boards and very soon had most of the roof on the ground. Father ran and fetched water, and quenched the fire on them, and then

handed some to me. I succeeded in quenching the fire on the top of the house. When all was done we went into the house, and found Dunn and his wife sound asleep; neither the falling poles and boards, nor the loud talking of Father and me had aroused them, and evidently they would have been burned with their house, with one or two small children, if we had not been there.

So inconceivable is the wisdom of God in the dispensation of His providence, to fulfill His purposes of mercy, that no event is unforeseen by Him, nor can anything surprise or frustrate His designs. However we may view such events as mere casualties or accidents, all are known to God, both means and ends; and, in His providence, they are directed and controlled, so that all the movements, or secondary causes, are conducted according to His wise designs. These people, when we had with much difficulty awakened them, and when they had heard and seen, with astonishment, what had happened while they were strangely sleeping so soundly, seemed deeply affected, and the man said he would never again refuse to entertain strangers. His life and that of his family had probably been rescued by us. Finding that the fire was entirely extinguished, we again retired to rest, and early in the morning we started on our journey. My feet remained extremely sore and painful, but being young, I felt a little rested, and could hobble along; but Father was worse, and his hips and back were so lame, he doubted being able to walk to his brother's, which, we learned, was distant about six or seven miles. We started, however, and in due time arrived.

After getting some men to take the keel-boat down the river to bring up our freight, and finding my brother and cousins all there, safe with the horses, we hurried back. Some went by land with the horses, others went down the river with the keel-boat, to meet us opposite the mouth of the Ohio, at Bird's Landing, where we had left our boat and family. It began to snow the day we started, and it snowed very hard, too, but we traveled hard until dark, and stopped at a house for the night. The snow-storm continued. Some time in the night the man that had started in the keel-boat came to us, saying that the river was so full of floating ice, they had been compelled to secure the keel-boat at Harris' Landing, and could not get her any further until the ice had stopped running.

We became very uneasy about our women and children that we had left in our boat, lest the ice might injure them. We hired our landlord to go down with us, and take his oxen wagon to haul our goods up to Harris's. So, as soon the morning light enabled us to see our way, we started, and, before night, reached our boat, and found all well and safe. We left my brother and cousin to load the wagon and go up with it to Harris's, about thirty miles, and there store our goods until the ice would permit the keel-boat to run. We went on with the family, and at Harris's, we examined the keel-boat, and got him to take charge of its safety, and of our goods when they came. The next evening we reached my uncle's again.

Here we continued a few days. My brother and cousins came home; and they told us that the man who hauled our goods got drunk, broke down his wagon on a rainy day, and they had to unload and reload in the snow and rain. All our things had got wet, and many of them were broken and some were lost. They had finally got them to Harris's, and stored them into a waste house all wet. Here they lay until the ice stopped running. We then got some hands, and went down and loaded them into the keel-boat, and got them up to Cape Cirardeau.

Here was performed the first "cordelling" that I ever did. This is done by fastening a long rope to the bow of the boat, and grasping the other end in your hands, taking the rope over your shoulder and running along the shore, bending forward and pulling the boat after you, while others in the boat keep it from the shore, and off the rocks or sand-bars. In many places the current of the Mississippi is so strong, that for an hour or more, you have to keep in a constant strain, for the least relaxation gives the

boat the advantage you, and the current takes her back. Sometimes, in pulling this rope, you have to clamber along the sides of rocks that bluff into the river; at other times you have to climb over large fragments of broken rocks which have slid down from the neighboring cliffs; at another time you will have to pull with your feet sinking in the quicksand, in which case you dare not let them rest in one place for a minute, or you would sink down in the sand. Still, let the foothold be what it may, you must keep all your strength steadily on the rope, or the boat would go back. I, being young and strong, had to take my place at the “cordell”. My feet were still tender, so we made slow headway; my shoulder became sore with the rope, but I had to stand it.

Finally, we arrived at the Cape. Here we hired a team to take the goods out to my uncle’s, and then I went out on foot, but Father staid behind to come with the team. Next day we became uneasy at the non-arrival of the wagon, and I was about to start to see what could be the matter when we saw them coming. The first man Father had hired broke his wagon, and he had to procure another, which caused him some delay. Father moved into a house that was empty, on a claim; and I stopped in my uncle’s kitchen until we could look for some place to rent for the first year.

CHAPTER SEVEN

First Eight Months in Missouri

I NOW was the possessor of one two-year old colt, one-quarter of a dollar in cash, one bed and bedding, some broken chairs, one small table, some clothing which was badly mildewed, and not a thing to live on even for one day. We were far from all our old friends, the church, and the pleasant walks of childhood and youth, and were now among strangers and in a strange land. Corn was fifty cents per bushel, wheat one dollar, and pork ten dollars per hundred, and these were very scarce. I began to cast about in my mind how to dispose of my cash (the cut quarter) to the best advantage, and soon decided to spend it all for ammunition. I took my gun and marched off to the woods, and in a short time procured plenty of venison, turkeys, and ducks. I borrowed one bushel of corn and had it ground, and I borrowed also a small piece of bacon, and so we began to live. This was in January, 1811. I kept my little family well supplied with wild meat from the woods, for I was used to the rifle and hunting wild game. I worked for bread, and made sugar and molasses in plenty, and in a short time rented a small farm. The house was filled with flax, and I dressed one-half of it for the other half. This gave my wife some business, for she was a spinstress. I repaired my cabin and we moved into it.

The next week after I moved to the country, I went to a meeting at the Bethel Church, about seven miles from where I lived. I found it to be a small church, and in a very cold state, but sound in the faith, and in peace. I had never been without membership in a church since the day I was baptized, and I panted for a place in the house of Cod. So I gave in my letter, and also the letters of my wife and father and mother, and cousin John Reynolds. This little church was situated in the district of Cape Girardeau, on a fork of Bird's Creek, not far from where the town of Jackson now stands. This was then the only church in southern Missouri, except a small one about thirty miles distant. Both these churches were under the care of Stephen Stilly, the only ordained minister in the vicinity, who was assisted by a man named Cochrane, a licentiate. I believe they were sound men, but weak men, and could not teach doctrine.

I was young, and being a stranger, and far from my associates, I felt lonely; and soon I found that I was surrounded with a very rough class of society. The Lord's Day was devoted to hunting, sporting, and shooting at marks, horse-racing, jumping and foot-racing. Shooting-matches and all wild sports were principally set for Sunday. It was common for hatters to bring hats, blacksmiths their hoes, axes, etc., while others would bring turkey, geese, ducks, chickens, deer-skins, etc., to the place of assembly (Hubbe's mill) where all things were there shot for. I had to pass by this mill going to, and coming from, meeting. As I would go in the morning, the crowd, with their guns, and the articles for which they were going to shoot, would be gathering; and by the afternoon, on my return, they would be pretty well inebriated, for these festivities were generally attended by plenty of whisky. Some would be quarrelling, some fighting, some swearing, and some playing tricks, such as knocking off each others hats, and cutting bridles and saddles. I, therefore, could expect nothing less than abuse from such outlaws; oaths and vulgarity, and all that bad words and threats could do to annoy, were hurled at me. My course was to pass on my way, without either making any reply, or seeming to notice them. All this was so very different from anything that I had ever seen before. I sometimes felt awful bad to see so much wickedness, dissipation, and immorality among the people.

I often reflected on the pleasant seasons which I had so richly enjoyed in Kentucky, and I pondered over the deep impressions I had while there of work to be done here, believing that God had called me to go to Missouri to preach and there see the displays of His power and grace, in the gathering in of His people, and building up of His church. These anticipations had fortified my mind to leave all my friends and the church, to come to this strange and rude community. The contrast was such that I felt greatly discouraged. This first year was to me, emphatically, a year of persecution. It would fill a large space to detail what I passed through. I will record only a very few cases out of many.

When spring began to open, I took a school for four months, and my employers agreed to do my plowing when called upon, for I had neither team, plow nor harness. I had a singing school for Saturday and a common school the rest of the time, and for Sunday I had preaching. So I was closely confined. I called on my employers for plowing, but none came. I called again and one came and, finally, another, until I got my ground plowed. Then I dismissed my school for a day, and got a team to furrow my fields, and I planted my corn mornings and evenings. When my corn was large enough to plow, I could get no one to plow it. After trying in vain to get it plowed, I became fully convinced that I must have my crop attended to in some other way, but I knew of no chance of hiring either horse, plow, or plowman. I felt much discouraged, and was pondering one day in my school what I should do. The children were playing and I was alone, when, suddenly, I was interrupted by a stranger entering the door. He said he was poor, and a new settler, and was not able to pay for the schooling of his children; he had two to send, but could not pay. I told him I would take the pay in work.. He said he was obliged to leave home, and so could not work for me, but that he had a good horse and plow, and that I could have them to tend my crop, if I would let his children come to school. I agreed at once, and, after dismissing school for one week, I took his horse and plow and worked in my crop during the time. After this I worked mornings and evenings, late and early, and thus tended my ten acres of corn, my garden, potatoes, etc., and lost no more time from school. After I had finished my school term, I had no trouble in collecting my money, for all were pleased with my teaching.

There was one bill, however, I could not collect; it was a bill I held against a Mr. Hendrickson, on whom I called for a settlement. He came to me as I sat on my horse and seized the bridle near the bit, and then commenced a torrent of abuse, saying at the same time that he was well pleased with me as a teacher, but I ought not to be permitted to live, for I was bawling and preaching around the country such doctrine as should never be tolerated, as election, predestination, and salvation for only a part of Adam's race, while another part was bound to suffer eternally. He said that such doctrines were abominable, and the law ought to put to death every man that would preach them; but if the law would not hang such villians, he would kill them. Then, with an awful oath, he swore that I should never leave that spot alive, for he would break my skull and scatter my brains on that spot of earth. I might now say my prayers and make ready, as my time was short, for there and then he would send me to my last account. Then followed the most awful oaths, and calling the heaviest judgments and curses of God to fall upon him if he did not break my head before I left the spot. All this time he held my horse by the bit with his left hand, and the fist of his right was rubbing about my mouth and nose, and I was watching for him to grasp my throat to pull me off my horse. I had made no reply all this time, but when he had fully exhausted his store of oaths and curses, I said: "Now, sir, if you will let loose my bridle I will go on and leave you to your own reflections." His tongue broke loose again, and in the profanest manner possible called the bitterest curses upon his head if he did not take my life before I left that spot.

I can not account for my feelings, for I felt no excitement, anger, fear, nor confusion; but at that moment my confidence became so strong that I could not keep silent, and, placing my eyes steadily in his face, I spoke as follows: "My dear sir, I am sorry for you; I pity you from my heart; you can do me no harm. The wrath of man shall praise my God, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain. Your evil heart, propelled by the prince and spirit of enmity against God and His cause and truth, would willingly incite you to do all that you have threatened, but He that has set bounds to the waves of the sea, holds you in restraint so that you can do me no harm. You cannot hurt me. My religion is not in my head; and if you were to break it and scatter my brains here in the road, it would not do my religion nor the truth which I preach any harm. It would be more awful if all the curses which you have invoked were to fall upon you, than for my head to be broken; but, poor man, strong as you feel, and malignant as your passions are, you are helpless and harmless to do me any injury. You cannot break my head, rid neither can you strike me nor hurt me. Here is my head; break it if you can. You cannot, you dare not attempt it. The God that I serve holds you in restraint, and He whose truth I preach will not permit you to harm me. Your ravings are as a chained lion when he gnaws his chains in his rage, until his strength is exhausted and then he quietly lies down to refresh his energy. Now do all that you can; strike if you can; break my head if you can. If you cannot, then take shame to yourself; let your enfeebled arms fall, let my bridle go, and, repulsed with shame and a consciousness of your gross impropriety, leave me and return to your house. There reflect on your vice and folly, the many false oaths you have sworn, and the many curses you have called upon your devoted body and soul. All these you have tried to tempt God to do to you, and you have done me no harm, neither can you; so now be ashamed and leave me to pursue my way in peace; and while you reflect on your folly, learn that there is a God who will sustain His people, and restrain and punish the wicked." As I closed my speech, his fierce, fiery countenance began to relax; he turned pale and his arms fell to his sides, and his eyes fell to the ground, and without one word he left me and walked toward his house, slowly and without looking back. I then rode on my way.

This is but one case out of many, of a like sort, that occurred during this trying year. This man was a Universalist I had no society except when at church and among the brethren there. They were sound, social, and free to converse on religious subjects. Among them I enjoyed myself well; but I lived seven miles distant, and seldom ever saw any of them except at meeting times. I often went among them on Saturday and remained until Monday morning, to avoid the sporting rabble at the mill. I was very poor, a young beginner and a stranger. My father and his family, Uncle Benjamin and his family, were all I could associate with in the neighborhood. I was so closely confined to business that I traveled but very little. After my school engagements were finished I made one visit to the church in Tiawapity Bottom but I found the people all so sick that there were scarcely well persons enough to take care of them, and of course none to go to meeting, so I returned.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A Trip Back to Kentucky

ON THE 20th day of April, 1811, our son Grigg M., was born, and sometime in the August following I took my wife and child, he being now about four months old, and we started on horseback for my wife's father's place, in Campbell County, Kentucky. This was a long journey to travel on horseback and to carry a child. I attended an appointment, previously made, for a funeral in Illinois, near Gash or Silver Creek. We crossed the Mississippi fifteen miles above Cape Girardeau, at the Coffin Spring, or what was then called Green's Ferry. From thence we traveled the trace for Shawneetown and came to the place of meeting. After preaching to a large assembly, we went to a preacher's house on our way, a few miles farther, and were treated kindly. I think his preaching could not have been very edifying, but he treated us well, in his rude way. Next morning we proceeded on our journey, and in a few days passed the Salt Works, and reached Shawneetown, on the bank of the Ohio River. We crossed the river, and once more entered Kentucky. Here we stopped to camp for the night. I built a large fire, and my wife prepared supper.

About this time four Methodist preachers came on, and concluded to stop with us, and share our hospitality. In the morning my horse's back, having been hurt before, was so badly swollen that I was doubtful whether he could travel or not. One of the preachers, seeing his situation, and finding we were going near Cincinnati, gave me five dollars, and said he: "If you need it in getting along, then use it; but if you should not need it, and can spare it, you might send it to me at Cincinnati, as we are going there to attend a conference." This I considered as an unusual act of benevolence for an entire stranger. I have never thought of his kindness since except with respect and gratitude. I had to exchange my horse for another; but after I got through, I sent the preacher his money. I think few men would show as much benevolence to a traveling stranger. I hope this narrative may influence all its readers to follow the example of that Methodist preacher. He received his money all safe, and in addition to that he won my lasting gratitude. He enjoyed the sweetness of an approving conscience, and felt, before God and his associates, that he had done a good deed without any solicitation from me.

We traveled on slowly. I changed my horse for another, with but little loss; and with this fresh one we proceeded rather better. We generally camped during the night. Our course of travel was to pass Hardensburg, Elizabeth, Yellow Banks, Bardstown, Frankfort, and Williamstown, thence down the dry ridge to near Banklick, then crossed Licking at Decory's Ford, and thence to my wife's parents.

I will state one singular event that occurred on this journey: We missed our way, and after traveling some distance found we were on the road to Redbank's. After receiving some directions we crossed to our road again, which was several miles distant, and the way being very intricate, we were obliged to inquire very often. On stopping at a large house to make inquiry, an old Virginian approached us with as much kindness and friendship as if we had been his children, and, with a remarkable suavity, insisted that we should stop and rest until Monday, it then being Saturday afternoon. I made some excuses, but he still insisted, saying we must be tired of riding, and that the child was tired, that he had plenty of food for us and our horses, and if we would rest until Monday we should be refreshed for our journey, and it would cost us nothing. The proffered hospitality of this entire stranger so won our friendship that finally we accepted his kind invitation, and made his house our home until Monday. Every act of kindness that could well be shown us was freely administered by this family while there; and when we

started we found that our portmanteau was filled with cakes, cheese, dried beef, etc., and every arrangement made for our comfort that was possible for them to make.

We left this hospitable mansion, feeling more like we were leaving the domicile of kind parents than that of strangers. I think his name was Anderson. He wore his hair tied at the back of his neck, and he was a very jovial old man. He was an infidel in his religious views. He charged me not to stop at the Yellow Bank, as murder and robbery had, it was thought, been committed there, and he said it would not be safe for us to stop at that place. He told us to stop nine miles back on the road, at a place he described, and we did so, although we had time to have traveled the whole distance to the Bank. The next day, as we passed the place where they had suspected the murders to have been committed, we marked it well so as to avoid it on our return back. This kindness, shown to entire strangers traveling the road, with nothing to introduce or recommend them, was remarkable.

I often think of such events, and believe that the God of providence and grace superintends the affairs of his children. Although unseen he may lead them from the road they design to travel, and throw them upon some unexpected friend, whom He has in readiness to administer to their needs, such as the events above described fully illustrate. So, while we feel thankful to kind friends for their attentions, we should feel doubly thankful to God for his rich and wisely-directed providence in guiding us to such friends without our knowledge and often against our wills, as in this case, for by missing our way we were thrown upon this kind old friend.

We arrived safely and in due time at the house of my wife's parents, and were received with much joy. During our stay the North Bend Association met with the Old Licking Church, and most of the old ministers and members from a large scope of country were there. This was a feast to me, to see so many of the old brethren and to hear them proclaiming the gospel of the grace of God, while the saints, like a flock of sheep, were feeding on "the sincere milk of the word". Still my mind would be running back to Missouri, and fondly anticipating a great display of Divine power and grace in that place, where I had endured so much, and where I had felt so lonely and sometimes so much discouraged. After a very agreeable association was over, I traveled with Elder James Lee, and visited several churches, and then crossed the Ohio River and visited a number of churches north of Cincinnati up the Miami Valley as far as Middle-town, and then filled an appointment west on Cotton Run. Here we were forced to retire to a grove, on account of the immense crowd. The people were very attentive and solemn, and a deep effect was visible. The same afternoon we preached at Elk Creek Church to a similar congregation, and with similar effect, and again at candle-light at Deacon John Lucas's. This was a night of great power and deep effect. I then returned to my wife's father's, and after visiting some of the churches, we started again for our home. We made a few stops on the way, and I preached a few times.

I will now relate an occurrence that may interest the reader. Night overtook us, and there was no house for about five miles farther on our way, so we were forced to travel on in the dark. Scarcely able to see the road, we still proceeded slowly. After traveling a considerable distance we saw a light, and soon came up to a house; we asked for lodgings, and we were admitted. The landlord came out with a candle. As soon as the light shone on the outside of the house, I was surprised to find we had stopped at the very house that my old Virginia friend had warned me of as we came out, and which had caused me to notice it so particularly. I immediately recognized it, and then knew it was nine miles to the next house, through a dark, heavy-timbered bottom. To go on, after calling for our lodging for the night, would be more dangerous than to remain; only we should keep ourselves on the watch.

Having no time to consider, I dismounted and went to help down my wife and child. Four other men came out, and one of them took my saddle-bags from my saddle, and weighing them in his hands, he gave a significant look at his friends. I had collected for my father and uncle five or six hundred dollars in silver, and had it in my saddle-bags. We went into the house, taking my saddles and saddle-bags with me.

I had a lead horse with me with a pack-saddle on it to carry food for the horses as we traveled through the wilderness. On the tree of this pack-saddle I had tied an old musket that I had taken for a bad debt, and the main spring being broken, I had procured no ammunition. I had also a butcher-knife with me, which I had brought to cut hobble rods to hamper my horses when we camped out. This was in a scabbard and fastened to the tree of my pack-saddle. I had been in the house but a few moments, when the landlord invited me to walk out and see what a number of deer-skins he had taken from deer he had killed. I thought it strange for him to wish me to go out in the dark to see deer-skins. But I had resolved to brave every danger and show no fear, so I went, leaving my wife within. After feeling of the skins, of which a long pole was strung full, managing all the time to keep a proper distance from the landlord, and keeping him constantly talking, by asking many questions, I said that I was very tired, and wished to return into the house. He asked me if I carried weapons of defense while traveling. I replied that it was my own business, but if any person wished to know, they could find out by making an attack. He repeated this question, and I again gave the same answer. I again observed to him, that being tired, I wished to go into the house; and so saying I started, when he said, "We will go into the other house."

The building was arranged with two log houses set end to end, with a hail between the two. We went into the west one. Some fire was burning in it, and one chair only. I sat down in that, and the landlord stood by me, and again inquired if I carried weapons about my person. I replied that I was always ready for whatever might come, that I never shrank for fear, and a coward I did despise. I said I wished never to insult or injure any man, yet if any one was concerned, or deeply interested in knowing what kind of weapons I carried, he would ascertain by periling an attack, and the consequences would convince him how these matters were. At that time I was young, large, and strong, and presented something of a formidable appearance, being about six feet high and pretty well proportioned. But the truth was, I had neither side-arms nor weapons of any kind, except a small penknife, and the old musket and butcher knife, which were in the other house. Shortly after I had sat down, the other four men came in, one at a time, and formed a circle around me. The last one that entered was a most savage-looking man. Indeed all of them were large, fierce, villainous-looking creatures. The landlord kept up an incessant talking about the fights and conquests he had made, sometimes conquering two or three men at a time.

The last one that came in was the tallest of the gang and the most ferocious in appearance. He wore a leather apron reaching from his neck down to his ankles, and had a belt around his waist, and in his right hand he held a large butcher knife, and was whetting it across the palm of his left hand. He stepped into the circle now formed around me, leaving only the opening between me and the fire. I arose to my feet and observed to him: "Sir, you seem to be the oldest man in the company, and as there is but one chair here, it of course belongs to you; take the seat." As I thus spoke I arose and stood with my back to the fire, leaning against the mantle so that no one could get behind me, and that I might keep them all under my eye. I accomplished this in as easy and careless a manner as possible and without showing fear or excitement. I intended if any motion of violence was made, to prostrate, if possible, the one between me and the door, and then leap into the dark. I said to the landlord: "I wish some supper for myself and my wife, and must go and notify the landlady." "No," said he; and then he

halloed to her. She soon came in to prepare supper. I then said I would give the lady my room about the fire, and stepping out into the other house, took a seat by my wife at one side of the fire.

All the men soon came in and began to stride back and forth across the room, and occasionally they would meet in the middle of the floor and huddle together, whisper, motion, and consult quietly for a time, and then stride across the room again. After one of these consultations the landlord stepped off and got a bottle of whisky, some glasses and water, and placed them on the table. I comprehended the plan, which was evidently to get me drunk, and then they would have me in their power; or perhaps, some deadly poison or narcotic had been prepared for me, so I resolved that all would drink first. As soon as all matters were arranged on the table, I was invited to drink of some "old Bourbon". I replied: "Fond as I always am of this 'creature,' and dry and as I feel from my journey, I cannot violate the rules of propriety. The landlord must first drink to his guests, and must follow in the order in which they came in; and as I was last to come in this evening, I must drink last in the rounds." This rule was adopted to my satisfaction, and I saw I could soon drink them drunk, which I resolved for the first in my life to do; and that too as soon as possible, for in that condition I thought I could manage them if attacked. I loathe a drunkard, and the man who, under ordinary circumstances, would induce others to get drunk, I despise. But my life, and that of my wife and child, besides the money, all depended on thwarting their plans in some way. By this time I was fully convinced that this was their design, and since our safety depended on frustrating their intentions by any means, this opportunity was not to be refused in such a crisis. By the time supper was ready they were in my power, and yet they could walk and seemed to keep their senses. I had drunk scarcely one drop, but feigned to drink whenever they did, which was every few minutes. They drank from glasses, but I turned up the bottle so that I could see the size drains they took, though they could not tell what quantity I drank.

As soon as supper was over I gave my wife a sign to follow me, and we went into the room where our saddles were, and I asked the landlady for a bed, which she showed to us. I then untied the gun for to use as a war-club, drew the butcher knife half way out the scabbard, leaving it on the saddle, and then drew all close to my bed so that I could grasp either in an instant. I also took my penknife in my hand, and so lay down, having put my saddle-bags under the edge of the bed. The bed was in the corner of the room with the foot toward the fire, and curtains were hung around it. These I parted at the foot so as to see all that passed. Here I lay and watched. Very soon after I lay down all the men came in, and, drunk as they were, they still seemed intent on mischief. They began their walking to and fro again, and every few minutes they would huddle and again consult. They would get near the foot of my bed, where the curtains would have perfectly hid them had I not parted them, so I could see all that was going on. In these consultations I could see them point to the gun, the knife, and the saddle-bags, and then shake their heads as if they thought there was great danger. If they killed me they must also kill the woman and child; and seeing the gun and knife and not knowing but the gun was well loaded, they appeared to fear getting hurt, and besides they supposed I was well armed with private weapons about my person. After many such consultations three of them went off yelling and screaming like Indians, and the other two (the landlord and another) threw themselves on some bearskins on the floor before the fire. From their motions and actions I concluded they had abandoned the attack, but it was my conviction that the three were to go off making a noise, and the other two were to lie down, and when I was sound asleep, crawl under the bed and steal the saddle-bags. I believed, however, they were so drunk that they would soon be asleep, and awake no more until morning; and this belief proved true, for it was broad daylight and I was up before they awoke.

This was an awful night to me. There was a traveler murdered here but a short time afterward, which I shall have occasion to say more about hereafter. These men saw the gun and knife, and supposed they were in good order; and, from my apparent unconcern, they supposed that I was armed, and probably well-provided for an attack. All these things must have had their effect; but I have ever regarded our escape as a merciful interposition of God's providence. The morning found us early on our road, and we kept a sharp lookout, for we suspected they might waylay us on the road, as we had to travel about nine miles through a dense forest which was entirely uninhabited; but we were not molested. After this we proceeded pretty well until I was attacked with the fever and ague, but we did not stop for this.

One afternoon, as we traveled along through a heavy fall rain, I took a chill, which was followed by a high fever and pain in the head and back. About nightfall we came to a house where we were permitted to stay. We were dripping wet, and I was unable to sit up. The family would afford us no bed nor bed-clothes, so we had to lie on the floor on our wet blankets. It was a cold November rain, and, of course, the night was a hard one on a sick man. My wife and child had to suffer with me for the people would get us no supper, and my jaded horses were tied out in the rain and had nothing to eat.

We were then in Illinois. I will mention that the night before we had stayed at the Saline Salt Works, and while we were there, a messenger came with the news that General Harrison had been surprised at Tippecanoe and was defeated with great loss, and that the Indians were desolating the whole country. A council was called to determine what they should do, whether to abandon the salt works and go to Kentucky, or send out spies to ascertain what was best for them. But to continue my narrative: After passing a miserable night and, morning having relieved us, we were soon on our journey, although I felt scarcely able to travel. Nothing more of importance occurred until we reached home. Finding all our friends well, and my corn gathered, I felt well-satisfied.

CHAPTER NINE

Back in Missouri; the Clouds Break

I HAD been at home but a short time until a man came from St. Genevra, on Saline Creek, a distance of fifty miles, as a committee sent by his neighborhood with proposals to me to move to that place and teach school for one year, as they had received a most flattering account of my skill in government and order, as a teacher. The proposal was as follows: They would furnish me with a house and three acres of land, a cow and provisions for the year, and pay me a salary and three hundred dollars in cash. Three responsible men were to bind themselves for the payment of the money and the furnishing of all the other things. I should engage to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to just such a school as they were pleased to make, and also to teach five days in each week. Saturdays and Sundays should be my own. And if I would teach a singing school on Saturday, at one dollar and fifty cents per scholar, they would make me a good school. I thought the offer a good one. I was poor and had no permanent home, and this would give me a good start. It would give me three four hundred dollars clear of all expenses, and, as land was cheap, I could buy a home with that money. I was pleased; as I had never seen that part of the country, I appointed a time when I would come and see them, and then, probably, give them a definite answer. When the time came my father, never having seen the country, concluded to go with me. We spent a few days at the place, and were both well-pleased; so we concluded to move there. They said if I would set a day they would send teams to move me up free of charge.

I told them I had a crop to dispose of, and could not then set a day, but if I did come, as I then thought I should, I would write to them in two or three weeks, to inform them at what time they might come for me. They insisted for a positive promise; but although my mind was fully made up to accept their offer, and I was even highly pleased with the prospect, still, somehow, I felt like I ought not to bind myself by any positive answer. I returned home, and my wife was highly pleased with the prospect I set before her. I arrived home on Saturday, and on Sunday I went to Bethel to meeting. After the meeting I began to feel oppressed in my mind; a heavy gloom came over me; I felt as though some disaster threatened me, but I could not tell what it was. This depression of my spirits I tried to relieve myself from, but could not.

My wife and I staid that night with Brother Thomas Bull, the clerk of the Bethel Church. I suffered greatly in mind, and slept little or none during the night. My mind was led back to Kentucky, and the impressions I had felt there, how I had been convinced that the Lord had sent me here, and that He would show me the power of His grace. This conviction had heretofore fortified my mind and induced me to leave my native state, my mother church, and dearest friends, and come to a strange land, and dwell among strange people. Here, 'tis true, I had suffered many privations, temptations, and sore persecutions; but, then, I remembered that through all these the Lord had sustained me, and now, I asked myself, though I am poor and needy, should I be induced by pecuniary gain to leave the field where I believed God had called me to labor? "No," I answered to myself, "I would not for the worth of the world." But it now occurred: "How did I know that God had specially sent me to that place? My impressions might have been imaginary, for one year had passed away and there was no prospect visible of any special work of grace, either in the little cold church or among the people; but sin and opposition to the truth seemed to predominate."

In this way my mind was tossed all that night. I knew that my worldly interests said: "Go and prosper"; and the opening seemed providential, as I had not solicited it or even thought of it until the messenger came. To know the mind and will of the Lord in this matter was my great concern, and His will I would do cheerfully, if I could but know it. The morning came and with it my trouble increased. I felt like seeking solitude, for no one was company for me, and I could interest no one. We started early on Monday morning for home. On the way we talked very little, and my mind became so weighed down that I really began to think that some severe disease was fastening upon my vitals.

After riding some five or six miles we came to my father's and stopped, and I lay down on the bed, for my strength seemed to be gone, so that I could not get home, although it was in sight. Here I lay until about noon, and kept quiet; but my mind was laboring like an overladen vessel in a storm, without compass or rudder. I was tossed in every direction by every contending wave, and felt as if there were no port for which I might sail; so I knew not what to do. To do right was my aim, but what that was seemed to be concealed from me. Old impressions said: "Stay," but all my best worldly interests said, "Go." My father and all his family had concluded that I ought to go; and my wife wished to go. Nothing but my former impressions held me back; but these seemed to forbid me, and to hold me fast.

In this suspense I lay without letting any one know the state of my mind until, as sudden as lightning, and as clear as light, every doubt was removed from my mind, and my course was made as plain as noonday. All those old impressions were confirmed to my mind as the workings of God's mighty power, and all these flattering prospects of earthly gain dwindled in my view to nothing. So sudden and so powerful was this mental relief, this burst of light and evidence, without hearing externally any words, or any words coming to my mind, that I leaped from the bed on the floor and burst into a flood of tears. I left the room and passed out into the porch, when my wife caught me, and, with her eyes flowing with sympathetic tears, inquired what was the matter with me. I could not answer for a time, but as soon as I could give utterance to words, I said: "The Lord has let me know that the time is at hand, when I shall fully realize all that I have anticipated of the display of His power and grace, in renewing His church and gathering in His redeemed heritage. This hope fortified my mind," I further said, "to leave all our dear friends in Kentucky, to come here among strangers, where I have toiled in poverty and suffered sore persecutions; but still this hope cheered me through all. Now, when the prospect of temporal relief came, in the proposition to move away from here, I became ensnared, and partly concluded that my impressions had been delusive, and I would give them up and go. But the Lord changes not, and He has sent me here; and when I would have gone away, He has hedged me in. And now He has revealed to me a truth that I must stay here, and see His salvation, for He will now speedily cause this 'wilderness to bud and blossom as the rose.' Here He will be glorified in the gathering in of His people. Many of His scattered fold are here, to be gathered in; and I shall see it with joy, and shall feed them; and you may all prepare to witness a mighty out-pouring of His Spirit. Many of these vile persecutors and relentless sinners are soon to be converted to God and will follow Jesus in baptism, and find a home in His church. The Bethel Church will soon be a Bethel indeed; for the Lord will truly be there." I continued to speak in this way until they had sent for Father, who was out somewhere on the farm. I had not observed what was going on until I saw Father and Mother, my wife and all my brothers and sisters standing around me, all shedding tears.

After a short silence, Father spoke and said: "I have been listening to your talk, and have but one fault to find with it, and that is, you speak too positive. We may have many feelings when the mind becomes excited, and we may feel very different, in a short time afterward, when that excitement dies away; and

we should not feel, nor speak positive so soon, but take a few days to see whether these sudden impulses prove true and permanent, or whether they wear away and pass off.”

I replied: “I have spoken positively, but not because I thought there was a possibility of any mistake in my impressions, but because I had no doubt. The natural passions and sympathies may be greatly excited, and we may be greatly deceived by them; but this is not of that sort. I have now spoken positively again. Perhaps, I ought to have said, I think this is not an effect of any natural excitement; but I feel no such doubts, and the truth of what I say is so certain before me, that it will admit of no doubt in my mind, and to speak doubtfully seems to me to imply a want of confidence in God. Nevertheless, your counsel is certainly good in common cases, and I am willing to let a few days test it, but I feel no fears of this conviction passing off, or proving to be delusive.

He replied: “Perhaps not; but, you know, when Zion travails she brings forth her children, and I can see no signs of anything of this in the church. All seems cold and lifeless, and I have seen nothing in the church nor in the congregation to indicate any such times as you speak of. Yet I should be truly glad to see them come, but I doubt if they are not much farther off than you suppose.”

I replied: “When the husband of the church comes to his spouse in the visits of His love, children will be begotten of God; then Zion will travail and bring them forth; and I feel sure at this time, that the favored set time is come, and the Lord will favor Zion in this vicinity. I feel forbidden to leave while I have these impressions; but, as you advise, I will be quiet for a few days, and see if this can wear away, but still, I must say that I have no doubts on this matter.” So our conversation ended, and I went home.

This was on Monday, and on the Wednesday following I went to a brother, Abraham Randalls, and purchased fifty acres of land in the green woods, with no house nor any improvements on it, at three dollars per acre, to be paid for in trade, as long as I had any articles to spare that he wanted. He had a new cabin near the land I had bought, and this I was to have until I could build one of my own. This cabin was chinked, and had a floor and a door, no hearth, back wall, or jambs; but I was to fix it so it would do to live in until I had cleared what ground I could for corn, intending to build the next fall. The next day we moved to our new home, within one mile and a half of the Bethel meetinghouse. We then had one small table; our bedstead was a temporary frame, made of poles fastened to the wall, and posts fastened to the joists. These, with three chairs, constituted our furniture. We had one cow and a two-year-old bullock, some chickens, a few clothes, a scant supply of shelf-ware, and one horse, after letting one go toward paying for my land. We had plenty of corn, but no meat. These things were about our fortune, but we were young and able to work, and this, with the blessings of Providence, were our trust, and we felt of good courage.

This was December, A. D. 1811. The next Sunday night occurred those notable earthquakes that produced such eruptions on the Mississippi River, about New Madrid, and which rent the earth with deep chasms in many parts of southern Missouri. Even where I lived large trees were broken down, fences and brick buildings were prostrated or much injured. My door-hinges were loosened, and the back wall which I had just put up was shaken down. For three days and nights, the sun, moon, and stars were concealed by a mist and fog which dropped like a heavy dew, while ever and anon, a hard shock would seem to threaten the world with destruction. All this commotion seemed to have no effect on me, nor gave me any alarm whatever. I calmly viewed the phenomena as a matter of God’s wise arrangement, and I pursued my daily business with a composed and contented mind. The next day after the first shock, I was building up my chimney of sticks and clay, and sometimes I would be upon it when a heavy shock would come, and, to keep from being shaken down, I would have to throw my arms around a log of the house until the violence of the shock was over. All these things never moved

me nor caused me to doubt for one moment but that the Lord would speedily make bare His arm and almighty power, revive his saints, and gather in His redeemed children.

From the time I moved I had, by request, held evening meetings, the evenings being long. At one of these, an unusual effect was visible among the members. Some of the old brethren were so revived that they engaged in prayer, and some of them delivered short exhortations. I had never seen such appearances there before, and perhaps my feelings and constant expectations for such symptoms of a revival, did magnify things to my view. Be that as it may, I believed that the work I had so confidently anticipated had now begun, and another evening meeting being appointed, I went on there the day before. The next day Father came on, and I told him what a meeting we had, and how the work of the lord, that I had spoken of, was at hand, and that the Husband of the church had come in His Spirit, and that Zion was now travailing and would soon bring forth her children.

He went home with me and then to the meeting, but none of those favorable symptoms appeared that night. Numbers were out, and all seemed attentive, but there was no visible effect more than common. As Father and I returned home, he said: "If this is your great revival, I do not think much of it; for I can see no evidence." I replied: "It is true, this meeting was not as the other; but I have no doubt that the good Lord is now at work in a still way, without visible observation, among the people; and what He is now doing in secret will be proclaimed on the house top."

He said no more, and the conversation turned on certain subjects of Scripture, for my mind was working hard on the doctrine of the union of Christ and his people before faith. The preaching I had heard was that God's people became united to Christ by a living faith; but I saw things differently, for I conceived that such an union was indispensable to the legal imputation of our sins to Christ and of His righteousness to us, and that, too, before faith could act upon, or lay hold of, that mystical union, or draw any comfort from it. This was the sense in which I understood the doctrine, and I was laboring hard to discover the true principles upon which it was based, as revealed in the Scriptures of truth, and by the Spirit in the hearts of God's people. This subject engrossed most of our conversation, as I found Father also was much exercised on the same point.

The evening meetings were continued, from time to time, sometimes nearly every night in the week, and they were attended with great interest. I was, however, afraid to send for Father, as some of our meetings were cold, but others were deeply affecting. Yet all of them were of that still, noiseless character that shows a rending of hearts and not of garments. Thus our meetings went on during the month, and Father had heard nothing of our progress since he was there. When the church meeting came on, he came up, and was astonished to see the house crowded full on Saturday, when usually there would be only about twenty persons. When the church was organized for business, Father was chosen moderator for the day, and when he announced the door of the church was open for the reception of members, eleven persons came forward and gave clear and satisfactory evidence the hope that was in them. While this was going on, I could see the big tears coursing down my father's cheeks, and I knew he had the evidence now that the Lord was truly in the midst doing wonders among the people.

The last person that talked to the church that day was my father's brother, Benjamin Thompson. He had been much excised for some time and had received a hope; but his deliverance from the burden of his sins, and from the deep sense of his just condemnation had not been so clear as some others. At times, the evidence would shine a little, but soon darkness would again envelop his mind, and then another ray of hope would break in. In this way he had lived for some years. He was at a loss to say at which particular time he should date the upspringing of his little hope. He arose in the crowd, and stood there

without attempting to come up to the moderator. He said: "I am a stranger to myself, and am in a strange situation. I do not now offer myself as a candidate for baptism, or member in this church. I do not feel worthy of this, but I have been exercised betimes, for some years past, have passed through scenes that I do not comprehend. I not deny that at times I have had some dawns of hope; yet I dare not trust in this hope as a good one, but fear even to think of it. I verily believe the Baptist Church is, indeed, the Church of Jesus Christ, and I have full confidence in you that you are a people taught of the Lord and led by His Spirit. Perhaps you may be able to understand my case, and give some advice. If the church is willing to give me time tell the particulars of my long experience and feelings, I wish to state them to you now, and then receive your best counsel."

Liberty was given, and he spoke about an hour. He begun saying: "I am fully aware that I am a great sinner. I have seen so much of sin, and the deceitfulness of my heart, that I have lost all confidence in myself. I am afraid I have deceived myself; and having been raised among the Baptists, and heard so much of their preaching and conversation through my life, and having heard so many relate their experience, I fear I have learned so much as to deceive even the church. Therefore I beg of you all to watch me closely, and act faithfully with me.

When he had finished he requested all the members of the church to ask him such questions as they believed none but a Christian could answer, for he feared he was deceived. The members of the church looked at each other and said he had been so particular, and had so fully explained every point, both of Christian experience and the doctrines of grace, that they could ask no questions, but if he was disposed to join the church they were fully prepared to give him their hand, and in their hearts they would receive him into Christian fellowship. He then asked leave to ask the church some questions, and the privilege was granted. After many questions relative to the feelings and impressions of Christians were answered, he said: "When I began to talk I had no intention of attempting to join the church, but since I have been talking my little hope has revived, and my attachment to the church and her ordinances, and the privileges of a home within her gates and among her members, has so increased that I now feel prepared to say that if you can receive such a poor creature, I want a home among you." He was gladly received, and afterward he became an able minister for many years, and died between the age of seventy and eighty years lamented by all his friends in the churches, who had been so often fed by his ministry. He died a member of Bethel Church, which he first joined, into which he was baptized, and by which he was licensed and ordained to preach, and which he served as their minister until his death.

This Saturday was a day of great power; many hearts seemed melted, and a deep silence prevailed, broken only by sobs which might occasionally be heard in all parts of the house. Eleven were received for baptism, but no ordained preacher was there to baptize them. On Sunday morning, by request, the church again gave the opportunity for the reception of members, and my uncle Benjamin's wife came forward and was received. That day was a day never to be forgotten by me, and many others have reason to remember it as a day of days to them. It was a new country, our roads were mere traces and paths, the thick woods of the forest and underbrush were still in their natural state. The people lived in settlements or patches here and there along the creeks, with frequently some twenty miles of unbroken forest between these small settlements. This day the crowds of strangers from different settlements, for twenty or thirty miles around, were thronging every trace and path. Solemnity, deep as death, was depicted on most of the countenances, while joy and comfort sat with a heavenly smile and serene peace on the lips and brows of the saints. It was soon found that the church would hold but a small part of the gathering crowd, and, although it was now the middle of winter, yet, as there had been a rain and a thaw, the ground was very muddy. This day, however, was pleasant for the season. The seats were all

carried out of the house and placed where there were a number of logs. A stand was arranged for the minister, and the services commenced.

I took for a text the saying of Paul: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." After briefly showing the connection of the text, I spoke of sin: First, as a transgression of a good and holy law, and of death as its penalty. We were all sinners, having our all in one man, and he a transgressor. By one act, that one man transgressed God's just and holy law, and as a penalty, death was upon us. Secondly, "All unrighteousness is sin;" and we are such sinners in ourselves, in this sense, that when God looked down from heaven on the earth and searched all men individually, he declared: "They have all gone out of the way; there is none that doeth good, no not one." "There is none that seeketh after God." This being our unrighteous state, our condition at death was hopeless with respect to any good works or righteous desires of our own. The third definition of sin is in the sense of infidelity: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "All men have not faith"; therefore all men are sinners in this sense; and "without faith it is impossible to please God." From this we must conclude that all are under sin, and in a state of universal unrighteousness; none doing good, all out of the way, and the result is that "none seeketh after God." This is our dead and hopeless condition in ourselves as sinners.

But the blessed gospel shows a way of hope in the language of our text: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ as our mediator is Himself the gift of God, and He is the eternal life of the church; for, says St. John: "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." All spiritual blessings are in Christ, and were included in Him as the one great gift of God. He was given to be "Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all and in all." The saints being the proper members of Christ's body are His fullness. They constitute this complete mystical body in all its parts and proportions, not one surplus, nor one missing, and all fitly joined together, not promiscuously, or at random, but all in their proper places; for they are "members in particular." And as they are to fill different offices as members of the one body they must not all have the same gifts, but each has such a spiritual endowment as will best qualify him as a member to fill his proper place in the body of Christ. All are in the body, members one of another.

Behold then the fullness of Christ's body, the church, and see how the Head fills each member respectively with precisely the gift to fill his proper place. This gift of eternal life is a gift of God in common to all the members of Christ's body. He hath this life in and of Himself, and so is called a living stone. This life, being communicated to us from the Divine nature, through Jesus Christ, by the quickening spirit of God, transforms us into "lively stones". And being built up as a spiritual house, Christ lives in every member as his eternal life. This life is put into motion in us by the work of regeneration. Then appears faith as a fruit of the Spirit, and also love, joy, and peace, with all other spiritual blessings. These blessings we enjoy, as the effects of the gift which God Himself has given us. It was His gift, a free gift, a gift that contains all other blessings, and, through our Lord Jesus Christ, this gift is also given and also received.

I also entered into the doctrine of the legal and spiritual oneness of Christ and the church before faith, and of faith as acting on the testimony of that truth, and so being the Spirit's evidence to the child of God of the truth of the doctrine and of the comforts and joy, the strength and edification, flowing from the understanding of it.

At the close of this discourse the large congregation seemed deeply affected. I cast my eyes over them, and the general appearance was a solemn stillness, as though some unseen power was hovering over them. Every eye was set on me, and I felt mute with astonishment, and stood silent for some minutes. I

believe there was not a motion nor a sound during the time, until, simultaneously, some twenty or more persons arose from their seats and came forward, and bending down on their knees around the table cried out in low and solemn voices: "Pray for me; O, pray for me, a poor undone sinner." I stood dumb for a moment, and then said: Here are many sinners requesting me to pray for them. I can them no good; none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. To Him, Who alone hath power on earth to forgive sin, you must look; but He has made it our duty and our privilege to pray and offer our requests before God. Let us, therefore, attempt to pray.

I began with some assurance of access at a throne of grace. As I closed, Bro. Hitt, an old member of the church, began to pray, and he prayed with great earnestness. The congregation then sang and were dismissed. I think about a dozen persons soon after were received, who then first had a view of God's justice in justifying ungodly sinners through the redemption of Jesus Christ. That day was often spoken of. Some said that while I stood silent my countenance became so changed that it appeared as if I had been struck with death.

My uncle, who had been so full of doubt on Saturday, was now full of assurance. On his way home he said to my father: "This is, truly, the greatest day I have ever seen. The spirit and power of the Lord was surely hovering over the place, and His glory was in the midst. I never can doubt again." Father replied: "Truly, this is a day long to be remembered. Yet," he added, "I have seen some days that, at the time, I felt like I could never doubt again; but these seasons are short, and perhaps you may soon find yourself in darkness and doubt."

Uncle said: "I think this can never be. I have this day had such clear views of the glorious plan of redemption through Christ, and have had such comfortable assurances of my interest in it, that I cannot believe I shall ever doubt again."

Father's response was: "The plan of salvation, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, I have had no doubts of for many years. Although sometimes I can view it much more clearly than at other times, yet, in my darkest hours, I do not doubt that Christ is the only way, and that all who are really in Him, as the members of His body, are really saved. This I have not doubted for years; but my personal interest in that redemption, and my real membership in that mystical body, has been a matter of doubt with me."

My uncle then said: "I think I shall never doubt that again; and I feel quite sure of one thing, that if I should doubt it, it can only be momentarily, for when any such doubts arise, I will just think of this day, and they must all vanish at once."

"Well," said Father, "such seasons as these are very precious and strengthening, and are often pleasant to reflect upon and refer to. Doubts are not pleasant things, and you had better live without them as long as you can; but if they should return, and reference of memory to this day will not dissipate them, do not then conclude that no one was ever in your condition. Young pilgrims have much of the way to learn, and many of these hard lessons can be learned only in the school of experience. Some persons, I believe, are not harassed with doubts, as others are." Such, in substance, was the conversation of these men, as they returned from the meeting.

The evening meetings were still continued, crowds attended them, and a great effect was manifested; yet all the proceedings were still and solemn, quite different from the revivals that are so popular in the present day. No mourning benches were there for the seekers to exhibit themselves upon, but many mourning hearts were hiding from the public gaze in some dark corner, and there, in the secret breathing of desire, were seeking after the Lord, "if haply He might be found."

CHAPTER TEN

The Revival in Missouri

The baptism of the twelve being postponed because there was no ordained minister present, a messenger was sent to Elder Stephen Stilley, requesting him to come up and baptize the candidates at our next meeting. There was no other ordained minister that we knew of living in all that country. Elder Stilley was the pastor of the Bethel Church, and had served them as such for years before I moved there, and was well received. I was only a licentiate and could not administer the ordinances of the church. He came at our next church meeting, but seemed distant and gruff, and was unwilling to baptize the people. His reasons were that he had been afflicted sometime before with the ague, and going into the water might bring on a relapse, and that he felt too weak to perform the labor. These, and many other poor excuses, he made—such as perhaps no Baptist ever had been known to make before.

The church reasoned with him, stating that there were now twelve received for baptism, and many more were expected, as a very powerful work was going on around us and in our midst, and he was the only ordained minister in the neighborhood that could baptize. As for the coldness of the water, or the danger of his health, they never had heard of any one's being hurt by baptizing or being baptized, at any season of the year. As to his physical strength, if he thought there was any danger of that, I would go in and out with him, and do all the labor of raising the candidates from the water, and conducting them out and in. If any doubts were on his mind as to the experience of any of the candidates, he could have full opportunity of hearing them, either publicly or privately. After much persuasion he reluctantly agreed to perform the ordinance, if I would lead them out and in, and raise them from the water. This I willingly agreed to do; and so it was done.

This was the first time in my life that I had ever seen or even thought of the possibility of ministers becoming jealous of each other when the labors of one were blessed more than another; but I have suffered so much, since that time, on this account, that I have been made to tremble for the peace of the church and the cause of God. I have suffered far more heartfelt trouble and discouragement from the jealousy of ministers and their evil influences, than from almost all other causes since I have been in the ministry. Some preachers cannot bear to have others even thought well of, and if any should show special respect for another, speak well of his talents, influence, knowledge in discipline, or in the Scriptures, this root of jealousy will spring up as if they felt they were undervalued or slighted, and some way is sought to prostrate the one who they suppose stands in their way. This is all of the flesh, and is a very hateful enemy to the social comfort of Christians, and especially among ministers. They all have their proper gifts and places in the church, and in their place and gift they are of great use in the body. But when they begin to envy and seek to rise higher at the expense of some other's downfall, then they begin to destroy themselves, maim and afflict the body, and, perhaps, injure the usefulness of him they envy. Most of the divisions among the churches originate, directly or indirectly, from this destroyer of the mutual comfort of the ministers, and of their influence among the members.

The Church at Bethel at once perceived that this monster was at work with the old man, and well knew there was no just cause for it. Such crowds of people, such warmth of feeling, and such ingathering of converts had never been under his ministry there, and the tempter had seized upon all this to poison his mind against me and the church. He stated, while there, that the earthquake had been very severe in the Big Prairie, below New Madrid, and had bursted the earth to pieces, and that an old Baptist minister by the name of John Tanner, formerly of Virginia, was now so old and infirm, and unable to travel that the

church could not get him to come. The Red River Association, to which we belonged, had resolved that fewer than two ordained ministers could not constitute a presbytery to ordain a minister, and Elder Stilley was the only one we knew of in all our territory. The church felt very desirous to have me ordained while there was an opportunity, and they requested Elder Stilley to go with me and some of the members sent by the church, to Elder Tanner's, and they, by the act of church, could ordain me. By hard persuading the elder agreed to go. As Elder Stilley lived about thirty miles on our way, he said he could easily send on the appointment. The church then called on me to go. I considered the conditions of things, finally consented, and sent on my appointments by Elder Stilley. The first appointment was in Elder Stilley's neighborhood, the next at Elder Tanner's. Brother Thomas Bull, the clerk of the church, was to go with me.

The time came, and Brother Bull and I went to Elder Stilley's. He had sent on the appointment, but began to frame many excuses about going. Brother Bull urged upon him to go, and said that if he would not, then none of us need go, as far as the ordination was concerned, for there would be but one minister. The elder seemed crusty and distant, and in the morning he said his horse had got out and he could not find him, and therefore, could not go. A good riding horse was offered him, but he would not take it. Every means of persuasion was used by several of his friends, but to no effect. The friends inquired of me, what I should do. I replied: "My rule is to fill all my appointments, unless providentially prevented; therefore, I shall go on." Brother Cotterall, a licentiate, and Brother Bull said they would go with me; but Elder Stilley would not go. We started, and I filled all my appointments: the first at a friend's in Robinson's Prairie, then next at Matthews's Prairie, and from there we went to Elder Tanner's, near New Madrid, arriving on Sunday. Soon after our arrival, a heavy rain began to fall, and finally it turned to snowing. The wind blew strong from the north, and the earth was quickly covered with a sheet of ice.

On Monday morning, we started for home and got to Robinson's Prairie, where we stopped for the night. Tuesday morning was extremely cold, and we had about ten miles in the open prairie to ride, facing the wind. We pursued our way until we reached a large bayou, about half a mile wide; the road crossed it, but was now frozen over with a slick hard ice, strong enough to bear a horse. On each side of the road was a thick growth of flags as high as a horse's back. We tried to lead our horses on the ice, but mine was barefooted, and the other two were smooth-shod. They fell, and could not get up until we slid them to the shore. After trying every plan to no purpose, I told the old men, if they would stay on the shore I would mount my little horse and try to find a way through the tall flags, and if I were successful, I would return and help them over, for the flags were so thick, and the ice was so rough the horses would not fall. I mounted into my saddle, and proceeded, perhaps, about twenty or thirty rods, when suddenly my horse broke through the ice. I sprang from my saddle, and lit into the water about waist deep, by the side of my horse, which was plunging, and could get no foothold that would bear him up. My feet seemed to be on a mat of the flag roots. The water being put in motion by the plunging of my horse showed that the ice continued no farther. All around shook like a quagmire and seemed as if it were soft mud that was under the mat of flag roots. I was afraid to move my feet lest I should loose my sod, or tuft of roots. These roots seemed as if they could half hold up my little horse. His feet would break through, and he would plunge sometimes nearly under the water, and then he would rise again. I still held the rein in my hand, and kept him back to the thick ice where he first broke through. I finally got him in a favorable position, and then I placed both arms under his breast. I made one mighty effort to lift him, just as he plunged forward, and succeeded in throwing him backward on the ice, with his head toward the shore. The ice bore him up, and he lay sprawling upon it. I sprang on the ice again, and

caught the bridle just as my horse was rising to his feet. Thankful for an opportunity to escape, I got back to the shore.

I told my friends the adventure in a few words. We had no means of making a fire, and there was no house for ten miles back, and that through the open prairie. I told them I should freeze before I could get half-way there for I was as wet as I could be, my boots were full of water, and I was covered with ice. I left my friends, and took my horse by the bridle, and walking on the edge of the flags, along the smooth ice in the road where my horse could keep his foothold, I succeeded in getting over. I then left my horse, ran back and finally got both the others over. We then traveled on about a mile, when we came to another such lake. I went across on foot, and examined the sides, but found no chance of leading the horses over. I found a large handspike, with which I broke the ice from one side to the other, and we led our horses over. It was four miles to the first house, and two of these were through a swamp. The rain had filled every low place, and the road was mostly covered with smooth ice, and on each side was a thick underbrush, matted with raspberry briars so we were compelled to follow in the road.

The horses would frequently fall on the ice, and we would be obliged to slide them to some rough place before they could get up. We finally succeeded in getting through, but it was now about dark, and we had two miles to travel before we could get to a house. I was now literally shielded over with ice, and I thought I should freeze before I could get to a fire. I told the old brethren, that I should now ride fast, and would stop at the first house. I then mounted my horse, and started, in a gallop, through the dark, thick forest, and soon came up to a gate in front of a cabin, where a bright light was shining. I got off my horse but could not stand alone. I held to my horse and the fence and exercised my limbs until I could walk. I then started to the house. When I reached the door I knocked, but did not wait for a reply, but rushed in. I saw at a glance that I had intruded too abruptly, for there were a number of ladies collected to assist the lady of the house, who was at that time in the act of parturition. I paused for a moment and observed: "Ladies, my unpleasant situation is my apology for this abrupt intrusion. Is it not sufficient?" They then invited me to be seated and thaw my clothing. As soon as my boots, pants, and socks were all thawed apart, I took off my boots and socks, and emptied the water out of my boots and wrung my socks and drew them on again, bid the ladies good evening, and went to my horse, just as my fellow-travelers came up.

We then went on two miles farther and stopped for the night. My clothes were full of water, and it had run down until my boots were again filled. I sat by the fire, in this situation, for an hour or two, and then asked for a bed to be made down before the fire. My request was granted, and I lay down. In the morning, we were all surprised to find that my feet were only a little blistered, not enough to prevent me from wearing my boots. The water in my boots kept the air from my feet until they were warm, and thus drew the frost all out of the blood. A proper circulation was restored. Thus, through the special providence of God, I was safely conducted through this dangerous and severe trial. We proceeded on our journey, but with much difficulty. We were often compelled to leave the road on account of the ice, (which, in many places, blocked up our trace for several rods), and wind our way through the forest as best we could, until we gained the road again. We reached Baldwin's, in Tiawapity Bottom, that evening, and Brother Cotterall was at home.

In the morning Thomas Bull and I started early. Leaving the bank of the Mississippi, we had three or four miles to travel before we got to the hill. This was on the 8th of January. When about half-way, a severe shock of an earthquake came on. We sought as open a place as possible in the timber and dismounted from our staggering horses, who could scarcely stand up, and we ourselves found it

difficult to stand. We could hear the screams of the people near the river, and the falling of houses. Large trees were snapped off, and the boughs of others were lashing each other with fury, and old mossy logs were rolled out of their beds. All this was from the great agitation of the earth, for not a breeze of wind could be perceived. These heavy shocks were often introduced by a sound like distant thunder, and then a roaring, like heavy wind, would come through the air, and with this sound would come the shaking and convulsive surges of the earth. After the earthquake had ceased we traveled on; the temperature was a little moderated, but still it was very cold. We had much trouble in picking our way through the ice, but at last, cold and fatigued, we reached our homes that evening, and found our families well.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Revival Continued in Missouri

The great work of the Lord was still progressing gloriously. Saints were happy, rejoicing in the displays of God's power and grace, young converts were singing the praise of their Saviour, while mourners with heavy hearts and downcast eyes were seeking solitude from the crowded assemblies, so that they could silently breathe the emotions of their wounded spirits and burdened hearts, in the unuttered prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

The earthquake had been so very severe in the low lands about New Madrid, that Elder John Tanner left and came to the high lands of Cape Girardeau, and stopped near by us, in the vicinity of Bethel Church. Elders Stilley and Tanner were both at our next meeting. The church called on them to ordain me to the gospel ministry, which they did in the usual form of prayer and the laying on of hands. Elder Tanner delivered the charge to me in a sermon on this text: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" All the brethren admired the sermon as an able discourse, and very appropriate to the occasion. I still remember many of his remarks, and the general arrangement of the sermon.

The call, "Simon, son of Jonas," he defined as a special call to him personally, so special that it was by name. But as there were others of the same name, Christ designated him as the son of Jonas," from which the preacher argued the special call of the Lord's ministers, according to His eternal purpose, as well as the special call of all God's chosen people, to fill the various places assigned them in the church of God. This question, "lovest thou me?" being thrice demanded of Peter, was not only to show the Lord's immutable purpose in the call, and to test Peter's confidence in him, and draw from him a confession of his faith in Christ's wisdom and perfect knowledge of all things, even the secrets of the heart and affections (which every gospel minister must believe and be willing to express on all proper occasions, and without which no man ought to be ordained as a minister), but it was also intended to imply a gentle admonition to Peter, to bring him to consider all his imperfections, especially his very recent denial of his Lord, and to cause him now to confess his love as the ground of his ready obedience to His command, as often and as solemnly delivered, "Feed my lambs." Every preacher, he argued, should love his Lord well enough to obey Him, feeding both lambs and sheep, even if he got no money for it, nay, if it cost him all he had, and even his life beside. And the flock who were fed by him should remember that he had a right to his support from them. The duty of the church was plainly laid down, and they ought not to neglect it. The duty of the preacher was his own, and he should do it from love to his Lord, and if he loved his Lord he would also love the church, and, therefore, he would cheerfully feed them with gospel truth. The lambs and sheep were both to be fed. He spoke of the relation of Christ and his sheep before faith, which apprehended this relation but did not create it, for Christ knew his own sheep equally as well when they were wallowing in the mire of sin, as when they were gathered into His visible fold. He saw some young men sitting at a distance by the root of a tree who were talking (the meeting being held in a grove, as the weather had become pleasant), he raised his hand and said: "Those young men at the roots of yon tree talking may, for aught I know, belong to Christ. If they do, He knows them as His, although they do not know Him. If they are His He knows them, and will, in His own time, call them by name and lead them out."

In speaking of the proper way to feed both the sheep and the lambs of the flock, he said that in old Virginia, after a dinner of meat and cabbage they took a glass of milk for dessert, and if there were

some who could not eat much meat they took the more milk. So the Epistles began with doctrine and closed with exhortations, and he thought it best for the flock of Christ to be fed with doctrine, well tempered with experience and exhortation. The youngest lambs love sound doctrine if it is bright with experience, and the older sheep love experience if it is according to sound doctrine. In this way all the flock will feed together. Error, when contrasted with the native beauties and richness of truth, only makes them shine the brighter by the comparison. Although forty-five years have passed away, and many sermons and other valuable things have gone from my memory, the substance of this sermon I still retain.

After the preaching was over I baptized a number of willing and believing subjects. This was on the fourth Saturday and Sunday in January, A. D. 1812. Elder Tanner was then very old and very infirm. He attended our next meeting, but was soon after confined to his house, and lived but a short time. I visited him often during his last illness, and he always requested me to sing the old song:

*On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wistful eye,
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.*

Then he would observe: "If that word Jordan signifies death, and its banks the close approach to death, amid the storms of disease, and if the words 'Canaan's happy land' means heaven's holy abode, where the treasure of an immortal inheritance remains for the heirs of glory, then that is my song. For here I am on the stormy banks of death, and my eyes, full of faith and hopeful anticipations, are fixed on a brighter world by far than this. I long to possess that immense fortune, a house not made with hands, and unshaken by storms, which I must soon go to inhabit. O, the riches of the grace and wisdom of the God of love, to open such prospects to a poor old fallen sinner as I am; and its being all of His grace, through Jesus Christ, renders it the more precious. I have often tried to feed the lambs and sheep of Christ's fold with this food, but never was it more delicious than now, when I am so near the fountain-head, with my eyes fixed on its superlative glories." With many such remarks he would talk until his strength failed him; he would then close his eyes and lie serenely calm for a time.

He was a native of Old Virginia, and for his zeal in religion and his fidelity to the Baptist cause, had been shot and imprisoned there before the Revolutionary War. He still had the lead in his flesh, and many scars upon him, from wounds he had received during the great persecution of the Baptists by the authorities of the Colonial Church of England. He would sometimes show me those scars and bullet-marks, and tell me of the conflicts he and his companions endured, the suffering inflicted upon him in prison, and by mobs and bands of outlaws, and how the Lord had been their helper through all these trials. I have been more particular to describe this robust and dauntless old man because he was one of those ministers of our order who had been sorely tried, and still he boldly preached the same doctrine, earnestly contending for the same faith which now distinguishes the Regular Old School Primitive Baptists from all others. Through this one man we find our doctrine, for now more than one hundred years, still surviving the severe ordeal of guns, prisons, and mobs, which, in his early life, he was forced to pass through, with many others; and yet they stood firm and undaunted advocates for the truth, and died in the assurance of the faith which they preached, and for which they suffered.

But to return to my narrative. I continued to preach from house to house, both day and night, so that I had very little time to work. I was poor, and had to work for my family's support. Of corn I had raised a full supply, but I had to depend on day's work for all the other necessaries. I was now settling in the green woods, and all my chance for another crop was to clear my ground in the wild forest, and of

course I had to work hard. I would often work in my clearing by firelight, when all around me was hushed in repose. Often during these lonely hours, while my brush-fires were throwing a brilliant light around me, and the sound of my ax echoed through the solitary forest, my busy mind was engaged in the contemplation of the Scriptures, and the deep things of God revealed in them, and also on the visible glories of the Creator stamped on the bespangled firmament above me, and the earth and its productions around me—the changing but regular succession of the seasons; the day and the night; the cold and withering blasts of winter, when the chilled insects, beasts, and birds were hidden each in its close retreat away from the pelting storms that had stilled the songsters' cheerful songs and dulled their bright eyes and brilliant plumage; then the warm sunshine and the lengthened days of spring, when they would again come forth with fresh animation from their winter's solitude, and with mellow notes and cheerful songs seek the budding pastures and opening flowers. Even the worms and reptiles would crawl to the warm surface, glad to leave their torpid holes in the cold earth. All these wonderful creations on the earth and the reflecting constellations in the heavens, whose light is the sun, I viewed as a type of the church, or kingdom of Christ, and the revolutions which its subjects were constantly going through. These meditations would so occupy my mind and entertain my thoughts that my labor seemed easy, and the time passed swiftly and pleasantly away. The midnight hour would often find me still at work. This was my place of study, not like those who have private apartments, carpeted and furnished with all the necessaries of comfort, with books, maps, charts, etc., and a lounge for slumber. My study was either in my clearing, or by my little cabin hearth, with a light made from bark. I patiently read my Bible and had none but God to make me understand it. Or, if plowing, hoeing, walking, or riding, my study was always at hand; being portable, having no weight, and filling no space, it was always convenient when my mind was prepared to use it.

A small Bible, Rippon's Hymn-Book, and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress constituted my library, and, up to the time I was thirty years old, I had never read any other books, notes, or comments on the Scripture. My reading was always very slow. I had to stop frequently, and read it over and over again, so as to be sure I understood the writer's meaning. Then I would carefully pursue his arguments and illustrations, always trying to study but one subject at a time. This has always been my way of reading. Whenever asked for my opinion on any text, and I could not at the time call up the connection where it stood, I have always refused to give an explanation, at least any further than a probable meaning. But when I had the whole connection and thread of the subject on my mind, I would give my explanations with confidence. On the general doctrines professed and advocated by the Baptists, I have no doubts of their correctness and truth; nor have I doubted for over half a century. If I were as sure that I was savingly embraced in that system of grace, as I am that it is the only system in which any sinner of Adam's fallen race can ever be saved, then I should never doubt at all.

The good work before spoken of continued about eighteen months. I can only give some special sketches that occurred while I remained in that territory. During the revival I baptized four or five hundred subjects, some old and some young, and some white and some black, but all professed to be sinners, and to trust in Christ as their Saviour. They renounced all hope and confidence in any work of their own, or ability to fulfill any conditions by which they could ever be saved. When every other name, work, and plan had failed, then they put their trust in Christ, male and female, black and white, and all were joined together and animated by one spirit, having been called in "one hope of their calling, and having "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism."

The country was new and but thinly settled, but the congregations were immense day and night. I will here relate one event: Judge Green, a wealthy man, who had a number of negroes as his servants, and

who was a very respectable citizen, but an avowed infidel, and who kept race-horses and was a great sportsman, had one servant whose name was Dick. Dick's business was to attend to the stock and racehorses, and especially to wait upon his young mistresses when they rode out. The Judge's daughters had attended my singing school and appeared to be inclined in my favor, and would frequently attend my meeting. Dick was always with them, and was so attentive and polite they thought very much of him. At one of our church meetings Dick came forward, and related an experience that no one could dispute, and he was received for baptism. The church proposed to send a committee to ask the Judge's consent for Dick to be baptized. I told them I should not oppose the church, but it was a course of conferring with flesh and blood that I could not find in my Book, and I did not believe it was proper for us to ask an unbeliever whether a believer might serve and obey his Lord or not. If Judge Green or any other master, father, guardian, or husband came forward and offered an objection, the church ought then to consider it, and act as duty should dictate under the circumstances. But for a church to go to hunting for objections in the world, it would be rather strange if they did not find them. I, for one, did not feel willing to have anything to do in any such course. If objections were made I was then willing to give them all the consideration they merited, and would labor to remove them.

However, a committee was appointed, and they went to see the Judge. They reported, on their return, that he said Dick was his property, and he made them his witnesses to tell me that if I laid my hands on his property to throw it into the water, he would push the law upon me to its utmost extent. When the report was made I observed to the church: "So much for consulting the world and hunting for their objections. I should not have feared the laws of this free government, even here in a territory, where ten years ago the liberty of conscience was not allowed. But, now, the Judge has full testimony that I was forbid to lay hands on his property, or put it in the water. Now if I should trespass I will be liable to the law."

The next Sunday, when the others were baptized, poor Dick was not allowed to attend the meeting, nor for two or three months afterward. One Sunday, when I was about to dismiss the meeting, I heard a call behind me. Looking out at the window back of the pulpit, I saw Dick holding up a bundle of clothes in his hand.

Said he: "I want to be baptized." I told him to walk around and come in at the door. He did so, and I met him before the pulpit.

Said I: "Dick, what do you want?"

Said he: "I want to be baptized, sir."

"Has your master given you liberty?"

"No, sir."

"Do you wish to disobey your master? The good Book says: 'Servants, obey your masters.'"

"I got two masters, sir; one is greater than the other. My great Master says to me, 'be baptized'; but my other master (Green) says, 'you shall not be baptized.' Now, sir, I cannot obey both; and I wish to obey my greatest Master, and also to obey Master Green in all things, when his commands do not forbid the commands of my greater Master."

"Dick, do you not expect that your Master Green will whip you, if you are baptized?"

"Yes, sir, but my great Master says, Fear not him that can kill the body, but fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell."

“Have you concluded, Dick, to lay your back bare to your master’s lash, rather than disobey your Master in heaven?”

“Yes, sir; Master Green will not even kill the body; and I love my Master in heaven, and I want to obey Him.”

“Well, Dick, the church has received you for baptism; so, if you are not afraid of your Master Green’s whip, I am not afraid of his law, and I will baptize you.

All this was said aloud, so as to be distinctly heard by all that were in the house. Though the house was crowded, all were as still as death. Dick’s two mistresses were present, and heard it all. I turned round and said: “Can any one forbid water, that this man shall not be baptized?” Some of the brethren said, very low to me: “We fear you are running a great risk.” I replied: “I am not afraid, for I believe the Lord has ordered this matter, and I have nothing to fear. ‘The wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain.’” I took up my hymn-book and said: “We will now repair to the water for baptism.” The water was near the house, and I took Dick by the hand and started the song: “Am I a soldier of the cross?” All the congregation followed, and many voices joined in the song; and then, with the usual ceremonies, I baptized him.

As we came up out of the water, I gave him the right hand of fellowship, in behalf of the church, as a full member, and the brethren and sisters crowded in, and gave him their hands as a brother. His young mistresses went to the water and saw it all. The scene was solemn and deeply affecting.

The young Misses Green waited for Dick to change his clothes, and to get their horses. On their way home, they began to conjecture, as I afterward heard, how and what they should do in this matter. Said they: “We respect Mr. Thompson, and do not want Father to trouble him; and Dick is so ready at all times to serve us we do not want him whipped.” They finally concluded not to say anything about it, and thought perhaps no one else would, and so their father would not know of it, at least for sometime.

All passed off quietly for several weeks, when one evening the Judge came home, apparently in a fine humor. He began speaking in very high terms of Dick, as a servant, saying: “Dick has always been one of my best servants, but for some weeks past he has been better than usual. The horses shine from his rubbing and attending them, late and early, and he keeps things in the very best of order.” The girls concluded that this was the time to tell him about Dick.

One of them said: “Father, we can tell you what has made Dick so much better of late.”

“What has done it?” said he.

“Why, Father, a few weeks ago, we were at Bethel at meeting, and Mr. Thompson baptized Dick. They all had such a nice time, and Dick seemed so very happy when they all gave him their hand, and called him brother.”

“Did you see Mr. Thompson baptize him?”

“Yes, sir, we saw it all.”

“Well,” said the Judge, “I wish to God he would baptize all my negroes, if it would make them all as good as Dick.”

Here ended the law-suit, the whipping, and all complaints about the dipping. Dick was again allowed to go to meeting whenever he pleased. His master provided him with good clothes, and all that was necessary for his comfort. He also had a horse to ride, and was allowed to go and come when he chose, and to work when he pleased. When Dick’s master was about to die, he put him under the guardianship

of his son, who was to provide amply for all his needs. Dick remained the same obedient servant, but never failed to attend meeting. I saw him many years afterward, when on a visit in Missouri. He was then getting old, was well dressed, had his horse to ride to meetings and seemed to enjoy himself well, even better than if he had been set free, for he had all the liberties of a free man.

Dick lived long a beloved brother in the church, and an honored servant in his master's house, and was respected by all who knew him. Obedience is the path for the Christian, who should leave all consequences with God, for then he will have nothing to fear. "To obey is better than sacrifice;" but to take counsel of an enemy brings a snare.

Another event, of a different nature, I will relate: During the time of this glorious display of the power and grace of God, and the manifestation of His Spirit, I attended Bethel Church on the fourth Saturday and Sunday in August, 1812. At one of our meetings a number of young converts came before the church, and with great clearness gave evidence of the hope that was in them, and of their faith in the Saviour, and a willingness to obey Him. They were all received for baptism, and it was a day of great rejoicing in the church, and of deep mourning of many awakened sinners. The next day was one never to be forgotten by me; and many others have reason to remember it. If I ever did preach "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven", I think this was one of the times. The immense congregation was bathed in floods of tears, and low, smothered sobs were heard from all the throng. After preaching we repaired to the water, and I baptized sixteen willing converts. I can give but a faint description of the joys of that day. Suffice it that I returned home full of comfort.

I said to my wife: "Surely the Lord is good to us, and we can never forget His kindness. He is worthy of our highest adoration; His mercy endures forever, and His faithfulness and truth can never fail; His promises are sure and worthy of our implicit confidence; for He always fulfills them to His people, and their realization is like the dawning of heaven. He gave me an assurance of these glories before we left Kentucky. That induced me to leave the home of my childhood, the loved associates of my youth, and the church where I found my first home, and the much-beloved fathers and mothers in Zion, who tenderly watched over me in my youth and instructed me in my ignorance. And it was God Who made you willing to leave your dear brothers and sisters, and parents dear, to take your lot with me in this wilderness. The assurance which He gave me that I should see the very things that we now so fully realize, has sustained me through the sore persecutions that I have here endured, and the privations we have suffered. When I was about to leave this place for worldly gain, the Lord interposed and gave me a new intimation that the time was at hand, when I should realize all that I had anticipated. Now we are here in a strange land, among a half-civilized people, where vice and immorality have long reigned and predominated; but the wilderness is destined to blossom as the rose. We now see the sun of righteousness shining, and we hear 'the singing of birds, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land; the ransomed of the Lord are returning to Zion,' and the triumphs of reigning grace and the all-conquering power of God are visible everywhere. Behold the wonders He hath wrought! O, how we should praise him!" I thus continued until bedtime. I lay down, but was too happy to sleep for a time; finally, however, I dropped into sleep, and forgot my pleasing reverie.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Conflict and Deliverance

I AWOKE in the morning, shrouded in a gloom as thick and dark, and agitated with as tempestuous storms as can possibly be conceived. I had lost sight of every promise, and all the assurances that I had enjoyed were all turned against me. I believed that God had brought me there, and that it was His power and grace that was so divinely displayed in the reviving of the church and the gathering in of His people, but I felt that I was only as a rod in the Father's hand, to be used for the benefit of His children, and as the rod was not a child, so when the Father has used it enough for the good of His children, He throws it from His hand. I thought I was that rod and not a child, and the comparison was constantly before me, yea, standing between me and every promise and former assurance. I thought the Lord was now done with the rod, which I believed was myself, and had given me this signal that He would use me no longer. I had often doubted my call to the ministry, and the vital interest of myself in the Saviour; but never before had both been presented and sustained with such an array of argument.

I went to my work, but found that I could do nothing. I would find myself standing still, my eyes on the ground looking at the image of myself, as a rod in the hand of the Lord about to be cast away. I could not think of my work enough to keep at it. I resolved that I would never again attempt to preach. I went to the house to tell my wife the state of my mind and the resolution I had made. When I arrived at the house she was engaged at her washing. I stood by her for some time without speaking, and, turning to walk away, the tears bursted from my eyes and my laboring heart gave vent to its pent-up sobs which choaked my utterance. My wife left her washing, and clasping her arms around my neck, begged me to tell her the cause of my strange agitation; but I could not speak to answer her inquiries. When I had recovered the control of myself, I told her all my feelings, and that I had resolved never to preach again. She labored to comfort and encourage me, but it was all in vain. At her request I went into the house and got my pen and sat down and wrote a poem of eighteen verses, descriptive of my condition and the oppressed state of my spirits. I have lost this poem, and as I cannot remember it, will have to omit it here. I then proposed to my wife to take her sewing, as she had now finished her washing, and go with me to my clearing. She consented and went with me. She sat down on a log to sew, while I began to fell a small tree. I had chopped but little until suddenly these Words came to my mind: "Be not faithless but believing." I dropped my ax, and stood silently pondering over the connection of that passage. I remembered that these were the words of the risen Jesus to the unbelieving Thomas, but the chain of the account I could not remember. I said to my wife: "Come, let us return to the house."

As soon as we arrived I got the Book and found the place, and examined the narrative, and thought I saw pretty clearly that this Thomas was a nominal disciple and not a true Christian. The thought that led me to this conclusion was what I found in the connection of the text. I saw that Thomas was not with the other disciples at the first appearing of Christ after His resurrection, and that he was not of those to whom it was said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost"; hence I concluded that Christ knew that Thomas believed only from the testimony of his natural sight and feeling. For he had said: "Except I shall see in His hands the prints of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." On the next appearance of Christ, eight days after the first, Thomas was present and Christ invited him to have all the tests and natural evidences he asked for, and then informed him that there was no blessing to any man who believed from the testimony of the natural senses. But this was all the faith which

Thomas had; therefore it was no blessing to him. The text reads: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed." No blessing for Thomas; he had seen with his natural eyes, and had by this natural, external demonstration, believed. There was no blessing for such natural faith, but only to those who had believed without seeing. I thought Thomas was only an external disciple, and I of the same sort of a believer, and therefore the same words were applied to me. This view of the matter not only destroyed all the comfort that the words had first brought to my mind, but it seemed to confirm my evidences that I was not a true disciple, or Christian, but was only an outward one upon external testimony, and was used only as a rod to correct the people of God. I can never describe the awful sensations that weighed down my spirits, and oppressed my disconsolate heart. No one could have made me believe at that time that I should ever preach again, or even attempt it, or think that I was any more than a nominal professor.

I mentioned this to my wife, but she argued that Thomas was a true disciple, and that the application of the words to me should give me comfort; yet I could not understand it so. I went to the field of a brother who was plowing, and took my Bible with me. I told him the state of my mind, and read the text, remarking that from the narrative I had found that Thomas, like myself, was only a believer from external manifestations made to the natural organs of sense. I read the account to him. He then labored to correct my views and to comfort me, but in vain. I viewed all attempts to comfort me, or to apply one of the promises to my case, as "daubing with untempered mortar". I left the field and spent the day in the most awful gloom and despondence.

In the evening a message came to me with a request that my wife and I should come over to the house of the brother whom I had been to see in the field. The messenger said that old Brother Bull and wife were there to spend the evening, and wished us to come. I was impressed at once that the brother I had seen in the field had sent for old Brother Bull to come and console me. I objected to go, assigning as a reason that I did not wish to hurt any one's feelings, nor did I wish to be plastered with "untempered mortar". My case, I thought, was beyond their reach, and I must bear it alone, for none could help. I was only a rod, and no man could ever make anything else out of me. My wife insisted that I should go, and said: "If they can do you no good they will do you no harm." I finally agreed to go, to gratify her.

When we had gone into the house, and the common salutations were over, the old brother began to talk to me. Said he: "The evidences of your call to the gospel ministry are sufficient to dispel every doubt and silence every fear. The Scriptures tell us that if any go into that work whom the Lord has not sent they shall not profit the Lord's people. Your preaching, we do know, has been profitable to the church, and I do believe that the Lord has a people here that are greatly profited by your ministry. There is a young man in our neighborhood who was so powerfully arrested last Sunday that he has neither eaten nor slept since; and I have heard of several others in much the same condition. And my errand here, in part at least, is to get you to make an appointment at my house for tomorrow night, and I will circulate it." Thus he went on talking for some time, without making the slightest allusion to any of my exercises or the state of my mind, but continued to talk of the wonderful displays of the Divine power and grace, so signally manifested in the church and vicinity-how the lambs and sheep were fed and comforted, and especially of the grace that was displayed on the previous Sunday. He, at length, paused and asked me if I would agree to fill the appointment.

I knew that he had been told about my condition of mind, and I had resolved not to say anything about it; but now I changed my mind, and answered that I had made the last appointment I ever expected to make while I lived; that I saw myself to be a rod in the hands of God, and He had used me as he did Cyrus, Belshazzar, Judas, Pharaoh, and many others, for the good of His people, in various ways. After

He was done with them, for the fulfilling of His purpose, He threw them away, just as the scaffolding about a building is useful in its construction, but when the object of the builder is accomplished, it is then thrown away as of no further use; it is not of the building. So a rod is often necessary for the good of the children, but when it has been used by the father sufficiently it is thrown away as useless. Now, I view myself as this rod, and God, the Father of the family, has used me in this way; but He is now done with me, and is dropping me out of His hand. This I think I can clearly see, and am, therefore, done preaching; but I do feel glad that the family are in a prosperous condition.

They all labored long and hard to remove my views, but to no purpose; the image of the rod was so depicted before me that I could not view myself in any other light. He finally asked me if I would attend the meeting at his house the next evening, if he made the appointment. I told him that if he made an appointment for me to preach I certainly should not attend it; “but,” said I, “we have a Brother Edwards, who reaches sometimes and exhorts frequently; if he will agree to fill the appointment, and you make it for him, I will go. I am always willing to attend meeting, but I never expect to make another attempt to preach; I feel fully convinced that I have no more of that to do.”

The meeting was appointed, and I reached the place about sunset. When I came near the house I heard many voices singing, and when I went into the yard I saw little groups of persons here and there. Some were young converts, telling what the Lord had done for them; some poor disconsolate mourners were sitting on the ground with tears in their eyes, with heavy hearts, and downcast spirits, while some of the members were pointing them to “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world,” and to the promises He has given. These things had always given me great delight, and even now I was glad to see it; for I had no doubt but that the Lord was gathering in and comforting His people. But I was not one of them, and felt like I was entirely alone, and no company for any one. I stood for a minute or two, looking around, but could only feel my disconsolate condition. I entered the house, which was pretty well filled. The voices of praise were sounding sweetly, but I dared not join with them. I pressed through to the farthest corner of the room, and there I sat down, like a poor, lonely, disconsolate stranger. Here I sat, condoling my unhappy state, until the time for preaching had come. The people crowded into the house, and Bro. Edwards stood by the door opposite to me, at the farther end of the house. An old Universalist preacher, whose name was Boyd (whose head was white with age, and who had a long white beard on his face, and who would get drunk as often as he could get spirits to swallow), came pushing his way across the house, and sat down by my side. I took this to be providential, as I thought him to be the most like me, with the exception that I had always preached the truth, though it was like Balaam, and I had never been a drunkard.

My mind found many particulars in which we agreed; yet I did not love or approve my companion, but from my heart I pitied him; indeed, my mind became much impressed with a deep sympathy for him, and all other deluded and false teachers; and, for a time, I almost forgot myself in the deep concern I felt for others who were preaching, when they were neither converted nor called to preach the gospel. Finally, my mind again returned to my own case, and again the great weight began to come upon me, when, suddenly, the text: “Be not faithless but believing,” again rushed into my mind, but with a new light and power. Every doubt that had heretofore oppressed me was gone. I had no more doubts about Thomas, and I felt a full assurance that I was a Christian also, and that I was called of God to preach His gospel. I felt that I could no longer be faithless. With these assurances the promises began to flow upon my mind, and I felt that I had nothing to do with my future state, nor should I dispute with the Lord about what was going to become of me after death, nor in what way He chose to use me here in this world. My business was all here now, and I should be actively engaged, and earnestly inquiring

what He would have me to do, not troubling myself about the whys and wherefores, only to be sure the Lord required me to do it, and that was enough for me to know. The Judge of all the earth will do right, there is no unrighteousness with God, who “worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” I had been often disputing with Him about my little hope and little gifts; all those things now looked to me to be wrong. These things belonged to God, and He would do all things right. I thought then I should never again find fault with any of His ways. This was unspeakable comfort to me. I then felt as if the Lord had said to me: “Go thou and preach the gospel.”

I believe I never had a better evidence of my call to preach the gospel than at that time. Brother Edwards was still speaking, and I could scarcely hold my peace until he had finished.

My mind was so engaged with these heavenly contemplations, that I have no knowledge of what Bro. Edwards said, or the subject of his discourse. My text under consideration was: “Be not faithless but believing.” I clearly saw my error in the application of these words to Thomas, and also to myself. The unbelief of Thomas was neither respecting his own personal interest in Christ nor his call to the ministry, but in regard to the resurrection of the identical body of Christ. When the other disciples had told him that they had literally seen Him alive, in the same body as before His crucifixion, he was faithless; he could not believe that the body whose hands were nailed to the cross, and whose side was pierced with the spear, and then laid in Joseph’s tomb was raised from the dead in the same identical form. He thought the other disciples had not scrutinized Him closely; and he resolved not to believe unless he could see and feel that it was so.

The Saviour well knew that men would rise up in after-times, denying the resurrection of the body, and teaching that it was in some other body that the dead would arise; so He withheld this faith from Thomas in order to lead to a full and thorough demonstration of the identity of His body by the most conclusive testimony; and to leave upon record an evidence to fortify the faith of God’s people in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. It is the body that dies, and if that same body does not rise, then there is no resurrection of the dead. This being a very important doctrine, it was necessary to establish it by the strongest and most unquestionable evidence. The incredulity of Thomas led to just such an investigation of the matter as would forever silence every reasonable objection. When the Saviour said to Thomas: “Reach hither thy finger and put it in my side, and thrust thy hand into my side, and be not faithless but believing,” Thomas doubted no more, but in language of confirmed faith cried out: “My Lord and my God.” Then Jesus said: “Thomas, because thou hast seen me”—that is, closely examined the evidences of the identity of my body “and believed” that this is, indeed, the very same that was nailed to the cross, so those who, in future ages shall read this when their faith is tried by false teachers, will find themselves blessed even as you are blessed, although they cannot have the personal evidence that you have now. These views then seemed to me glorious, and I saw clearly the propriety of this evidence being external, and tangible to the natural senses.

Such were my views of faith as a gift of God, a fruit of the Spirit; and I adored His wisdom in bestowing it in all its varieties and degrees, for the good of the saints, both collectively and individually. The wisdom, the condescension, the power, faithfulness and truth of God seemed unfolded in more glorious excellency, and in a brighter manner than I had ever before seen them.

I date this as the time when I learned to “live by faith and not by sight.” Before this, I lived by sight and feeling, and consequently was either in the garret or in the cellar. When my sight was clear, and there were no clouds to obscure my sky, my feelings were high and I thought all was well. These feelings and flights are cheerful things, but they are often of short duration. When the cold storms of life gather over us, then we lose sight of the sun, and darkness environs us, and we conclude that all is gone for ever.

Unbelief prevails for a time, and Satan, the world, and the flesh, unite to weaken our hope and hide all the promises from our eyes. Such trials of hope and despair had encompassed me, and still they linger to trouble my spirit. But from that time to this, a period of about forty-five years, although I have passed through deep waters of affliction, sore trials and persecutions, many of which before that time I had not known, yet my confidence has been unshaken, inasmuch as I have, at all times, felt resigned to God's will. Let my destiny in time or eternity be what it might, all things would be done well by Him.

When Bro. Edwards closed his sermon, I arose and began to sing the hymn: "When I can read my title clear to mansions in the skies," etc. As I sang I made my way through the crowd, and as I passed, many others joined in the song, and some of the members who had known the previous state of my mind, burst into tears of joy, for they saw my fetters were now off. I reached the stand, and when the hymn was closed I read the text: "Be not faithless, but believing." After a brief statement of my trials of mind, I began speaking on the text; and such light and liberty in speaking, I believe I never felt before. Great was the effect among the people. I believe I never saw as many tears shed on any occasion. Saints and sinners, old and young, sat with flowing eyes, and deep sobs were heard. Soon after I had begun speaking, old Sister Bull arose from her seat, in a flood of tears, and caught me by my hand, and without uttering a word, stood trembling and sobbing for a time, and again resumed her seat. This may be considered disorderly, but it had no effect upon me, either to confuse or excite my mind; I was calm and well composed. When I closed my discourse, the young man mentioned by Brother Bull as being so arrested the Sunday before, came trembling and sobbing, and kneeling by the chair where I stood, cried out: "Pray for me, a helpless sinner." Immediately there was a general move in the house, and near half the people came and knelt before me. All were orderly and perfectly solemn. I stood silently looking on, until all was still.

I then said: "My dear friends, you request me to pray for you as helpless sinners. I am as poor and helpless a sinner as any of you. I can only pray for myself, or for you, when I have the spirit of supplication granted me. I can do you no good; you must not think that my prayers can save you, or move the compassion of God. I am as poor and unworthy as any of you; but I do know that there is forgiveness with God. While I am authorized to preach both repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ, I feel willing to ask of God, in the same Name, for the manifestation of that forgiveness to all of us, and, in accordance to His will. Let us pray.

After prayer, we sang God's praise in hymns and psalms. The season was solemn indeed; to many it was truly joyful, and to some a time of rending of hearts and not of garments. I believe I learned more by that hard conflict, and my deliverance, than by all my high excitement of pleasing promises. Still, pleasant feelings are very desirable, but they are often of short duration; and their lessons are not so deep and abiding as those we learn by painful trials.

*Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring us to His feet-
Lay us low, and keep us there.*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Churches Added in Missouri

ANOTHER event occurred which will show something of the spreading of the gospel during that glorious work. There was a man of some attainments and learning, by the name of John Faroe, who had taught dancing through the country sometime before. He was riding thoughtfully through the forest, when he fancied that the wind, playing through the foliage of the trees, was whispering to him of the Being and wisdom of God. His mind became so deeply affected, that he finally took his wife and moved to Tennessee, in order to dispel his gloom; but, instead of removing his distress, it grew more weighty, nor did he find any relief until he found it in the atoning blood of Christ. Then he, and his wife also, who had received like precious faith, were both baptized, and they returned home. They lived in what was then called "Caldwell's Settlement", on the river St. Francis, not far from a village called St. Michael, about sixty miles from the Bethel Church. They came and joined the church by letter, and the man requested us to regard him and his wife as arms of the Bethel Church. He requested me to go down to his place, and, if possible, bring some others with me, and "sit", in order to receive and baptize members, if any should desire to unite with the church. There never had been a Baptist preacher in all that part of the country, and he had not found a single Baptist. The Methodists and Campbellites were all the sects he knew of. He said that a Methodist minister by the name of Thomas Wright had a circuit along the river, and that was all the Protestant preaching that had ever been in that country. The church adopted the proposition, and gave me the necessary authority. I made an appointment, and Brother Faroe was to circulate it.

When I set out I found the way was through a dreary uninhabited wilderness, having only a narrow trace or path. I at last found the place after much difficulty. The appointment was at a mill in the vicinity of Brother Faroe's. Here I was an entire stranger to every one, except Brother and Sister Faroe. Every eye was upon me. I was the first Baptist preacher many of them had ever seen. I felt very lonely under these circumstances, as at that time I was young in the ministry, and not accustomed to going among strangers without friends with me. A considerable congregation had gathered, and I delivered as plain and pointed a discourse, and as definite as I could. I then explained the circumstances which had led to that appointment, and that I was authorized by the Bethel Church, of which I was a member, and which was located in the district of Cape Girardeau, to give an invitation to any persons wishing to be baptized and become members of the Bethel Regular Baptist Church. I added that if they could give full and satisfactory evidence of the hope that was in them, I was ready and willing to baptize. But I would wish all to understand, that the Baptists alone were by us considered a gospel church, and therefore they received none into their fellowship or communion, except on public profession of their faith in Christ, according to the doctrine of His grace.

No probationers of six months, no infants who were sprinkled on the profession of their parents, nor any others but believers in Jesus Christ were received. Therefore, all who joined this church must renounce alliance with all other denominations. They should treat all men friendly as men, but have no communion or fellowship with any but the Baptist Church of Christ; for they should look upon all others as the daughters of mystic Babylon. "I have been thus particular, as I wish to deceive no one," said I. "We wish to be understood to say, as did the Lord in reference to this 'Mystery, Babylon' (if any of God's people be ensnared by her), 'Come out of her my people, and be ye separated from her.' If any

believe the doctrine I have been preaching this day, and feel the evidence of repentance, faith, hope, and a love for God and His people, who wish to walk in the truth, and desire to partake of the ordinances of His church, come forward. You now have, perhaps, the first opportunity in your lives of declaring for Christ; come forward, and we will hear you relate what you hope the Lord has done for your souls." Four persons came forward immediately. All of them were Methodists, but they fully renounced Methodism, and gave satisfactory evidence of a Christian experience, and were received to be baptized the next day.

On Sunday a powerful effect was visible; many tears of repentance were shed, and great solemnity was manifested. The request for me to come again was so urgent, and my feelings were so enlisted, that I made another appointment, one month from that time. A new, large block-house had been erected in this vicinity, for the people to repair to in case of an attack by the British or Indians, as this was during the war of 1812, and the Indians had become so hostile as to compel the people to fortify themselves. This block-house was to be used as a place of worship by all Protestant denominations, and the preference was to be to the oldest appointment. Mr. Wright had held his meetings there, and so had some other minister. My next appointment was to be at that house, and at a time not to interfere with any other.

The time came on and I went to fill my appointment. When I arrived I was informed that Mr. Wright had been there and preached in the blockhouse, and that he had forbidden me to preach in it, saying that it was a Methodist meeting-house, and that he claimed it as such upon the right of possession. The builders were principally Methodists, he had obtained peaceable and full possession of it, and he intended to hold it. He said that I was an impostor, and that he was well acquainted with my character as such, and that where I was known no respectable person would patronize me. I had come out there and plunged four of his members in the water, and had deluded them into a renunciation of all connection and fellowship with the Methodists. I had preached false doctrine among them, and had broken their harmony. He charged me with having preached among them the doctrines of fatalism, Divine decrees, saints once in grace could never finally fall so as to be lost, for let them do what they might, they, by a decree of fate, must be reclaimed. This doctrine, he said, destroyed all virtue and good works; and if it were true, he could take seven or eight of the old backsliders and storm Canada, for they were bullet proof and could neither die nor be killed until they were reclaimed. Such doctrine should not be preached in that house.

After hearing all this I concluded to say but little, for I saw that the excitement was pretty high already, and I found that many, even some of his own members, and all others, were displeased with his course, and the main proprietors of the house told me that I should have it at any time, that I had as good a right to preach in it as Mr. Wright, or any other man on earth, and that I need suffer no fears, for I should not be interrupted. I went on with my meeting on Saturday, when four more were received for baptism, and on Sunday I baptized them. These were also some of Mr. Wright's members. This was a very solemn meeting, and the effect seemed so deep and so general, and the solicitude of the people was so urgent, and my own mind was so impressed with a sense of duty, that I agreed to attend them once each month for a time.

At this meeting, while I was preaching, a man who was supposed to be employed by Mr. Wright or his friends, arose and came to me, and in a loud voice said: "That is a lie. You are preaching lies, sir." He repeated this several times. I still continued, seeming to pay no attention, or make any reply. Finally, a man who, it was said, was a justice of the peace, came and took him by the arm and led him out of the house. After preaching I stated to the congregation, that I had been informed that Mr. Wright, the

Methodist preacher, was very much troubled about my preaching in that blockhouse; and because the neighborhood had permitted him to preach in the house, he had assumed the right and control of it. If he had been favored with the use of the house through the benevolence of the people, he should have learned not to claim it as a Methodist meeting-house, and then try to prevent one from preaching in it who was invited by the same benevolent proprietors. My right was equally as good as his, and neither of us had any right except by the hospitable permission of the people who had built it.

In regard to my character I invited all or any of them to inquire of the most respectable people in the district of Cape Girardeau, and they could easily satisfy themselves. As to the doctrine that I preached, all would be satisfied, I thought, that it was the very reverse of that which Mr. Wright had represented; and as they had Bibles, and we both appealed to it as our standard, they must examine and decide for themselves. As to the effect of my doctrine, in destroying all virtue and good works, the course each of us had taken, in reference of that house, might decide that matter; for when I had accepted the kind invitation to preach in it, I had inquired when Mr. Wright's appointment was to be filled, and then made mine, so as not to interfere with him, or any one else; but, on the contrary, when he was invited by the same benevolent community, he not only entirely claimed the house as a Methodist meeting-house, but, on that absurd claim, warned me not to preach in the house at any time. Any one might easily see where virtue and good works might be expected.

"It was true," said I, "that I did preach the gospel of the grace of God, that He so effectually saves His people, that not one of them shall ever perish, but have eternal life. The Baptist people have always proved to be good soldiers in the Revolutionary War, and in all other wars for independence and liberty, they have proved to be valiant and trustworthy, and even an old backslider, if any such there be, who still believes the doctrine, would, no doubt, be a good soldier, and would do a valiant part either in the storming of Canada or in attacking the Creek nation of Indians. But still I very much doubt the estimate which Mr. Wright puts upon them; for he says, 'He could take seven or eight of these old backsliders', which implies that he would be their leader and commander. The Baptists, being subject to those powers which are over them, would, no doubt, be obedient to their captain. But I fancy Mr. Wright would be very much afraid lest he should accidentally get killed by some roving bullet, that his God could not, or would not, control it, and thus die before his time. In this alarm I doubt if he would not order a retreat and run from the field of battle, and thus defeat his object, by throwing his backsliders into confusion. He had better let them have a commander, who would fight under the banner of the Lord and of Gideon."

Waving any further remarks, in reference to Mr. Wright and his course, and tendering my sincere thanks to the people of this vicinity for the very friendly manner in which they had received me (a stranger), and for the kind offer of this house for our meeting, I left the subject by submitting this proposition: "Seeing that unpleasant excitement is always the effect of such an opposition as Mr. Wright has made, and often occasions discord and strife among neighbors and friends; and as I have concluded to attend a meeting here, at least for some time, I would prefer holding it at some neighbor's house in the central part of this vicinity, and so end the strife, and allay the excitement. I am a stranger here, and profess to be a subject of the Prince of Peace, and wish to have no share in the strife. I will await to see if any one feels willing to open his doors freely to admit the church. If not I shall thankfully receive the tender of this house."

A gentleman, an entire stranger, arose and said: "I am not a member of any church. I beg to say, however, that I live in as central a part of the neighborhood as any one, I believe; and I have as large a house as there is in this settlement; and if it is too small, I have a barn that will hold a much larger

congregation than this house; and if that should be too small, I have a grove that is large enough, I am sure. I have also a convenient place for baptizing, in a small creek in my meadow. I have a plenty to accommodate both horses and the people with food, and I tender it cheerfully at any time. You are welcome to any accommodations I have power to bestow. If the neighbors feel willing to turn out and haul slabs from the mill and make seats for the people, then I believe there will be nothing more needed to accommodate the congregation as well or better than here; and to all this they are welcome as long and as often as they choose.” Many persons said they would attend to preparing the seats, and all seemed glad of the offer. The brethren expressed the obligation they felt for the generous proposals, and accepted them.

We continued our meetings at his house one Saturday and Sunday in each month, as long as I continued in that country, until the church was constituted and had built a meeting-house. I baptized over sixty willing converts in his beautiful stream, and, although he was an infidel after the order of Payne, yet he was always as kind and accommodating as any deacon of the church, both to me and the company. Here, in the house of this deist, we met from month to month, and many young converts related the dealings of God with them, and sweetly sang the praises of their King. The deacons of the Bethel Church came out with me occasionally and administered the Lord’s Supper. This was an evidence to me that God, Who caused the ravens to feed Elijah, and quails to supply the camp of Israel, could also move a deist to cheerfully invite and bountifully entertain the persecuted people of God. A Methodist preacher refused them admittance to a public block-house, in which he had no right of interest, only to gratify his malignant hatred of the truth. I never saw Mr. Wright before that I know of, and of course no personal matter could have induced this opposition. I have frequently been invited to preach in Methodist meeting-houses, and sometimes at their private residences. But, in times of revival, when converts are coming into the church of Christ, some of God’s dear children have been caught in the devices of anti-christ. To these the Lord says: “Come out of her my people,” and when they begin to leave the daughters of Babylon, and come to Zion, then we may expect the fire of persecution to flame against the truth and all those who love and preach it.

I must relate one event which occurred at this deist’s house: At one of the meetings several persons came before the church and were received for baptism. Among them was an elderly lady, who said: “My friends, I regret that it cannot be my privilege to be baptized and become a member of the church of Christ with you. I have long believed that the regular Baptists are the only true church which Christ has on earth, and the doctrine they preach I believe to be the doctrine of the Scriptures; they are the people I love in the truth, and have long desired to be with them. I hope that I experienced the teachings and leadings of the Holy Spirit before I came to this country. I was then strongly impressed with a sense of duty to join the church and to be baptized, but my husband, although he is as kind a husband as any woman need desire, yet is of a stern and unyielding mind, opposed me in my religious impressions. I often labored to persuade him to consent for me to be baptized, but he would always become angry, and said he ‘would not live with me another day if I did so.’ I have a family of children, and in every other respect a kind and indulgent husband, and one, too, who amply provides for the family. But in this one case he would always become angry whenever I said anything to him about it; and so I concluded never to introduce the subject again. I studied very much about my duty as a wife and as a mother, and finally determined to trust to God, that He, in His providence, would open up a way by which I could be privileged to follow Him without violating His commands to me as a wife and as a mother. So, I have never mentioned the subject since to my husband. We finally moved to this Territory, and until you came here I had never heard of any Baptist meeting. I have attended your meetings, and heard the converts relate their experiences, and I have seen them baptized. I have heard

you preach, and all is just as I believe. I desire to be with you all, but dare not consent to be baptized. I now have one request to make, and that is, that the church hear me relate my experience, and if you can fellowship it as a work of grace, then suffer me to live under your watch-care, and if you see me doing wrong, which is so often the case, reprove and correct me, as you would a member, and allow me to enjoy fellowship as far as an unbaptized person can. I know I cannot come to your communion table, nor have a voice in your proceedings, or even a name among you; but I want your prayers, your friendship, your counsel, and watch-care, as far as good order will admit.”

We told her to relate her experience, which she did, to the full satisfaction of all. I felt some very strange emotions while she was talking. I believed that God had enjoined on the wife and mother duties to her husband and her children; but He had also commanded all believers to be baptized, and had made no exception to these positive orders. All things were under His control; and how could it be that one duty He had commanded should interfere with another? How was it that any of His people should be so situated as to be compelled to violate one of His divine injunctions in obeying another? This I could not reconcile. Still, I believed that there was a way by which all such seemingly conflicting duties could be removed. I believed that this woman was a true believer, and the command to be baptized was positive to her; and I knew that wives were positively commanded to obey their husbands in all things. When she had told her experience, I asked her if her husband should now consent for her to be baptized, whether she would embrace it as a privilege and duty?

Said she: “O, yes, I would rejoice in it as such; but I think there is no hope for this.”

I then inquired: “Are you willing that I should ask your husband for his consent?” She answered that she had no other objections except that she knew her husband’s turbulent temper, and she feared he would abuse me. She added that she had not mentioned it to him for years on that account. It was the only thing he had ever spoken severely about, and when he became angry he was very severe. She did not want my feelings hurt; she believed he would insult me if I spoke to him on that subject.

Said I: “He cannot hurt my feelings on that matter. When no objections are made known, I never go to hunt for any. But in a case like this, where they are made known, I believe we should then do all we can to remove them; and I believe if we strive lawfully, we shall succeed. And now, if you are willing, I wish to make the trial.”

She replied that she was willing if I wished to try him, but I must be prepared to hear hard talk.

Said I: “Will your husband be at meeting tomorrow?” She replied that he had intended to come. “Then,” said I, “say nothing to him about this matter, but come early, and bring a change of clothing, for I believe he will give his consent, and you will be baptized tomorrow without any opposition. The next morning they came early.

I had inquired of my host and others, and they all agreed that he was a staunch deist but a warm Republican, that is, a Jefferson Democrat, and almost an enthusiast on the subject of a free government. My plan was adopted at once. They said if he got angry all was over; for he could not be persuaded, and would abuse and insult anybody. But when in a good humor he was one of the finest of men and the best of neighbors and citizens in the country, and, withal, a well-informed and wealthy man. I told my host that I should expect him to give me an introduction, as I had never seen him. He did so, and I began conversation at once.

“This,” said I, “is a morning that promises a pleasant day for our meeting; and, under the auspices of a popular free government, that disarms the disposition of tyrants and places us all under the protection of the tree of liberty, men can now enjoy freedom of conscience, of thought, of speech, and of the press,

and be free to act in compliance with their own convictions of where and how they should worship God, or not to worship at all, as they choose. All are free from the 'established' religion of an earthly king, and an oppressive law-made clergy to override the consciences of the people—regardless of reason or the free volition of the mind and will.”

He replied that we were a very happy people at this time; but we should watch well the windings of the spirit of bigotry and despotism, for it was still lurking around us, ready to assume all the power it could possibly obtain. I then said that great as our religious and political liberties were, I believed there were some now in America, who would prefer to have their own opinions and speculations established by law, that so they might control the consciences of others, and dictate to them how they should worship and serve God, and what they should do in His service. He replied that all such despots could well be spared in this country, and he heartily wished them all in Europe, under the iron yoke of some tyrant, until they could learn to appreciate the blessings of a republican government.

The people, as they gathered in, crowded around us. We were out in the yard, and we continued to talk until he became quite enthusiastic on the subject of the right of conscience, and liberty of speech and of the press. I heard him in this way until the yard was full of people. I then observed to him: “This day we enjoy the fruits of our free institutions; every man and woman can worship the God of the Bible, or of the Koran, or any other, or none, as he chooses, and in whatever manner he chooses. He can worship in public or private as his conscience dictates, and adopt any form or ordinance in his worship that will answer the convictions of his judgment, and none to control or make him afraid. See the crowds that are now coming to this meeting, all voluntary, none to force or retard them in their attendance. There, in the house, the songs of vocal praise to God are sounding; here, in the yard, we are recounting the infinite kindness of God’s providence in conducting us to the realization of our free institutions.

“I should be very glad to continue this very interesting theme, but the time for our worship is near, and I must defer a further pursuit of this subject until some other time. It gives me great pleasure to converse with a man who knows how to appreciate these blessings. As the duties of this day now call on us to leave this topic, I will just say to you, in conclusion, that your wife came forward yesterday before the Baptists here, and gave full evidence of her faith and hope. The church gave her a hearty welcome to baptism, and then to a membership with us. It is always pleasant, in such cases, to have the free consent and cordial approbation of the husband, so that no disturbance or reflections should be made afterward, and as our conversation has led to this point, I will ask your free consent to me to administer the ordinance of baptism to her, and the church to receive her as a member. We hope to do all this by your free consent and approbation, so that nothing disagreeable may hereafter disturb the domestic comforts of your family. I take it for granted, from your political creed, and the very high and correct estimate which you and I place upon the rights of conscience, that you will make no objections; but still we would prefer to have a free and full expression of your hearty consent. I therefore await to receive it.”

He replied: “You have it, sir. She has always been a good and agreeable wife, and you and your church have treated me with respect. You have my full consent to baptize her, and she has my approbation in being baptized, and the church is at liberty to receive her as one of their number, and I shall never oppose her in going to the meetings and filling her place, and following the dictates of her conscience, nor will it disturb the peace of my family.”

I replied: “I thank you, sir, for so full an expression of your cordial consent. It is always most pleasing to me, when I baptize a woman, to have the full, free, and universal approbation of her husband. You were an entire stranger to me, yet as our conversation was so reciprocal that it seemed almost

unnecessary to ask your consent; but I had intended to do so, and our conversation led directly to it. I rejoice in the assurance you have given me; and I hope, at some future time, we may have the pleasure of further acquaintance. I must now attend to the duties of the day.”

I then went into the house, fully convinced that none of the duties which God has enjoined on His people, do so interfere, that they cannot be observed without one clashing with another. If we can act consistently and do right in these cases, I believe God’s commands are all consistent.

This was a day of very great power. After preaching was over we went to the water, and there I baptized this woman and a number of others. One sister whose name was Riggs, in this arm of the church, was afflicted with the jerks severely. She was sound in the faith and practice of the gospel. She said there was no religion in the jerks; but if her mind became much excited, either on natural or spiritual matters, she was often taken with that strange exercise. If she was at meeting and was blessed with great enjoyment in hearing preaching, or in any part of worship, and the jerks took her, they left her very dull, and spoiled all her comfort for that day. She considered it a real affliction and greatly desired to be released from it; but when it came upon her she could not avoid it. I believe I never saw her have them but once; then she jerked backward off her seat, and her feet and arms played like drumsticks on the floor, as she lay in spasmodic emotions. She was the only Baptist I believe that I ever knew who was afflicted with this strange disease. I have seen many of the Newlights and Methodists in wonderful commotions with them, dancing, falling, jumping, and all such wild expressions of excited passions. These people call such things religion; but this woman called it an affliction that destroyed her religious enjoyments.

While the glorious displays of Divine power and grace were spreading through this settlement, and to some extent on Bear Creek, Brother Johnson, from Turkey Creek, about twenty miles southwest of Bethel Church, came in with his wife and son, and joined the Bethel Church by letter, and requested me to attend them monthly, and carry with me the authority to receive and baptize members there, as members of Bethel Church. This was called Johnson’s Settlement on Turkey Creek. The church granted the request. I made an appointment and went out there, and several members went with me. I baptized two persons the first visit, and continued my visits monthly until I had baptized quite a number in that new small settlement, where no Baptist preaching had ever been before. About this time a brother, Thomas Donahue, who had once been a member of a small church below St. Genevra, long since dissolved, came to Bethel and joined by relation, and some of the old members of Bethel having formerly been there with Elder Green, corroborated his statements. He also requested that I should come authorized to receive members and to baptize for the Bethel Church in that vicinity. This privilege the church granted.

The country was new and sprinkled with small settlements, so where there was any prospect of raising a church in a settlement, the members, as they were gathered in, became members of the Bethel Church, with the understanding that if the Lord should prosper them and gather a number sufficient, all other matters agreeing, these arms or branches would in the proper time become organized as independent churches. This last-named arm had now only one member. I went there accompanied by some of the Bethel members. Several Baptists having emigrated to that part along the Saline, about forty miles north of Bethel, came and joined by letter; and some, like Brother Donahue, as the relics of the old church, were also received. That arm became quite strong, for the good work of grace soon became powerful in that settlement. I continued to visit them as long as I remained in that territory, which was about one year after that time. On the occasion of my last visit I baptized twelve. It was a time of Divine power; at the water especially was the power manifested. I never saw more soul-stirring

manifestations of Divine grace than here. I left crowds of people weeping on the sand bar by the Saline Creek, who seemed to have no inclination to leave the place.

I visited all these settlements monthly: Caldwell's Settlement, sixty miles west; Johnson's Settlement, twenty miles southwest; and Saline Settlement, forty miles north. Going and returning I had to travel about two hundred and forty miles each month. I was very poor and not able to hire labor, and was just beginning in the green woods. Most of the people were newcomers and had nothing to spare, so I got nothing to help me. I had to work by day labor for provisions, at least for my meat and flour. I raised corn. I had to work hard at clearing and fencing my ground, and the building of houses and barns was all to be done by myself, besides all this traveling and preaching. I generally preached from two to four times a week in the bounds of Bethel Church, and often had to go on foot.

My chance for opening a farm was very poor, but still I kept in good spirits. I felt that I was now fully realizing all that I had anticipated before I left Kentucky. The conviction that I was just where God had placed me sustained me; and when I was at home I did all that I could, day and night, in my clearing and building. The revival was still going on about Bethel. All was love, joy, and peace in the church, and some were baptized each month. The meetings were always crowded, day and night, wet or dry, cold or warm. The songs of praise were heard from the mingled voices of both young and old, and often in some retired corner, or on the back seats, could be seen the dejected countenances which indicated hearts heavily burdened with guilt and sin.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Trial in Sickness

WHILE making one of my visits to Johnson's Settlement, my mind became impressed that something was the matter at home. This impression grew so strong that after meeting on Sunday I started for home, and reached it sometime after dark, but found no one there. I put up my horse and went to Brother Randolph's. Here I found my wife sick with a burning fever, and very much affected in her mind. She seemed some better the next morning, and I took her home and gave her medicine, and her fever left her, but she continued to show increasing symptoms of mental derangement. This continued until she became entirely delirious. I was advised to have her ride every few days on horseback. She was too much deranged to ride alone, and I would take her on the horse behind me, and ride with her to prevent her from falling or jumping off when her paroxysms would come on, for they came by spells.

The next Saturday was our church meeting at Bethel. I took her to meeting, and my mother and sister undertook to take care of her. Eighteen, I think, came forward that day, and were received for baptism; two were rejected. About the time of calling for the reading of the minutes, for adjournment, my sister came to the door, and hurriedly called me out. I called for another to take the moderator's chair, and ran out, and found my wife in severe fits or convulsive spasms. She had several of them, but finally got better, and rode home behind me. That night she became entirely insane, and went into severe spasms, and continued in these convulsions all night. She bit her tongue and lips, and a spoon that I held between her teeth, and screamed so that she might have been heard a mile.

The doctor came about ten o'clock the next morning. By this time she was so exhausted that she lay like one dead, except for a faint pulsation and breathing, and occasionally slight symptoms of spasms. The doctor gave her some medicine, and in about thirty minutes she seemed as if awaking out of a deep sleep, and was perfectly calm and more rational. The people had been coming and going, to and from my house all night, and I suppose there were more than a hundred persons present when the doctor came. Something was said about the great disappointment of the meeting, in response to which the doctor said that as she was now clear of spasms, I might go with safety, and he would stay, with some others, until I returned. She heard it, and said she wished me to go, for she felt much better.

I rode to the meeting-house, about one mile and a half distant, and found a crowd in the grove, for the house would not hold one-fourth of the people. I explained to them the condition of my wife, and that it had been a night of terrible anxiety with me. I spoke in the way of an exhortation for about twenty minutes and then the congregation, in a solemn procession, repaired to the water, about twenty rods distant, and I baptized the eighteen candidates and received them as members of the church by giving to them the right hand of fellowship. This was a very solemn and deeply affecting season. I left the large concourse of people singing the praise of God, rode home, and found all about as when I left.

My wife continued about the same for three days, and relapsed again as bad as ever, except the convulsive fits; they did not return. The doctor told me that unless some speedy relief could be obtained she must die. His medicine would not operate, and the only chance, he thought, was in the use of the warm bath. I ran about two miles on foot, got a hogshead on my shoulders and ran home with it. When I returned, the medicine had operated, and the bath was not applied. From this time her health gradually grew better, but she remained delirious and was so weak that she could not turn herself in bed or raise

her hand to her head. She was gloomy, and yet, by times, very boisterous; she seemed to have no reason and was very determined.

Sometimes no one but me could do anything with her; and she would not suffer me to leave her bedside for a minute, day or night. At other times she would not allow me to enter the house nor come in her sight. If anything crossed her will, she would roll her head from side to side, and make a strange noise, and seem to be in great agony. She was not a large woman, and besides was so reduced that I could take her in my arms and carry her like a child to any of the near neighbors. Before she got strength to stand or sit alone, she took a notion that the house we lived in had made her sick, and she must leave it. To pacify her I had to carry her to some of the neighbors', and probably after we would get there she would fret to go home, and I would have to carry her back again. As soon as she could sit on a horse behind me, I could not prevail on her to stay at home any more, but I had to go from one friend's house to another. She took a notion that victuals would kill her if she ate, so we could get her to eat scarcely enough to sustain life.

Finally, I got her to my father's, where she sank into a settled state of melancholy and despondency; a gloomy despair beclouded her countenance, and we could find nothing that would arouse her out of this gloom. She persisted in her fixed determination never to live another day in the house where she had been taken sick. Mother and my sister could take care of her, and I left her with them while I attended my meetings. She at length agreed that if I would build a house on my own land she would then go home and stay there, but she would not return to the house in which we had lived. She would not allow me to leave her one night to work at my house, so I had to travel seven miles every morning and evening to and from my work. My hands had become soft and tender, and I went at the work so hard that I bruised them until they gathered with inflammation, and my left hand broke between every finger and between my thumb and forefinger; the swelling ran up my arm to my body, and became full of purple spots and threatened mortification. I carried my arm in a sling, and as soon as I dared I worked with one hand and managed to get forward my house so that we could go into it. One of my sisters lived with us for awhile to attend to the house affairs, and take care of my wife.

During these heavy afflictions my cow died with the murrain, and the wolves killed my calf. The friends were very kind to visit me during the worst of my wife's afflictions; but having so much company for so long a time, all the provisions which I had laid in for my family were consumed. I had no money, and no cow to give us milk, nor anything but potatoes, pumpkins, and corn. My only child was then about sixteen months old, and was taken sick soon after my wife got ill. I had many hardships to endure. As soon as I got my house so that I could live in it, we gathered our little household goods and went to keeping house again. I had to work for provisions, and then work in the green woods to clear and fence ground for corn the next season. This, with a sick child and a deranged wife, made my condition very trying; but still the good work of grace was progressing. This greatly sustained my mind. The church in that new country did not help me. They were thoughtless in part, and, in a new country, they had but very little to spare.

I have always found that the Baptist people were more negligent in supplying their preachers' wants than any other order of people that I have known. There are some honorable exceptions, it is true, but they are few in the West and North. In the South and East it is different; but where I have mostly lived and labored the Baptists do but very little, and that little is done by a few individuals. Frequently the most wealthy do the least. I am sorry to record this, but candor compels me to confess that in this particular the Western Baptists are far behind the gospel standard. Their ministers are generally poor men, and illy able to spend their time in the service of the church for nought. Yet they do go at their

own expense, sometimes for weeks, without receiving one cent. Ohio and Kentucky do much better; but Indiana, considering its general wealth, is far behind any other state in the Union, as far as I am acquainted.

But to return: At the time of which I speak, Missouri was a new country, and but few of the people, if ever so willing, were able to do much for me. I was beginning to make a farm in the green woods. I had no house and not a foot of cleared land, nor any money to hire help, nothing but my hands and time to depend upon; and I had my wife in a weak and partially deranged state. I had, moreover, two hundred and forty miles each month to travel, besides attending many other meetings about Bethel. The little time I had at home, the ax was in my hand, plying it on the forest trees, often until a late hour of the night.

The work of the Lord still went on, and I felt stimulated to action. At last I got a small comfortable house and some out-buildings built, and I had a small field for corn and some pasture cleared and fenced. I had to carry the rails on my shoulder, for I had no team to haul them. Young men, and young preachers especially, who now live in an improved country, can know very little of the hard trials and privations that I then endured; but still the work of the Lord, which prevailed to some degree, stimulated me.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Decision to Leave Missouri and Labor in Ohio

BEING advised by the doctor and my friends to travel with my wife, I resolved to try it, and prepared for it as well as I could. On the last day of July we started, in company with a Brother Hale and wife, for the Red River Association in the southwestern part of Kentucky, resolving that if she seemed to mend by traveling, I would still go on as far as to her father's. We came through Illinois and crossed the Ohio River above the mouth of the Cumberland, and from thence to the association in Christian County, near Knoxville, Kentucky. We had meetings frequently on the way, at which I preached, and also at the association.

After the close of the association I had an appointment at a Mr. McKinney's, on my way. The house would not hold the people, so we repaired to a large horse-mill where I spoke to them. The meeting was solemn, but I know of nothing particular, save one event which I will relate hereafter. My wife and I still traveled on, for she was improving fast. I had many meetings on the way and enjoyed the trip, without much trouble, until near Bardstown. Here my horse took the colic and died. I was then left to go on foot. I was lame with the rheumatism and had no money to buy a horse, and was an entire stranger. I placed my portmanteau on my wife's saddle, and took my blanket and saddle on my shoulder and walked on. We passed Bardstown and stopped at Elder James P. Edwards', son of the old elder, the same young preacher before mentioned as living at Bethel in Missouri. He had left there and returned to his father's. He owed a man in Missouri fifty-five dollars, so I assumed that debt and bought a mare of him. After holding several meetings there, we went on our way. Finally, we reached my wife's father's, in the vicinity of the old Licking Church, where we both had been baptized, and where I was first licensed to preach. My wife's health and mind had again become good, and I felt happy.

I had many meetings at this church and at Four-mile, Twelve-mile Church, and at Newport, and in September I attended the North-Bend Association at the Dry Run Church. Here I met Elder James Lee, whom I have before mentioned in this narrative. He seemed like a father to me. I thought I could perceive a tincture of Arminianism in some of the preaching that I had never before noticed. After this association was ended I traveled with Elder Lee and wife up Licking to Falmouth, and through Paris, Cynthiana, and then to Rockbridge, holding meetings all the way. Here we had many relatives, and we held meetings almost daily from house to house and from church to church, at Rockbridge, Bald Eagle, Sharpsburg, and then over in Fleming County at Fox, Poplar Plains; then at Stone Lick, Washington, Lee's Creek, and Germantown; then down the ridge to the Flag Spring, Brush Creek, Twelve-mile, Four-mile, and then at Licking Church.

After spending some days here, I took my wife, and we all crossed the Ohio at Columbia, and visited the churches at Clough Creek, Duck Creek, Carpenter's Run, and then went to Brother Jacob White's, on Mill Creek, near where Carthage now stands. Elder Lee had been persuading me to settle in Ohio, but my mind was fixed on Missouri, where God had so wonderfully displayed His power and grace. But now, he and Bro. White both set in to persuading me, and they changed my mind some. Bro. White named two churches, Pleasant Run and West Fork of Mill Creek, both of which were destitute of a preacher. They insisted that I should give them an appointment for these churches on my return, which I did. We went on to near Princetown, Fairfield, then to Middletown, on the Big Miami, then to Post

Town, and up to the mouth of Twin Creek, to where Elder Lee then resided. From here we had meetings daily around, from Twin Creek to Cotton Run, and Elk Creek Church, and so filled the time very pleasantly. The congregations were large and attentive, and solemnly affected. The church seemed to be in a travailing spirit.

When my time was filled here, I left and filled an appointment in Hamilton, and then went to Pleasant Run. Here I met a large assembly of people, and had a very interesting meeting. The next day and night we met large and attentive congregations at West Mill Creek. At these churches the interest became general, and the people were urgent for me to settle with them. My mind became deeply burdened and in suspense, for I felt so strongly attached to the Baptists in Missouri that I could not get consent of my mind to leave them; and yet the thought occurred that the Lord had a work for me here in Ohio.

In this state of suspense I remained, unable to decide. The mind of the Lord was all I desired to know. The little property I had was in Missouri, and if I stayed here it must be lost; for it would cost it all to go and get it. To stay in Ohio, I would have nothing to keep house with, neither bed, dish, nor spoon, and nothing to farm with, except the two horses. We had but few clothes, for we traveled on horseback and could bring clothing only to do us until our return. Having worn them from July to October they were now unsuitable for winter. How to manage I could not tell; yet to know the will of the Lord was my great concern. I could not decide where to go, for two fields were now before me. I promised these two churches that if I did not start to Missouri, I would visit them again; but if I did go, I would write to let them know.

We then returned to Kentucky to my wife's father's. She was then taken sick and was unable to travel, and winter was coming on, so I was compelled to give up all ideas of returning home until spring. I therefore attended Mill Creek and Pleasant Run churches monthly through the winter. This was the winter of 1814. That winter was a season of great mental trials to me, from conflicting views of duty. I traveled and preached regularly through Kentucky and Ohio until spring, and still the same restless suspense harrassed me.

I visited Mill Creek and Pleasant Run Churches, but was still unprepared to give them an answer. I told them that I would visit them in April, and then I would decide. So I left them, but April came and found my mind as undecided as ever. As I went to visit them, the thought came to my mind to look at the events as they occurred. I had no place there to make my home, nor anything to work with if I had. So I concluded to give no answer until the very last hour, and if Providence opened the way, without me or my friends seeking for it, that I would stay there, but if not, I would return to Missouri. This conclusion eased my mind, for it was followed by many Scripture texts such as these: "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"; "He sets the bounds of their habitation." I was much better satisfied than I had been since the fall before, for I felt that God in His providence would in some way make my duty known if I would look for it, and passively submit the case to Him. I visited Pleasant Run, but nothing special presented. I refused to answer them, but told them that I would leave an answer with Brother Sorter, one of their members, before I left. I went on to Mill Creek; still nothing took place to satisfy my mind. I left them in the same way, promising them also that I would give an answer to Brother Sorter, as I was going to spend the last night with him, near Springfield, now called Spring-dale.

As Brother Sorter and I were riding along the road between New Burlington and Springfield, we heard the clattering of horses' hoofs behind us, and on turning round we saw a man on full gallop pursuing us, who motioned us to stop. He came up and inquired if we knew any one that wished to rent a farm, stating that he had one for rent if he could rent it now. He had intended to cultivate it himself, but he now had a school offered him. It was so late in the season he feared that all renters were supplied; yet

he could not take the school unless he could rent out his farm, as the next day he must give an answer whether he would take the school or not. I told him that I had been talking some of moving into that vicinity, but I had no plows to tend his farm with. He replied that he owned a good plow, and that I could have it, or if I wished to buy it, he would take five dollars for it. We went a short distance to see the place and found eighteen acres of good ground for corn, to be rented for one-third the crop, besides a good garden free, and a good plow cheap, if I chose to buy it, or I might borrow it. I looked at this as deciding the case, so I took the farm and decided to settle with these churches. The farm was nearly central between them. I set a day to be on with my family. A wagon was to meet me in Cincinnati and move me out. I returned to Kentucky and at the time appointed moved to my farm. The man that I rented of was an Irishman and an entire stranger to me, and had no knowledge of me or my situation. I have ever believed that this was providential.

When I moved to this place a disease called "cold plague" was raging with mortal effect. Deaths were occurring around us daily, and I attended funerals almost every day for some weeks. I attended these two churches, and they were kind and supplied me with provisions. I made harness from ropes and bark and hickory withs, and made a cornhusk collar, and borrowed an ax and hoe, and so went to work and raised a fine crop of corn and potatoes.

The churches prospered well; a gradual work of grace prevailed in both these churches. I baptized a goodly number and visited most of the bounds. I visited several of the churches in Kentucky as well as in Ohio.

After my crop was cultivated I started for Missouri. I crossed the Ohio river at Cincinnati and went up the dry ridge, and so on to Frankfort. Here I spent one or two days preaching, mostly at a church under the care of Elder William Hickman. Then I went to Elder Edwards's, and James P. Edwards concluded to go with me to Missouri. I waited a few days for him to prepare for the journey; during the time I preached daily in the vicinity. We then went on our way. The weather being very warm my horse's back became so swollen that I found he could not perform the journey. One evening after I held a meeting, I stated to the people that if any one had a horse that they would exchange for mine, they might make their own bargain, and that mine was a good, large, young horse. A man came forward and said he had a young gray horse that would suit me well, but he was out in the commons; if he could be found he thought we could trade. The next morning we all turned out to hunt him, and succeeded in finding him, and we traded even.

The next evening my new horse became tender-footed, having no shoes on, so I stopped at a shop. The smith said if we would stay until morning he would shoe him, which we agreed to do. We found him to be a Methodist preacher. The next morning I arose early and we went to the shop. He soon began to inquire about a gentleman in Cincinnati. Then he asked if I had ever seen a small book published by the advice of the Conference. I told him I had read it. He then inquired if that book did not effectually refute the doctrine of predestination and election? I replied that I thought it misrepresented it. The book was entitled: "The Dagon of Calvinism; or, the Moloch of Decrees." I had not told him that I was a professor, but I suppose that my answer about the book made him think that I was not a Methodist. So he began to abuse me as a predestinarian. He said that he supposed I believed Christ to be a hypocrite, pretending to love the world when He loved only a few favored chosen ones, and that the Holy Ghost was a Jack-o'-the-lantern, enlightening in spots here and there, wherever it could find one of the eternal elect. I told him I neither believed in such things, nor that it was becoming in any one to talk thus about these things. He then began a volley of abuse and ridicule.

When he came to a pause for breath, I said: "Sir, I will not talk on any subject, especially on religion, in such a manner; but if you will define your point intelligently, I will sustain any doctrine that I believe to be scriptural."

He said he would do so, and quoted this text: "This is the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, whereby he might be saved."

I then asked him: "Sir, do you name that as a proposition for discussion, or as a text for explanation?"

Said he: "I named it as a text you cannot get around, over, nor under."

I said: "I do not wish to go around, over, nor under any text in the Bible, but that one is not in the Bible; and unless you can show some valid credentials for making Scripture, I shall have nothing to do with your spurious text."

He insisted that it was Scripture, and was to be found in the first chapter of St. John. I said it was not there. He said it was, and if he had his Bible he could show it. I replied: "There are several men now in the shop, and they have heard you quote the text, if one of them will step to the house and bring his Bible and show me the text, and if it is in the language he has given, I will yield the matter."

He answered: "If I do not show you that whole text in the very words that I have mentioned, I will shoe your horse for nothing."

"Sir," said I, "it is a bargain." The Book was soon brought; he took it and read the text, word for word, as he had quoted it.

"There it is," said he, "now, will you give it up?"

"I will, sir, if it reads so, and you have not written there; allow me to see it."

Said he: "Do you think I cannot read?"

"No, sir, far from it; I think you can read more than is written."

"But," said he, "every word that I have now read is written."

"Let me see it," said I.

He still refused. I told him he had said that he would show it to me, and I should hold him to his word. He then let me have the Book. I read it without finding the words "enlighteneth, whereby he might be saved." I told him this was his own make; it was not in the Book. The other men read it as I did. He broke out again in a torrent of abuse. I remained silent until he paused again. I then said if he would give me candid answers, I wished to ask him some questions. He said I might ask him as many questions as I pleased, for, like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, he was sanctified from the womb, and had lived sinless, and understood all the Scriptures, and should be justified before God by his works. I asked him if he intended to shoe my horse for nothing, as he had failed to show me the text. He said unless I paid him he would do no more at it. I told him that I intended to pay him, but there was one text which said: "All liars shall have their portion in the lake." This text I wished him to explain, and reconcile it with his saying he would shoe my horse for nothing, and then again that he would not. How did that agree with his claims to sanctification and a sinless state? Here he gave another blast of vile ridicule. I listened until he stopped.

I then said: "You have seen that I will not talk on religious subjects either in an angry manner or in a romance. Still, if you will be cool and candid, I will ask two or three questions." He said he would. "I will ask, then," said I, "Did Christ come into this world commissioned of God to save all Adam's race?"

He answered: "Yes, every one of them, and this was the work the Father gave Him to do."

"Then, will every one of Adam's race be saved?" He said they would not.

"Then," said I, "if the Father gave Him a work to do, and that work was to save every one of all Adam's race, and they are not all saved, and never will be, did Christ speak the truth or not when He said to the Father, 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do?'" "He was at this time driving the nails in the third shoe. He paused a little, as if to prepare an answer, when, suddenly, he drew his hammer and hit the horse a full blow on the leg, between the knee and the fetlock. This bruised the skin and the blood flowed freely. He then struck the horse two or three blows with the hammer on the ribs; dropping the hammer he took up a large piece of split hickory timber, designed for ax-handles, and drawing it above his head with both hands, prepared to make a violent blow on the horse's head, as I stood holding the horse by the bridle. I told him to stop: "My horse is my friend, and I am far from home, and I do not wish him injured any more." He said he would kill him. I replied: "If you do you shall pay for him." Then he turned at me, and declared, in a boisterous tone, that he would break my head- the stick still drawn.

He motioned several times to strike, and such threats and abuse as he uttered are seldom, if ever, heard. I stood holding the bridle, watching his eyes, to see if he should strike, to try to dodge the blow, but remained silent, while he went on with his abuse. He said that I was a horse-thief, and had stolen that horse, and he could tell by my looks. I said nothing until he became moderate. I then asked him to finish my horse's shoes. He declared that he would not, for he knew him to be a stolen horse, and that I was a thief, and had escaped from the penitentiary and was a worthless wretch, and I must now pay him for he would do no more to the horse. I told him that he had commenced shoeing the third foot, and had the last foot trimmed; my horse was crippled, and I wanted him to finish his job. But he would not.

I then talked mildly to him, saying that as he professed to be a sanctified and sinless man, and so calculated to be justified before God by works, I would ask him how many such works as these would it take to justify him? Should I be a thief, villain, or deserter from the penitentiary or anything else that he had accused me of, he had no evidence of it. He had treated me badly as a stranger, and I had behaved myself civilly in his house and shop, and had given him no reason to accuse me of any such crime. But if he believed I was a horse-thief, why not now arrest me and bring me to justice, and let the true owner get his horse? If not, he would be held as my accomplice. "You have threatened my life," said I, "and abused my horse, and you send me off with my horse bleeding, and one foot shaved down until it is tender. How will it sound to have it said that a poor traveler came on the road and, without any provocation, the Rev. Thomas Taylor drew a club and threatened his life, abused his horse, and accused him of the blackest of crimes without one shadow of testimony, and all the while this Rev. Thomas Taylor claims to have been sanctified from his birth, lives sinless, and expects to be justified before God by his works. What credit would accrue from all this conduct, either to the Christian or the reverend standing of this man of courage, with those who judge the tree by its fruits or the fountain by its stream? I am now about to leave you, and never expect to see you again in this life; but, although I have been so badly abused by you, yet I wish you may receive the gift of true repentance, if it be the will of God. I wish you no harm, but after I am gone I hope you may think, reflect, and be forgiven." I then left him still raging.

We traveled on, and soon crossed Green River. I got the other shoes put on my horse, and finally we reached Red River Association and met the messengers from the Bethel Church, Thomas Bull and Isaac Shepherd. After the association was over we all traveled on in company.

As I traveled along a man by the name of Johnson overtook me. He was hunting horses, and said he would travel some miles on my way; he believed he had seen me before. He asked me if I did not preach about a year since at McClinner's Horsemill, about a mile from where we were then. I told him I had done so. He said he was very glad that he had now seen me, as he was at that meeting, and had often thought since of one idea that he had understood me to advance. He might have been mistaken, but he had understood me to say that "Whatever is to be will be." I replied: "I suppose you did not misunderstand me. I surely do believe that proposition as self-evident. You must either believe that what is to be will be, or the negative, that what is to be will not be. Now which position would you take?" He seemed confused, and soon after turned his horse into a by-path and left me.

We went on and crossed the Ohio near the mouth of the Cumberland River, and thence through a part of Illinois to Earthman's Ferry, fifteen miles above Cape Girardeau, on the Mississippi River, and thence into Missouri.

I reached my father's, and found all well. I had almost daily meetings around Bethel Church, and I visited Caldwell's Settlement, on St. Francis. This church had been constituted during my absence, and they had built a meetinghouse near the residence of my old host, the deist that I have heretofore mentioned. From this place I returned to Bethel, and, after spending some days, I took leave of the church and friends, after obtaining a letter of dismissal from the church. Father concluded to go home with me and view the country in eastern Indiana. We started and traveled daily, until we arrived at home, which we found deserted. By inquiry I ascertained that my wife's sister, who was to stay with her during my absence, had gone home on a short visit and was taken dangerously ill; they had sent for my wife, and she was now in Kentucky. The next day I went to her father's and found her young sister convalescent. After two days' meeting we returned home.

My father lived with us that winter. I gathered my corn, and then visited and preached around among the churches. My wife and I gave in our letters, and became members of the Pleasant Run Church. Then I went with Father to look at the country along White Water in Indiana. We traveled as far as the West Fork of White Water, and he finally entered one hundred and sixty acres of land, on the waters of Indian Creek, near Miller's Mill. During this trip I had a number of meetings. This was my first preaching in Indiana. We returned home and bought a sixty-acre lot, on what was called the "Ministerial Section", in Symmes's Purchase between the two Miamis. The section so denominated was valued in eighty-acre lots, and leased for ninety-nine years, renewable forever, but subject to a revaluation at specified times. The principal was never to be paid, but the interest on the valuation of each lot was paid each year, and this interest was divided equally among all religious societies living within that congressional township. The lot we bought was one of this sort; it had been divided and but sixty acres were left in our lot. The interest to be paid annually was ten dollars and eighty cents. We gave one hundred and fifty dollars for the improvements, which included twenty acres cleared, a good cabin, log barn, and corn-crib. We divided the lot, and Father built a cabin on his part, cleared some more ground, and prepared to receive his family in the spring. My brothers were to move with Mother in the spring. I left my rented farm and moved on this lease. Here I lived about three years, during which time I cleared and fenced most of the lot. Father, about one year and a half after his family came, moved to his Indiana land, and I bought his part of the lot. I planted an orchard, and repaired and enlarged the house, cleared, and put up some out-buildings. During all this time I traveled and preached in Ohio and Kentucky, and the eastern part of Indiana.

I made one long journey of over three months, traveling in Kentucky, from Covington through Frankfort, Bardstown, and Dripping Spring; in Tennessee, to Nashville; and thence to Huntsville, in the

Mississippi Territory, now the State of Alabama. We went on to Ditto Landing, on the Tennessee River, thence through the Cherokee towns, and, having crossed the mountains, reached the Black Warrior River. We followed that stream some distance, and then crossed a range of mountains to the Kehaba Valley, and thence down that valley to the falls of the Kehaba River. Here the settlements were very small and far between, and inhabited by very poor pioneers. This was the next year after the Creek Indians had been driven from the country. They had planted corn crops, and the whites had moved in and tended them. This was all that was raised that season, so the settlers had to depend principally on fish and wild game for sustenance, and on the forest and grass for their stock. My father traveled with me this trip. One of my sisters had married a man named Joshua Hale who was now settled at the falls of Kehaba. Elder Canterbury had moved there with him. When we got there we found him sick; he concluded to leave and move to Ohio. We waited ten days for him, during which time we lived in an Indian camp, and I preached to the few settlers there.

While on this journey I suffered more for food than at any other time in my life. We were forced to subsist three days and nights upon a piece of musty bread about the size of my two fingers, and a piece of jerked beef about the same size. Sometimes we had to do without fire of nights. While we were at Kehaba Falls we spent each night in an Indian corn-crib. These cribs are constructed differently from any others that I have ever seen. Three rows of posts, about two feet high, are fixed in the ground; on the top of these three small poles are fastened; on these large cane-stalks are laid thick, from end to end, on this a basket-work of split cane, and on this is built the crib, made of pine slabs, and covered with cypress bark. Many curiosities I saw here: There were large kettles made of a compound of shells and sand, and probably some other ingredients. They were as thick as common crockeryware, and much more durable. They were used for boiling sugar. Many of these kettles were left by the Indians, but they were all broken so as to be spoiled.

After spending ten days here we set out on our return, and my brother-in-law and family with us. We traveled in the trace made by General Jackson's army up the valley, and then over the Cumberland Mountains to Fort Deposit, and near it we crossed the Tennessee River and came through Nashville, and stopped a few miles south of that town, and I preached several times. Then we went on to near the line between Tennessee and Kentucky to Wm. Hales's. Hales was a brother to my brother-in-law. Joshua and family remained there, and Father and I went on again into Missouri, visited the old Bethel Church, and the church on St. Francis, and preached nearly every day for about two weeks. Then we started again, and returned to Wm. Hales's, in Tennessee; and then with Joshua and family we started home. We had rough weather, for winter was now upon us. We reached home and found all well. I then resumed my regular course of preaching for the churches.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Labor in the Ohio Churches; A Revival

SPRINGFIELD Church was constituted, and my time was divided among the three, Mill Creek, Pleasant Run, and Springfield. These three churches were so situated that most of the members could attend all the meetings, and they lived in such peace and Christian love that they were more like one church with three meeting-houses, than three separate churches. A gradual work of grace was going on among them, and some were added to one of the churches by experience nearly every month. I still visited the other churches around, and sometimes took a trip into Kentucky, through the counties of Campbell and Boone, and once a year I made a tour through Bracken, Mason, Fleming, Bath, Montgomery, Bourbon, and other counties. Sometimes I would make a tour through Indiana, mostly in the counties of Franklin and Union. I generally attended the associations in direct correspondence with Miami. These were Mad River, White Water, East Fork, Little Miami, and Brush Creek.

One year I visited a church called Pleasant Run, in the Sciota Association, about seven miles toward Zanesville from New Lancaster. The day I started it rained in torrents, and before I got one mile on my way I was as wet as I could be. On coming to Mill Creek I had to swim it. I went on to Lebanon, in Warren County, and there learned that the Little Miami was overflowing its banks, and the logs and drift were floating down so that no craft could cross. I stopped for the night, and in the morning went on to the river. The drift was not so thick but that a small craft, easily managed, could cross. I rode my horse into the water among the trees and timber, and sometimes he came near swimming. After working through the trees, brush, and floating logs for about half a mile up the river above the road, I approached the main channel of the river. Here the small boat came to me and I entered it and swam my horse by its side, and so reached the other shore. Going eastward I had to swim all the large creeks, such as Todd's Fork, Paint Creek, and Rattlesnake, until I came to Old Town, Ross County. Passing this, I went to a ferry on the Sciota River below the mouth of Deer Creek, after crossing which I traveled through Piqua plains, Circleville, and New Lancaster, and reached the association. I had been wet most of the time, for the rain continued every day, and swimming the waters kept me wet.

We had a very pleasant season, and though this was the first time I had ever attended this association, or ever been in this part of country, I formed many agreeable acquaintances among the elders and brethren, many of whom were Germans; but they were tinctured with Arminianism.

I returned home quite unwell. I became benumbed and lost the proper use of my limbs, and I had a slow fever, with chills. My feet would involuntarily fly up, for I had but little control of my limbs; my strength declined rapidly; my head ached and became very dizzy. Sometimes I would have three or four chills in one day. I was still about, and missed none of my meetings. My wife often caught my horse and rode with me, for fear I might fall off on my way. I remained in this strange condition for some months, and at length I consulted a physician. He said I was broken down from overexertion, and that no medicine could restore me unless I would stop either preaching or farming. He then directed me to take a handful of parsley tops and roots, and a handful of juniper berries, and put them into a jug containing a gallon of clear cider, to shake it well every day for ten days, then take a gill three times a day, and not labor during the time, and preach but moderately. I took his advice, and one gallon of this preparation cured me.

After I had recovered I went to work, for I now had a wife and three children to support. During the time I was living on this lease I received intelligence through my brother, that my father was not likely to live. I started with all my family and reached his place about midnight, and found him already struck with death. He was calm and perfectly in his right mind, and fully sensible of his situation; he knew he was dying. His faith was firm, and his assurance unshaken. His tongue began to be stiff, but he talked as long as we could understand him. Just before daylight he breathed his last, in the unshaken and joyful prospect of a glorious immortality. After he was buried in the Indian Creek burial-ground, this being the church of which he was a member, we returned home. Mother and one of my sisters came with us. When we came to the Big Miami we found it rising fast, but we were informed that it could be forded. I took the three children on my horse, one behind me, and two in my arms. I had no girth to my saddle and the water ran very swift. I rode before and the three women followed. The water was much deeper than we had expected, and some of the horses swam part of the way. We all got wet to the waist, and the weather was quite cold for October. We landed safe and felt that our escape was providential.

Not long after this I sold my lease, and bought forty acres of land near the little village of New Burlington, and the next spring I moved to it. Here I lived three years more. I greatly improved this little farm; I cleared some land, repaired the fences and cabins, built a good frame barn and some other buildings, enlarged the orchard-altogether I made it a comfortable little home. I was requested to come and preach on a week day at Brown's Run, between Elk Creek and Twin Creek, as it was known that all my Sundays were taken up. Very few Baptist members lived there, and they had no church. Elk Creek Church was seven or eight miles distant one way, and Tapscott's meeting-house a little farther the other way. The few members at Brown's Run, and down in the Miami bottom, about Banker's Mill, belonged to Elk Creek Church, then under the pastoral care of Elder Stephen Gard. I visited this neighborhood and preached at the house of John Lee, son of Elder James Lee, before mentioned.

This was a very solemn season. I had never preached in that immediate neighborhood before, although I had often preached within a few miles of it. I felt deeply impressed that the Lord had a people in that place, and that the time was at hand to gather them into His visible fold. After preaching two days and nights, I made an appointment in two weeks for two days more, and left many wounded hearts, and went home, some twenty-five or thirty miles distant. In two weeks I came again, and found such a large crowd of people collected that we had to go to the grove. The good work seemed general and powerful. I continued to visit them every two weeks, and preached two days and nights each visit, all on week days. Two stands were erected, one on the Run, near Lee's, and the other over in the river valley in a grove, near a place called Post-town. We would hold the meeting one day and night at one place, and the next day and night at the other. These meetings became so large that it appeared like an association.

Soon there were a number of rejoicing young converts, who greatly desired to follow their Lord and Saviour into the liquid stream. By request Pleasant Run, where my membership was, authorized me to baptize approved candidates, with the consent of Elk Creek Church, and to give each a certificate of his baptism, upon which, if circumstances approved, they might be constituted into a church, or otherwise could be received by neighboring churches. The members of the churches crowded to these meetings, and frequently Elders Gard and Poineer were present. All these would be called together, and would sit as a church, to hear the young converts tell the reason of the hope that was in them. All would welcome them to baptism. This neighborhood had been considered rather on the rough order, and but very little preaching had been heard there. When this work broke out among them it made a more visible change than it otherwise would. Their experiences generally were very satisfactory. This work continued from spring until fall, in which time many that lived more convenient to Elk Creek or Tapscott Churches

went to them and were baptized; besides, there were about sixty constituted into a church, which was called Mount Pleasant; this church yet remains. Their meeting-house stands on the hill bordering the large valley of bottom land between Banker's Mill and Brown's Run.

I will further describe this powerful work by narrating a few cases. There was a man named James Bowles, who, like King Saul, was a very tall man. He was an avowed atheist. Several years before this he bursted an overcharged musket, on a Fourth of July celebration, which tore off one of his hands at the wrist. He came to one of the meetings on the Run. After preaching we went to the water for baptism; the congregation was immensely large. On one side the bank was perpendicular, and a large hornbeam grew on its verge and bent directly over the water. Along this tree, Bowles stretched his long body at full length. On the opposite side was a gravel bar that sloped down into the water. Here I led the candidates down into the water, directly under where Bowles had stretched himself. The first that I took into the water was a young man named Samuel Lucas, and as I laid his body in the liquid grave, Bowles burst out crying, and quickly turned to retreat; but when he had faced about he found a dense crowd before him. He pressed through, however, weeping like a whipped child, and being a head and neck taller than any one else, every eye was fixed upon him, but he never stopped until he got out of sight. After this he attended our meetings, but would not come into the crowd; he preferred to seat himself by a tree, at a distance, and take out his knife and whittle a stick, in a hurried manner, during the services.

At length his step-daughter came, and, with many others, was received for baptism. In the morning of the day the baptism was to take place he broke out in opposition to the immersion of the young woman, talked very hard to his wife, who was a member, and said he had resolved to attend no more of these meetings. This greatly troubled his wife, who came on her way to meeting weeping. She said she could not pray for him, but she pled of all the members to pray for him. I told her that her tears were as much prayer as words could be, and that I believed this little bluster was probably one of his last bursts of opposition, and I should look for him at meeting even that day. The meeting was on the river, near Post-town, at a stand in the grove. After a large assembly had met and I was about to open meeting, I saw Bowles coming on foot, and in a hurried walk. When he came near the outskirts of the assembly he sat down by a tree. I went on with my discourse. Suddenly he sprang to his feet and advanced with quick steps toward the stand. After coming about halfway he suddenly dropped down by a tree; his knife, as usual, was busily plied to a stick. He sat there but a short time, until he started up again and rushed to the corner of the stand, and dropped down again. Many persons were alarmed, and thought that he would attack me with his knife. I saw it all, but I had no fears. After I had closed my discourse we went to the river, near Banker's Mill, and I baptized a number of willing converts.

The next day we met on Brown's Run at the stand. The crowds were gathering fast, and the songs of praise were swelling from many voices, when a messenger came, saying that Mr. Bowles wished to see me out in the wood. I started to go out to him, but a number of my brethren opposed me, believing it unsafe for me to go to him. I told them that I should go to the man, doubting nothing; but if they were afraid of any evil design against me, they could follow behind until I approached him, and then, if Bowles would consent, I would give them a sign, and they could come and join us. He was sitting on a log about fifty yards from the outskirts of the crowd. When I drew near enough to see his countenance, I saw the plain index of a calm and gentle heart. I stepped up to him, with an extended hand, and asked him if he had a desire to tell me what great things the Lord had done for his soul, and how He had compassion upon him? He said, yes, he wished to tell me what an atheist had felt and seen. I asked him if those brethren who had followed me part of the way, and who would be glad to hear him, might join

us? He said, yes, he wanted Christians to hear, and to tell him if they ever felt as he had. I beckoned to them to come. We all sat down on the log, and I told him to begin.

He said he had first been a deist, then an atheist, and believed there was no God, devil, hell, nor heaven, and, of course, no resurrection, except as matter was in constant progression, changing from one form to another. Under this delusion, he had long lived; but, of late, something had greatly troubled him, and his mind had become gloomy and loaded down with a weight, and he could not tell what it was about. On the day that Samuel Lucas was baptized, and just as he was immersed, he had such a view of the holiness, goodness, and justice of God, that all his atheism left him, and his sins and criminal rebellion rose up in his view. He then held up the arm from which the hand had been torn. "There," said he, "is the mark of my rebellion against the God of mercy." He then spoke of his sense of guilt, of the justice of God in his condemnation, of his helpless condition, of his repentance, and sense of forgiveness through Jesus Christ, of the love he felt for Christians, and his desire to follow Christ in baptism, and to live with His people. But he feared that, as he had been such a great and hardened sinner, they could not have confidence in him. I told him to come along and try them. He walked with us to the stand, and when the opportunity was given, he related his experience and was cordially received.

A number of others were also received. One young man, who had been raised a Lutheran, came and related his trials. He said he could not read, but his mother had told him that he was once baptized, and that the Scripture said: "Cursed is he that is baptized over again." This had greatly troubled him, since he hoped he had felt the preciousness of a Saviour and wished to follow him in baptism. He wished to know what that text meant. I told him there was no such text in the Scriptures, and if there were it could have nothing to do in his case, as he had never been baptized. "Sprinkling is not baptism," said I, "and even the immersion of an unconscious infant is no gospel baptism; nor can any man administer gospel baptism without the legal authority of Christ. This authority He has vested in the true church, as the executive authority in His kingdom, to see to the proper execution of all His laws and ordinances. The proper authority, therefore, is indispensable to gospel baptism, and this no Lutheran has. So you need have no more trouble on that account." His mother, being present, became very angry, and rushed furiously through the crowd toward me, but stopped and sat down before she reached me, and said: "My son is lost forever for this dreadful act." Such is the effect of a false religious education.

While this gracious work was progressing there was also a similar work going on at Pleasant Run. This good work spread on the north to Hamilton, and south to Mill Creek and Springfield, making many additions to those churches, especially to Mill Creek. These were joyful seasons. Pleasant Run, adjoining the line between the counties of Hamilton and Butler, was a most favored place. Large numbers were added to that church. This work continued for about one year.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Another Tour; First Contact with Missionary Concept

IN THE fall I made a tour, by Lawrenceburg, Madison, and thence to Maria Greek Church, situated near Vincennes; and thence up the Wabash Valley, Busaro Prairie, to Furman's Greek and Honey Greek Churches, preaching almost day and night in these regions. I made a tour to a church on White River, and baptized four there, and then returned to Honey Greek. Here I became acquainted with Elder Isaac McGoy, who had just engaged in the "modern missionary enterprise". He had established a Station and an Indian school, on Raccoon Creek. At his strong solicitation I agreed to visit his Station and school. When the time came for my appointment, I started in company with some brethren; we went through Terre Haute, and from thence to the Station on Raccoon. When we arrived we found Elder McCoy sick of a fever, but he was beginning to recover. Elder Aaron Frakes, who was the pastor of Honey Creek Church, went with us. After my sermon, as was their order at the Station, the opportunity was given for the reception of members, when Corbly Martin, the teacher of the Indian school, related his experience and his doctrinal views. He was received, and I baptized him in Raccoon Creek, for Elder McCoy was not able to do it. After preaching at the Station a few days and nights, we returned to Honey Creek, and soon I started for home.

My uncle, Joseph Thompson, my father's brother, and his wife, and Gideon Long were with me. We came to General Allen's, at the east side of Fort Harrison Prairie, and from here we struck our course through the woods; sometimes we had a small trace and sometimes none. I, being a woodsman from my youth, led the way. We came that night to Mr. Ather's, at the three forks of Eel River. After this we had to camp in the woods. We found no settlers but Messrs. Lad and Whetsel at the bluffs of White River, some twenty miles below where the city of Indianapolis now stands; all was a vast forest at that time. We went on, camping in the woods during the night, until we came to Thornberry's, on Big Flat Rock, below where Rushville now stands. The next day we reached the settlement near Counersville, and from there to my brother Jeremiah's, and from there home. We found all well. During this tour I visited the widow of Elder James Lee. Lee had moved from Miami to Honey Creek, and had settled his family on new land, and died soon afterward.

Shortly after my return home I received a letter from Elder Isaac McCoy, requesting me to join him in his Mission, to come to his station and go with him through the Indian tribes to Fort Wayne, to which place he thought of moving his station, it being more convenient to the Indians. This trip he purposed to make in January. His solicitation took a deep hold on my mind; for I had viewed the missionary scheme only as being a benevolent plan for promoting the spread of the gospel. Whether or not it was a scriptural plan, I had not examined, nor once questioned. My mind became greatly impressed with the vast importance of preaching the gospel to ALL nations. And as these poor heathen savages were among us, and we had their land, and had greatly reduced their numbers, I felt that I would seize the opportunity now offered for carrying the gospel among them.

I soon made my resolution known to the churches, but I met with strong opposition from all the members. My house soon became crowded, day and night, with my best friends, often pleading with tears in their eyes for me not to go. They presented their own destitute condition, if I should leave them; and then they would point out all the horrors and privations that I must endure in spending a life among these superstitious and cruel barbarians. Elder William Jones, whom I regarded as an able

teacher in Israel, came, with several others, and stayed most of two days and one night. He labored hard to persuade me to abandon the undertaking, but all to no effect. No one said a word about the enterprise being wrong or anti-scriptural; all seemed to admit that the wonderful movements, the zeal and perseverance now so suddenly and so simultaneously springing up in the United States and Europe did surely give some strong indications that the time was at hand when the gospel was to be preached to every nation. All this was admitted, but I must not leave them to engage in this work.

This, I thought, looked selfish in them; for if the time had come for the gospel to be preached to those heathen people, some one must go and preach it, and I believed then, as I do now, that God fixes the field of labor for each of His called ministers, and in that place alone will they be profitable. And when He is about to move one of His ministers from one place to another, circumstances and impressions will open up the way. My mind was not decided as yet, as to whether I should finally engage as a missionary or not; this should depend on my impressions and their evidence respecting my duty as presented to my mind. I must be satisfied what was the Lord's will, and that should govern me without regarding ease or toil, privation or plenty; and for this knowledge I was seeking and praying, fully believing that God would direct me, for I was submissive to His will. This I told to all that talked to me.

My contemplated winter tour to Raccoon Station and thence through the Indian tribes in the Wabash Valley, and so on to Fort Wayne, where Elder McCoy designed a location, would probably show, by the next spring, what the prospect of success was, and what the path of duty would probably be. I met their arguments on privations and hardships by saying: "I was born in the new settlements of Kentucky, which the Indians called the 'bloody ground', in the year 1788, and I had been raised to the use of the rifle; the chase of the deer, the bear, the panther, and other wild animals, was the sport of my leisure hours; I had learned most of the habits of the Indians, and was used to camp life; I was a woodsman that could not lose my compass, and I did not know but the Omnipotent Disposer of events might have been superintending my education in the forest as a college far more suitable for an Indian missionary than any school of science could be. These matters time would doubtless develop." I further told my friends that I hoped to be found submissively waiting and observing the openings of Providence, prayerfully seeking for wisdom to understand them, and for the leadings of the Holy Spirit to guide me in the right way that I might not go astray, for "it was not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

Under these circumstances I made every arrangement to start. I had my horse shod, and all in readiness for the next Monday morning, and this was Saturday, the church-meeting day at Pleasant Run. I had bid the other churches "farewell", and to-day I bade this church "farewell" also, but expected to meet them again on Sunday.

I started home alone on foot, and as I was walking fast and in a thinking mood, suddenly these words came to my mind: "Who hath required this at your hand?" It thrilled through my whole frame and set me all of a shiver. I stood motionless, except a shaking from head to foot, with eyes bent toward the ground. I could not answer the interrogation, but this inquiry started calmly in my mind: "God 'worketh all things after counsel of His own will'; if He intends to send the gospel to the Indians, or to any other heathen nation, He has not only fixed the time for it but has arranged the system. And have you the evidence that this is either the time or the system which He hath appointed?" I saw myself on the verge of a precipice, and, like a blind man, was about to leap I knew not whither. I stood without moving hand or foot, and trembling with solemn awe! In my mind I said: "Lord, shall I know what Thy system is and whether this is it or not? O, Lord, teach me, and let not my feet be taken in the snare of the crafty." The reply to my mind was quick and satisfactory: "'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the

man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.’ Search it carefully and you will find the Lord’s plan.”

During all this time I stood like a statue in the road. It seemed to me that I must have stood there half an hour without raising my eyes from the ground or moving a limb. I often look back to that time as the most solemn period in all my life. When the last-mentioned text came so forcibly to my mind, I was fully satisfied that this new system of missions was of human origin. It was new, and I knew but very little about it; but the text relieved me, by fully convincing me that I would find the Lord’s plan plainly set out in the Scriptures. My trembling left me at once. I felt calm, but still I was anxious to discover the Divine system for the spread of the gospel among the heathen. I proceeded homeward with my mind at ease, and I have never felt that sort of mission fever since. I got home, and every hour of time that I could spare was devoted to this subject. The next day I published a renewal of all my appointments at the three churches, and that I had abandoned my journey, at least for the present. I read the commission which Christ gave to His disciples with close attention, and found it definite, special, and limited. Definitely: “Preach the gospel”, not anything else, but the gospel alone. Specially: “In all the world”, and “to every creature”, not to the dead nor to those in purgatory and hell. It is limited: “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” and nothing more. Here is the boundary line in teaching; teach all, not a part, but “all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” No more than what Christ had commanded them were they commissioned to teach to any one; therefore those who teach such things as are not commanded by Christ go beyond their commission, and are rebels against the King of Zion, and prove themselves impostors and not the ministers of Christ. This great and well-defined commission, as given by Christ, was also given to special characters, not to any or all promiscuously, or to any who claim it, but exclusively to His disciples.”

A disciple is one who is under the government, instruction, and tutelary discipline of a teacher, whose lessons, commands, and instructions, the disciple is bound to obey and observe strictly. To these disciples, and such as these only, did Christ give the commission, showing them the obligations they were under to obey strictly and faithfully all they were to teach, and then to stop where His command stopped. This being an arduous and responsible work, He fortified them by declaring that all power, both in heaven and earth, was in His hand, and that He would be with them through all their course, in the trials and afflictions attendant on the discharge of this commission.

To supply them with the proper spiritual gifts for their work, the Holy Spirit was promised them; and they were not to engage in the work until they received those gifts, which would not be until he was glorified. Then the Comforter would come and abide for ever with them, and bring to their memory all things that He had said unto them, which things they were to teach all nations to observe. Christ was a Baptist, and His disciples were Baptists. John the Baptist, who was sent of God to baptize with water, received his authority from heaven and not from man. He baptized Christ and perhaps all His disciples. Christ perpetuated this ordinance by the commission given to His apostles; and He told them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were “endued with power from on high”, and then they were to begin their mission. This endowment they received on the memorable day of Pentecost, which may be regarded as the day of the inauguration of Christ as King of His visible kingdom. His church on that day began its administration as the executive authority of that kingdom. The apostles then received the requisite gifts for their work, and the evangelists for theirs, and all pastors, teachers, and exhorters, and even lay members, received theirs. This was the church the Lord added to daily, such as He would have to be saved. This was a Baptist Church or, at least, a church composed of believers who were all baptized. Peter had commanded: “Be baptized, every one of you;” then “they that gladly received His word were

baptized.” These were added to the hundred and twenty disciples, making about thirty-one hundred and twenty in all. Peter, standing up in the midst of the multitude, referred to the prophecies of Joel and David, to prove that this day, with the events then transpiring, were matters of prophecy, in attestation of the exaltation of Christ as a king at God’s right hand. But no prophet that I could find, in speaking of this day or its events, had ever spoken of it as a day in which even one dead sinner would be quickened to spiritual life; but they had all spoken of it as a day in which the Lord would pour out His spirit and its gifts, upon His servants and upon His handmaidens, and they should prophesy, and there would be signs and wonders in earth and heaven, and dreams and visions among the young and old of Zion.

These were the blessings spoken of in connection with this day of Pentecost. So the events of the day corroborated the prophecy, for the Spirit was poured out upon God’s people abundantly. The hundred and twenty disciples, who were in waiting for this outpouring of the Holy Ghost, made the first class of attendants; the second class were those devout men from every nation, who had been taught the folly and idolatry of the heathen nations, and, under a thorough conviction that the God of the Hebrews was the true God, had abandoned their native lands and national religions, and, as proselytes to Judaism, were dwelling at Jerusalem, where the law and the prophets and the psalms were deposited, and where these oracles of Jehovah were read and expounded every Sabbath day. The rabble of unbelieving Jews constituted the third class, which, perhaps was the most numerous.

The Spirit came visibly as cloven tongues of fire on the first class, and then Peter arose, full of the Holy Ghost, and began his work by teaching the devout proselytes to understand the prophecies of Joel and David. He proved the resurrection and glorification of Christ, and showed that this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which they now both saw and heard, was the fulfillment of the promise which Christ made to them, and for the fulfillment of which they, according to His command, had been tarrying at Jerusalem. When Peter had thus clearly answered their previous inquiry: “What can these things mean?” these devout men were pierced in their hearts, and with a full conviction of duty, and an unerring willingness to obey and perform all that this exalted King might require of them as His subjects, they cried out to Peter and the other of his associates: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter replied: “Repent”—that is, leave Judaism as you formerly left heathenism, “and be baptized, every one of you,” openly putting on Christ as your Saviour, as your King and Lawgiver, “and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then they that gladly received the word were baptized.”

Here I saw a sample of the mode of bringing into the true visible church or kingdom of Christ, His people of all nations. There was no moneyed board, nor anything in the least resembling the present modern missionary enterprise, or any of its kindred institutions. I read on, still more and more confirmed. Another example was Peter’s mission to the house of Cornelius, a devout man whose prayers and alms had come up before God as a memorial, and to whom God sent an angel, who directed him to send to Joppa for Peter; and, in the meantime, Peter, by the vision on the house-top was supernaturally prepared for this event. So far from Peter being sent by any board or society, the church at Jerusalem really called him to account for going to Cornelius. I still read on, more and more, delighted with God’s plan and its success, as its glories and systematic harmony opened to my mind. When I came to the conversion and call of Saul, and read his apostolic or missionary commission to the heathen, I found the whole divinely-arranged plan fully and practically exhibited. The contrast was so obvious in every point as to show clearly that they could not both be from the same source.

If the plan adopted by the apostles, by which Paul was sent forth to the heathen (Gentiles) is Christ’s plan, then the opposite (the modern plan of missions) is antichrist’s. Paul was sent directly by Christ; the modern missionary is sent directly by a board of missions. The field of labor for Paul was specially

pointed out by Christ; the field of labor for the modern missionary is specially pointed out by the board. The support and defense of Paul was Christ alone, Who said: "I have appeared unto thee to make thee a minister and a witness of the things thou hast seen, and those in which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and the Gentiles, to whom now I send thee." And Paul, referring to this sure support said: "Having received help of the Lord, I continue unto this day, witnessing to both small and great none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come." All this showed that Paul's commission and supplies were ample. The modern missionary goes forth under the pledge of the board, and is constantly complaining that his treasury is exhausted. Paul's mission was successful, and his supplies were abundant. The modern missionaries never have enough, but are constantly crying "give, give!" Paul's success was so great that in a few years he had planted many churches through Asia, and we hear of his going to France and Spain. Historians say that he once visited London, and he said he preached the gospel to all nations. All these churches were flourishing, their members were all called in one hope of their calling, and they were one body and one spirit. They had "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and one God and Father of all."

The modern missionaries have such poor success that with the thousands sent out, and the millions of dollars expended, very little has been done; perhaps not even one well organized gospel church is to be found as the fruit of their labor. So far from Paul's being sent out and supported by the saints at Jerusalem, he raised money in the churches which he planted among the Gentiles, and conveyed it to the poor saints in that city! The modern missionaries never relieve the poor at home, but beg the last cent they can get from the poorest widow, or the hired orphan girl in the kitchen. Paul was separated to the work whereunto the Spirit of God had appointed or called him by express command; but the modern missionary is separated to the work whereunto the board has called him. The contrast might be still further demonstrated, showing these two systems to be opposite plans, and contrary to each other at every point. The first is of Christ directly; the other is its opposite and antagonistical to it, and is of course antichrist's. Of these facts I have been more and more confirmed. By this exercise of mind and this course of searching the Scriptures, my feet were saved from the snare, and my course of ministry settled for life.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

More Labor in the Ohio Churches: Lebanon Church

I CONTINUED preaching for these three churches, and the work of grace still progressed at Brown's Run, until the church had increased to about sixty members. Most of these were new converts, although many had also joined Elk Creek and Tapscott's Churches. During the progress of that gracious work of Divine power, a similar work was going on at Pleasant Run Church, where my wife and I held our membership. This revival was preceded by a general travelling in the minds of the members of the church, and seemed to spread gradually its influence, until sinners were awakened generally, so that I was compelled (as on a former occasion) to resort to the grove, as our place of worship would not accommodate the people. This work was one that was truly deep and solemn, adding many valuable members, who in after years became its pillars. During this time a similar demonstration of Divine power was prevailing in the churches of Westfork, Mill Creek, and Springfield. The additions were not so numerous, yet they were marked with the same deep and impressive solemnity, being free from exciting emotions. The work gradually developed. Christians were refreshed, and sinners were awakened and made to rejoice. Most of these were young and of middle age. The work continued about one year, during which time about one hundred were added to the churches.

About this time I received a call from the church at Lebanon, Warren County, Ohio, located about thirty miles from Cincinnati, and about twenty-five from where I lived. I told the committee that my time was all engaged: the first Saturday and Sunday in each month at Mill Creek; the second at Pleasant Run; the third at Springfield; and the fourth I divided among the three; thus giving to each church two Sundays in every three months; consequently, all my meetings in the Brown's Run vicinity had been on Wednesdays and Thursdays. I felt, however, some impressions to go to Lebanon, so I replied to the committee, that if their church saw proper to send a committee to these three churches, and they would release me on the fourth Sunday, that being the regular meeting-day at Lebanon, I would accept the call. A committee was accordingly sent, and the churches agreed to release me on that day, so I gave to the committee an appointment for the Friday following, at four o'clock, at one Alexander Van Pelt's, and at Lebanon the two days following.

The circumstances which led the Lebanon Church to call on me at this time were as follows: Elder Daniel Clark, a fatherly man and a good minister, had become old and infirm and unable to perform the duties of a pastor, especially as a baptizer, and had requested the church to release him and call another. The church refused to release him from the pastoral office, but was willing to call me as his assistant, and did so. This excellent old elder had been their pastor from the period of their organization many years before, and served them so faithfully that he seemed like a father to them all. They could not bear to dissolve the relation of pastor and flock while he lived. I heartily approved of their course and believed then, as I do now, that he was worthy of their marked respect.

When I attended the aforementioned appointment, at Van Pelt's, old Elder Clark was there. After the meeting was over and the crowd had dispersed, a conversation ensued. Some brethren had accompanied me from Pleasant Run, and others of the neighborhood stayed, and all joined in the conversation. Many questions were put to me on various points of doctrine, to all of which I answered as fully and copiously as I could, being a stranger to most of them, and but very little acquainted even with Elder Clark. The questions led on to the doctrine of the legal relation of Christ and the elect, and

their justification in Him. These points, about this time, were greatly agitating the minds of the members of the Baptist churches, and I had heard that old Elder Clark taught a different opinion to the one I advocated. After fully and freely expressing my views, I observed that I was taking too much of the time and would rather hear others talk. Elder Clark, who had been a silent listener, requested me to go on. Said he: "I have an ear for these subjects, and I wish you to explain your views of these points, in accordance with Christian experience."

I replied: "I believe that any creature who is led by the Holy Spirit is led according to that volume which was written by the inspiration of the same Spirit, and therefore the written word and a gospel experience will always harmonize. Men are by nature the children of wrath, both elect and non-elect. In this state they are dead, blind, deaf, and without understanding, or any proper knowledge of their condition, or of the true God, and the heavenly kingdom, or spiritual things. Christ is hid from them as a mediator, although in other things they may be both wise and prudent. When God quickens or gives eternal life, He opens the eyes of the understanding to correct views of the Divine character, glory, and goodness of God; and these views, contrasted with the sinner's own native depravity and degradation, show him his just condemnation. He sees that such an unholy sinner is utterly unqualified to dwell with a holy God. He begins to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to pant for the living God, and to inquire how to order his cause before Him.

"Now he flies to the law, and summons all his powers to keep its precepts, and resolves to reform and seek for pardon. Failing in all this, his burden and load presses him heavier and heavier; every prospect of hope fades away; death, judgment, and eternal despair are before him, and the justice of God and the terrors of His offended law, as the ministration of condemnation and death are upon him. But as he dies to the last hope of salvation, pardon, justification, or acceptance with God through his own works, he falls as a pensioner before Him and cries: 'Lord, save or I perish.' Christ, the end of the law, the way, the truth, and the life, is revealed to his faith. He sees in His blood and righteousness, and infinite fullness, the ground of his justification, acceptance or pardon, and he rejoices in hope of the glory of God.

"The relation he sustains to God as his Father, and to Christ as the mediator of his Father's will, may be illustrated by supposing me to be an heir to one dollar, bequeathed to me by the will of my father even before I was born, and the dollar deposited for safe keeping with the executor to be given to me at a set time, and under circumstances which he foreknew would surround me. We will suppose all this was unknown to me. I had never seen my father and knew nothing of his will. In process of time I became oppressed with poverty; I was willing to work but none would hire me at any wages. I began to beg, but no one gave me even a morsel to eat, or one drop to drink. In this forlorn condition I grew weak and faint, and fell helpless and hopeless and was dying of hunger and thirst, and in despair. One dollar would now relieve me, but I had not one cent. Death seemed about to fasten its fatal grasp upon me. A friend stood by me and held up a dollar and said: 'This is yours, bequeathed to you by your father, and this is the time I, as his executor, was to give it to you.' With what joy I would grasp the dollar! how I would love my father and admire the plan of his will! How I should love the executor, and admire his faithfulness! How I should desire to see and read the will; and O! how I should prize the relation in which I found myself standing to such a father, and to such an executor, and for being known and blessed in such a will."

The old elder burst into tears, saying: "That is the doctrine I love and believe, and have loved ever since I knew the plan of salvation. Is that the doctrine preached by Elders Lee and Gard?" I replied that it was. He said that he had not so understood them. I replied that they were merchants who dealt by the

wholesale, but I am a retail dealer and so deal out by the small. Elder Clark became fully settled on these points of doctrine, which removed his last objection to my becoming his assistant. The next day was their church meeting, when I became Elder Clark's assistant for one year.

On going to attend the next meeting there I went from Banker's Mill on the Big Miami, and the road being very intricate I missed my way and did not arrive until just as Elder Clark was about to read his text. As I stepped in, he called on me to come into the pulpit. I requested him to go on, as I preferred to follow him. While sitting in the pulpit I felt some strange impressions. A child was crying near me, and as I looked toward it, my eye was attracted by a young woman who was sitting by the mother of the crying child. Why it was I cannot tell, but I felt an assurance that she was one of God's elect and would be gathered into His fold. She seemed careless and indifferent and was an entire stranger to me, yet those impressions were strong and irresistible. When the elder closed I followed him, after which I read a hymn and gave the book to the singing clerk and sat down. I saw that this young woman had been weeping. She wiped her eyes and commenced singing. She came to the verse:

*My faith would lay her hand,
On that dear head of thine;
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.*

At these words she dropped her head and wept like a child. The good work was now begun in her. Her name was Elizabeth Eddy, and she was the daughter of Joseph Eddy, one of the elders of the Presbyterian Church in the town. He lived at the crossing of Turtle Creek, two or three miles below town. They were a good and wealthy family. I continued to attend this church every month, and still saw this young lady every meeting. I saw that she was deeply and solemnly impressed, though I had never spoken to her.

About this time Elder Clark was prostrated by a paralytic stroke, which greatly injured his mind and impaired his speech so that he could not attend any more meetings. Although he lived many years afterward he never attended but one meeting after his first shock, nor was his mind or speech ever restored; yet on religious subjects his conversation was deeply interesting and edifying. Brother Drake, a sound Baptist, and his wife lived about four miles from Lebanon, in a little village called Deerfield, on the Little Miami River. This man and his wife had letters from some sister church, but had never joined since they came to this place although it had been several years. He came to Lebanon and requested me to hold a Sunday evening meeting at his house, after preaching at Lebanon, each month. This I agreed to do and published it. I saw full evidences of a work of grace silently but gradually progressing. The congregation became very large and solemnly attentive, and many were deeply affected. The church was revived.

After the next meeting closed, a request was made for me to make an appointment on the Friday evening before the next meeting at Lebanon, at the house of Mr. Joseph Eddy. It surprised me that a Presbyterian should make such a request. From the time I had first noticed his daughter I had a desire to talk to her on the exercises of her mind, but had never spoken to her, nor did I know any other member of the family. I readily published the appointment and thought the way was open for me to converse with the young woman, for I had observed such a visible change in her countenance, from a look of gloom and despair to that of peace and hope, that I was very anxious to speak with her. The time of the meeting came on and doubts began to arise like this: "This leading Presbyterian has showed great friendship to me in requesting me to make this appointment at his house, and now if I should find his daughter to be a gospel subject for baptism, and I should lay this duty before her, perhaps her father

would be offended, and, with plausible reason, think me unfriendly, fancying that I had taken an undue advantage of his invitation. I am not willing to give any just ground to any one to think me an intruder, but should I introduce the subject of baptism to this man's daughter, it would look quite impolite, and he might think it an insolent return for his friendship." The more I thought on this matter the greater the embarrassment was magnified in my view, although I had resolved to leave it all to such circumstances as might arise during my stay at his house.

When I arrived I was received with marked attention and cordiality. A large crowd of people were in attendance, and we had a very solemn and interesting meeting. After preaching was over and the people had dispersed, and the family were all seated in a large parlor, the old gentleman introduced a social conversation which soon convinced me that he was a well-informed man, and by his familiar manner, soon changed my feelings of being a stranger and a Baptist in the midst of a Presbyterian family, to the feeling of being at home. He was sound in doctrine, and on experience he spoke as if he had traveled my road and knew the land-marks. After some time I asked him if there were any "dryland Baptists" in his neighborhood.

He replied after some hesitation: "There are some Baptists among my neighbors, but 'dryland Baptist' is a denomination of which I never heard."

I then said: "We Baptists use this term to designate such persons as have been taught by the Holy Spirit to know that they are poor and helpless sinners, justly condemned by a righteous law, and have no power to help themselves. Having received faith as a fruit of that same Spirit, to lay hold of Christ, the end of the law, they rejoice in Him as their Sayiour; but though they have believed Him to be worthy of their obedience, and have found baptism to be one of His positive commands to all believers, and have often felt more or less impressed on that matter, yet, in consequence of doubts of their own fitness, or their pride, or some other cause, they have never been baptized. Of course they are not Baptists, but we speak of them as 'dryland Baptists,' and I did not know but I was in the house of just such a man."

At this he dropped his head for a little, then looked up and said: "I do hope I have felt and seen myself to be a helpless, guilty, and justly-condemned sinner; and I also hope that I have received some comfortable evidences that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven my sins. In this faith and hope I do sometimes rejoice; but often I am filled with doubts and fears, and walk in darkness. I have thought much about water baptism, but have finally thought the virtue was not in the water, nor in the manner of its application, and so I became a Presbyterian, and for a number of years I have been a member of that church."

"My friend," said I, "if you were to tell your daughter to make you a cup of tea, and forthwith she went and made you a cup of coffee, would she have obeyed you any more than if she had done nothing at all? Water, both in quality and in quantity, was as good in the coffee as in the tea; but the essence of the obedience is in the authority from whence the command came and in the command itself, and neither sprinkling nor pouring is baptism in any language, any more than coffee is tea. I will just leave this for your consideration."

After some further friendly conversation I turned to his daughter, who was sitting beside a stand some distance from me, and said: "I know your mind has for some time been very much exercised on religious subjects, and probably you have found rest, and feel a desire to relate to some one your feelings. If so, just begin where the Lord began with you, and give us a history of the manner in which your mind has been led. I shall be pleased to hear it, and if I can help you in deciding on the nature of your case, I will try honestly to give you the best counsel that I can."

She then began at the very day that I had first noticed her, and went on and related as clear and thorough an exercise as any one could ask for. Her father sat and wept like a child. I asked her if she had felt it to be her duty and wish to unite with some church. She said she had felt such a wish.

Said I: "There are many denominations of professed Christians around us; to which of these does your mind lead you?"

She answered very promptly, "If ever I join any church it must be the Baptist."

I asked her if she would not feel bad to go alone to the Baptist Church, as her parents were both Presbyterians, and, of course, would go to their church.

Said she: "I cannot help that."

Her father then raised his head, the tears flowing down his cheeks, and said: "My daughter, I have known for some months past that you were very deeply impressed in mind, and have desired to hear you talk; and now, for the first time, I have heard you, and I do rejoice and thank God to hear you, with such clearness, give evidence that you are 'born of God'. Now, my daughter, do not confer with flesh and blood. Let father and mother, sisters and brothers go where they please, but you should serve and obey your Lord, Who has done such great things for you. I give you my free consent to be baptized, and my prayers for your happiness. Go to the Baptist Church if your mind leads you there, and I will make it convenient for you.

I then said to him: "I do rejoice, sir, to find you so friendly; you have my thanks for your proffered consent to your daughter's baptism, which is all that she could ask of you except the more potent prompter-that of a father's example. I am reminded of an illustration an old minister once gave in showing the power of a father's example over his child.

"A boy was sent into a field to bring some pumpkins. He took a stick sharpened at both ends, so as to carry a pumpkin on each point. He came to the first pumpkin and stuck the stick through it, but pulled it out again, and then went to a second and stuck one end of the stick through that, then went to a third and stuck the other end of the stick through that, and then balanced these two pumpkins across his shoulder and started home, leaving the first pumpkin he had pierced lying in the field. On being asked why he left the pumpkin after sticking it, he replied that his father always did so. I thought, perhaps, your daughter might think that disobedience was perfectly right, because her father had set the example. The power of a kind and affectionate father over an obedient child, by example, is far beyond that of precept."

The old man wept like a child. The conversation went on very agreeably until a late hour, before we retired. I had observed, that during the time of Elizabeth's relation, and at different parts of the conversation, the old lady and younger daughters were deeply affected, but remained silent listeners to all that was said. In the morning all was friendship, and most of the family went with me to meeting. I was satisfied that I had given no offense. Some were received for baptism that day, for the good work was progressing, and some were received and baptized each month. The next month came round, and Joseph Eddy, his wife, and his daughter Elizabeth, and a younger daughter, were all received and baptized with others. This old Presbyterian afterward became clerk of the church, and one among its leading business members. I subsequently baptized two more of his daughters and one of his sons.

About this time, on a Sunday, after meeting at Lebanon, as I rode on my way to Brother Drake's, who lived at Deerfield, a man came out of a lane and joined me. After the first common salutation I put the common Arminian question to him:

“Stranger, have you got religion?”

“No, sir,” said he, “not yet.”

Said I, “Do you think it worth having?”

“Yes, sir,” said he, “I believe it is.”

“Do you think you could get it if you were to try?”

“Yes, sir, if I should go at it in earnest I could, of course.

“Could you get it in one month by doing your best all the time?”

“Yes, I think I could.”

“Do you not think that religion would be worth more than any thing you could possibly get in one month, at any other business?”

“I believe it would.”

“Then,” said I, “surely wisdom would dictate to you the propriety of making this the month for the trial. Life is uncertain to us all, for it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment; and it is an awful thing to die without religion. If we should both live another month, and I should be here again, and you should do your best and get religion, you could tell me all about it, and I do love to hear young converts talk. Will you now agree to do your best this month?”

He said he would. We talked until we reached the place of meeting. The next month we met at the same place, and I renewed the same inquiry.

“Stranger,” said I (for I had not learned his name), “have you got religion?”

“No, sir,” said he, “my business has kept me so constantly engaged that I have neglected my duty too much.”

“Then,” said I, “you have not done your best yet, and another month of precious time is gone for ever. It will be a great mercy bestowed if we should live another month. Will you now begin afresh, and make the getting of religion your first business, so that all other engagements, being of an inferior nature, must be suspended if they stand in the way of this great leading pursuit, seeing you admit that it is worth more than all other things?”

“Yes,” said he, “I believe it is; and I will do my best for this month, and not be led off by any other things.”

I replied: “Do your best this month, and remember that half work will not do. The whole heart, and mind, and strength, must be in the work.” We continued the conversation until we reached the place of meeting.

The next month came and we met again at the same place. I put the question: “Have you now got religion?”

He answered: “No, sir; and I fear I never shall.” He burst into tears. I paused for a moment and asked him what was the matter, and what had hindered and discouraged him.

As soon as he could control his feelings, he said: “I fully intended to do my very best for the month, as I said I would; and I commenced, but soon found that I could not do my best if it were to save me. You said half work would not do, and the whole mind, and heart, and strength must be engaged; but, sir, I cannot control my mind nor get it engaged in the work at all. It is constantly flying from one evil and

presumptuous thought to another. The more I try to engage it, the more it wanders from all that is good. My heart seems to be more wicked, hard, and deceitful than ever before; and on these accounts I cannot do my best, and fear I never shall. Can you tell me what to do?"

Said I: "My friend, yours seems to be a very bad case; you admit that you can never get religion except you do your best, and now, after a trial of two months, you seem to think your chance even worse than it was at the start. If you are fully convinced that, with such mind and heart as you say you have, and that you cannot control them or engage them in the work, and cannot possibly do your best without them, and that if your salvation depends upon your doing your best (and you can not do that), the case looks next to hopeless. Perhaps as a last effort, you had better go humbly to God, and confess to Him that, with such a wicked heart, and such a wandering mind and presumptuous thoughts as you have, you can not do your best. Plead humbly and fervently before Him to enable you to do your best. Try this plan for another month, and add to it every plan of doing which your own mind may suggest, but be sure that all you do is done in faith, humbly and fervently. If we should live another month, and should meet again, you can tell me what advance, if any, that you have made."

So our conversation ended for the time. Although he seemed much discouraged because he could not do his best, I felt strong hope that the light of the Holy Spirit was within him, showing him the depravity of his corrupt nature, and the impossibility of salvation on a system of works, or of a sinner ever obtaining it on the plan of doing. The month passed away and we met again as before.

Said I: "The month has passed and we still live to meet again. Have you got religion yet?"

With despair in his countenance he said: "No, and I never shall. I think I am a lost and helpless sinner. There is no help for me. I have tried to plead with God to help me to do what I found (and confessed) that I could not do of myself; but I could no more pray humbly and fervently with faith than I could do all the other good things which I had been trying to do. It came into my mind," continued he, "that there was no mercy for me, and therefore I could never perform even one of those good things, and it was not worth my while to try any more; but still my load of guilt, a sense of the hardness of my heart, and the heinous nature of my sins of thought, and all my wicked doings, oppressed me more and more. I do now believe that my sins are so many and so great that I deserve nothing better than a portion with the lost. This is my present condition. Do you think there is any hope for me?"

I replied: "My friend, upon the plan you have been trying, your case is indeed hopeless, for by the deeds of the law none can ever be justified; and yet, strange as it might seem, it is true that men do, and will continue to, believe that they can and must do something to get religion, as they call it. I saw, when we met the first time, that you were strongly attached to that plan. I did not wish to debate that question with you, but to try to get you to test your powers, and if it pleased the Lord to show you your depravity, you would need no further evidence to convince you that salvation is by grace. God alone can teach His children to understand this plan, and give them faith in it, and every man thus taught of the Father cometh to Christ and is saved. I hope you are now under the true Teacher, and will both hear and learn of the Father. Come to Jesus Christ, 'who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption', and in Him you will find redemption, 'even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.' In Him there is salvation, and in none other. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The conversation ended here.

At the next meeting, at Lebanon, I saw this friend with a countenance that indicated a mind at ease. After preaching, the church being organized for business, and the opportunity offered for the reception of members, this man arose and walked around to the farther side of the room and gave his hand to his wife, and they came hand in hand before the church, related their experiences, and were cordially

received. Now, for the first time, I learned his name. It was Edward Dunham. This man gave an unusually clear account of his travail of mind and death-like struggle under a legal or law-work effort to obtain acceptance with God. He sought to obtain pardon by some works of his own, until the last hope of salvation on that plan yielded up to despair. Then Christ, “the way, the truth, and the life”, with His fullness of grace and glory, appeared for his relief, and in Him he found comfort, peace, and an assuring hope. He continued a sound, orderly, and useful member of this church until his death, which took place some years afterward.

The good work was still progressing, and some were baptized nearly every meeting for over a year. Then the excitement gradually wore away. The church remained in peace and union, our meetings were largely attended, and occasionally another convert was received. The church called me for another year. I continued preaching for this church, and Pleasant Run, and West Fork of Mill Creek.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Controversy at Sugar Creek Church Concerning Conditional Salvation

ABOUT this time an Elder John Mason, who had preached for many years to the edifying of the churches, embraced the doctrine of an universal atonement, with a special application of its benefits to the believer, upon the conditions of repentance, faith, and obedience. He was the pastor of a small church called Sugar Creek, in Montgomery County, in the vicinity of a small town called Centerville. Many of the members could not receive these new ideas, and finding this had become the leading topic of all his sermons, the dissatisfied ones began to cast about in their minds to find the best way to get out of their difficulties in a peaceable way, so as to make no trouble in the church. They formally resolved to call for letters of dismissal, to join a small church under the care of Elder Jacob Mulford, with whose ministry they were highly pleased, and although the distance was some greater to go to that meeting than to Sugar Creek, at least to some of them, still they were willing to travel it.

Another consideration had its influence in this decision. Elder Mulford's Church was a small one, while Sugar Creek was large; they hoped, therefore, to be of more use to the little, weak body assembling at Tapscott's meeting-house than they could be to Sugar Creek, which was not only large but had many old and able disciplinarians in their number. This plan was agreed upon, and if their letters were granted they would leave in peace, and as both churches were in the Miami Association, they would make no bar of fellowship in consequence of the doctrine preached by Elder Mason, as they would not be directly compelled by a rule of order to sit under it. They accordingly made their request for letters. The majority regarded this request as a gross violation of good order, and appointed a committee to labor with these members, and to cite them to attend the next monthly meeting and answer to this complaint. All this was attended to, and the next meeting came. The withdrawing members being present were called upon to answer to the charge of disorder, to which they pled that letters had been granted in similar cases. They further said that Elder Samuel Jones, in an able treatise on Church Discipline (which they believed had generally been sanctioned by the Baptists), stated that where a member of one church became specially attached to and edified by the minister preaching for a neighboring church of the same faith and order, and no other charge being at the time against the applicant, it would be no disorder to grant a letter of dismissal, permitting such member to place his membership in the church where he could best enjoy the gospel ministry.

Again (they urged), "We have not found any command or rule laid down in the Scripture binding any believer to be a member of the nearest church to his residence; therefore, if any one has a choice, even though he has to go farther to meeting, he certainly possesses the privilege and right to do so. We did not think that barely asking for letters was such an offense. We only designed to join another church in the same association, where we would live in the same general union; and it might be for the mutual comfort of us all, especially as the one we wish to join is a small, weak church." In conclusion they said: "These are our reasons for our request; we thought they were good ones; but if the church think differently they must refer us to their order and scriptural warrant and we will bow to it."

The church urged that they should give other reasons. They insisted that they had already given, as they believed, sufficient reasons, and if it were disorderly to plead as they had done, to go further in the

same course would only be adding disorder to disorder, and could do only harm instead of good. I think another committee was appointed to see them separately. However, it was so managed as to compel these members to confess that some points in Elder Mason's doctrine of late were contrary to their views, and that they were not edified in hearing him preach, and they thought they could be much better satisfied and edified in that (Tapscott's) church. This was construed to be charges against the elder, and they were called upon to specify the points of doctrine they dissented to. This they objected to do, and contended that they had been forced to do what they had done; and now to be compelled to lay in specific charges against certain points of doctrine preached by Elder Mason, was contrary to what they considered to be good order and would have a disastrous effect upon the peace of the church. The demand was again made, and they finally defined the points to which they objected, but still said that if letters could not be granted them they would submit and live in peace and union.

I cannot now give all the objectionable points in the order of their arrangement. The principle objection was that the elder taught that the atonement, or death of Christ, was not specially for the elect, but an equivalent for sin, and would be applied to any sinner on the conditions of becoming a believer. He said that it was not the death or the blood of Christ simply being offered for men, but the application of it to the believer by the Spirit that justified him, and that the sacrifice of Christ was an equivalent for the sins of the whole race of man, but would save none until applied, and would be applied to none but a believer. Man had power to repent, obey, believe, and do all that was required of him, and neglecting to put this power into action was the ground of his condemnation. This he called a physical power, but there was another which he called a moral power, which man had lost. This last power, he said, governs the will, the affections, etc. So while they had all the physical powers requisite to serve God and obtain acceptance with Him, yet for want of moral power, or the power of the will and affections, the power of volition of mind, the physical powers were not brought into requisition, and judgment and condemnation passed because of neglecting to obey God's commands with the physical abilities which all men have. This point the elder illustrated by the following case: "Every man in the world is just as able to keep God's commands and be saved, as a man with plenty of money in his pocket is able to pay his debts. The reason that he does not pay is not because he cannot, but because he will not."

The above outline substantially embodies the points of doctrine objected to. The specifications were drawn up and presented, and the points came under debate. The elder admitted that he did believe and had preached the doctrine set forth in the specifications, and had used the case referred to as an illustration of it, and that he now saw nothing erroneous in it. He labored hard to defend all the points objected to, and a large majority of the members of the church sustained him. From this time forward the parties were distinguished by the names "Majority" and "Minority". The case was laid over from month to month for a long time; the minority protested against many acts and decisions of the majority on points of order as violations of their rules of decorum and also the Scriptures. The difficulties multiplied and grew worse and worse. The minority urged upon the majority to call a council from a number of sister churches to examine their protests, both in doctrine and order, and decide which of the parties were the church (if either was), and try to settle the difficulty, for in their present state of excitement and undue prejudices, they were all the time getting further apart. The majority refused all such propositions.

At length the minority claiming to be the true church upon the original platform of faith and practice, as set forth in the articles of faith and rules of decorum, held a meeting and agreed to call on the sister churches to send them counsel, but before doing so to send a request to the majority to join with them in calling a council, before which each party should have equal rights to bring in all questions they

might deem proper, and explain all matters in dispute between them. This was all rejected by the majority, and the minority proceeded to call on a large number of churches for counsel. A large council met and was organized by choosing a moderator and clerk. The copies of the whole proceedings of the church, with the articles of faith and rules of decorum, were then laid before the council, and as much of their business had been done by writing, all this was also submitted to the council. They sat until late in the night, and finally unanimously decided that, according to the testimony before them, the minority stood upon the original platform of the church, but as the majority refused to participate in any way in the matter before the council, they advised the moderator to go in a Christian-like manner and propose to unite in jointly calling another council, where both parties as equals could be fully heard. This advice of the council was fully complied with, and the majority also agreed, as the church had become two bodies, both claiming to be the Sugar Creek Church. The clerks of both parties signed the letters sent to the churches jointly asking for help.

The council assembled, and it was a large one. After becoming organized, the whole matter came in regular order under consideration-the church-book and all its accompanying documents, all the evidences and explanations of both sides, a lengthy defense by Elder Mason of his doctrine, all that each party wished to say on the case-and then it was taken up for decision by the council. All advice to the parties to try to settle the matter in a spirit of concession, forgiveness, and forbearance, was now unavailing. This council, like its predecessor, was unanimous in its decision, that in doctrine and order, the minority stood upon the original platform of the church, and were contending for the truth, but as all were very imperfect and so prone to err, the council advised that all the members should feel willing to forgive each other, and exercise much "long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace", and although the council had decided against the majority, yet it would be a subject of heart-felt rejoicing if both parties were satisfied with the settlement and advice so that peace should again be restored, and all were again living and walking in love and fellowship.

The matter lay in about this way until the next meeting of the Miami Association, when there came two letters, one from each party, each purporting to be from the church called Sugar Creek. After due deliberation the association decided to receive neither of the letters nor messengers at present, but to leave the question open for the churches to inquire into for one year. The association gave both parties advice to meet together, and as brethren to labor in the spirit of the gospel of peace, to live in fellowship with each other, to try to settle all their difficulties, and become one again in the bonds of Christian unity. According to this advice the minority proposed to meet and labor for peace, but the majority refused to make any such trial; and so the matter remained until the next session of the association.

Two letters were again presented, as on the previous year. The association deferred any action on the case on that day, except to appoint a committee to inquire into the matter and ascertain the probability of a settlement of the pending difficulties, and to see if any new light on the subject could be obtained, and report on the next day. On Saturday the committee reported that nothing new had come to light, and the churches had become satisfied that the majority had gone into great errors, in both doctrine and discipline, and that the minority was, in faith and practice, the regular Baptist Church of Christ, in order, and as such recommended the association to review their letter, and to decide that their messengers be entitled to their seats.

The association then called upon me to make a full statement of the proceedings of both the councils, as I had been the moderator of both, and presided over both their deliberations. I did so to the best of

my ability, whereupon the association received the letter of the minority, and gave their members seats in the body. Shortly after this was done a member of the association stepped out of the house and heard Elder Mason, in a warm conversation with William Gray, the preacher of the Presbyterian congregation in Lebanon, say that I had made false statements and had led the association to decide as they did. When Brother Ayers informed me, on his return back into the house, what he had heard, I arose and asked the moderator if I could be permitted to inquire on a question of order, which liberty was granted.

I then remarked that: "If a well-known person, who sustained a good character for truth and veracity, should accuse me of falsehood, and the person was not amenable to our church, although he had been, and was still, viewed by many as a Baptist, in such a case, what would be the orderly course to take to refute the slander and prevent the reproach? Would the naming of the offender, and proving that he had made such a statement, and then proving that the statements which I had made were true, be order?" The association decided that it would not be disorderly in such a case.

I then proceeded to say: "Since the decision of this association on the Sugar Creek case, Elder John Mason has asserted that I had made false statements, and so had induced the association to decide as they did; and as the elder's charge was public, I, therefore, request the association to hear the testimony, for if it had been misled by any false statements of mine, the association ought to know it, and reconsider the decision and, if necessary, reverse it." The association agreed to hear it all. I then proved by Brother B. Ayers that Elder John Mason had made the allegation complained of. I then called for the minutes of the two councils, and other documents, in proof of my statements, and the association put it on their minutes that I had fully proved what I had stated.

Soon after this I was called by the minority to become their minister. I have given a more minute account of this protracted difficulty, that all who read the narrative may see the unfavorable circumstances under which I commenced my labors as pastor of this small church. Their number was small, being considerably in the minority of the original church. They were without any meeting-house, as the majority claimed the building, and they would not contend about it; so we held our meetings in a barn during the summer season, and in some dwelling-house in the winter, until the church had built a good stone meeting-house in the town. Elder Mason continued to preach for the majority party, claiming still to be the Sugar Creek Church. All persons know that strong prejudices will always spring up under such circumstances, not only between the parties, but, more or less, it will affect the community; and in any neighborhood where the people have long been in the habit of going to a good meeting-house, they do not like to leave it and go to a barn or private dwelling-house. Under these discouraging circumstances I commenced with this little houseless church.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Full-time Labor in the Ohio Churches

I MUST now return to Lebanon. The good work was still gradually going on here, and after I had preached one year for the church, and there being no prospect of Elder Clark's ever being able to preach any more, the church insisted that I should move to Lebanon and take the pastoral care jointly with Elder Clark, although there seemed to be no probability of his ever being able to be at meeting with them. This call took a deep effect on my mind. I had still attended the three churches, Pleasant Run, Mill Creek, and Springfield, monthly. One week of each month I attended a meeting on the south side of the Little Miami River, where a good work of grace was going on, and a number were now waiting for an opportunity to be baptized. Finally, seven or eight old members having settled in that vicinity, and holding letters, were constituted; and to them were added a large number by baptism, so that this soon became a prosperous and growing church. I continued to attend them monthly, on a week day, as all my Sundays were taken up. I thought that, under these circumstances, if I should move to Lebanon and still continue to attend all these churches, it would greatly increase my traveling labor. So before giving my final answer to this call I took a tour westward, through Indiana, as far as the Wabash River, which I struck near the mouth of Raccoon Creek, and ascended it to the mouth of Sugar Creek, then turned down the Wabash, by Terre Haute, to Honey Creek and Turman's Churches, and here I spent some days preaching. This was a new settlement, and many of the members of these churches were either those I had baptized in the State of Ohio or brethren with whom I was well acquainted in that state. After spending some days here, I went on down the river, through Vincennes, and on to a church not far from Evansville, on the Ohio River. Here I remained and preached a few days. I then crossed the Ohio River into Kentucky and spent some days in the Green River country, and then I went on to Bardstown, and then to Frankfort and Covington.

This tour was performed in the month of January. The weather was extremely cold, and there were several heavy snow storms during the time, through which I had to pass. Part of the way was so thinly settled that I had often to camp in the woods at night. I had no previous appointments, and had to travel from one settlement to another, and there circulate my appointments, and when I had filled them, I would then move on to another settlement, and so on.

The day I came to Covington was extremely cold. The day has since been known as the "cold Wednesday". I found the river so full of floating ice that the ferryman refused to venture over to Cincinnati. I saw a boat starting out from the Cincinnati shore. I waited until it came over, and then got my horse in and we started across. Shunning very large pieces of ice, and, with poles pushing off the smaller masses and flakes, we made our dubious way, until we came near the Cincinnati landing, when a very large cake of solid ice struck the boat, and carried us below the landing before we could disengage the boat. We were carried far below with the heavy piece of ice, and the smaller pieces were crowded against the wharf, and flake upon flake was piled up until an embankment was raised so high that there was no possibility of getting on the land, and we were in constant danger of being capsized. Every man was to his pole. The stream was swollen, the current swift, and the ice, in very large cakes, pressed hard to the shore. The boat was jammed between the cakes, and a high ledge of ice was banked up against the shore. To push off the floating pieces of ice, and keep the boat from the shore, and push her up a strong current, full of small pieces of ice, was no easy matter. All worked for life, and finally

we reached the landing where the ice-ledge had been kept open. Here we got on land again. It was now after sunset, and I had traveled forty-two miles that cold day. Though I was now quite wet from the splashing of the water, I resolved to press on for home that night, which was about thirteen miles distant, and I did get home about ten o'clock. My ears, fingers and feet were frozen until they blistered. I found my family well.

The next evening, being tired and sore, I lay down before the fire to take the cold out of my system. I fell asleep. I dreamed that I was in the neighborhood of Lebanon, and traveling east on a newly-made road, which ran very straight and was quite wide, and every tree and log had been taken out of it. I saw that in the middle of this road was an old beaten track, very narrow and straight, and wore down as if it had been traveled a long time. I walked along in the old straight, beaten track, which appeared to be traveled only by footmen. While thus walking I became suddenly impressed that my life was in great danger, that a great persecution had broken out, that a large reward had been offered for my head, and that the woods were infested, on each side of the road, with men on the hunt for me, to take my life. I raised my eyes and saw, some distance before me, a large band of these men, near the left side of the road, and who were coming toward it. I thought they stopped and looked in every direction. I stood still with my eyes upon them; at length it appeared that they had seen me, for they hallooed loudly: "Catch him; that is the man." And I thought they started at full speed toward me, screaming and yelling, while their feet made a noise on the ground like a troop of horses. I suddenly took fright and turned to run, and to my satisfaction, soon found that I could easily outrun them all.

But my mind was arrested with the thought that this running was a reproach to the cause of God and truth; for if my work were done and my days ended, let me not run. God can and will sustain me while He has any use for me on earth; and, as I am now persecuted for the truth's sake, this may be the Lord's time, and place, and manner, for me to seal my testimony with my life. I stopped instantly, and looked at them as they were coming like a tempest. I faced them and dropped upon my knees in prayer for the Lord's will to be done with me, and that I should glorify His name, either by my life or by my death. I heard no more of them; and, after a short time, I opened my eyes, but could neither see nor hear anything of them.

Believing firmly, as I did, that God was glorified in my deliverance from these enemies, I arose up from my knees and resumed my walk as before. I had walked but a short distance until I came to the point of a hill, by a creek of beautiful, clear water. Here I began to lift with my hands some very large, flat rock with perfect ease. I thought they were six or eight inches thick and four or five feet square. When I had raised them on one edge I thought they were for a building, but I had no tools to break them to a suitable size. I then rolled one into the water, and immediately the rock broke into pieces, just the proper size for the building, and the sides were so straight, smooth, and square that no hammer was needed for their preparation. I continued to lift them, large as they were, and with perfect ease. As fast as I rolled them into the water, they would fall to pieces as before described. I was greatly delighted with this work. I thought in my dream that I soon had a large quantity of the best and handsomest building rock I ever saw. Presently some friend came along and began to help me. I stepped a little farther up the point, and found another such quarry, and I began to roll the rock into the water with the same result. I spoke to my friend and told him that these rocks were as good as the first, and they were abundant in different places in that hill.

I was greatly delighted with this work; but I dreamed it was all a dream, and that its interpretation was this: that I must soon pass through some sore persecutions on account of the doctrine which I preached, and the ordinances I practiced; but the Lord, in His own good time and way, would deliver me, and I

should see the church of God “built up of living stones, for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” With a full assurance and a joyful anticipation of the realization of this dream, or rather its interpretation, I awoke, believing firmly that it would be fulfilled.

The next morning I started to Lebanon to meeting, tired and sore from my journey and frozen flesh. I traveled along alone in the cold, pondering on my dream and its signification. I have never been much of a dreamer, but this dream and some others have made such deep and abiding impressions on my mind, that I have never forgotten them; but have surely seen them fulfilled. Perhaps the reader may think I am an enthusiast; be this so or not, I cannot see why God should not, by dreams or visions, communicate with His servants now as in former times. But I only state these occurrences as they took place, and Leave the reader to form his own conclusions. I will now go on with my narrative, and if the reader will keep my dream in his memory, and also its interpretation, he will be able to lay his finger on the events which I view as its fulfillment. In April I moved to Lebanon. My regular meetings had all been continued. At Brother Drake’s I still held meetings on Sunday evening as before mentioned. I continued to preach for the newly-constituted church south of the Little Miami River.

I will here relate one event, as it may be of interest to the reader. It took place at Lebanon. A lady, named Mrs. Wiles, who had led a female class for some years in connection with the Methodist Church, had become fully convinced of the errors of that church, both in doctrine and practice, and especially as to the practice of baptism, which she considered open rebellion against the ordinance of Christ. The result was she could live no longer with them. She went to the church of which she was a member, and told them plainly to take her name off their class-book, as she could not conscientiously be a member of that body any longer, and she had fully resolved in her own mind to offer herself to the Baptist Church, and if received by them she wished to make her home there.

At our next church meeting she, with several others, came forward. I told her to begin where the Lord had taught her to know and feel the weight of her sins, and give the reasons of the hope that was now in her. She was so deeply affected that she could utter but a few words. Presently her voice was lost in sobs and tears, so we had to wait for her to subdue her feelings, and again she would be overcome as before. These efforts were repeated a number of times. The house was crowded, and a number of the most prominent members of the Methodist Church were present. Their principal class-leader stood leaning against one of the columns which supported the gallery, for the seats were all full.

After she had made some fruitless efforts to proceed, the class-leader said to me: “You need not delay on her account, for she has long been a member of my class, and she is not fit to become a member of the Baptist Church.”

I turned to him and said: “Is not Mrs. Wiles a full and honorable member of what is called the Methodist Church?”

He answered: “Yes, sir.

“Has she not led a female class?”

He answered: “Yes, sir.”

“Has she not been for some years regarded as an orderly, pious, and godly woman, and as a female member highly esteemed?”

“Yes, sir,” said he.

“Then,” said I, “how much better, in your opinion, must persons be, before they are even fit to become members of the Baptist Church, than the most pious, orderly, and exemplary persons in the Methodist Church?” He said he did not know.

I replied to him that she would be able to talk directly, and then the church could decide whether she had the prerequisites for membership and gospel fellowship among us. Then I said to Mrs. Wiles: “Give us a relation of the way the Lord has led you, and why you have come to this church seeking a home, and why you have left the Methodist Society.” She now seemed perfectly composed in mind. Her relation was full and clear on all the points of Christian experience, and of faith, repentance, and a good hope through grace. Then she explained how she was taught by the Methodists, and how she fell in with them, and also how her mind had been exercised as to the doctrine, the ordinances, and discipline of the true church, all of which she found in the Baptist Church, but the very reverse she had found in the Methodist. These were her reasons for leaving them. She was cordially received and baptized, and long continued to be a sound, an orderly, and zealous member.

After some time this work gradually decreased. The church paid my house-rent, and furnished wood and provisions for my family, and I gave myself up to the work of the ministry. I now preached one Saturday and Sunday in Lebanon, one at Mill Creek, one at Pleasant Run, and one at Sugar Creek, and two days in each month at Wilmington, Clinton County, about twenty miles east of Lebanon, and also two days each month at the new church south of the Little Miami River. I spent the remainder of my time among different churches, and in going from place to place, and in writing a book entitled “Simple Truth.”

When this book came out, the persecution of my dream, above stated, began with great violence. Two learned ministers, one a teacher and the other a student in the college at Oxford, Ohio, together with the Oxford Church, opened the campaign by publishing a pamphlet as a review of my book, and a letter was written to the White Water Association in which, as well as in the pamphlet, my writings were misrepresented, and I was arraigned before the world and my brethren as a Brahmin, a Socinian, an Arian, a Sabellian, a believer in the Alcoran, in short, as a teacher of doctrines containing a mixture of all the ancient heresies which had troubled the church. Soon after these productions there came out another pamphlet by an Elder Fairfield, and afterward another by Elder Mason, of whom I have before spoken. These several publications, with the personal influence of many ministers and members of the Baptist churches, produced great excitement, and many misrepresentations were spreading through the country. From these circumstances the world, and more especially those of other denominations, felt emboldened to fall on me and to do all in their power to sink me if possible below recovery, and to load me down with reproaches and disgrace. The churches for which I preached and the Baptists generally, and the associations stood firmly by me. But some of them gave me very strong hits for being too sanguine in believing that patience, forbearance, and kindness on my part, and a calm and deliberate examination of the Scriptures and their plain teachings (on the points investigated in my book) by the friends and churches would bring me out all right.

I also published another book entitled the “Triumphs of Truth”. In this book I undertook to prove by Scripture language every disputed point in my first book. I published some letters to the Oxford Church and to the two ministers who had published the pamphlet in review of my first book, and I fully exposed their misrepresentations in an appendix. When this book came out it quieted the tumult. One of the ministers confessed his wrong, and the Oxford Church finally went down. The other editor of the review removed to Kentucky, and soon after died. Elder Mason lost his influence in Ohio and moved to Wayne County, Indiana, drew a small number from the Elkhorn Church into his views for a time, but he

and his party both finally came to the church and made a confession and were restored. He died an elder in the White Water Association.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Experience at an Association

THE time for the meeting of the White Water Association came on, and Elder Stephen Card and I, with several brethren, were appointed by the Miami Association to bear a corresponding letter to the White Water Association, to meet with the Franklin Church, Fayette County, Indiana, on White Water, some four miles below Connersville.

When on our way to that place, near Oxford, we met some brethren who began to urge on me to return home by all means, for a letter had been sent from the Oxford Church, and I was to be rejected from a seat in the association, and would receive no entertainment. I told them whatever treatment I might meet with I should go on and hand in the letter, and discharge the duties which the Miami Association had given into my hands; and then I should act as circumstances might dictate. We went on our way in rather a melancholy mood. I was a stranger and had never been at the church where we were to meet, and had attended the association but a few times. My acquaintance was very limited, either with ministers or members of that association, and I felt like a stranger in a strange land. I said to Elder Card: "I suppose I shall have to hunt for a tavern to get lodgings, and so we will be separated at night." He replied that our horses should not part. This was before I had published my second book.

When we came to the place, we found a very large crowd, and Elder Minor Thomas, of New York, was reading a hymn, preparatory to preaching the introductory sermon. We dismounted in the grove and were about to hitch, when an elderly gentleman, by the name of Pierce, a stranger to us all, but who knew me, came forward and intimated that he lived in the house on the bank of the river, the nearest house to the stand, "and," said he, "as your horses have traveled a good way, I will take them under my care, and you can walk backward and forth to the meeting, and let your horses rest. You can make my house your home." I thanked him and introduced Elder Card and the brethren, and said: "If you can take us all in, we shall be glad to accept your generous offer." He said he was prepared to receive all of us. I felt encouraged by this providence at such a trying moment, for, as such, I viewed it. We went up near the stand and heard a good sermon delivered by Elder Thomas, after which the moderator called for the letters from the several churches to be read. When Oxford was called for, many of its partisans went on the stand and others stood about it. The letter was very lengthy, and while it was being read the moderator said he believed such a letter as that ought not to be read on the stand. To this one of the authors of the review replied: "Let it be read; it is from one of our churches, and is well worth hearing." The moderator took his seat, and the letter was read. He then announced that the association, and all that were interested in the business department of it, would now repair to the house, and, after a short recess, preaching would recommence on the stand.

As we were going to the house, I was accosted by a stranger who seemed to know me. He said: "Ah, and are you here? At what time did you come? Did you hear that letter?"

I replied that I heard it all.

"And what did you think of it?"

"Why," said I, "I think they have put in too much powder, and have entirely overshot me; and, as their powder will be wasted by to-morrow, and so be found very scarce, they will undershoot me then, and so I shall not get hit at all."

He said: "May be so"; and turned away. After the association was organized, Elder Lewis Dewees was chosen moderator. The Miami letter of correspondence was the first called for. I arose and handed it in. It was read, and all the messengers were cordially invited to seats in the deliberations of the association. Here, I supposed, my seat would be objected to, and the investigation respecting me would commence; but not a word was said. I still waited until all the letters of the corresponding associations had been read and disposed of, and then I obtained the floor and said: "I rejoice to perceive, in the friendly reception you have given the letter from Miami, which I have handed in, abundant evidence of the harmony and uninterrupted brotherly correspondence that still exists among us. And now I have discharged the duties which my association required of me to do, and you, by inviting me to a seat with you, have showed your regard for the body which sent me here.

"Now I wish to call your attention to a letter from one of your churches, and which was publicly read on your stand this day, in which I am personally assailed as being a heretic, a Brahmin, a Mohammedan, and a believer in about all other species of heresy, both ancient and modern, which have ever troubled the church. I am personally attacked by one of the churches of your body; and yet I am sitting with you in council, without your offering any reproof, or any manifestation of your disapprobation of that church's course. If I am guilty of even one-half of what they have accused me of, I cannot be worthy of a seat with you in council, or of any other Christian body. If that church has basely misrepresented my writing, as I now charge them, then I cannot sit with them in this association. I say this only for myself, as an individual, and I add, upon my own responsibility, that I am ready to meet any committee that either this association, or the Oxford Church, may appoint. I think I can prove that all they have said in that letter about the heresies of my writing, are misrepresentations of my book. Therefore I cannot sit in this association until I know by some expressive act of hers, her disapprobation of that church and her letter. I, therefore, for myself personally and individually, decline taking a seat under present circumstances."

No one made any reply, and, for some time all was silent. Then a motion was made and carried to refer the Oxford letter and the whole matter to the committee on arrangement, so that it should come in as an item of business on the morrow. Thus the matter ended on Friday. Elder Card was appointed to preach on the stand first, on Saturday morning. After we went to our place of entertainment and had dined, Elder Card and I took a walk in a meadow. We both felt sad and gloomy.

After walking some time in silence I said: "Well, Brother Card, contrary to the wish of the Oxford combination, who did not intend that either of us should preach to the people from the stand where that letter was read, God has so ruled it that you are to preach to-morrow morning; and I do hope and pray that the Lord, who has called and sent you to feed His sheep and lambs, will be your present helper in time of trouble." He remarked that he was surprised at the appointment, "for," said he, "I plainly saw that neither of us was to be put on the stand, and the association was not to take any action on our case if they could prevent it, and so their letter would stand in full force, and the association, by her silence, would seem to endorse it. This was their policy, and yet I was appointed without any visible opposition. From the time it was announced that I was to occupy the stand I felt like Samson." He stopped suddenly, trembling with emotion.

I said that I was glad that he felt so strong, and added: "I do hope that your looks may not be timid."

Said he: "I feel very weak; it was not in regard to strength that I felt like Samson; but when he grasped the pillars he cried: 'Lord, help this once.' So I now pray, 'Lord, help this once, for I am not able,'" and he burst into tears. We both stood weeping for some time together.

At length I said: "My brother, these people have not so much against you as they have to the company you keep. I am the victim they came to sacrifice. Your doctrine, 'tis true, is the same as mine, but my book, they perceive, lays the ax at the root of 'Fullerism', which has long been their hobby, and they are now seeking for an advantage to prostrate the book and me both, not by any fair Scriptural investigation, nor by letting my book go before the people to speak for itself, but by that letter sent by the Oxford Church (the very seat of learning in the West) to the association. This is their policy to keep us both out of the stand, and prevent the association from taking any action on the letter, but let it all pass as though it were approved and endorsed by her. Then their condemnation of all the alleged heresies they have accused me and my book of advancing, will seem to be endorsed by the silence of the association, and by our being rejected from the stand. But I believe that the God who has committed to you a dispensation of the gospel of His grace has so far restrained the wrath of men that it shall praise Him; and prejudices that were intended to be fixed on the minds of the people, and especially on the churches and brethren, will in some degree be removed. Let them succeed as they may with me; I am in the hand of God in this matter; and, if it be His will that I should preach here, He will so have it. I shall submit and leave it all with Him, for I am far too ignorant and unworthy to dictate in such a case. I feel to say, 'Not my will, but thine be done, O Lord.'

When Saturday morning came we went to the meeting-house, and when the bill of arrangement of business was reported, received, and made the order of business for the day, not one word appeared about that letter. I then saw that it was to be passed over without any action of the association, unless it was to be called up by motion, if I should go to the stand to hear preaching. Soon a call came from the stand requesting Elder Card to go out, for that an immensely large crowd of people were in waiting to hear him. The moderator called for him to go and preach to the people. The elder came to me and got my Bible and hymn-book. I saw his countenance was unusually solemn. He walked out, and quite a number followed him. I kept my seat to watch the movements of the business. When I began to hear the loud, strong voice of the elder sounding aloud, my mind became deeply and powerfully impressed with a desire to know if the Lord was with him in his time of need. I could sit there no longer, and so stepped out and went near enough to the stand to hear every word. I saw at once that he was in one of his happiest moods of preaching. I stood by a tree until I felt as confident that God was with him for good, as I could have been had I seen His glorious presence with my natural eyes.

I then returned to the house, fully satisfied that God would in some way, beyond my comprehension, overrule this thing for His glory and the good of the church and His people. When the bill of arrangement had about gone through, Elder Thomas took me out and said: "That letter which was referred to the committee was not attended to as directed by the association, and if you wish it, I will bring it up by motion, after the bill has been gone through."

Said I: "I should surely feel much relieved to see the association act on the case." He replied that he would make the motion at the proper time. We then went into the house. When the ballots were cast for the preachers to occupy the stand on Sunday, I was truly surprised to hear my name announced as one of them, and that I had the highest vote. The rule was then that the one having the highest number of votes should preach last. At the proper time Elder Thomas made his motion, which was carried. Several persons said they did not know what the association could do in the case. The letter had been written by one of the churches, and she could write on any subject she chose. One minister said he did not see what I could wish the association to do more than she had done. She had invited me to a seat, and had appointed me to preach on her stand tomorrow, and he thought all that was enough, and he wished to

know of me what would satisfy me. The moderator then called on me to say what I wished the association to do in the case.

I then arose and said: "This association has heard that letter from the Oxford Church read publicly on her stand in a mixed assembly of people, both saints and sinners, believers and infidels, and in the hearing of both the messengers from the churches of your own body and from the wide range of your correspondence. I am a stranger among you; the attack was personal, and made before some thousands of people, charging me with almost every heresy that can be named. So here I stand as a condemned heretic, of the worst sort, by the authority of one of your churches. After all this, when I handed in the corresponding letter from Miami, that association was not accused by any church, and, of course, this association in receiving that letter, could do nothing else than invite its accidental messengers to seats with you. This was all done as a matter of course, and I, being a messenger, was, of course, included, as no personal objection was made.

"Now all this gave no expression of the mind of the association either for or against the course of that church or their personal attack on me as an incorrigible heretic; unless, indeed, their silence on the matter, and passing it over as though it were all right, be construed into an implied approbation of that church, and a justification of its course, as well as their belief that I am guilty of all the heresies which I have been charged with by that church. I saw this was the design of my accusers; for to avoid any investigation of the matter they raised no objection to such a heretic having a seat in council with them. This left me but one course to take. I refused a seat and charged them with base misrepresentations, and declared my readiness to substantiate my charge by a fair investigation. This was treated with silence, and the letter was handed over to the committee on arrangement, to be taken up in the order of business on Saturday. But this order of the association was strangely passed over without any notice whatever in the report of the committee, and the report thus deficient was made the business of the day. So that if Elder Thomas had not directly brought it up by motion before the association, I suppose that no expression would have been given nor any investigation entered into. And yet my accusers seem to suppose that the association has done all that she could do to satisfy me, because she received a corresponding letter at my hand, and also appointed me to preach on the stand on Sunday, and had excluded me from a seat in her council!

"Now, I am called upon to say what more I wish the association to do in the case. It has been said that a church has a right to write on what subject she pleases; then, if she chose, she can fill a long letter with slander, detraction, falsehood, and misrepresentation, and even presumption, blasphemy, and persecution, and yet, strange to add, the association cannot reprove or admonish a church of her body for sending such a letter to her! Every person must see the fallacy of such a position. I am disposed to be satisfied with as little as the nature of the case will admit. I do not wish to dictate to this body what they should do; but I will now propose to you that if by your inviting me to a seat with you, I am to understand that it is a full expression of your fellowship for me personally, notwithstanding all that the Oxford letter has said, and also that by your electing me as one to preach to-morrow, you mean to declare by this act that after all the grievous charges of heresy contained in that long letter from the Oxford Church, you still believe the doctrine contained in my book, and are willing to have it preached among you, or, by a resolution or motion send a reproof upon your minutes to that church for sending such a letter to you, and thus caution all the churches against sending any such letters for the future, and, in addition, grant me a certified copy of the letter, as it was personal, to take with me and use as prudence and circumstances may dictate, I shall be content." To this proposition the association

cordially agreed. The reproof and caution were spread upon the minutes of that session, and I got a certified copy of the letter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Sermon on Jesus' Eternal Natures Elder Thompson Vindicated

THE Sunday meeting was immensely large. I spoke last, taking for my text the words: "Philip began at the same words and preached unto him Jesus." I began by showing that the eunuch was on his return from Jerusalem, where he had been transacting some business for Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, and had probably got a copy of the prophecies of Isaiah, and the part he was now reading was to be found in the fifty-third chapter of these prophecies. The whole connection showed conclusively that the prophet was speaking of the Mediator in behalf of His people. I cannot now give an entire and correct synopsis of my sermon from memory, but I endeavored to show that in the Person of this Jesus were two whole and distinct natures, divine and human. In His human nature He was God's holy child Jesus, and in His divine nature He was God, to the exclusion of all persons real or imaginary, which were distinct from Him. In His holy, harmless, and undefiled manhood or humanity, He was set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was, and that His goings forth were from everlasting. This Jesus, the executor of the will of God His Father, in which will, testament, covenant, counsel, or by whatever appellation it may be expressed by the Mediator or executor, was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world. He was to be the head, the life, the shepherd, the husband, the prophet, the priest, and king of all His people. His members, His heritage and portion, yea, all His saints were given to Him, and chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, not indeed on account of some good in them or foreseen to be done by them, but they were so chosen that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love. To secure to them this high and holy destiny, God in His will settled an inheritance upon them, having predestinated them to the adoption of children, and so they receive the inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. This chosen people, these predestinated heirs, are given to Jesus, and in Him are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, according to that early choice and predestination of love by which they were chosen as His people, His portion, and the lot of His inheritance. Grace was given them in Him before the world began, and the great and precious promises or guarantees of God's will were ordained to their glory.

In this way I showed that God was from everlasting, God; and as such, was the testator of His own immutable will, covenant, testament, or counsel. Jesus was from everlasting the Mediator of that will, and in this legal and indissoluble relation to Him or in Him, believers are one with Him. He is the Head over all things to the church, and we, as members in particular, and members one of another, all fitly joined together and compacted by joints and bands, constitute the body of Christ and make up the fullness of His body. Thus all its members are complete up to the original or eternal measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ; and from His fullness He furnishes all of them with such gifts and blessings as would fit them for their respective places in His body, which they as members were to fill. So of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. Thus Christ was the Head of the church and the Saviour of the body. So there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God the testator is one; and His chosen heirs, as men, are now legal relations as joint-heirs with the man Christ Jesus, Who was appointed heir of all things. He, therefore, legally stands between God and these heirs in His will as Mediator, a relation He sustained to

them before time began. This Mediator was called Wisdom, because all the hidden wisdom of God's will was in Him, and in time He should make it known, just as He has done, as we may read in the eighth chapter of Proverbs. But when by this Wisdom God made the world, this Wisdom was called His Word; as it is said: "By the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing in the water and out of the water." This Word of God was that by which He produced all things and formed them according to His wisdom and by the word of His power. God put forth His wisdom and power in the creation and order of all things, in and through the medium of His Word; therefore as man was made a living soul, that is, a natural, accountable, and conversational being, he was to govern the lower world and all its hosts by His Word. God gave language to men by which to communicate with each other, and since this Mediator of God's will is the organ or medium of God's communication to man (and that commonly in language), it is proper that this medium should be called the "word of God".

Moreover, all the volume of words of truth which God has revealed and made known to the sons of men, were then hid in God as His unrevealed wisdom; yet all this was essentially in the Mediator, and by Him to be declared in the fullness of time. This name "Word" is therefore not only proper but full of instruction. This Voice, or Word of God, was heard by Adam, in the cool of the day, where he had hid himself through conscious guilt and shame, for his nakedness and crime were now upon him. The crown of earthly glory had fallen from his head, and the light of God's smile had darkened on his brow. His unborn race was sunk with him under the gloom and power of death. The Word of God called him to an account, and pronounced special penalties which should spring up from the earth; now it would bring forth briars and thorns for his sake, or on his account, and the beasts, the fish, the fowl, the reptiles, and the insects, are no longer in quiet subjection under him, but stand arrayed against him to devour his flesh and suck out his blood. Surely this awful crisis-when horror and despair seemed depicted on the entire universe-was a proper moment for the Word of God to give some intimation of the will of His Father, which He as Mediator was to fulfill. He there implied a threat to the serpent, saying: "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." This was the first revelation of the mediatorial work of this Jesus, whom Philip preached to the eunuch.

In the symbolical offering of faith we see another exhibition of the same dawning hope, and the mode of its accomplishment by Abel's acceptable offering, a type of the sacrifice of this Jesus. Ere long the Mediator, as man, declared to be man, in human form, appeared to Abraham, in company with two other men, on their way to Sodom. Something peculiar appeared in this Man, wherefore Abraham interceded with him, as with God, for Sodom. This Man made a direct promise to Abraham, of Isaac, as a seed in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed, and said that the child of promise should be brought forth by Sarah. This was the word of God to Abraham, but the Man of God's right hand revealed it to him. Here was a plain historical narrative of a fact, which the inspired historian records as a fact; and if we have like precious faith with Abraham, we must believe as he did. The Man who stood before Joshua with a drawn sword in his hand and declared himself to be come forth as the captain of the Lord's host, is another plain fact recorded by an inspired historian; and the protomartyr, Stephen, declares that Jesus was with the church in the wilderness. Still another narrative, equally plain, is recorded of Manoah and his wife, seeing and conversing with a Man, a mysterious Man, concerning the birth of Samson. This Man was also seen by the heathen Nebuchadnezzar, in the "burning fiery furnace", with the three Hebrew children, and his form was like the Son of God. This is another plain narrative recorded by the inspired historian, and must be either true or false. If true then this Jesus, as man, did actually pre-exist before He was born of Mary.

All these plain narratives are fully and forcibly corroborated by the prophets to whom the Word of the Lord came saying: "Thus saith the Lord," so and so. This same Jesus is the Word of the Lord which came to the prophets when they were searching what and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow. Christ Himself, Who is the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God, settled this question by a constant reference to his pre-existence with God. We meet with many such sayings as the following: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" "I proceeded and came forth from God;" "I came not of myself, but He sent me;" "Before Abraham was I am;" "He that ascendeth is the same that descendeth into the lower part of the earth." Now, numerous similar references to His former existence with God, and of His coming out from God, and being sent from God, and of His returning back to God, all prove positively His pre-existence. If this were not true, why did Jesus pray to His Father for the same glory which He had with Him before the world was? If this preexistence was not true of His subordinate or human nature or manhood, how could He be sent? We know He was sent not to do His own will, but the will of God Who sent Him-to do a work which God had given Him to do. Surely, David, in the Psalms, recognized His existence as a man; for he calls Him "the man of God," even "the Son of Man which God had made strong for himself." Surely, another of the holy prophets recognized Him as a man existing in his day, for he calls Him "the man that is God's fellow." And Daniel, another of the prophets of God, saw in a vision one like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven, and approaching this Ancient of Days; and they brought Him near before Him.

The holy apostles also bore witness to the same truth, as did also John the Baptist, who declares that this "Jesus was preferred before him, for He was before him." Now John was born of Elizabeth about six months before Jesus was born of Mary. So if He did not exist previous to His birth of Mary He was not before John. The apostle John confirms the above testimony to the doctrine of the pre-existence of the Man Christ Jesus, as borne by the inspired historians, prophets, and apostles, with John the Baptist, and even by Christ Himself. This holy man says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." And again: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory (the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." Again, he says: "The same was in the beginning with God."

Now, as the Word was with God, and as the Word was made flesh and dwelt among the apostles, as the only begotten of the Father, we think the point of his pre-existence settled. But if any doubt should remain on the mind of any one, after all these Scripture quotations, it should be expelled by the most unequivocal testimony of this same witness, where he says, in speaking of this same Word: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full."

This testimony includes all the apostles under the pronoun WE-we who have heard, and seen with our eyes, looked upon and handled [Him] Whom we have preached, written and testified of, with a view to settle the faith of all the saints and all churches, on this very point; so that their fellowship may be with the apostles, as their agreement or fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. This

very Jesus, Whom Philip preached, was then truly as the Word, in existence with God from the beginning and was manifested to the apostles, and they were fully qualified as witnesses in the case.

The result is incontestable. Jesus as Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus, did exist from the beginning with God; and was manifested in these last times for you who believe in God, who raised Him up from the dead.” If all this infallible testimony can be spurned as heresy, then the whole Bible may be rejected as a novel, and the actual existence of Jesus denied; for how do we know that Jesus lived at all, about Jerusalem, only as His apostles, evangelists, and John the Baptist have told us, and historians have recorded it, as Luke and others did. Now, as these and the inspired historians and prophets of the Old Testament have told us that Christ was both seen and heard by them, from the beginning, and we can trace Him all along, at various times and places, how can some among you deny His pre-existence, and boldly, in the face of God, His Word, His church, and the world, charge the doctrine as the worst of heresies?

So far we have examined a few of the many witnesses to prove that this Jesus, Whom Philip preached, was not, even in His subordinate nature as man, or creature, of yesterday, springing first into conscious existence at Bethlehem, when born of Mary. This low and contemptible notion of the Man Jesus not only eclipses the personal glories of the Mediator, but dishonors God’s wisdom and will in appointing a nonentity as mediator, leaving all the patriarchs, fathers, prophets and saints, who lived during the first four thousand years of the world, without any mediator between them and their God; for the only Mediator is the Man Christ Jesus. It also, in effect, denies that God loved them in Christ, blessed them in Him, gave them eternal life in Him; in a word, this sophistical theory undermines the whole revealed system of redemption in Christ Jesus.

We now claim with confidence that we have proved incontestably, not only that He did exist before the world began, but also that He did frequently appear to Adam, to Abraham, to Joshua, to Manoah, to Nebuchadnezzar, to David, to Daniel, and many of the fathers, prophets, and saints, as MAN, in the active and actual discharge of the laborious functions of the mediator between God and them.

I have thus shown the eternal glories, faithfulness, grace, and fullness of the Mediator in his manhood, or human nature, with God, and among His people, as the messenger or angel of God’s presence; or, if you would better understand this phrase, the ever-living Mediator, the executor of God the Father’s immutable will. So the saints of old were often made to rejoice, not in that which did not exist, but in the living God of Israel, and His redeemer the Holy One of Israel. In all the early appearances in His manhood there was a constant manifestation that the God of Abraham was in and with the Man. We shall admire the testimony of His divine nature, and see whether this was simply the divinity of one-third of the Godhead, or the whole of it.

I am publicly accused of heresy, because I not only believe, preach and have written, on the pre-existence of the Man Christ Jesus, as the Mediator; but also because I maintain that this Jesus, in His Divine nature, is the true God, to the exclusion of all other persons, beings or things that are distinct from Him. By the term “person” I understand is meant an individual. So I learn from words, which are signs of ideas, that a person is an individual, and that distinct and separate. Therefore, as there are many persons in the Godhead, distinct from each other, and each one of these Divine and distinct persons, being separately considered, is truly and properly God, there must be just as many distinct, or separate individuals, and each one a God, true and proper. Now if words are signs of ideas, the words are the signs of the true and proper Gods, separate and distinct from each other. This Popish heresy I have exposed. Let the advocates of this Papal tradition roar and vent their venom as they may, and labor to

rob this Jesus of all the divine glories, except what belongs to the second one of these three divine persons, separately considered.

Now the Word, which was with God in the beginning, and was made flesh, was the man; but in the divine nature of that Word, the Word was God. So the Word was both God and with God. While there was no God with Him, this could not be true if the Word was a distinct person from the Father; and, as such, was truly and properly God. If the whole fullness of the Godhead dwelt in the Man Christ Jesus, then there could be no part of that fullness left out of Him, to remain among other persons distinct from Him in Whom its whole fullness dwelt. The Father, Whom they call the first person, dwelt in Him, for He says: "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." "I in the Father and the Father in me." "I and my Father are one." If these, the Father and the Word, were two persons, they were both in Christ, and not distinct, but one. The Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, which they say is the third person, is in Him. Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." But this Holy Ghost was, "the Spirit of Christ which was in them, when they testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow."

This Holy Spirit was not in Him by measure. A measure of the Spirit was given to the prophets, apostles and all God's people, to profit withal, but it was all in and upon this Jesus, and not distinct from Him. It follows, of course, that if three were persons, they were not distinct persons, but all three were one God, in person, and "these three, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit" – the three that bear record in heaven – are all in the one person of this Jesus, Who is properly the visible form of the invisible God.

This truth is stated most emphatically by Isaiah, in these words, dictated by the Holy Ghost: "Unto us (the people of God) a child is born; unto us (the same people) a Son is given; the government shall be upon His shoulders." This born child, this son given, surely describes Christ's manhood, while His name is indicative of His Godhead. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor," and what can be more wonderful than for a child to be born, a son given Who was both God and man, God being His Father, and Mary, one of the fallen daughters of apostate Adam, His mother. Yet, at His conception, the Holy Ghost came upon Mary and hallowed her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. Therefore that holy thing which was born of her was called the Son of the Highest. Is this not wonderful indeed, that the Holy Ghost should be actually engaged in His conception, preparing a sinful mother of Adam's fallen race to bear a holy, sinless child-Jesus, Who was "holy, harmless, and undefiled"? All His works and doings were also wonderful.

Counsellor – This item of His name He amply fills. The mysteries of God's holy will were to be revealed by Him. All things are open and plain before Him. All the treasures of Divine wisdom are in Him. His eyes are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their cries, and they come boldly to His throne of grace in every time of need. O what a Counsellor He is, and with what freedom and confidence Christians may come and consult Him under all their trials, afflictions, and persecutions. Surely He is worthy of the name Counsellor.

"The government shall be upon His shoulder." I have omitted to remark on this part of the text until now, because it attributes to Him the government, and not a name; and, therefore, might be more correctly understood and applied to Him as both God and man in one person. The government shall be upon His shoulders. The government of the earth, the starry heavens, the seas, and all their varied hosts, are under His control. Even heaven and hell are all subject to His government. But, more especially, in the light of this prophecy, the government of His chosen people, His church, His kingdom, as King of saints, to whom as a child, He was born, and, as a Son, He was given, seems to be intended for a full

development of His superior and infallible qualifications, as a Governor. I shall examine His appellations analytically.

He is called, the Mighty God. “The” being a definite article, defines one kind or species, and distinguishes Him from all other beings, individuals, or persons of the same species. The word “mighty” being an adjective, qualifying the noun “God”, it follows, then, that all persons, although they may be said to belong to the same nature, or essence, yet being distinct from this governor, can have no valid claim to an equality with this personage, Who is here called by name, the Mighty God.

If one shadow of a doubt should still hover over the most beclouded mind, it surely must be dispelled by the next item of His majestic name – the Everlasting Father. Here again the same definite article is found separating this Person, on Whose shoulders the government shall rest, from all other persons that may be imagined, of the same nature. The word “everlasting”, the adjective qualifying the noun “father”, shows that this father is the very God and Father of the Man Christ Jesus. The Jehovah of the Jews, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Who claims the confidence and worship of all His people, and [Who] under the most awful sanctions, forbids us to know or to reverence any other person, being, thing, real or imaginative, distinct from Him – “Him only shalt thou serve.”

The closing item in His name seems to be designed to show the perpetuity and glory of His government, including both His manhood and His godhead in one person, not in three distinct forms, but in one person, who is called “the Prince of Peace”. Jesus “made peace by the blood of the cross.” “By Him we have peace with God.” By this offering of himself as made to God through the Eternal Spirit, “He has slain the enmity contained in the transgressed law of commandments and ordinances, taking it out of the way and nailing it to His cross, so making peace-breaking down the dividing or middle wall of division” which was between the Jews and Gentiles, and of the twain making one man, body, or church, so making peace. His government was not established “with garments rolled in blood” on the field of battle and carnage, but by “Peace on earth and good-will toward men”.

“The government shall be upon His shoulder”; He, by wisdom and power, benevolence, and good-will, and every virtue, either human or divine, will sustain the government forever. This is beautifully delineated by the prophet, whose declaration includes the born child, the given Son, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, all as one and the same person, sustaining the weight of the government upon His shoulders, and executing it by His own power most gloriously. These are His words: “Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

Where are your three distinct persons? They are vanished in the bewildering fogs of a vain imagination; for in the Person of Jesus, this child, this son, this governor, this prince, this mighty God, even this everlasting Father, are found identified, to the exclusion of all other persons distinct from Him, the Father (your supposed first person in the Trinity), and the Holy Spirit (your third distinct person). But we have found both the Father and the Holy Spirit to be included and embodied in Jesus Whom Philip preached. It is, therefore, self-evident to every intelligent mind not blinded with Papist traditions, that the Triune God-Father, Word, and Holy Spirit-is the Holy Jesus, in His own true, proper, and undivided eternal power and Godhead. All this was essential to Him personally and officially, to qualify Him as mediator between God and man, to be our Saviour.

As man He could die for us, and so save legally from the legal courts, and from the law under whose curse we had fallen by sin. He, “through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself to God for us,” as “the altar which sanctifieth the gift.” Jesus, as man, is betrayed; He agonizes in the garden of Gethsemane; His

very soul is sorrowful even unto death; and thrice He prays, not that He should be spared from drinking the cup, but “O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass, yet not my will but thine be done.” Jesus had taught His followers that He had come down from heaven not to do His own will, but the will of His Father Who had sent Him. Now, the will, being immutable and confirmed by the oath of God, was, therefore, unchangeable; hence Christ, as man, must needs suffer these things and enter into His glory. Jesus, as man, died according to the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God. On that awful and eventful hour, when the sun was veiled in sable shade and the earth trembled in convulsive agitation, when the rocks were rent, and the graves of many sleeping saints were opened, Jesus cried: “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?”

Here the divinity which had been in Him, and co-operated with Him, but could not die, separated from Him, because man had sinned and must die. Hence this division of the two whole yet distinct natures was of necessity effected for the time. The man-the whole man-suffered for the sins of the heirs in God’s will; “His soul was made an offering for sin.” “He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” When the agonies and pangs of the death on the cross were endured to the end, He cried: “It is finished!” and gave up the ghost (the spirit of the man), and He was dead. On the third day, God, Who had forsaken Him on the cross, returned again, and raised Him from the dead. The very Holy Ghost, which quickened the dead body of Christ, is the very same Spirit which dwells in each of God’s believing children, in measure, and shall finally “quicken their vile bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in them.” He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; so, we see that the Father and the Holy Spirit arose again in Him, as His true and proper divinity. God the Father, Word, Spirit, and all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in this Jesus bodily or personally. “No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and He to whom the Son will reveal him.” My impugnors assert that to the three distinct persons three distinct provinces are given, and each Person is limited in His work to His own province.

Their first Person, the Father, has the province of creation, providence, and grace. The Word or Son of the Father, begotten by what is vainly called “eternal generation,” as “God of God,” is the second person, and His province is redemption. The Holy Ghost “Who proceeded from the Father and the Son” is the third person, and His province is inspiration, sanctification, regeneration, quickening the dead, and raising them to life. Each of these supposed divine persons have their respective provinces to operate in, and cannot work in the province of another. This is the folly of their earthly wisdom. Does not the Father raise up the dead and quicken whom He will? Did Jesus raise the dead while on earth, and declare He had power to quicken whom He would? Is it not the Spirit that quickeneth? Then, as we have proved again and again, that “the three that bear record in heaven,” are in Jesus and in His Person, they all operate in the same province. Your distinct persons and their respective and distinct provinces all dissolve like vapors before the beaming rays of heaven’s truth.

Let saints rejoice in this Jesus, this Saviour; for there is salvation in Him and in no other-in no other distinct from Him, for there is none “other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.” This name is Jesus, which signifies Saviour, “for He shall save His people from their sins.” No person, real or imaginary, that is distinct from this Jesus, or operates in a different and distinct province from His can ever be our Saviour. This Jesus is “Immanuel,” which being interpreted is “God with us”; He is the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father; He is the only true God, the only wise God. This Jesus is “the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the Almighty.” And as there is but one first and one last, and but one Almighty, where are your other two persons who are distinct from this Alpha and Omega? They are excluded by the word of truth. This Person Who is above every man, either in this world or in that which is to come, is the same Jesus, at Whose name every knee shall bow and every

tongue shall confess that “He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” All the angels were commanded to bow to this Jesus, Who was made known to Thomas as his Lord and his God; yea, all the angels of heaven worship Him, and the four and twenty elders cast their crowns at His feet, crying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.” Surely the saints on earth may join with the glorified multitudes around His throne saying: “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”

Yes, brethren, this Jesus in whom the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells is in the Father and the Father in Him, and these three are one. O! praise Him with all your powers, love Him with all your affections, serve Him with all your mind and strength, believe in Him with all your hearts, let your gratitude and devotion be employed to swell His praise, and “crown Him Lord of all.” This divine fullness of Jesus is all the God I know. To preach this Jesus and His fullness as the only Saviour of sinners is the theme I love to dwell upon. If all this be unparalleled heresy, then I am a heretic. But let this heresy be tested according to the sayings of God, and then these my impugnors will be found false witnesses, false accusers, and revilers of that which is God. If it be God’s will, I may rejoice in the promise to the persecuted, against whom all manner of evil is spoken falsely. If my God, Who has all power in heaven and on earth in His hands, and Who in the conduct of His government causeth the wrath of man to praise Him and restraineth the remainder of that wrath, wills that I should suffer for His truth, I am content, unworthy as I am of standing in the relation of His minister, as His persecuted servant, yet I must remember that “so persecuted they the prophets” of old and the apostles. All the advocates of the holy truth have more or less experienced what Paul suffered, “Cast down but not destroyed, dying but behold they live, chastened but not killed.” Like them, I humbly “rejoice in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.”

I have never been afraid of going too far on two points of revealed truth. One of these points is the depraved, helpless, guilty, and condemned condition of the sinner, in himself considered, under the law and under the curse. The other point is the superlative fullness, power, grace, truth, and every divine attribute and perfection of the eternal power and Godhead of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If He were not man He could not have died for my sins. Nay, if He were not a holy, sinless, and undefiled man in Himself, standing in an indissoluble, legal, vital union to His body, the church, our sins could not in justice or in law have been laid on Him, nor the righteousness of Him imputed to us. Hence His death could not have removed our sins nor His righteousness have justified us, or legally redeemed us from under the law and its curse.

This legal relation of all the heirs in God’s eternal will, which is immutable and confirmed by His oath, are the two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie. All this did God show to the heirs of promise that we might have strong consolation in the truth, that all the guarantees or promises are settled immutably in Christ Jesus the Mediator-”in whom all the promises are unconditionally yea and amen.” They are all in Him, as the estate or inheritance of an heir is always in the legal executor of the will, and they are blessed with all the spiritual blessings of that will in the Mediator, according as they as heirs were chosen by the testator, in Jesus its mediator. This shows the immutable union of Christ Jesus and His people or church in Him, as heirs of God the testator, and joint heirs with the Man Christ Jesus, its mediator, Who as such was “appointed heir of all things.” So, brethren, you are assured by an apostle that “all things are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” “Christ is the Head of the Church,” and God is the head of Christ. Thus we perceive the unity of Christ as man, and of the whole fullness of the Godhead which dwelt in Him bodily. The heirs are all one body in Christ, and

each one of them a member in particular of that body. Jesus the Mediator as man, or the real man Christ Jesus, in Whom they were all chosen, is their Head, and God is His head. This is that eternal and indissoluble oneness of each and all the heirs in Christ and Christ in God.

So in the one Person of this Jesus we see the whole fullness of the Godhead shining in every mighty work which He performed. Jesus is in the Father, and the Father, the Word, and Holy Ghost in Jesus, and all the heirs, or church, yea, every spiritual blessing and every promise are in Him. Redemption, justification, reconciliation, are all in Jesus Christ. In this Jesus we have a God to worship, a Spirit to quicken us, a victim to die for us as a lamb without blemish or spot, a High Priest over the House of God, a Prophet to teach us, and a King to give laws and to rule in us and over us. He has, through His death, “destroyed death and him that had the power of death, that is the devil.” He has triumphed over the last enemy, extracting the sting of death, and carried off victory from the grave! He has ascended to heaven with a shout, leading captivity captive. There, on His eternal throne He sits, from henceforth until His enemies become His footstool.

O, what a Saviour is Jesus! He is Lord of lords, and King of kings. There surely can be no person or persons distinct from Him, that can be equal with Him, for “His name is above every name, not only in this world but in that which is to come. At His name every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord.” Now, we have treated on this Jesus in both His natures, of God and of man, from of old, even from everlasting, down from heaven to earth, and back to heaven again with God, where He was “before all worlds,” and have showed Him to be, all the time, in His personal manhood, the visible form of the invisible God, by the materials of His body in which He appeared to the patriarchs, prophets, saints and others of what sort they may be, whether spiritual, or like Adam’s, before the fall, or like Christ’s after the resurrection, or like His glorious body after His ascension—which I think most likely of all. Still He was as He still is, God, and God as He still is, He ever will be. So He was and ever will be, the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His person. Not a mere resemblance, but the express, or exact, image of His invisible person, in which God appeared to the people, from time to time, until He was born of Mary, in a body prepared for Him to offer as a victim, for the sins of the children which God had given Him.

This whole subject is summed up by the apostle, where he testifies of Christ, saying to the saints: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Here we see this very Jesus, in the form of God, that very form in which God visibly appeared to men of old, and, therefore, it was not robbing God of any of His glory, for Him, Who was in this form, to be equal with “the invisible God, whom no man hath seen or can see,” except in this Man. This was the high state of honor, glory and majesty, which He originally possessed in the heaven of glory.

Having this form He first made Himself of no reputation. O, what humility this was. He next took upon Him the form and condition of a servant. This was astonishing condescension—to be made in the likeness of men, or, as Paul says, in the likeness of sinful flesh. Now, being found in fashion, or connection, as a man, “He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death” – but see another amazing step – “even the death of the cross!” O, my soul look up to His native sphere, and see from

what an amazing height of glory and heavenly dignity this blessed Man of God's right hand has stooped to save His people from their sins! From the highest conceivable excellence He has come down, step by step, to the very lowest point of servitude, pain and death, even the most painful and shameful of all deaths-the death on a Roman cross, between two malefactors, thieves and robbers. This fulfilled His Father's will, redeemed the heirs from the curse of the law, finished iniquity, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. Through His death "He destroyed death, and him that hath the power of death, that is the devil," and so, legally, "delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Through the humiliation and servitude of this Jesus, all the heirs of promise are freed from every legal barrier that stood in the way of their coming, when called to receive, as free men, their bequeathed eternal inheritance.

This view well agrees with the words of the apostle, where he appeals to the knowledge of the brotherhood, saying: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Some one may say that this means the second divine, distinct person in the Godhead. I would ask such an one: Did the divine Godhead of Jesus become poor? Did it humble itself and suffer death, even the death of the cross? What! God dead! The very idea is so glaringly preposterous, in itself, that it merits no refutation. This Person was none other than the Man that the Lord of Hosts claims as His "fellow", the Shepherd Who was smitten for the sheep.

When the obedience and death of Jesus had done all that God's will required, and He had lain in the grave until the third, the appointed morn, God highly exalted Him by raising Him from the dead, and finally exalted Him with His own right hand again to occupy His former glory, which He had before the world was; and He still remains the Lamb of God that is in the midst of the throne. He still leads His people, flock, or subjects to fountains of living water, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes. I have often said, and still say, that the Spirit of Christ, which is the same with the Holy Ghost, moved the saints to write and speak, and that the Spirit of which believers are born again (and so are born of God), the Spirit which dwells in them and leads them, is the very same spirit of Truth. Therefore, every true experience will beautifully harmonize with all the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, for a few moments at the close of the present discourse, let me invite you to a review of your own experience as Christians. When God was pleased to shine in your heart, did not His light enable you to see light, even the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? Did not His fullness, perfection, grace, and truth draw out your heart's best affections to Him, as altogether lovely, and cause you to begin to pant for the living God? With His light shining in your heart did you not see your own vileness, poverty, pollution, guilt, and condemnation? Did you not, from this time, begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and see plainly that without holiness no man could ever see the Lord? You now saw and felt your abject poverty, and felt as a guilty and justly-condemned culprit, before a just and holy and sin-avenging God. In this agony of soul you saw an end to all that boasted moral free-agency, and conditional system of salvation which Fullerites and all conditionalists proclaim as indispensable to a sinner's acceptance with God. You had tried your prayers; they came from a wicked, hard, and deceitful heart, passing through a throat polluted as an open sepulcher, and from lips under which the deadly poison of the asp was corroding, and they were uttered with a tongue that used deceit, and a mouth that was full of cursing and bitterness. Therefore, your very prayers were so loaded down with the fumes of evil that they could not rise acceptable before a holy God, but seemed to bound back upon you with an alarming emphasis. You were told to come to God, but you knew not the way, and your feet being swift to shed blood, and destruction and misery being in all your ways, you dared

not, nor could not come in that condition. You were told to come by prayer and repentance, but you found your heart was too hard to repent, too full of evil thoughts and imaginations, and you could neither soften nor cleanse it. You were told to believe and come by faith, but alas! you soon found that all men have not faith, and you were of that number. You now felt a realizing sense of the poet's words:

*I would but can't, though I endeavor oft,
This stony heart can ne'er relent, till Jesus makes it soft.
I would but cannot pray; I'm filled with deep dismay.
O could I but believe, then all would easy be,
I would but cannot! Lord, relieve; all these must come from thee.*

So you found that when to will was present, how to perform that which was good you found not. One thing now you well knew. That was, "that in me, that is in the flesh dwelleth no good thing." So the last hope of salvation by fanning some holy, vital spark, supposed to dwell in every man, vanished as a delusion, and, with it, all hope of salvation by the deeds of the law were blotted out, and you were thoroughly convinced that if your salvation, in whole or in part, depended on any condition which you must perform, that condition would never be fulfilled by you, and, therefore, you must be lost without remedy. Now, the law which you had thought to be unto life, you have found to be unto death; for it was the ministration of condemnation and death: "So when the commandment came, sin revived" in all its heinous reign unto death, and you were dead to all hope or acceptance with God on the conditional platform, in whatever shape it could assume. And unless a merciful and gracious God could be just, and yet be a Saviour of a guilty, depraved, and helpless sinner, there remained no hope for you. Even this seemed only hoping against hope, for you could see no such a way. With your eyes cast down, and the gloom of desponding dread on your brow, and your hand smiting on your guilty breast, burdened with a condemned heart, you poured forth the deepest desire of your soul: "God be merciful to me a sinner;" "Lord save or I perish;" "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Then you realized that feeling expressed by the poet:

*Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must pronounce Thee just in death;
And if my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well.
O save a trembling sinner, Lord,
Whose hope stands hovering round Thy word,
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair.*

When you had proved the falsity and delusion of all this worldly scheme, and it pleased God to reveal His Son in you, you no longer conferred with flesh and blood, but you were ready to own Him as your Lord and your God, your Saviour and your Life, your all in all. The end of the law for righteousness, all the fullness of the Godhead was in Him. No other distinct person from Him was thought of, for all fullness was in Him, and no other was needed. He was the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. "Whom have I in heaven but thee! and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee." Grace is in His countenance: "This is my Beloved and this is my Friend." There is salvation in Him and in no other. There is none other name of person or thing given under heaven among men by which we can be saved. "God and the Lamb" is the theme which fills the heaven above and the most capacious wishes of the saints on earth.

Not once did you feel your faith shaken by the thought that Jesus the Saviour, Who should save His people from their sins, was without existence until he was born of Mary. No, “the Word that was from the beginning with God was now made flesh and dwelt among us.” Your faith found in Him all the treasures of grace and truth; He was to you the true God and eternal life. You viewed Him as “the only wise God, our Saviour”, in Whom your hope took a firm anchorage, and your faith found a perfect righteousness, sanctification, and eternal redemption. The chilling thought never once obtruded itself that He was, as man, of “timely origin”, or that, as God, He was only one of three divine, distinct, and equal persons, each of whom was limited to a certain province, so that He could not act beyond its limits, without being an intruder on one or both the other divine, distinct, and equal persons. Neither your faith nor hope found any such repulsing impediments; but you could then give vent to your full and admiring soul, in harmony like this:

*O, sacred beauties of the man, that God resides within!
His flesh all pure without a spot, his soul without a sin.*

Your faith received and rested in His fullness. In Him you found the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, as well as the child that was born to us, and the Son that was given to us. You realized the ecstatic sentiment so well expressed in the following stanza:

*Babes, men, and sires who know His love,
Who feel your guilt and thrall,
Now join with all the hosts above
And crown Him Lord of all:*

*Let all His saints of every tribe On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all.*

My Christian brethren and sisters, in the faith and hope of the gospel of our adorable Jesus, Whom you have received as both Lord and Christ, whether your first hope-inspiring view of this Saviour was as a bright vision of His divine fullness and glory, or only as a moving fullness of virtue and power, so that you could only touch the hem of His garment, and feel your disease removed, substantially His fullness was the same. The faith which you received and by which you trusted in Him was the same, although less in its degree. In all cases we only see or know but in part, and the more you have read the Book of revealed truth with prayerful and studious attention, when the Lord has opened your heart to understand the Scriptures, the more you are enabled to see the adaptation of this Jesus and His fullness of divine riches and glory to our helpless state of degradation. In Him you have found a father, a brother, a husband, a shepherd, a priest, a prophet, a king, a full and complete Saviour. Like the man to whom Philip preached, you desired to obey and follow this Jesus, and be buried with Him in baptism, and thus put Him on openly as your lawgiver, and henceforth walk in newness of life, as one of the subjects of the kingdom. I believe you now see that “after the manner that some call heresy, so worship we the God of our fathers.” You see and feel also that the Holy Spirit in your experience has taught you to know and feel the witness in yourselves, both of the emptiness and vain philosophy of all our impugners, and also the fullness and adaptation of this glorious truth. Farewell.

I do not pretend to say that the above is a verbatim copy of the sermon it represents, but as a synopsis it follows the same arrangement, gives the same Scriptures to sustain the points of doctrine it advocates, the same arguments and illustrations, and as near the same language as my memory can now enable me to give it. The result was evident in the fixed and solemn attention of the thousands in attendance,

crowding closely around the stand in the grove, with their countenances manifesting the deepest interest. The meeting closed with expressions of warm love and brotherly union.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Impressions to Leave Ohio and Reasons for the Move

THIS was the end to any further public attacks or complaints from my assailants in that part of the country. The outcry was all hushed as suddenly as in my dream, and the rush and noise of my persecutors were silenced and have continued so.

My second book entitled "Triumphs of Truth" was soon afterward circulated, and although several pamphlets had been sent out by the Fullerites against my first book, "Simple Truth", all was still from that time on. Elder J. Mason, of whom I have spoken in connection with the division of Sugar Creek Church, was among those who published pamphlets. Elder Fairfield of Troy, north of Dayton, Ohio, was another, but I made no reply, nor took any public notice of these men or their productions. All the excitement died away among the Baptists, and no further trouble ensued among them. I returned home looking upon this meeting and its results as one of the most signal displays of God's divine interpositions for good that I had witnessed. Elder Gard was greatly rejoiced, and so we went home believing that our good Lord had evidently caused the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He had restrained.

The revival at Lebanon had gradually declined, and now it was rather a cold season in the church, yet all were in peace and brotherly love and fellowship. Our congregations were large, orderly, and attentive, but baptisms were very few. Nothing, however, seemed to present a discouraging appearance; yet I became oppressed in mind, and I was led to think that my work was probably finished at that place, and it was my duty to seek some other field of labor, for I felt that I was in the way here. This feeling oppressed me sorely. I soon thought that I could see in the countenances of the members that they were tired of my preaching, but I am now convinced that all this was a temptation. Perhaps it grew out of certain circumstances which I will here briefly relate.

Some elders who were of the Andrew Fuller school, but who had a standing with the old order of Regular Baptists, as stated above, had made so formidable an attack upon me through the press and otherwise (although they did not reside near Lebanon) that many rumors prejudicial to me were spreading over all parts of the country, and other denominations seized upon this state of things to rally all their strength against me and the Lebanon church. The first move of this kind was made by the Methodist Episcopal people. One evening a messenger, who said he was sent by some of the leading Methodists, came to my house and invited me to come that night to hear a stranger, who was a very able minister, preach in the Methodist meeting-house. I was not in the habit of attending their meetings and had never before received a special request to attend them. I thought it strange that they should pursue such a course, but I attended the meeting.

Mr. Mitchell, the strange minister, was just opening meeting when I took my seat in the house. He read for his text the words of the apostle Peter: "Repent and be baptized every one of you." He took his position on the hypothesis that baptism was the application of water in the name of the divine Trinity, but the manner in which the water should be applied, nor the quantity to be used was not stated, but was left for each candidate to choose according to his or her own conscience. And as baptism was not essential to salvation, but only "the answer of a good conscience toward God", whatever the quantity or by whatever mode water was applied, so that it answered the conscience, was gospel baptism. He spoke lengthily and burlesqued the Baptists severely. Several times during his discourse he said if any

minister of that order was present and believed that he could defend their narrow, contracted views, he should have his pulpit when he was through and they would hear him try. Finally at a late hour he closed, dropping on his knees in prayer, and while on his knees he dismissed the congregation who rushed out of the house in haste.

I returned home convinced that there was a design in what I had witnessed. The next morning early some of the Baptists came to my house and told me that people were in a high state of excitement, that a rumor was going all through the town that Mr. Mitchell had exposed the doctrine of the Baptists on baptism effectually, that he had repeatedly challenged me to reply and defend the sinking cause if I could, that he had offered me his pulpit and promised they would all stay and hear me, but that I was so badly beaten that I sat dumb and could not be provoked by taunts, nor prevailed on by fair offers to say one word-in short, that no man had ever been so exposed, and yet I was afraid to say one word. I explained to the brethren the above-stated facts. They said that not only I as their preacher, but the church and the cause of God and truth in general were suffering from the rumors that were going on the wings of the wind, and these rumors would lose nothing by being repeated. They thought it therefore necessary that I should see Mr. Mitchell before he left town, and have something done in the case to stop this rumor.

I went to visit him, and when the ceremony of introduction was through, I asked him if he had intended his remarks the evening before as a challenge to me personally, to take his pulpit then and reply to him. If so, why did he dismiss the meeting in so summary a manner as to give neither time nor opportunity for me to say one word without interrupting him in his discourse. He said he meant it for a challenge, and I should still have the use of the same pulpit for a reply if I believed that I could refute anything that he had said, and if I felt desirous to venture a reply he wished to be present and have the privilege of offering a rejoinder to me. He was now on his way to Kentucky, his appointments were published and he must fill them, but on his return, say in two or three weeks, he would let me know in time to make an appointment public.

I told him that I looked upon his course as an attack upon me and the Baptist Church, whose servant I felt myself to be in the gospel of Christ. I was but a weak man, and altogether unqualified to defend deep and complicated mysteries, but then I did not regard baptism as such a proposition. The Scriptures were plain, definite, and all on one side of the question. His position I believed to be weak in itself, altogether fallacious, outside the gospel and revealed truth, and very easily refuted. But if he claimed the right to reply to me, which was not in his challenge at the start, I should claim the right to reply again to him, and so we could continue the debate to an indefinite time. He said: "Very well," he would stay and continue the discussion till I would be glad to desist. I replied: "The manner in which you have made this unprovoked attack as a stranger upon the Baptist cause in this place, and the excitement you have raised through the town against them, demands from me a reply; and I shall expect from you early information of your return, so that I may have full time to give a general notice of the appointment for my reply." The agreement was thus made and we parted.

In about three or four weeks, late on Saturday evening, I received notice that an appointment was circulated through town that I would reply to Mr. Mitchell's former sermon the next day at eleven o'clock, in the Methodist meeting-house. I had a previous appointment to preach at the Baptist meeting-house at the same hour. I went to see one of our deacons and stated the case to him, and we agreed to have someone at our meeting-house early to tell the people that the meeting had been changed to the Methodist meeting-house, as the houses were both in the same town. When the hour came I went to the appointment in the Methodist house and found it crowded to overflowing, and many

were on the outside who could not obtain room inside the building. I made my way through the throng toward the pulpit, when Mr. Mitchell said to me in a loud voice that a number of leading members of the Presbyterian Church had come there with a request. Mr. Gray, their minister, and his congregation were desirous to hear the discussion, and hoped that we would postpone our appointment until Mr. Gray should deliver a short sermon to his congregation, and then we could occupy the Presbyterian house, which being large, with spacious galleries, would accommodate all the people present. The Presbyterians present spoke up and endorsed what Mr. Mitchell had said, and added that they believed all present were willing to the arrangement if I would agree. I answered that if it was the wish of Mr. Gray and his congregation, as the Methodist house would not accommodate the people, I would not object to the proposition.

A short discourse was delivered by a Methodist minister present, after which we all repaired to the Presbyterian meeting-house. When we entered the house, Mr. Gray was just concluding his discourse. He said: "I now yield this house and pulpit to these two gentlemen for a discussion of the subject of baptism, and I hope the brethren will prosecute the investigation in a spirit of Christian tenderness and moderation."

Mr. Mitchell said: "I do not know how mad I may become before we are through, and if I take this pulpit I do so without any restrictions."

I then said: "The subject for our discussion is of a controversial character, as I am to reply to a sermon that Mr. Mitchell, some weeks before, had delivered; and, of course, my remarks would be opposed to his, and I should not go into that pulpit with my hands and tongue tied, but should feel at full liberty to discuss the subject in my own way.

Mr. Gray said: "To be sure, that is entirely proper." He then came down from the pulpit and invited us up. We entered the pulpit, and I began my reply to Mr. Mitchell's former discourse, by using the same text which he had used on the occasion referred to.

I first showed the high authority for baptism, and the well-defined subjects admissible to that ordinance. Believers, all such as brought forth fruits meet for repentance, were the legal subjects, and all others were forbidden, even those who were the children of believing parents, or the descendants of Abraham, if they had not these fruits, were rejected. The action of baptism was not left to every man's conscience, but was well defined by the word baptize, which word in all languages is entirely a different word from sprinkle or pour. But it was not only well defined by the word employed in the commission, or authority under which it is administered, but also in the manner practiced by the apostles, who declared it to be a burial: "Buried with Christ in baptism." Both the candidates and the administrator "went down into the water", when the act of baptism was performed, and then "they both came up out of the water." The ordinance of baptism was performed between the acts of going down into and coming up out of the water. It was also defined as being administered in "rivers", or in places where "there was much water." These, with many other words, figures, and defining circumstances, which I introduced, settled the question as to what baptism really is. And if to be baptized is to be buried in water, then to be sprinkled with water, or to have water poured on some part of the person, is not baptism, but quite a different thing, and the operation is expressed by a very different word – a word of a different signification, and plainly defining a different action.

I then showed the error of Mr. Mitchell's main position, that baptism was to answer the conscience, when the conscience was such as to depart from the living God. Such a conscience was defiled, and could not lead the subject into the obedience of faith. But we read of some, "whose hearts were sprinkled from an evil conscience," whose consciences were purified by the blood of Jesus Christ."

This was evidently the kind of conscience called “a good conscience”, which can only be answered in the service of God. To such, baptism is “the answer of a good conscience.” On the other hand, sprinkling, pouring, or no baptism at all, or any other departure from the literal observances of the ordinances of the living God, may answer such evil conscience. Hence the preference which some have between a well-defined ordinance and positive command of God, and a vague and rebellious departure therefrom, choosing the latter, rather than the former, is an evidence of the kind of conscience which they have. We should therefore look well to the choice which is made, and, by it, decide whether the conscience which dictated it, is good or evil; for “by their fruits ye shall know them.”

Among many other texts I quoted from Ephesians: “There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Now if the phrase “one Lord,” means but one, and He alone is the Lord of the one body, the church, and if the phrase “one faith,” means but one true and living faith, the faith of the one body or church, which I presume few will deny, then it follows, of course, that to the same body, or church, the phrase “one baptism,” must mean but one, the immersion of believers. Because the Baptist Church has believed in, and constantly practiced this one baptism, and opposed all intrusions and inventions of men in its stead, they have suffered sore persecutions, and thousands of them have lost their lives as martyrs, under the persecuting zeal of Paedo-Baptists.

Here Mr. Gray suddenly sprang to his feet, holding a large key in his hand. He struck the back of the seat a severe blow with the key, which very much startled the congregation by the abruptness of the stroke and the noise occasioned in the spacious building. With a very angry look, accompanied with rapid gestures, he cried out to me, in a loud tone of voice: “You are stating lies in the pulpit.” I had stopped speaking at the time, and stood silent until he ended his fiery invectives.

I then said: “I am truly sorry to see Mr. Gray forget the counsel he had given us, when he yielded his pulpit to us, and so soon to disturb the attentive and orderly congregation.” (The remarks that so much provoked his ire were in reference to an historical statement, to which I had alluded, by the way.) I went on: “But if Mr. Gray will be seated again, and does not disturb the meeting until I am done speaking and through with Mr. Mitchell, he can then appoint a day for the purpose, and I will now pledge myself to prove, from authentic history, the truth of my statement.”

He still remained standing, and said that my statements were false, and should stand as a falsehood until I did prove them to be true, which he averred I could never do. I then said: “I am very sorry to see Mr. Gray act so disorderly, in open violation of the laws of the land, and I should feel still more sorry to see some officer of the peace take him out of his own meeting-house, as a disturber. It is very unpleasant to be called a liar while preaching in the pulpit, and have the charge persisted in, and repeated. Now, if a friend will go to my house and bring me Robinson’s History of Baptism, I will prove my statement to be true before I proceed any further.”

A young man then started to bring the book, but many voices were heard in the audience saying: “Mr. Thompson, go on; do not mind him, but pursue your subject.”

I replied: “If Mr. Gray will take his seat and act like a peaceable man, I will proceed; and I will hold myself bound to him and all present to prove the truth of what I have stated; I am willing to let Mr. Gray set any time he pleases, when a sufficient notice can be given, and I shall do as I promise. But to be interrupted in this rude and disorderly manner is more than I am willing to submit to.”

Many persons now spoke and said they wished Mr. Gray to take his seat, and for me to go on, and that they wished to hear me through. Mr. Gray then took his seat, and I went on and finished my reply.

Mr. Mitchell made but few remarks; he said he could not stay to continue the investigation any longer and dismissed the congregation. He left Lebanon, and I never heard of his returning again. The Methodist people were all mute about what had passed between Mr. Mitchell and myself, and, strange as it may appear, they became my warm friends, in opposition to Mr. Gray.

The next Saturday a piece from the pen of Mr. Gray came out in a political newspaper, published by one of his friends, in which lengthy quotations were made from Mosheim's Church History and Russell's Modern Europe. These quotations he gave as the historical evidence on which I had predicated my statements when he arrested me. These quotations consisted mainly of ridicule of the German Anabaptists, whom these authors accused of being a set of journeymen tailors and bakers, who had excited and led on the Munster insurrection, by running stark naked through the town, crying: "We are the naked truth," and declaring that they were commissioned to build up the temple of God, and that they held in utter contempt all laws and magistrates, etc. These quotations were coupled with many remarks of his own; and Mr. Gray promised that the expose would be continued in the next paper. I went to the same editor in order to reply through the same medium, but he refused to publish my reply. So, I went to another editor in town, who had been raised under Presbyterian influence, and he published my reply to Mr. Gray. This newspaper investigation went on for some time.

In the investigation I showed that the name Anabaptist was a nickname given them by their enemies, because, as they alleged, these dippers rebaptized. They maintained that the ceremony performed by the authority of Antichrist was not gospel baptism, and hence that they did not re-baptize, for they, no more than modern Baptists, did not admit the validity of the so-called baptism received in infancy, at the hands of the ministers of Antichrist. Their baptism was not re-baptism, but simply baptism. I showed that the Munster affair was far from being begun and led on by these Baptists, but rather that it was started and led on by a PaedoBaptist of the Lutheran order. The Baptists being at that time passing through a severe persecution, some of them fell into the movement, in the hope of obtaining deliverance from their cruel persecutions. It was a civil and not a religious revolution. Their manifesto was good and patriotic enough for a Lycurgus to have signed it, and yet many of these Baptists lost their lives because they were Baptists. So, even Mr. Gray's own historian, who was an inveterate enemy to the Baptists, strongly corroborated my statement, which had been so very offensive to Mr. Gray.

I thanked him for giving what he wished the people to receive as my historical testimony, but I could inform all of them that I had no reference to the Munster matter, therefore, my thanks must be the whole reward for all his labors. I then gave the full proof of my statements, and the debate turned on the simple question of baptism. Mr. Gray soon withdrew from the controversy. Afterward the discussion was published in pamphlet form, copied from the papers, under the title: "Both Sides of the Question." Thus ended the attempt to injure me and the Baptist cause on the part of the Methodists and Presbyterians.

About this time a Universalist minister, by the name of Kidwell, of Wayne County, Indiana, came to Lebanon, and commenced a regular series of meetings, one or two days and nights in each month. He was called a great man, as an orator, reasoner, and scripturian. I had never before heard of him, and did not go to hear him for several months. I heard that he gave challenges at the close of his sermons, and although he had large numbers to hear him, no one would meet him in discussion. I believed, from the course he pursued, that he sought my downfall. His meetings were held in the court-room. At length, while one of his meetings was in progress, several of my friends and brethren came to my house and said to me they believed that all the preachers in town were remiss in duty, and that this Kidwell was

deceiving the people in sight of their houses, and challenging them to come out at the close of each one of his discourses. Yet there was not one David among them to oppose this Goliath. The watchman who saw the wolf coming and remained silent would be held responsible for the injury done to the flock. The public challenges, so often repeated and not responded to, were used by Kidwell as conclusive evidence that all the ministers about the town well knew that his doctrine could not be successfully met, and that their own must fall if subjected to a fair scriptural investigation, and that this was the only reason why they remained so cowardly silent. "The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth, but the righteous are as bold as a lion."

This in substance was their talk to me. They said the people, generally, were also talking in the same way, and that this silence on the part of the ministers of the town, was a strong argument in favor of Universalism. Kidwell was now preparing to organize a church, and about sixty names were already registered, of persons who were pledged to go into the organization, and many of these were among the most influential men of the town. A high degree of excitement was prevailing in the town and country, and if this man was not met fairly and boldly, and his flesh-pleasing doctrine fully exposed, it was impossible to say where it would end. Kidwell was to preach that evening in the court house, and they wished me to go and hear him. I finally agreed to go and hear him once, but not to reply, stating that he was a stranger, and, from rumor, was of too bad a character to be patronized as an honorable opponent, although he, no doubt, was a smart man and a good orator.

In the evening I went to hear him. He commenced by saying that a certain minister of the town had come there pledged to reply to him; he should, therefore, be very brief in his remarks and give place. He spoke twenty or thirty minutes, and then said he'd give place for the gentleman to reply. I supposed some preacher had agreed to reply. Kidwell stood silent a short time, and then said that he was sorry to see the gentleman who was to reply afraid to do so; he had given him full time, and he hoped he would not now back down and give up without one effort to sustain a sinking cause. Truth, he knew, was mighty and had nothing to lose by investigation, and if the man who had come there to reply to him believed that he had truth on his side, he should be zealous enough to attempt, at least, to stand up in its defense. He waited again for about a minute, and then said: "A man by the name of Thompson, the minister of the Baptist Church in this town, is the man who was to have replied to me. But I suppose that he sees his cause cannot be sustained, and, therefore, he will not make a fruitless effort. I would advise him to make the attempt at all events, and not yield without one last, mighty effort, or an open confession of the native weakness of his system, and then abandon it for ever."

I then arose and stepped to the lawyer's desk, in front of the bench, and, facing Mr. Kidwell, said: "This is all a very strange proceeding to me. So far from having come here pledged to reply, I had said that at this time, and under the present circumstances, I did not intend to accept Mr. Kidwell's challenge." I then named the reported bad moral and religious character of the man, saying: "If the reports which have reached me were even half true, no man could equalize himself with Mr. Kidwell without dishonor; but whether these rumors were true or false I know not. He is a stranger to me. This is the first time I have seen him. But his vamping, boasting, challenging manner, would seem to corroborate the rumors alluded to. A little more modesty and humility would better become a stranger. I have not risen to reply. I can see nothing in his discourse that merits a reply. I arose because I was named and called upon. He may now know two things, at least: one is that I can see nothing in his sermon just closed, that merits a reply; and the other is that, according to report, the man who would recognize him as a minister would dishonor himself by debating with him. I have now said all that I took the stand to say.

He was standing when I ceased speaking. He said I was entirely justified in what I had said. It was true that very reproachful rumors had been circulated against him. One was that he had stolen corn from a widow lady's corn crib; another was that he had defrauded a widow out of a large amount of money; and others as bad as these. But they were all false. He heard them and would settle them all; and, as I had heard them, it was prudent and commendable in me to refuse to engage in discussion with him until he had fully refuted these reports and established a good character. He should do this; and the next time he came to Lebanon, which would be in one month from that time, he would bring certificates from good men to prove his character good; and then he would hold me bound to investigate the points in dispute, or back down publicly. And so the matter ended for that time.

When the time came round for him to return, a heavy rain had caused such a freshet in the streams that he could not come. After this I received a letter from him explaining the reasons why he had not been true to his appointment, and letting me know that he would be back again on a certain day. He stated that he had the certificate required, and therefore should hold me bound to investigate the points of difference between us. He requested that I should make the same public. At the time set he came on, produced a certificate signed by a number of names, so that those present said they thought it would acquit me from any just imputation of dishonor by engaging with him in an investigation; and especially so as he was the editor of "The Star in the West", a religious paper, and the approved organ of his denomination.

The preliminaries were then settled, a board of order chosen, and a regular discussion ensued. I shall not attempt to give the arguments, but will state that we continued the debate two days in good order before a large and deeply attentive audience. At some parts of the debate the solemnity felt and the tears shed plainly manifested that hearts were melted and consciences made tender. The result of this debate was that some came and joined the Baptist Church who said that they had been bewildered with the Universalist doctrine, but during the debate all was explained, and their minds were relieved. On the other hand Mr. Kidwell could not get a respectable number together again. No more was heard of his church organization. After trying a few times and finding the people would not go to hear him, he abandoned the place. These were my first debates, and I was convinced that they were gotten up for my downfall and the destruction of the Baptist influence in the place. They intended it for evil, but God overruled it for good.

These are some of the circumstances which I believe brought on my mind the desponding feelings spoken of before. This gloom became heavier, until I could not rest, but I kept it all to myself, with the exception of my wife, who alone knew the state of my mind. I finally resolved to visit a number of churches in the western part of Ohio and the eastern part of Indiana, and see if my mind would not become settled as to where my labors were required. My wife and I started on this tour, and we visited the churches in Butler County, Ohio, also in Union, Franklin, Fayette, and Rush Counties, Indiana. I held meetings daily from place to place during the tour. All the Baptists in these churches were very solicitous for me to come among them, although I kept my mind to myself as to the object of my tour.

Soon after, my mind felt a drawing back to Lebanon, and this feeling increased daily, until I became fully settled and assured that God was about to display His power and grace in a marvelous manner at that place, and that I should see the church there in a short time revived, sinners converted, and many of the ransomed of the Lord returning to Zion. This place, I now fully believed, was to be my present field of labor; and after this change had taken place in my mind I was in such a hurry to get home again that I could hardly wait to fill my appointments. When they were filled, I hastened home, fully assured in my mind that I was going to where the Master had appointed me to behold His glory made known. Of

this I was so fully assured that I seemed to have no doubt of it, and yet all the evidence I had was my own feelings. But these were enough for me, for I did believe them to be of God. I said nothing of this to any one but to my wife and to Elder Thomas. I said to Elder Thomas when I was going to start home: "I feel some very strong impressions that the Lord is about to make bare His arm at Lebanon. You will soon hear good news from us." He said he should rejoice to hear such news, and if such a work of grace should really take place he wished me to write to him, and, the Lord willing, he would come in and feast with us. I promised to do so and we parted.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Second Revival at Lebanon

I HURRIED home, and if I have ever felt in the spirit of preaching it was at that time, or if I ever desired to serve the Lebanon church it was then. I reached home a day or two before our meeting-day, and these days seemed a long time to me. At length Saturday came and we met. All seemed about as usual. I saw nothing special among the members. A good congregation was in attendance, and the church was in peace and had been so for a length of time. I went into the pulpit feeling as much like preaching as I ever have, but when I began it seemed that I could employ no words that had weight in them sufficient to reach to the people. I labored hard to reach the hearts of my hearers, but my words seemed so light and small that they failed to express the unsearchable riches of Christ, and I thought could not reach the people. So I labored but could effect nothing. I felt myself to be like a man throwing feathers at a mark against a strong current of wind that would blow them back over his head. I felt my words to be so light that instead of reaching the hearts of the people, they passed off in empty space. This continued through my discourse, and I felt that it was a failure and was greatly mortified. After meeting I went home discouraged and greatly confused.

On Sunday morning my mind was clear of these unpleasant feelings, and was filled with thoughts of the glorious fullness of Christ; and so with the return of my former confidence that God would speedily revive His work in a powerful manner, I went to meeting. A very large congregation had come together, and good order and attention prevailed. But, as on the day before, my words seemed as feathers, too light to reach the hearts of the people, and again I felt that it was another failure and went home with my mind in gloom. I am convinced that my strong desires to see the wonderful displays of Divine power and grace and the assurance that the time was near at hand, made me feel as I did about the lightness of my words, and seeing no special effect among the people made me feel that I had again made a failure. This feeling, that my words were like feathers thrown against the wind, followed me until the work broke out, measurably, without preaching, and then it left me, or rather I was brought to see that the Spirit of the Lord must quicken the dead sinner and then the gospel of the grace of God presents Christ and Him crucified in the promises, as food for the sheep and the lambs, who “as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby.” The congregation increased in numbers, and a deep solemnity and much feeling began to be manifested. At length two came forward and were baptized. A very visible effect was now manifested both among the members and those who were not.

From this time the work began to spread. At each church meeting some were baptized, and many more were deeply affected. All was still without any noisy excitement, but a deep and solemn feeling prevailed. One Sunday, after baptizing four or five, I went home with one of the members in town and found one of his daughters in great distress. She was handsome and accomplished, and was regarded as the belle of the town. She had been vain and proud and very tasty in her apparel. She now wore a changed countenance; despair seemed to be written upon it.

I said to her: “Mary, it seems that many of your acquaintances are seriously thinking of their latter end and their future state; how is it with you?”

She tremblingly replied: “It is too late for me. I have spent my days in folly and sin, and now it is too late. There is no mercy for me.” She burst into tears and could say no more.

I then spoke to her in a few words of Jesus, saying: “Jesus is the sinner’s friend; He has come to seek and to save that which was lost; ‘It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ This He can do. His mission was not simply to make the way possible and passable and then offer salvation to the sinner on the condition of good deeds on their part, which would make the whole a failure. No; the angel proclaimed the truth without the possibility of a failure: ‘He shall save His people from their sins’, not try to do so and fail. This Jesus in Whom there is salvation, and in no other, is the only ground of a good hope through grace for a disconsolate, guilty, and helpless sinner.” I then started the hymn: “Jesus my all to heaven is gone,” etc. Before the hymn was finished the parlor was filled with people weeping like children. I tried to talk to them a few minutes about the poverty of the sinner, and the riches and fullness of Jesus as a Saviour. A number of brethren and sisters came in and began to sing. I soon stepped out and went from house to house and talked to those I met with. All were solemnly impressed. Thus the afternoon and evening were spent.

Monday morning came, and although it was morning yet many thought it looked the most solemn of any day they had ever seen. “Surely,” said they, “the presence of the Lord is in this place for the very day shows it, and the people feel it; saints rejoice in the Lord, and sinners mourn and bow before Him.” This peculiar appearance of the day might have been owing to the state of mind in which so many of the people were. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday all bore the same appearance. I still look back upon those three days with solemn but joyful remembrance.

On Monday the members began to gather in the town in their wagons, filled with persons equally as affected as those in town. They would inquire what was going on in town, for their minds were deeply impressed that the Lord was doing some great work there. The very day seemed to show His presence. They could attend to no business on their farms, and had come to town to see what it was. These joined with us, and the day was spent in going from house to house, talking of the good things of the kingdom, praising God in singing songs and hymns; for of a truth the Lord was doing great things for us, whereof we were glad. That day and evening passed in this way.

The next day was spent in about the same way, and on Wednesday, Brother Hologate, who lived in town, requested us to meet at his house. We reached the house about twilight, and directly began singing. Soon all the rooms, the windows, and the doors, were filled, and the sidewalk outside was crowded with men and women. Solemnity was on every face, and many eyes were flowing with tears. After much singing, and conversation on Christian experience and exercise of mind, and the powerful displays of God’s grace among us, Brother Hologate laid the Bible on the center table, and asked me if I did not feel like preaching to the large crowd of anxious listeners in and around the house. I replied that I would read a chapter. I was seated by the table, and remained seated while I read a chapter, and commented on it. I believe I have never seen a more deeply affected people. Sobs could be heard audibly in every part of the crowd, and the impression was deep and solemn. No anxious benches had we to call mourners to, to be prayed for, but many with anxious hearts and weeping eyes were there, who could not conceal their emotions. They were looking up to God, Who alone could do them any good. After I closed my short comment on the chapter, I tried to pray, and return thanks to the Lord for what we now felt and saw of his goodness and power. I then said to the people: “The evening is now far spent, let us sing the evening hymn, beginning with this verse:

*The day is past and gone,
The evening shades appear,
O may we all remember well
The night of death draws near.*

The people can then retire, and reflect on the past and the present, and also on the hymn.” I started the singing of the hymn, and many voices joined with me till the hymn was sung, and then the people dispersed.

I remembered my promise to Elder Thomas, and wrote to him of the work going on among the people. He came on and was soon with us, richly partaking of “the feast of fat things”, and feeding the sheep and lambs of Christ’s fold. At our next meeting I baptized thirteen, and two weeks afterward thirteen more, and again in two weeks thirteen more. This was remarked as strange, that just the same number should be received and baptized each meeting for three meetings in succession. Elder Thomas was a good preacher. His gift was chiefly on experimental and practical topics. He could trace the windings of the doubting and tried Christian in a very clear and comforting manner. He was sound in doctrine, but not so able in the investigation of deep points as some others. He was one of the highly esteemed elders whose praise was in all the churches. He continued with us eight or ten days, greatly to our comfort and edification. When on his way to Lebanon he had made an appointment at Trenton, in Butler County, Ohio, at the meeting-house of the Elk Creek Church, to fill on his return home. This was about fourteen miles west from Lebanon, on the road leading to Oxford, and was the church which Elder Stephen Gard served.

On Elder Thomas’s return home, I accompanied him to Elk Creek. When we reached Trenton we were informed that the place for holding the meeting had been changed to a private house, about one mile south. This was done by the request of a young man who had been quite sick, and was not yet able to go out to the meeting-house. Elder Gard soon came in and said: “Brethren, you must try to prepare your minds for a very great change of circumstances today. The church here is in great distress, and likely to go to pieces. Some of the members will not even speak to others when they meet. I have labored in vain for some time to promote peace; but matters still grow worse, and I fear the church will rend in pieces. I think you will have but few out to hear you preach.”

As the hour appointed for preaching drew near, the people began to gather in. Here I must relate one of the most singular events that I have ever witnessed: As the people came to the door many of them would burst into tears, and, when seated, would sit weeping on their seats. These strange manifestations continued until the rooms were filled, and there were many out of doors who could find no room inside the building. All was measurably silent in the house, nothing to excite, to alarm, or touch the sympathies of the large crowd that we could see. All was passing strange to us. The time appointed for the meeting came, and preaching began. The emotion of the people increased; sobs and tears were manifest through the congregation, and no one seemed more deeply affected than Elder Gard, who sat sobbing and weeping, so as to be heard through the house. Elder Gard was noted as a man of a firm mind, and was seldom seen to manifest emotions outwardly; he had a good control of his philosophical judgment. To see him so completely overcome surprised all who knew him. He continued weeping during the time Elder Thomas and I were preaching. At the close of the meeting, a general request was made that we should preach in the meeting-house at candle-light that evening, which was agreed upon.

The appointment was published and the people were dismissed. Some of the members remained with us, and the wonderful effect among the people occupied our conversation. Elder Thomas and I gave it as our belief that the Lord was going to visit this church in the power of His spirit and grace, for the gathering in of many of His redeemed children, that the good work was already begun in their midst, and that they would ere long see more of the glorious working of the power of the Most High among them. They said this day looked indeed as though such was the case, but they thought the church must first have a travailing spirit, before she brought forth. Instead, however, of possessing such a spirit, the

church was now in a state of confusion, and bitter feelings existed between many of the members. Such being the state of the church, converts would not likely wish to join so distracted a body. I wished them to remember that “one word from our King has calmed the billows of the raging sea, hushed the howling tempest, and brought the ship safe to shore; and then all was well. Our King still reigns in His almighty power and wisdom. He can say ‘peace, be still,’ and your storm will be over and gone, the church will be safely in harbor, and her members, who so short a time before had been desponding, will rejoice and say, ‘the winds and the waves truly obey Him.’ I believe, from what I have this day seen, that the power that is at work among you is of the Lord, and that you will soon realize it, and rejoice that ‘God is the rock and His work is perfect.’ A short time will show whether this is a perfect work or a delusion.”

I have given the substance of the afternoon’s conversation. That evening we met a large assembly at the meeting-house, and much solemnity pervaded the entire congregation. The next morning Elder Thomas started west for his home in Indiana, and I east for my home. The good work went on in Elk Creek Church with great power, and extended out in all the bounds. At their next church meeting a number were baptized, and all the troubles of the church were ended, for all those hard, ambitious feelings were gone; and mutual confessions and forgiveness restored a warm, brotherly fellowship throughout all the church. The work was general, numbers were baptized each month, and large additions were made to that church. When I reached home, I found all well, and the good work of grace still going on.

I must now return to the little houseless minority, who were recognized, as before stated in this narrative. I still attended them monthly-meeting in a barn in warm weather, and in a private house in cold weather. Some very encouraging symptoms had of late showed themselves among the little despised church. For some cause, we knew not what, Elder Mason’s majority opened the door, and invited us to hold our next meeting in the old meeting-house. We accepted the kind offer, and at that meeting two were received for baptism. These were the first received after the division. This day was a day of great power. Especially at the water the effect was great and general. We received no more invitations to hold service in the old meeting-house, but had to return again to the barn and private residences. The good work increased, and spread in the town and adjacent country. Many were added to that little church. They built and completed a good stone meeting-house in the town. Near one hundred were baptized during the progress of the gracious work. Here, on one occasion, I baptized twelve, when my mouth was running from severe salivation, and one of the persons baptized was the mother of an infant not quite three weeks old; yet no harm came to either of us.

An old church called Clear Creek, near the village of Ridgeville, about half way between Lebanon and Centerville, had so dwindled down by deaths, removals, etc., that at last the few that remained talked of dissolving. They had chosen a man who was not a member, but who attended the meetings regularly, and whom they believed to be a Christian, to serve them as clerk pro tem. The church was very small, but in peace. This little body solicited me to hold a regular meeting with them on Friday evening of each month, as I was on my way to Centerville (Sugar Creek Church). I agreed to do so. Soon the good work began there, and a number of very acceptable candidates were received and baptized, and Clear Creek became a strong church. These were happy times. I have often seen our large meeting-house crowded to its utmost capacity, while vast numbers would be outside, around the house, standing in the lot or seated in vehicles, all eager to hear the word of the gospel.

This gracious work continued with great power for about one year, when it began to decline. Still there were some baptized, occasionally, for six months longer, when, suddenly and unlooked for, one of the brethren came to me in a very ill-humor and said that a certain small boy had told him that he had heard

a member of the church, a youth of about fifteen years of age, say some very reproachful things about this brother's daughters, and, said he, "My daughters shall not suffer such a scandal." I saw that the old brother was very much excited with passion, and was not in a spirit to do anything calmly. I asked him if his wife and daughters knew of the evil report. He said they did. These were all members of the church. I proposed to go with him to the youth who was reported to have slandered his daughters, and know of him if he pled guilty, or what he would say about it. He agreed to do so, and we went and found the youth. Having taken him aside, we asked him if he had heard this rumor. He said he had not, and had not spoken one disrespectful word about these young women, neither had he ever had any cause to do so, and that there were no members in the church that he had any more confidence in or esteemed any higher. He said he would as soon slander his own sisters as them, and if we would go with him to them, he believed all could be fully and satisfactorily settled. I then asked the old brother, who still appeared quite angry, if he was willing to have us all go to his house and privately try to settle this unhappy affair, before it should become public. He hesitated for a moment, and then consented. We three then went to his house, and, together with his wife and two daughters, held a private interview. I stated to them that an ugly rumor had been put in circulation, and that hearing it, we had visited the youth, and he denied it all. "We now wish," said I, "to talk together, and see if this unpleasant occurrence can not be overcome, and good feeling entirely restored."

The accused youth and young sisters conversed freely together. The young sisters said they did not, from the start, believe that the young brother had said any such thing as reported, and that they were now fully satisfied and wished the whole matter to be dropped as if it had never been. The old lady said she hoped the young people would still feel the same friendship for each other which they did before, and in the future refuse to hearken to the foolish talk of the little boys about the streets. The old brother still appeared to be angry, but said that as all the rest were satisfied, he would drop it all and say no more about it, and so left the room. I said that I was very thankful to see this matter settled so soon and so satisfactorily to all, and that it was the duty of all parties to say nothing more about it unless it were to some of the members who, having heard of it, might venture to inquire of us, and then we should only tell them that it was all settled amicably and satisfactorily to all parties. I returned home rejoicing that so threatening and distressing a difficulty had been removed.

That evening, however, a young man who was living in this family, a journeyman tailor, and who had joined the church, learning that the parties had been reconciled, told the old brother that he knew much more about the youth's slanderous talk than what the little boy had said. He then went on to tell of far worse things than what the boy had stated. The old brother, being of a hasty temper, and his former passion not having fully subsided, now became more excited than before. The next day he came to me in a great rage, and told me that all the settlement the day before was now null and void. He then went on to tell me what the journeyman tailor had told him, and wound up by saying: "And now the church must settle it, for I have the gospel testimony, and am determined to prosecute it to the bitter end." I labored in every way I could to calm his passion, but all in vain. At length I told him that I was truly sorry for any difficulty to come into the church, and especially one that must, more or less, bear heavily upon the moral character of both male and female members of it. But if no other plan would satisfy, he had a legal course to take before the church would hear his complaint.

"If that journeyman," said I, "knew the guilt of the accused youth, he should have followed the rule laid down in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. As he has not done so, you must now proceed in the spirit of love to reclaim the offending brother. You say one accuses and the other denies, and there is no witness to prove which of them tells the truth. The journeyman accuses and the youth denies. Now, if

you take up the case, you must first talk to each of them privately, and see if it can not be settled privately; and, if it cannot, take one or two others with you, and let them labor for reconciliation; and if this proves unsuccessful, then tell it to the church and let the church labor with them. Be careful that you keep this matter strictly private until it is brought legally before the church. Then the accuser and the accused will stand on equal grounds before the church, except as the evidence may give to either the advantage of position. My brother, be calm and deliberate; the cause of God and the peace of the church now hang upon your proceeding according to the rules of the gospel. The journeyman has already departed from order in having gone to you instead of going to the young brother with his grievance.

“Christ, our Law-giver, has given us a plain rule in all such cases, and while we follow it, in spirit and in letter, there is but little danger of discord or trouble in the church. But when our evil passions become aroused, and the tongue, that unruly member, is not curbed, it sets on fire the course of nature; and then, ‘behold! what a great matter a little fire kindleth.’ Your duty is to say no more to any one about this matter; it is a private matter between the accused youth and the journeyman, and there it should have remained until all the labor to gain the accused had been exhausted, after which let it come before the church. But this journeyman waited until your passion was aroused, and then he told you; and instead of your reproving him for this error you come to me with it, and so it may go from one to another until the whole church becomes excited and prejudiced, some one way and some another, while, perhaps, the accused is ignorant of what is going on until many of the members of the church are arrayed against him, and his character is reproached in the world.”

The old brother left me, but instead of following my counsel, he went to others, both in and out of the church, telling them that the accused youth was now proved to be guilty of basely slandering his daughters and other females. Directly the town and country around became wonderfully excited, and some of the friends of the parents of the accused youth advised them to send him to some other part of the country, for his life was threatened and he would be in great danger to remain where he was. At the same time I was taken suddenly sick with fever, and lay some weeks so low that my physician and friends despaired of my life. While I thus lay my brethren visited me daily, and told me of the dreadful state of affairs. They had met at different places and sought for evidence against the accused youth but could find none. But the general excitement was so great that the youth must be excluded to maintain the honor of the church. I was too weak to talk much, but I said that when one person affirmed and another denied, the onus of proof lay on the affirmant, and if he failed to prove what he affirmed he lost his case, and the accused stood acquitted for want of evidence to convict him. There was nothing of it as yet brought into the church, and all the proceedings thus far had been in open violation of the laws of Christ and the adopted discipline of the church. Through the imprudence of others the matter was made public in its worst form, and the people of the world had become so much excited that the accused youth must now be excluded to satisfy the world and save the church from public disgrace.

I had never heard of the youth having said one word to make the matter public, only to deny the charge whenever he was accused. All this was the effect of disregarding the authority of Jesus Christ, and unless the church changed her practice her prosperity was at an end. This state of things continued until my health began to improve so that I could sit up a short time each day.

The journeyman came to my house and confessed to me and my wife that he had made all this trouble in the church, and the accused youth was not worthy of censure, so far as he knew. He said he wished the church to know this, and he was ready to confess himself guilty of the whole trouble and to ask the church to forgive him. But as he did not feel like he could be composed enough to make these

statements publicly to the church, he wished me to write them down for him and he would hand in the paper at the next meeting. He cried and made such humble confession that I felt truly sorry for him. I told him that I had already sat up much longer than at any one time since my sickness, and was too much fatigued to do any writing that night, but as he wished it I would, if able, write as correctly as I could on the next day the statements he had made, and he could come to my house in the evening and examine the paper, and if he discovered any mistake in what I wrote he could correct it, and when it read as he wished it to, he should sign it in the presence of one or two of the brethren, which he could bring with him, and they should also sign it as witnesses. He agreed to this, and then went home.

The next day I wrote down his statements as near as I could remember them, but in the evening he failed to come. The next day I learned that the morning after he left my house he had quit his employer, and was gone to parts unknown. In a few days after this his affidavit was sent to the father of the two young sisters in which much more was sworn to than had been stated before. This affidavit occasioned quite a talk through the town; and when church meeting came on it was reported to the church. The church took it up, and as it purported to have been made before a justice of the peace in Franklin, a committee was appointed to go there and cite this journeyman to attend the next meeting to give in his testimony before the church. I objected to this course; we had his oath already and that was as strong testimony as he could give, and I was sure that the committee would not find him, for I did not believe that he would face me after stating what he had to me, and then making affidavit to the very reverse. But I was overruled, and the committee was appointed. I told the committee to visit him soon, for if he ascertained that they were coming he would abscond again. They said there was no danger, they would doubtless find him and his personal testimony would be much more satisfactory than his affidavit. The committee, after some delay, went in search of him, but the only intelligence they could obtain was that he had gone west. This was the last we heard from him for more than a year.

The committee had been invested with power to send for witnesses and investigate the case and report the result. I protested against such proceeding as unscriptural. I never had read in the New Testament any warrant for a church to transfer her authority to a committee of members to convict a reported offender. If any such warrant existed either in the New Testament or in the rules of the church, I had not found it, and unless some one could show it to me, I must protest against any such practice. The church had previously appointed another person as moderator, knowing that, as moderator, I would not suffer anything to come into the church until all the preliminary steps had been taken. This has ever been my understanding of the responsibility of a moderator. Much of the troubles and divisions in churches come from taking up business which has not come up in order before them.

The committee held a private session, and on rising, reported that, in the judgment of the committee, the accused youth had used obscene language prejudicial to the character of the young ladies before mentioned. Nothing of a definite character, further than this, was charged. Some objections were made to receiving the report, because it was so vague and indefinite. The committee said it was their judgment, based upon the affidavit, and other circumstances, and they thought the honor of the church required it. A motion was then made and carried, by a majority vote, to receive the report. Another motion was then carried, by a majority vote, to exclude the accused youth, whereupon I arose and said: "I have not cast a single vote in this whole matter. I have, from the first to the last, raised my warning voice against the entire course pursued, believing it to be gross disorder. I did not feel willing to act in the case, but have entered my earnest protest at every step, appealing to the laws of the King of Zion, which I saw were being trampled under foot. I suppose the church is now through with the case, and I feel like I had done my duty, though it has been a painful one; and now, in the close of the matter, I

wish to say to the church and hope they will not forget it, that the Lord will visit the iniquities of His people with a rod and their transgressions with stripes. He will cleanse His people and purge His floor. This is often done by divisions and sore trials. This church, I most sincerely do believe, has egregiously offended against her Lord, and has disregarded His authority and laws, and has been led by excitement, blindly, into great errors, and will have to endure sore chastisements. These things, I say, not because I feel any antipathy toward the church, for if I know my own heart I love you all for Jesus's sake. I cannot forget the happy seasons I have enjoyed with you, and it is with painful regret that I have witnessed your strange departure from the right way of the Lord.

“I have now told you plainly my impressions, and wish you to remember what I have said; and if you are sorely scourged or your candlestick is removed out of its place, look back and remember what I have told you. On the other hand, if peace and prosperity attend the church, as in time past, let that be an evidence that I have been misled and have greatly erred in judgment. The Lord will bless you if you have faithfully administered His laws; if you have not He will visit your iniquities with stripes. And now we will leave our differences to God's wise and just arbitrament, and let time bring in the verdict.”

A motion was then made and carried to exclude the journeyman tailor. I begged the church not to act so hastily, as no charge had been preferred against him and no preliminary steps had been taken. They had just excluded one, on his affidavit, and that, too, after he had absconded, and now to exclude him for giving that testimony would look passing strange. My remarks were not heeded. About one year from this time I received a letter from the clerk of a Baptist church in the western part of Indiana, stating that this journeyman tailor had come there and professed to be a member of the Lebanon Church. As I was the pastor of the church he wrote to me in order to ascertain if his statements were true. I wrote in answer, giving his character and a statement of the action of the church in his case. This statement I presented to the church, and the church authorized the moderator and clerk to sign it, and forward it to the church in Indiana.

The accused youth attended regularly the meetings of the church, conducted himself orderly, and as soon as the excitement growing out of the reports had abated, many of those who had been active in his exclusion began to regret their action in the case. They asked him if he did not desire his place again in the church. He said he felt very lonesome, like one cast off from his home, and he would gladly return, but he could see no possible way for him ever again to regain his lost privileges. His exclusion was upon a false charge, and he could not, therefore, acknowledge himself guilty. He felt that the door of the church was forever barred against him, and he must spend his days solitary and alone.

They replied: “You need make no acknowledgment. We have seen your orderly walk, and would gladly welcome you back to a place among us. All you have to do is to make the request, and we will grant it.” The youth finally handed a letter to the church, stating his desire to be restored again to the privileges of the church, if the whole church felt free to receive him, without requiring an acknowledgment on his part to the charge upon which he had been excluded, for of that charge he was innocent. He was willing to confess that he was very imperfect in his nature, and that, during the progress of the difficulty, his evil passions had been greatly aroused, and perhaps, at such times, he had spoken harshly, and injured the feelings of some of the members. “Whether I have or not,” said he, “I know that I have, at times, felt a hard spirit, and if the church should not restore me, I feel this acknowledgment is due her.” The church could act in the case as prudence might dictate, and he would try, quietly, to submit to her decision, and hoped that he would have an interest in all their prayers.

The church ordered the letter to be received, and by a unanimous vote of all the members, restored the youth to the full fellowship of the church. He afterward became an able minister, and is still preaching

the gospel of the grace of God. The journeyman tailor came back and visited me, making another confession, similar to the first one, and wished to know if I could forgive him, and approve of his restoration to the church. I told him his course had been such as to destroy my confidence; but if the church was willing to restore him I would remain neutral, and hoped he might, by a good deportment, do better in the future. He then applied to the church to be restored, but was rejected. He has, since that time, proved to be a very base character, and notorious for making false statements.

The church, for some time after this, was in a cold state. Many of the members were hurt and burdened, more or less, on account of the disorder that had been practiced by the church in her proceedings, but being in the minority, they could do nothing; so they agreed to forbear, and wait to see the purposes of the Lord. The congregations continued large and attentive, and sometimes many were much affected. But many of the young members married and moved away to other parts of the country; many more, who were mechanics, moved to Cincinnati, Dayton, and other places, and many of the older members sold their farms and moved west, where large sections of new lands had now come into the market at government prices. These changes greatly reduced the number of members in the church. I faintly hoped that I might have been mistaken in the degree of error that the church had gone into, but still my mind was burdened. I had my apprehensions to myself. At length a revival started, and I baptized about twenty persons in a short time, yet the church did not appear to participate much in the work, and it suddenly died away, and left the church in the same cold state. My love for this church was very great, for it was composed of very valuable, worthy members. There was no apparent difficulty in the church, for those who were hurt were bearing their burdens silently, and dreading the rod of chastisement which they believed must fall upon them. I exhorted them to long forbearance, gentleness, and brotherly kindness, in love, striving for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. I was so much attached to this church that I earnestly sought its prosperity in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Concern for the Church; the “Revival” in Cincinnati

I HAD purchased two small tracts of land in Fayette County, Indiana, and would often think of moving there, but the very thought of leaving Lebanon seemed worse than death to me. Few persons can conceive of the strong attachment which binds the affections and sympathies of a minister to a church made up of worthy and friendly members, and especially when many of them have been added as seals of his gospel ministry, and with whom he has enjoyed many happy seasons of reviving grace. All these ties bound me to the Lebanon church and seemed to forbid me from leaving them. Add to all this the fact that I was well settled there on twenty acres of good land of my own, all cleared, fenced, and cultivated in orchard, garden, and farm products. I had also a good, roomy, and convenient dwelling-house, stabling, etc., and I was convenient to the meeting-house. The church so provided for the temporal wants of my family that I was enabled to spend the most of my time through the week in preaching among the destitute churches in the neighborhood. I could not have been more pleasantly situated to my wishes than I was there, nor could I expect to be so well situated in these respects again.

Still I was so constantly and heavily laden with a foreboding of some undefined but disastrous calamity that was about to fall upon the church, and that I must get out of the way. I became so distressed under these impressions that I could not sleep at night. Often at a late hour of the night I would my bed and walk on the common and in the lanes for hours alone, and would lament and weep, and try to pray to know the mind of the Lord, and to learn from what source these impressions came. All the answer that I could get was: “Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord has a controversy with His people.” These words were impressed upon me constantly, with a force which I had no power to repel. I thought they were not the language of Scripture, and perhaps they might be from the tempter. This added to my trouble. Sometimes I thought I would remain where I was and suffer with the church, let what might befall her, but this gave me no relief. The impression would arise that I was in the way there and I must get out of the way. I shall never be fully able to describe the trouble and anguish of my mind for about one year. My feelings were to stay and suffer with the church, if she must suffer. But the imperious command of the Lord, as I thought, was impressed upon my mind with emphasis: “Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord has a controversy with His people.”

While I was thus exercised in mind, the word came out from Cincinnati, by passengers on the daily stage, of a wonderful religious work going on in that city. This news filled me with gloom, and added greatly to the burden already upon my mind. Each day brought more vivid accounts of the unparalleled work going on in the city. And the more I heard of it the greater my distress became. First, I thought that perhaps, as our church was not in a condition to participate in this great work, it might be the reason why I was distressed to hear that a revival was going on in another place. This suspicion troubled me, for I had always rejoiced to hear of such gracious displays of Divine power in any part of the world, and now that it should so trouble me to hear that it was within thirty miles of me, and in a church where I had often preached, I thought surely I must be influenced by an evil spirit. If so, then perhaps I have been under the guidance of an evil spirit from the first, and all the wrong was in me. This put me to work again to try the spirits, to know what kind of spirit I was of. I read, I studied, I tried to pray, to divest myself of all predilections, and search for the truth simply for the truth's sake. During this search it occurred to me that I should first seek to know what spirit it was that was

producing such a wonderful work in the city. If it was the Spirit of the Lord that was doing this great work, and the spirit in me was troubled because of it, they must be opposite spirits, and the spirit which governed my mind must be evil. I now resolved to go to the city and assure myself, if possible, what spirit was at work there.

Reports such as these still came daily: "Forty had been baptized the preceding Sabbath;" "the very air in the city seemed changed, so that the signs on the taverns, stores, and other buildings, were melting and running down;" "the people coming in from the country to market, as soon as they entered the corporation, were struck with awe, and would burst into tears;" "through the whole city, in nearly every house, might be heard the voice of weeping and supplication or of praise and thanksgiving;" and what was more, "almost every face you met with upon the street was as solemn as death;" "that this great work began among the Baptists under the preaching of the Rev. Jeremiah Vardaman of Kentucky, who said that his mind had become so deeply impressed for the conversion of sinners in Cincinnati, that he could stay at home no longer, but had left his family and churches and came to the city;" "the work began at once, and was now spreading powerfully in all the churches of the different denominations in the city, especially in the Presbyterian church;" "it was very remarkable that within a few days after Mr. Vardaman came to the city, two Cumberland Presbyterian ministers came from Tennessee with similar professions of an irresistible impression of mind to leave all and come to the city."

Many such wonderful accounts were coming to us daily. I had an appointment to preach at our meeting-house the next Sunday, and I set the Monday following to go to the city, and, if possible, satisfy myself whether it was indeed the Holy Spirit or the spirit of delusion that was at work there. On Sunday I used these words for a text: "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep, day and night, for the slain of the daughter of my people." This text was so much in keeping with my feelings that I was overcome while speaking. I could not refrain from weeping, and many of my hearers wept with me. At the close of meeting I observed that I intended to go to Cincinnati the next day, to witness some of the great work we were hearing so much about. Several of the sisters wished to know if my wife was going with me. I answered that she was. They then expressed a desire to go with us, to which I replied that if they could ride in a two-horse wagon, I would take as many as could find room with us in one, and all that wished to go with us must be at my house early the next morning.

The morning came and several of the sisters, my wife, and I started for the city. As we went along we had much talk respecting the news that had reached us. My companions were in high anticipation of great enjoyment when they should reach the city and witness the mighty work going on there. I finally remarked to them that they all had greatly the advantage of me: "Your anticipations afford you much comfort, while I have none. I have left home without any hope of realizing any real enjoyment from this visit, but to be a spectator of whatever may occur." They said they had seen me in revivals, and that when I got there and saw the great work going on, I would catch the fire and enjoy myself, perhaps more than they. I said that I had not set out with any such anticipations. I knew that if that city work was of God and I could see the evidence of it, I should be convinced at once that I was under the influence of an evil spirit, and this conviction would forbid me any enjoyment.

When we came to the city we neither saw nor felt anything unusual. The people looked and acted about as usual; no praying, no weeping, no singing could be heard. We drove to Brother Richard Ayers's and put up there. I inquired of him what was going on in the city in religious matters, that had given rise to so many strange rumors. He said there were surely wonderful works going on. "Is it the Spirit of God or the spirit of delusion?" I asked. "Of that," said he, "you must judge for yourself. There is a meeting

tonight, and you will have to preach.” I told him I had not come to preach, but to hear and see. He said: “They will have you to preach this night and will take no denial. And,” pointing toward his daughter he added, “there is one of the young converts baptized last Sunday; you can talk with her and see the fruits of this great work.” She was a very well-educated and intelligent young lady. I talked with her about her experience, but could get no evidence of anything like a change from death to life.

In the evening we went to the meeting. It was a very large meeting-house and was soon filled with city-dressed people. I looked over the congregation from the pulpit, but could discover none of that solemnity which I had usually seen so visible in the countenances of the people in times of revivals. No excuse on my part would be received, but I must preach. I preached with the best ability I had, of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” After I had closed my remarks a Doctor Patterson, recently from New Jersey, followed, and, in a very warm and appropriate exhortation to the people, recommended what I had said as truth.

Mr. Vardaman then arose and said in a dull, low manner, that he very much regretted the unprofitable manner in which the evening had been wasted. It was now too late to do anything to profit, and the people must wait until another opportunity. All at once he raised his voice and said: “Late as it is, I feel such an agonizing of soul for these poor mourning sinners, who feel as if this might be the last hour that salvation would be offered to them, that I cannot dismiss them until I have given them one more opportunity to come forward for me to pray for them.” He said he very well knew that God would hear and answer the prayers of His elect, who cry unto him day and night. “All the people seated on those long benches fronting the pulpit,” said he, “will please leave them for the mourners to occupy, while I come down to pray for them. All who desire salvation will come to these seats. I have prayed for such hundreds of times, and never without more or fewer being converted while I was praying; therefore, come without delay.” Turning to Doctor Patterson and myself he said: “Let us go down and meet these mourners.

We went down. He started a song and, as many voices joined in the singing, the spacious house was filled with melody. Every few minutes he would raise his voice and tell the mourners to “come on,” and “not confer with flesh and blood;” “this might be the night that would seal their eternal doom;” “come and receive offered mercy.” Again, he would order runners to go up every aisle and lead the mourners to these benches. Yet, with all this, they came but slowly. He stepped upon one of the long seats, and turning his eyes upward and raising his hand with his arm stretched out above his head, he roared at the top of his voice, in an authoritative manner: “Stop, Gabriel, stop; don’t speed your golden pinions again, nor attempt to take the news to the throne of God, until you can report at least fifty humble mourners on these anxious benches seeking the salvation of their souls amid the prayers and songs of God’s elect.”

When he had given this command, he raised his right foot and hand and stamped with his foot on the bench, at the same time striking the back of it with his open hand, making a startling sound through the spacious house. This he repeated three times, in rapid succession, and then followed a general movement through the house. He stepped down from the seat, telling them to sing with more animation, and not to pause between the songs even for one minute. His runners now began to lead in the mourners very fast. They were handed up to him; he would slap them on the shoulders, and halloo, “Glory to God,” and motion them to the seats. The seats were soon filled, and no more came. He ordered the singers to stop singing, and commanded every person in the house to go upon his knees. He knelt, and in that position surveyed the congregation; and again, in an authoritative manner, cried: “Go down upon your knees, I say; young men, down upon your knees! ‘It is written, unto Me every knee

shall bow.” When he had spent some time in this way, and had got all that would obey him on their knees, he pronounced some very heavy invectives on the others, and then said: “Let us all pray.” He went on to give a history of his coming to Cincinnati; of the cold state he had found the city and the church in; how he had proceeded since he came; how many he had baptized; and the great work that was going on with increasing power. This historical account made up his prayer.

He then called upon the singers to assist him, and he commenced singing the hymn, “How happy are they who their Saviour obey,” etc. They all joined in the singing, and he passed between the benches where the mourners had been placed, and stooping down to each one he would, in a low whisper, converse a short time with them, and in many cases he would rise up erect, clap his hands together, and shout: “Glory to God, here is another soul born for heaven.” In this manner he passed between all the mourners’ benches. I had not seen one among the whole number that I thought looked like a contrite mourner, such as the Saviour pronounced blessed, at least as far as I could judge from the appearance of those even who were on the anxious benches.

To close the scene, and as I thought to amuse the people, they introduced a young Indian, who, if I remember aright, was of the Choctaw tribe. A platform was prepared for him to stand upon, in front of the pulpit and facing the mourners. On this platform he stood and in his native tongue delivered a speech some thirty minutes in length. I knew not one word which he spoke, and, of course, could not tell what was the subject of his discourse, and I suppose the same was true of all who heard him. After he had concluded his speech he was told to come down and pass between the mourners benches, and give the right hand of fellowship to each of the mourners. This he did with a solemn countenance and in perfect silence.

When this ceremony was ended Vardaman said: “Tomorrow, at ten o’clock, I will preach in the seminary in Newport, Kentucky. I will then return again, and hold a meeting in this house in the evening, to receive candidates for baptism.” He then dismissed the people. The mourners seemed much delighted while the Indian was performing his part of the programme, smiling, whispering, and looking over the crowd, much like persons at a show.

I went to Newport Seminary, and at the appointed time Mr. Vardaman arose and introduced the meeting in the usual form, and then said that though several texts had been upon his mind, he should not use any of them on the present occasion, but he should take up and investigate three points of doctrine: First, the foreknowledge of God; second, election; and third, predestination. The very word foreknowledge, as applied to God, was so silly that none but fools would use it, and none but the most ignorant class would believe it. He should, therefore, spend but little time upon that point. He went on to say that neither of the three points which he had selected needed much to be said to expose them, as they would refute themselves in the minds of all sensible and sound-minded persons. These three points of doctrine are the foundation of the whole Calvinistic creed, and if they were not sustained the whole creed would fall to the ground. “And the first three rules of arithmetic,” said he, “are the only arguments, and afford all the testimony that can be produced in support of these Calvinistic doctrines. These rules are: Addition, subtraction, and multiplication. When a text was required to prove any one of these points, the advocate of the doctrine sought for certain words of a proper sound, scattered about promiscuously through the Scriptures, and by addition he would add them together, and thus produce his proof-texts. If any part of it or other texts were brought against him, he would employ subtraction, and take from the testimony every word offensive to his doctrine; but if he could not compound testimony enough by addition to prove his point, he would resort to multiplication, and thus manufacture plenty to suit himself.”

In this manner he spent about one hour in attempting to expose three points of doctrine, by burlesque, ridicule, and sarcasm. After closing his speech, he made an effort to get mourners to come up to be prayed for; this, however, proved a failure, and he sat down. Elder Monticue, the preacher of the Baptist Church in Newport, came to me and insisted that I should now preach. I refused to do so, on the ground that I was at Mr. Vardaman's appointment, in a seminary where the Baptists had no claims, and I would not intrude on Mr. Vardaman, unless he invited me. The elder then went to him, and requested him to invite me to preach, but he refused to do so. The elder came back to me again, and insisted that I should go on. I still declined. He then went to Mr. Vardaman, who then said that "if any one had a word of exhortation, as it was said in old time; so I now say, let him say on." The elder then renewed his solicitation for me to preach.

(The foregoing part of this narrative was written by Elder Wilson Thompson, whose intention it was to have brought it down to a later date, but interruptions deferred the work in his hands, and before he could resume it he was called from his labors on earth to the reward beyond the grave. The task of completing this biography has, by the other members of his family, been entrusted to the writer, who is the youngest member of the family.)

The reader will remember that the writer, in the close of what he had written, stated that Elder Monticue had renewed his request for Elder Thompson to address the people assembled in the seminary in Newport, Kentucky. After Mr. Vardaman had closed his abuse of the doctrine of foreknowledge, election, and predestination, Elder Thompson then arose and said: "I see some of my old associates and schoolmates in this congregation. I am near the scenes of my childhood, and the walks of my youth. The place where I was baptized, and the church where I was set apart to the work of the gospel ministry are near by me. Reminiscences of the past crowd upon my memory, and my mind is made to witness again things passed by long ago, but which will not be forgotten by me while my reason remains. Not the least among the things which are retained and cherished in my memory are the important doctrinal truths which, since my earliest recollection, have been believed by the Baptist Church and maintained by her ministry, and which, I believe, the Lord revealed to my understanding, not far from this place, when I was but a lad.

"The great truth which, to my mind since that time, is the only source of peace and consolation to a ruined sinner, wretched in himself and undone, is the doctrinal truth of the sovereignty and immutability of God. That truth has been my trust since I was first made to hope for salvation; and if that truth can be successfully removed, then I am left without any ray of hope. Today we have heard that doctrine assailed in a way of ridicule and mockery. Having the privilege to reply, I should feel that I was recreant to every honest emotion did I not expose the weakness of this unprovoked attack against truth.

"First; if the three points can be sustained only by words scraped from different parts of the Bible, without any connection with the general teaching of that holy Book, would it not be quite as easy, and much more satisfactory, to prove it to be so from the volume itself, than to give nothing but assertion to sustain the statement? Second; if these points cannot be disproved by the Bible, but those who oppose them have to resort to bare assertion to sustain their opposition, may we not, in the third place, inquire, 'are they not sustained by the Bible?' I presume if I bring forward two or three witnesses to each point without the assistance of either addition, subtraction, or multiplication, it will prove satisfactory to you all: Romans 8:29, 30: 'For whom He did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them He also called,' etc. 1st Peter 1:2: 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the

Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,'etc. Titus 1:1: 'Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth,'etc. Ephesians 1:11: 'In whom, also, we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.'

"It will be observed that these quotations embrace and sustain the three points named, not only in the precise language, but are undoubtedly the points of doctrine on which the apostles are treating. I do not, however, refer to them as isolated passages teaching a doctrine differing from the Scriptures generally. Such complete harmony characterizes the whole volume that whatever doctrine appears in one part will be found to be sustained and corroborated by every other part. With this thought before us, every candid mind will at once confess that the doctrines of foreknowledge, election, and predestination are Scriptural doctrines, and are therefore true.

"But again, the sovereignty and attributes of God are involved in these three points. To deny the foreknowledge of God would be to deny His being all-wise. It would be to make Him such an one as ourselves, knowing events only as they were developed in time. But the developments of the events of God's most gracious counsels are, by inspired men, declared to be 'according to His eternal purpose which He hath purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began.' And as a purpose must either be according to wisdom or according to ignorance, we can but acknowledge with the apostle that it is the hidden wisdom of God, and therefore that God foreknew that which He purposed. Again, it has pleased God to declare beforehand, by the prophets, the purposes which He would in time fulfill; and this too in the most emphatic language. And yet if God did not foreknow, He was just as liable to be mistaken as you or I. What a position would this make the great God to occupy, declaring that events shall come to pass about which He knew nothing! The thought is too preposterous to be entertained.

"God has declared His purposes to His people, because He knew the purpose of His will, and, as a sovereign, could not be disappointed as to the full consummation of the same. The prophet says: 'As I have thought so shall it be; as I have purposed so shall it come to pass.' In harmony with this truth the apostle says: 'Who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will.' I conclude that God is allwise, and in the execution of the purposes of His grace, He so displays or unfolds that wisdom to the understanding of His saints, that, astonished and delighted with the view, they adopt with rapture the language of the apostle: 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!'

"Election is but the exercise of this infinite and divine wisdom in choosing the heirs of salvation. First: We must either admit that God hath chosen those who shall be saved, or that they are saved without His having chosen them to salvation. Second: If those who are saved are saved according to the choice of God, then there were none embraced in that choice but such as are saved, or else God chose to save those whom He knew He could not nor never would save. If the last position be taken we must at once deny the wisdom of God. I appeal to you, my friends, to say if you could imagine one worthy of being accounted wise who is putting forth all his energies to do that which he knows he never can do? There is not one present that would be so silly as to engage in such folly. What! labor to be disappointed? Strive, knowing you shall fail? No; the Allwise declares, 'I will do all my pleasure.' God's people are saved according to His choice, as Paul says: 'We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.' Paul again says: 'He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.'

“Predestination is that determination of the Almighty before time began to conform His elect people to the image of His Son. This He fulfills through the Spirit in the work of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is shed abundantly upon us through Jesus Christ our Saviour. I will now close my remarks on these points with a quotation from the Epistle to the Romans, 9:15, 16: ‘For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.’” Here the meeting closed. The next night in Cincinnati another crowded house witnessed a repetition of the same revival scenes as before narrated.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The Move to Indiana

BEING satisfied that this work, which had occasioned so much talk, would eventually lead to trouble, that it was the work of cunning craft, in order to carry the popular tide, and that it was of the world and sought the honors of the world, Elder Thompson and those who had accompanied him, returned to Lebanon. And now he felt again the impression of mind: "Up, get thee out of this place." He had seen his impressions verified respecting the nature of the work going on in the city, and now he asked himself, should he longer hesitate to leave a place, however dear, when his labors could no longer profit those on whom they were bestowed? His mind was soon decided that he would leave Lebanon and move to Indiana, and there seek a field where he might hope to enjoy the approbation of his divine Master.

He accordingly arranged his business, and in the year 1834 moved to Fayette County, Indiana, and located about six miles north-west from Connerville. When he had settled here he had no stated place for preaching for near one year, but was engaged a part of his time preaching in different places, according to the inclination of his mind. He was very much attached to the brethren and sisters in his new field of labor, and they were much attached to him. This mutual feeling of Christian love soon led to requests from different churches that he would take the pastoral care of them. To these solicitations he lent a favorable ear, and, having put his membership in at Lickcreek Church, he took the pastoral care of it, and also the superintendence of the Second Williams Creek and Fairfield Churches. The remaining portion of his time was spent in traveling in different parts of the country, as before.

At the time when he came to Indiana there was no special manifestation of a religious work among the people. Some few were uniting with the churches, but without any general interest. This state of the church continued, with but little change, until the year 1843. In this year there was quite a revival among the churches of the Whitewater Association. There were, during this gracious manifestation, twenty-six members added to the Lickcreek Church, and of that number a son and daughter of Elder Thompson. All his family, with the exception of his youngest son, were now members of the church. The number received into the churches of the association during the year was two hundred and forty-seven. His membership remained in the Lickcreek Church until his death, and although, in the latter part of his life he was released from the pastoral care of the church, yet he continued to visit it during the pleasant season every year as long as he lived.

He continued his labors several years with the Second Williams Creek Church, until, on account of political differences, and some disaffection on the part of the members, he was dismissed from the pastorate by the action of the church itself. But the action of that church did not lessen his field of labor. There were other churches in the same association, and also in Miami, which were very desirous to obtain his services. He was not able, however, to supply all the churches that applied to him with the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us!" The writer remembers, although then quite young, with what earnest solicitations his brethren from different churches would urge him to visit them, and when he would tell them that all his time was engaged to churches that had preceded them in calling him, how they would advise him to get some one else to fill his engagements at some other points, so that he might visit their churches. For several years after he was dismissed from the care of the Second Williams Creek Church, he took the care of the Zion Church, in the Whitewater Association, and also

of the Hamilton and Rossville Churches, in the Miami Association. His ministerial labors in these churches were very acceptable and highly appreciated by the members.

For several years preceding the division in the White-water Association, a difference of opinion was known to exist among the ministry and membership of the association on certain points of doctrine. And as time advanced the differences developed themselves more and more. The point upon which the difference was based, was, "the use and effect of the preached gospel." One party held the view that the preaching of the gospel was a means of the conversion of sinners; and that it might be effectual to that end, it was necessary that societies and boards of missions should be formed to raise funds and employ and send out men to convert and Christianize the heathen.

Another party believed that in the conversion of sinners God used the preached word as a means or medium through which His spirit operated to that end, but that missionary boards and societies were institutions of men, and had not the sanction of God, and therefore should not be sanctioned by the church and that as the church received all her authority from Christ, as her King, she could not sanction and support institutions of men, as Christian institutions, without a sacrifice of her loyalty to Christ. Neither could the church admit that the institutions of men were adequate to the conversion of sinners or the prosperity of the cause of truth, without impeaching the wisdom of Him who hath declared that He has in the Scriptures throughly furnished the man of God unto all good works.

The other party in the association held the same views as the second on the subject of missions and kindred societies instituted by men, but differed from both the other parties on the use and effect of the preached gospel. They denied that the preaching of the gospel had any power to convert the dead sinner, or to give him life, and declared that man in nature was dead in trespasses and sins, and that as no means could be used to give life to one literally dead, even so no means could be used to give eternal life to those who are dead in sins, that God effects that work of Himself, by His holy Spirit, without means or instruments, and that the gospel is a proclamation of good tidings, of great joy to the soul that is prepared with a hearing ear and an understanding heart to receive it. To those who thus believe it is the power of God unto salvation, and it saves them from the false doctrines of men, and feeds and makes them strong in the truth.

In addition to these differences in views there were some men in the association who had personal difficulties and jealousies that alienated their feelings from each other, who were ready, when the opportunity offered, to seize upon any circumstance to advance their own ends or injure those against whom they held feelings of prejudice. There was nearly an equal number of churches on either side of the parties, after deducting the missionaries, who constituted but a small part of the association. It was ascertained, as the discussion of these differences progressed, that Elder John Sparks and Elder Thompson held different views on the subject of means, Elder Sparks holding the doctrine of means, and in opposition to missions, and Elder Thompson opposing the doctrine of means and missions both.

These were the two ablest men in the association, and as soon as those persons of whom I before spoke as having feuds and jealousies between them, heard that the two elders took opposite views on the means question, they began to make capital for their own ambitious ends. They would tell Elder Sparks that Elder Thompson was trying to injure him, and had said things detrimental to his Christian character, and was preaching in opposition to his views. They would then tell Elder Thompson that Elder Sparks was using all his influence to destroy him, and that he must defend his views and stand firm, or Elder Sparks would ruin the association.

Thus were these two good men and able ministers influenced to take firm and decided positions against each other. I need not follow the history of the unhappy division which finally rent the association,

leaving two fragments, instead of one happy and united association. In all this trouble and division, Elder Thompson stood firm in the defense of what was termed the anti-means doctrine. It had been his view of the Scriptures from his early youth, as the reader will have observed from what he has written in this book. Although he attributed great excellency to the preaching of the glorious gospel of the Son of God as the medium through which God was pleased to instruct, feed and comfort His renewed children, and to build them up in the most holy faith, he did not believe that God used it in giving life to the dead sinner.

In reasoning upon this point he would ask, "Can a thing be a means to an end, unless it has some power within itself to accomplish that end? If not, the preached gospel has a power within itself to quicken the dead sinner, or it is not the means by which they are quickened. If it be the means, therefore, by or through which the sinner is quickened, then the work of quickening is not all of the Spirit of God. That part performed by the preached word is not spirit, unless we conclude the preached, or written, word to be spirit. If we do, then it is not a means, because it is the agent that does the work. But if the preached word is a means used by the Spirit, then it follows that the end to which it is a means is in harmony with the means used. Hence, as all temporal means are used to feed, nourish, and strengthen living subjects, and not dead ones, so the means used by the Spirit is not to the dead and senseless sinner, but to the living, hungry, inquiring child. God gives unto them eternal life, and the gospel reveals to that living subject, Christ the way, the truth, and the life."

In proof of this position he would quote such texts as the following: "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." He would say, in explanation of these and similar texts: "The testimony declares the work of quickening the dead sinner to be of God's Spirit, not the Spirit and something else, but the Spirit. Now if the Spirit only can quicken, then no other power can, and if no other power can quicken, then no other power can be the means of quickening. My friends, would you not think me beside myself if I should go into the forest and take a cotton rope, or some such soft article, and try to cleave down the sturdy oak? I would certainly not take any such thing for that purpose. And why would I not? Simply because I know that when means are used they must be adapted to the end. Hence I would take my ax to cleave the wood, because it has a power, when properly used, to that end. To say, therefore, that the gospel is the means of quickening the dead sinner, and yet has no power in it to accomplish that end, looks to me like a paradox, or contradiction of terms."

After the division in the Whitewater Association, there was but little prosperity in the churches. They retained about the same numbers for several years. Some would occasionally join, either by experience and baptism, or by letter. Some died, and others moved away. During the time from the division until Elder Thompson gave up the care of the churches, he attended the Pleasant Run Church, in Rush County, Indiana, and the Salem Church, Wayne County, Indiana, in addition to those already named. In the month of October, 1849, his youngest son joined the Lickcreek Church, and in a short time afterward was set apart to the ministry. All his children who lived to be grown up, had now become members of the church, and two of his sons, the oldest and youngest, were ministers in the Baptist denomination.

After the excitement occasioned by the division had subsided, and the ruinous effect it had produced among the churches became apparent, those who had the Baptist cause at heart began to regret deeply that they had suffered themselves to be led by partisanship and ambition into so great an error. They felt that very brethren in heart had been sundered apart, and the glory of Zion seemed to be departing. Elder

Thompson was one of those who thus looked upon that unhappy event, and he, with some of the other brethren, was soon engaged devising some plan to restore union again in the association. A meeting to that end was called at Pleasant Run Church, but after mutual acknowledgments had been made, and the end had almost been attained for which the meeting was called, some of his brethren rose abruptly, and in disorder left the house. This broke up the meeting, and for a time put an end to all efforts for a reunion. Several years afterward, however, another meeting was agreed upon, and convened at the Lickcreek Church, known as the Means party. This meeting was for the purpose of preaching and visiting together. Elder Thompson took an active part in this meeting, but was very firm in preaching his views on the question that had divided the association. The meeting passed off harmoniously, in part, but some, as on the former occasion, took to flight after the first day, but not in so much disorder as before.

By request of Elder John Sparks, he and Elder Thompson held an interview at William W. Thomas's house. At this interview the whole matter of the division was fully and freely discussed, and, although the parties could not entirely come together in their views, they agreed to cultivate a more friendly feeling toward each other, and hoped the time would come when they should all be together again. Afterward letters passed between them, in which mutual acknowledgments were made, and mutual forgiveness tendered, and, though there was no formal union of the parties during life, yet it pleased the Lord that their ministerial labors should close among the same people, and the writer has a hope that today they are in perfect union in the paradise of God.

Elder Wilson Thompson for many years was considered one among the most able investigators of Scripture in the regular Baptist Church. He engaged in public discussion with the most talented men of the popular denominations, and in all his discussions the public judgment accorded to him great success. His opponents themselves, in many instances, admitted that he was successful in sustaining his views of doctrine, although they would say, at the same time, it was a great pity such hard doctrines should be sustained. In public debates he had, connected with his strong reasoning powers, the faculty of selecting his proof-texts directly to the point, depending more upon the meaning and purport of the texts used than on the number employed. When he took a position he was careful that it should be a tenable one; and after taking a position he would not suffer himself to be driven nor enticed away from it. Several of those who considered themselves champions in discussion, when giving challenges to the Baptists, would express their willingness to meet any man they had except Wilson Thompson. They were not willing to meet him.

But few, if any, of his public debates have ever been published. After he moved to Indiana he made three extensive tours of preaching, including one in which he traveled through Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, and New Jersey. He was several months engaged in making this tour, preaching daily. Among the numerous acquaintances which he made he was highly esteemed, and was considered as one of the most able ministers in the Baptist body. Many were the solicitations which he received to visit those parts again, and preach to them the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ.

Another of his tours was through Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina, in which he met with and formed the acquaintance of many very precious saints. He was cordially received among them as a minister of great logical powers and Christian virtues. It was not unusual for the ministers who were present at his discourses to arise, when he had concluded his remarks, and give him the right hand of fellowship in approbation of his preaching, and some of them, overflowing with feeling, would clasp him in their arms, and while the tears were streaming from their eyes, would invoke the blessing of

God upon him. A correspondence of mutual interest was continued between him and many of these brethren in after years; and he always spoke of this visit and the brethren he met with, as among the pleasant recollections of his life.

The other tour was through the State of Georgia. His oldest son lived in this state and had a very extensive acquaintance among the Baptists there. This gave the father introduction among the churches. His preaching here, as at other places, was with much warmth and ability, and met a response in the hearts of his brethren. It was as “good news from a far country.” And although it was the first time they had ever seen his face, yet they felt that they were not strangers. His God was their God, and the glorious gospel of the grace of God which he preached, was the same divine truth which the Spirit had written in their hearts. Hence it came to them in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. Neither was the influence of his preaching confined to professors, but many poor souls who had not made profession, would press forward to him and desire him to pray for them, that they might be enabled to realize an interest in the blessed Saviour. O how fervently did he lift his voice to God in their behalf, that He would give them the light of His Spirit that they might see a Saviour’s love, and that they might feel the power of His grace bursting the bars of their prison, and proclaiming liberty to their troubled souls. This tour was also a very pleasant one throughout, and one to which he often referred in after years.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Last Ministerial Labors and Death

ELDER THOMPSON'S last ministerial labors were with the Antioch and Ross Run Churches, located in Wabash County, Indiana. At these two churches Elder John Sparks ended his gospel labors but a few years before, and was called away to that blessed reward that is reserved in heaven for the faithful in Christ. For many years Elder Thompson had expressed a great desire to visit these churches, and although he was in ill health when the time came for him to start to fill his appointment, and his aged companion urged him not to go, he would not consent to remain at home, but in an affectionate way said to his wife: "Don't be uneasy; if I get sick they will take good care of me."

The meeting at Antioch commenced on Saturday before the third Sunday in April at eleven o'clock. When he reached the meetinghouse, he was taken with a chill of such a severe character that he had to retire to a brother's near by, where he suffered for several hours, first with the chill and afterward with high fever. While the fever was on him he talked much; his whole mind was apparently upon the subject of salvation. When the meeting was concluded at the house I returned to the brother's where Father was, and found him sleeping. When he awoke he turned his face toward me and said: "Salvation is by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." He attended meeting that night, and again on the following day. On Sunday he preached a very able discourse to a large and attentive congregation. His text was that portion of Scripture recorded in the 1st Epistle of St. John, 5:1, 2: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments."

It is impossible to give his discourse here as he delivered it. His first argument was that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh, that He was Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, "God with us," and that the prophet had thus spoken of Him. Isaiah had said, speaking of Christ: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; the government shall be upon his shoulder; his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Christ had declared the same of himself saying: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also." And again: "I and my Father are one." The apostles had testified the same. The apostle John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The apostle Paul wrote saying: "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory."

His second argument was, that Jesus Christ, who is God with us, came into this world to save His people from their sins. He quoted many Scriptures in confirmation of this argument, a few of which are as follows: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

His third argument was, that Jesus finished the work which He came to do. He sustained this argument by such texts as the following: "It is finished." "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." "For He hath by one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified." "He hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

His fourth argument was, that to believe that Jesus is the Christ is a full conviction of the mind, that He is the Saviour as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, and that this conviction is not the work of man but it is the effect of the Spirit of God working within the soul a knowledge of the truth. The text says: "He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Not that he shall be born if he will believe, but he is already born of God, and hence he does believe. Again, Paul says, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." John says: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we might know Him that is true." "He that quickeneth the dead and raiseth them up," gives light to the soul that was before in darkness and death, and reveals unto them Jesus Who is the way, the truth, and the life. He shows them their wretchedness and guilt, and makes them feel how just the Lord is in the condemnation of the ungodly, and that their own powers are impotent to do anything to change their ruined condition, and that there is no arm but the arm of Jesus that can rescue from the power of sin. To such a poor trembling soul He reveals the complete and abounding fitness of His salvation. He shows them by the light of His spirit a full atonement in the blood of the Lamb, and gives them the witness in their hearts that they have an interest in what Jesus did. With the heart they believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth they confess that salvation is of the Lord. To love God is a fruit of His spirit. Paul says: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"; and as we have the love of God we love them whom He hath begotten. The union is complete; it unites the soul to the head, and to all the members of the body.

The practical features of the subject enlisted great warmth, both on the part of the speaker and the hearers. He said it was very important that we should know that we love the children of God, for the same writer had said in another part of his letter: "By this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." We often inquire with deep solicitude, do we love the brethren? O, do we love them as the Lord here describes it, with that pure love that shall cause us to know that we have passed from death to life? The text explains the nature and practical effects of this love: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments." The love of God leads us in obedience to Him. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all His paths are peace. In all the ordinances of His Church we behold a beauty. Jesus has been there, and His blessed presence has left a halo of light in every ordinance. As the soul walks in obedience to His commands, he learns of Him Who was "meek and lowly," and he finds a sweet rest. The form of doctrine which the child of God obeys is replete with teaching, pointing to a crucified and risen Jesus, Who is "the author and finisher of our faith." We love God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the grace bestowed upon us, "leading us in the path of righteousness for His -name sake." We keep His commandments in the true spirit of the love of the truth, and by this we know that we love the children of God.

During the delivery of this discourse, which is here but very imperfectly sketched, he spoke with the energy of his younger years, and did not seem to become wearied, although he was engaged in the delivery near one and a half hours. Many who were present will not forget the power of that faithful old servant of Jesus, in closing his ministry on earth, but can with the writer say: "Truly, Jesus was with him to the end."

When he reached his son's house, he was disposed to sleep so much, that when not immediately engaged in conversation, he would relapse into deep slumber. A physician was called to attend him the day following his return, who used all the skill he could command to remove the disease, but after two

days of continued effort, with the assistance to be derived from consultations with other physicians, it became apparent that no human skill could reach the cause, but that death must soon ensue.

The physician approached his bed-side, and in his usual familiar way said: "Grandfather, I have done all that I can do to relieve you, but have failed. I can do no more.

To which the elder replied with a smile: "That is all right, doctor; I am fully resigned to the will of God, and only desire His will to be done whether I live or die."

The doctor then said: "Grandpa, are you still firm in what you have so long preached, and do you feel it is sufficient in a dying hour?"

To which he replied: "Yes, doctor, I have preached that which I believed to be the truth, and in prospect of death it is my only hope. For many years I have not known the fear of death, but have been waiting till my change should come, leaving the event entirely in the hands of a just God. How great a blessing it is to have a merciful and faithful God to trust in when I come to die. . . . My God is a God of purpose and of power; He doeth all things right."

His aged companion now approached his bed-side manifesting deep emotion. He took her hand in his, and in the most tender and affectionate manner addressed her, telling her not to weep, for he was in the hands of a wise God and all was well. He then called his two sons who were present to his side, and gave them directions concerning his business. When he had concluded telling them how to dispose of his business, he requested that his two daughters and son-in-law should be sent for, saying to those present: "I promised to let them know if I should be sick and likely not to recover. He was informed that a messenger had already been sent to let them know of his condition. He then requested those present to sing the hymn beginning:

"On death's cold, stormy bank I stand," etc.

When they had finished singing this hymn he desired them to sing a hymn which he had composed on the subject of death, and the feelings of the Christian when brought to pass the vale. This is the nine hundred and forty-first hymn in Thompson's Hymn-Book. It is here given entire.

*Time like a fleeting shadow flies-
My house of clay must fall;
This tabernacle must decay,
And vanish as a scrawl.*

*My youth and age, my months and years,
Like grass and flowers decay;
Before the mower's scythe of death
They soon will pass away.*

*But, far beyond death's gloomy vale,
A heavenly building stands;
Prolific streams of glory flow
In those celestial lands.*

*To that bright world, that house above,
My longing spirit soars;
Where God my heavenly Father lives,
And every saint adores.*

*Then let this earthly mansion fall
And set my spirit free;
Why should I wish to stay below,
And stay so long from thee?
I'm but a pilgrim far from home,
While here on earth I stay;
My brightest moments are but night,
Compared to endless day.
Then let me wait and live by faith,
Till I am called away;
And to that brighter world ascend,
That house which can't decay.
Let all my fleeting moments pass,
Earth's painted toys may fade;
O, Jesus, my eternal life,
Support me through the shade.
Then to that world of light and love,
Immortal and divine,
Bring this poor pilgrim from the tomb-
This trembling soul of mine.*

At the close of the singing of this hymn he again sank into a deep slumber and rested well during the remaining part of the night. The next morning he appeared better, but it was only transient, and in the afternoon he grew worse again. In all his sufferings he exhibited great patience and resignation, and whenever he spoke it was in a cheerful manner. The next morning his two daughters and son-in-law arrived, and when he was told they had come he looked up with a smile and received them affectionately.

The following is from the pen of his daughter, Mrs. Minerva J. Claypool:

“Dear reader, when the messenger arrived with the sad intelligence of my father’s illness, and the almost certainty of approaching dissolution, it found me watching at the side of my sick husband, who was so prostrated and feeble that I entertained but little hope of his recovery, and who survived my lamented father but two short weeks. My spirit passed through an ordeal, a struggle, between love and duty, the anguish of which my pen can never describe. That my venerable and much-loved father, who had cared for me from my earliest childhood, must pass away, when a few hours’ journey would take me to his presence, the thought was too grievous to be borne; and yet how could I leave the frail and emaciated form of my husband, whose lamp of life was about to expire, and who looked on me as the sole administrator to his wants? O what a conflict it was to act wisely and justly.

“After calling on my heavenly Father for wisdom and guidance, I appealed to my husband, who not only cheerfully assented, but urged that I should go and receive the dying blessing of my father. I procured the attendance of a good nurse, who, with the physician, promised the most faithful care and attention to my husband while I was absent. I consented to go, assuring them that I would return on the next train, thus leaving me but three short hours at my father’s bedside.

“When I arrived, in company with my sister and brother-in-law, he lay in a profound sleep, and although life was despaired of, his countenance bore no marks of sickness or pain. A placid smile rested

upon his features. On being aroused and told that we had come, he smiled and said he was glad to see us. But the joy that beamed from his eyes as he clasped our hands in his, gave evidence of the true love and parental affection that lay welled up in his great and noble heart. After relinquishing his hold upon our hands, he called my mother to his bedside, and clasping her aged form to his bosom, he called her by name (Folly, as was his wont in health), and said to her: 'Let us show our children how we love each other,' at the same time imprinting a kiss upon her cheek, while a smile of unutterable kindness overspread his aged face.

"But such was the potency of his disease that sleep, deep sleep, would overcome his faculties in the midst of conversation, and relaxing his embrace, he sank back upon his pillow in profound sleep. It must be that the sunset of life gives us a keener, quicker sense, else why do we love the more fondly as the curtain of eternity begins to descend upon us. Surely there must be a deeper undeveloped sense, lying beneath the surface of general feeling, which the tightening of life's cords draws out in all its beauty. As his physical strength grew feebler, and his voice became fainter, the glorious spiritual predominated, until mortality was swallowed up in immortality.

"My allotted time now having expired, I approached his bed to take my last farewell. I said: 'Father, I am forced to tear myself from you.'

"His reply was:

*'Our several engagements do call us away,
Separation is needful and we must obey.'*

"I remarked: 'Father, I fear I shall never see you in this world again.'

"He replied: 'Well, it is all right; I am in the hands of a good and just God, in Whom I have perfect faith. Nothing but a demonstration of His wonderful power can save my life.'

"His physician, who was standing by his side, said: 'Father Thompson, your faith does not forsake you in the trying hour.'

"'O, no,' said he, 'My God knows no change. My faith is in Him, and living or dying, all is well.'

"As I pressed his trembling hand in mine, and for the last time gazed upon his placid face, silently I murmured: 'O, my soul, pass under the rod, for the cup thy heavenly Father has given thee to drink must be drained, even to the dregs;' and with streaming eyes and bursting heart I turned from the couch of that dying apostle, my venerable father."

His physical strength continued gradually to decrease until his decease, which took place on the evening of the first day of May, 1866. The writer, with many friends, was standing by the bedside when the immortal spirit left the tenement of clay and "ascended to the God who gave it." As I looked upon the face of that clay, calm and tranquil in death, with not one muscle distorted (for without a struggle he had fallen asleep in Jesus), but placid and serene, I felt that the truth of the apostle's language was fulfilled in the Christian warrior now gone to his reward: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day."

Oh, transfiguring power of faith! Thou hast a wand more potent than that of fancy, and a vision brighter than the dreams of enchantment. It was thy sweet visions and hallowed light that lifted the spirit of my sainted father above the gloom and terror of the grave, and stamped upon his clay the impress of the light of heaven, leaving the features beautiful in death. Thy grace, O Lord, was the sovereign boon of my father's life, and I thank thee – O, how much my poor heart can never tell! – that in death it lifted

the veil of mortality and unfolded in ravishing beauty to his glorified spirit the light and bliss of heaven. O, how blessed it is to die as the saint dies, breathing out his life sweetly on the breast of Jesus Christ!

Dear reader, none but those who have passed through the trial, know the deep emotions of grief which fill the heart when death takes from us a beloved father, when a full sense of the truth that he is gone from us, no more to return forever, is conveyed into the soul. Were there no light beyond the tomb, no ray of immortality to illuminate the gloom of mortality and death, how bitter and inconsolable would our grief be, when the dark curtain of death has shut out forever those dear kindred ones whose lives have so closely been linked in ours that their death is as the rending of our own heartstrings. To look with one fond, long gaze upon the beloved form, to hearken to the last words of affection and love, and to feel that we are to meet no more-no, never! It breaks the springs of life; it is the wretchedness of despair.

But we sorrow not as those who have no hope.” We feel that our father sleeps in Jesus, that there is but a veil between us, and while we on this side see but dimly, he, within the veil, is beholding the beauties of the paradise of God. We miss him in the family circle; his chair is vacant by the hearth; his voice is no longer heard in council. In the church on earth no more is his great gift enjoyed, proclaiming salvation through Jesus, and ascribing wisdom and power unto our God. But beyond the curtain of mortality, among the spirits of the just made perfect, in the presence of the holy angels, with the blessed Saviour, in the glory of God, made free from pain, from sorrow, from death, he lives, with no cloud to intervene, to hide the beauty of the Lord. There, in strains seraphic, his immortal powers chant the great, the never-ending glories of our Redeemer God. O, with what submission to the will of God can we resign ourselves when grace shows us how excellent the way of the Lord is. Instead of despairing, we press forward toward the prize, and forget the things which are behind.

*In view of that eternal crown, we now the cross sustain,
And gladly reckon all things loss, so we but Jesus gain.*

Dear reader, we must now bid you adieu. Many important events connected with the labors of the deceased, events which would have been interesting to you, have not been obtained, on account of the many pressing duties of the writer engaging so much of his time that he could not get them together. But he hopes enough has been written in this book to give the reader an outline of the leading facts connected with the ministerial life of ELDER WILSON THOMPSON.

Appendix

THE following discourse was delivered by Elder Wilson Thompson, on the occasion of the death of Jediah Hill, an old and much esteemed brother with whom he had for many years been intimately acquainted, and for whom he entertained the strongest Christian regard and brotherly attachment. It was delivered at the residence of Mr. Henry Rogers, an estimable citizen, near Mount Healthy, Hamilton County, Ohio, on the 31st of July, 1859, to a large and attentive concourse of people:

TEXT – “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written; death is swallowed up in victory.”- 1 Cor. 15:54.

When death severs the tender cords that bind in sympathetic ties our friends and kindred, and the gloom of the grave spreads its melancholy mantle over the scenery, no thought, no contemplation, no subject, or theme, can so effectually dispel its gloom, disperse the melancholy, and brighten up the scenery, like the warrant of a glorious resurrection. The solace afforded by this doctrine is infinitely enhanced by the assurance that in the resurrection of the dead such a change will be effected as will effectually and finally forbid every possibility of a relapse again to death, mortality or corruption. It follows, of course, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is emphatically a cardinal point in that heavenly message of glad tidings sent to earth, called the gospel of our salvation.

On occasions like the present, when many weeping relatives and sympathizing friends are assembled to drop a tear to the memory of a deceased brother, whose pious life and peaceful death has left so many good examples before them, no subject can be more appropriate than the resurrection of the dead. The importance of this doctrine is second to none in the Christian system of revealed truth.

The apostle Paul, in the chapter of which our text is a part, shows its great importance by admitting at once that if this item in the Christian system can be successfully negated, all the other parts of it fall with it, and of all men the Christian is the most miserable. His faith is vain. He is yet in his sins. The apostles are found guilty of perjury, for they have testified that God raised up Christ from the dead, Whom he raised not up if the dead rise not. All the saints who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished. Christian baptism is but an unmeaning ceremony, for being buried in the water and raised up out of it, is an unmeaning ordinance if the dead rise not. All the persecution, even the fighting of beasts at Ephesus, is profitless, and endured for nought, if the dead rise not. We may eat and drink today and die tomorrow like the beast, and there is no more of us.

But Paul enters his solemn protest against this negative position and sustains his protest by the rejoicing which the Christian has in Christ Jesus, and declares, “But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.” Then he takes his position that Christ has risen from the dead, and therefore the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is an established and incontestable truth, and viewing Him as the first fruits of them that slept, it is the pledge and warrant of the resurrection from the dead of all the saints finally in the likeness of the first fruits of the entire crop or harvest. This raising of the entire crop, or gathering and purifying the entire harvest, is set for the last day, for the apostle saith, “The trump shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

Having thus taken his position, he first proceeds to prove the resurrection of Christ the first fruits, and then the certainty of the resurrection of all the crop. His witnesses for number and clearness of testimony are unparalleled. They testify to what they have seen and heard themselves; no confliction

appears among them; they all feel the importance of what they say, and venture freely and wholly the eternal destiny, and present comfort, and reputation of their present and future state, upon the truths of what they affirm. The greatest part of these witnesses, also, when Paul collected their testimony, would have no doubt corrected him if in anything he had misrepresented them. But the greater number, about five hundred, besides Cephas, the twelve, James, and all the apostles, and also Paul himself—all in one unbroken phalanx, prove the same truth without discord. Paul, in effect, seems to challenge those who denied or doubted the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, to enter their protest while these witnesses, the most of them, remained alive, and could be examined and cross-examined; but no man attempted to accept the challenge.

Next he proceeds to show how Christ is regarded as the proper first fruits of all the crop. He says: “Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.” However clearly the resurrection of both the just and the unjust is proved by the many other parts of the Scripture, yet in this 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, the resurrection of the saints alone is brought to view. Adam, the earthly man, by whom came death, shows the mildew and blasting of all the crop by his offense, his death, dishonor, guilt and shame making the whole crop as vain, vile, and blasted. As he represented the whole crop in him, and as death reigns by him, so all die in him; Adam their head is dead and all the crop in him, and like him are under the reign of sin and death. They die in him, “for it is appointed unto man once to die.”

We hear much said about man’s being restored back, by Christ, to what Adam lost by transgression. All this is wild speculation and vain philosophy. Christ never came to restore Adam, nor any of his long progeny, back to all, or any part of what he had lost by his disobedience. What he lost was his life, his crown of glory, his dominion over the world and all its hosts, his innocence, and all the earthly blessings with which his Creator blessed him in the day in which he was created. These he lost; and to these was he never restored, in whole or in part, but still remains a slave under sin and death, a child of wrath, and in dying he must die. “So by man came death.” This is the state of all the race of the earthly Adam, who was made a living soul, not by creation, for he was not created a living soul, but he was made a living soul by the breath of life being breathed into his nostrils.

Adam was created on the sixth day, but the breath of life was breathed into him sometime after the seventh day; and then, and not till then, did man become a living soul. It was after man became a living soul that he received the law from his Creator, and the woman was taken from his side; so that all the male and female, body and soul, were in the transgression, and all fell under the power of death and must die, for they are not restored. The life of Adam, and his earthly honor, dignity, crown, or dominion, never have been, and never will be, restored either to him, or to any of his offspring. “So by man came death. By man came also the resurrection of the dead.” The resurrection is a very different thing from a restoration back to Eden, or any of its temporal and natural earthly blessings; for in it we are changed, and put on a nature that is spiritual and immortal, which the earthly Adam never had before the fall, and of course he never lost it by his disobedience. The second man is the last Adam. He was made a quickening spirit, not made so by creation, as some vainly affirm—no, but by the Holy Ghost that was given to the heavenly Man, not in part, or by measure, as it was given to the prophets, the apostles, and others, or to all who are born of the Spirit, or received its gifts. But the Holy Spirit in all its divine fullness, as God Who is a Spirit was in Him and rested upon Him, and the Man became the visible form and organ, authorized by and with it to quicken whom He will; “for, as the Father

raised up the dead and quickeneth whom He will, so hath the Son power also to quicken whom He will.”

Thus the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The whole fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily; therefore He was the Lord from heaven. This heavenly Man, considered strictly as man, although a native of heaven, is properly so called a heavenly Man, and is nowhere in Scripture called a spiritual man, distinct from the divine power or Godhead. No; He is a heavenly Man, a native of heaven. This heavenly Man, according as it was written of Him in the volume of the book of God’s immutable will, came forth at the appointed time in the body which God had prepared for Him, and so the Word was made flesh; for although He was a heavenly Man before, He now for the first time became flesh, or a fleshly man. In His flesh He was of the seed of David, and made of a woman, etc.

Many have talked and written much about a spiritual headship of the church, which they say was created before all worlds; that is, this spiritual life and immortality of the church was created long before creation, and the church, as a spiritual seed in this spiritual head, life, and immortality, of the church, was also created in, and simultaneous with, this spiritual, immortal creature. All this fabric is outside of the Bible, and God has never revealed it in that Book, and neither we nor our children have any use for it, so we will let it pass back under its native shade. The heavenly Man was and is the head of the church, as God was and is the head of Christ, the Anointed.

In this mediatorial head of the church, who is the man Christ Jesus? this man of God’s right hand, even this Son of Man whom God hath made strong for Himself; this Man that appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Manoah and his wife, to Joshua, etc., as an angel or messenger from God to them? This Man partook of flesh and blood in Mary, for she was prepared by the Holy Ghost overshadowing her, and the power of the Highest coming upon her, to be the mother of that holy thing which was born of her. Although she was a daughter of the fallen race, yet by the Holy Ghost’s overshadowing her, and the power of the Highest coming upon her, she was prepared to bring forth the holy child Jesus, Who was free from sin and all its pollutions.

The Word of God did not put on flesh, but was made flesh and could carry our sorrows, bear our sins, hunger, thirst, and suffer weariness, pain of the body and soul, all for us, and not at all on account of any sin or depravity of His own nature, for He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. This heavenly Man was made, was put to death in the flesh, bore our sins in His body on the tree; His soul was made an offering for sin, and as man He yielded up the spirit, and was dead. His life as man was poured forth with His blood, and His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Thus after a life of strict obedience and suffering, in which He fulfilled all the precepts of the law, He died the shameful and lingering, painful death of the cross. His God forsook Him, and there were none to help Him. So He paid the penalty of the law by His death. He died according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. “So by man came the resurrection of the dead.” The union of Christ and His church was a legal union, a oneness in the life and nature of Christ as man and mediator. This oneness of nature as man, was not the nature of man after his fall, but the uncorrupted nature of man before his sin.

None of all the train of evils which sin has introduced is essential to man as such; but the children of God, as men, are loaded down with the bondage of this corruption. These corruptions, evil passions of the body, and sins of the flesh, are not redeemed by Christ, but His people are redeemed, both soul and body, and spirit, from all these evils, so that they shall be cleansed from all pollution. The children of God have their sonship in the Mediator, the heavenly Man Christ Jesus. Jesus, the Son of God, was appointed heir of all things, and all His minor brethren, as a seed in Him, were chosen of God in Him,

before the foundation of the world, as the heirs of God, in His immutable and confirmed will, in which will all these heirs were blessed with “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”; and of this will Christ was the Mediator, and Executor, and all the children being one seed in Christ, are with Him and in Him, chosen as the heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ the Mediator. The fact that these are the children of God in Christ is a good reason why they should be chosen in Him as the heirs of God. Their Father’s will, and Christ, the heavenly Man, in Whom all the heavenly seed is a unit, being the Mediator, that is, the legally appointed Executor of this confirmed will, is the good and valued reason why all their blessings should be given to them in Him, and shows at once the legal obligation of Christ as a Mediator, to sustain every legal claim, and fulfill every legal demand of the law in behalf of all the heirs. It may be objected that although the mediator of a will is legally bound to sustain every claim of the law, and pay every just demand of a pecuniary nature, yet he is not bound to go to prison, or die for the capital offense of the heirs; for these offenses a mediator is not bound in law, but the offender, although an heir, must answer for himself, in his own person.

To this objection I answer: The force of this objection rests on the provisions of the will; if the will is exclusively pecuniary in its provisions, the objection would be valid; but if the will made ample provisions for the redemption of the heirs from all the thralldom which any or all capital offenses could lung them into, even bondage or death itself, as the penalty of an offended law, and for that very end in the provisions of the will the mediator was appointed, in that case, the objection falls, and the mediator stands legally bound to endure the penalty of all the capital offenses of the heirs, and redeem them from thralldom and death. Such are the plain provisions of God’s will, now under contemplation, of which the Man Christ Jesus, is the Mediator, and all God’s children in Him are the chosen heirs. The apostle says: “For this cause He (Christ), is the Mediator of the New Testament will, so that, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament (the law), they that are called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance.” Such being the provisions of this will or testament, and the Mediator being appointed for the very cause of the redemption of the heirs from all their transgressions committed under the law (the first or Old Testament), and this redemption to be effected by means of the death of the Mediator of the New Testament (or will), we must see that this Mediator is held and legally bound by the provisions of the will He has come to execute, to redeem the heirs by means of His death, so that when they are, by virtue of this redemption, called from the prison, the dungeon, the pit, or death itself, as heirs now redeemed legally they may receive the promise, that is the guarantee in the will, which is the eternal inheritance.

As an illustration of this matter, suppose a slave in the South, who, by the law of the land, is in perpetual bondage, or a convict in our penitentiary for life, or in our jail under sentence of death. In either case, all the rights of freedom and citizenship are legally forfeited, and gone forever. Suppose, by the opening of some ancient and well-confirmed will, it should be found this slave proved to be the heir to the estate? But this heir is the legal property of his master, or the legal convict for life, or under sentence of death, and so is legally disqualified to claim or possess his inheritance, for the slave being legal property himself, can legally hold no property, any more than a horse can; and so with the convict. In either case, there is a legal barrier to receive the inheritance.

To put the criminal or slave in possession of his portion without legal redemption, would leave him the culprit or slave as before, the law would be dishonored, the heirs not benefited, nor God’s wisdom, power, or grace glorified; but if from a close examination of the will, it should be found that the father of these slaves and convicts, had, in his will, made ample provisions for the redemption of all these heirs from all these thralldoms, and their mediator had redeemed them by means of his death from all

things, and so had made them free, indeed, the legal difficulty being fully removed, and them redeemed from under the law, its bondage and penalty, they may now be honorably called free men, to receive and possess the eternal inheritance.

This redemption was completed by means of the death of the heavenly Man, Who was made flesh, made of woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of children. So, because we are sons, and of course heirs, God has sent forth into our hearts the spirit of His Son, crying, "Abba, Father." The Man Christ Jesus has redeemed every heir, and the perfection of that eternal redemption through His blood, by His glorious and triumphant resurrection, is that through his death He destroyed death and him that had the power of death, and of course it was not possible that He could be holden of it. The third, the appointed day, He declared the glories of the conquest by His resurrection from the dead, and thus wrested the sting of death and the victory of the grave, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

This heavenly Man died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, "so by man came the resurrection of the dead." As all God's children in the flesh have borne the image of the earthly man by whom came death, so shall all bear finally the image of the heavenly Man, by Whom come the resurrection of the dead. The apostle has by the two Adams, shown, the earthly man to be the representative or first fruits of a crop, all struck with mildew and blasted, under the reign of sin and death-not one sound grain, all being condemned-a mass of corruption, a compound of mortality, pollution-nothing sound in them, and no good done by them. Such is the entire crop of the earthly man, and he is the first fruit of all this sin-smitten crop, none good, none righteous, no, not one," none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God, none that doeth good, 'no, not one.'" Such was the decision of God, when from heaven He inspected the whole; not even one solitary grain in all the crop was excepted, "no, not one."

Here was Adam the first, the earthly man, and all this long harvest or crop which he represented, and by whom came death. On the other hand the last Adam, the heavenly Man, by Whom came the resurrection of the dead, having redeemed all the children of God as the heirs of His will, presents them holy and without blame before God in love, without spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing. God from heaven also inspects them and gives His decision, "Thou art all fair, my love, I will behold no spot in thee." Of the perfect crop Christ, the heavenly Man, was the first fruits, He having risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. It follows, of course, that they who have fallen asleep in Christ have not perished, but God will bring them with him.

This entire crop or harvest, of which the heavenly Man is the first fruits which represents the whole harvest or crop, is perfect, and in the resurrection will be found without one spot, blemish, or imperfect grain. I apprehend an objection by some modern Sadducees who deny the resurrection in full, but disclaim this charge for effect, professing to believe in a resurrection, but not of this identical body. They say that when the body dies, the never-dying spirit is separated from this dying body, and that being mortal, it will return to its mother earth and never be resurrected; but the living spirit, which never dies, leaves the body, and in a living, spiritual body ascends up to God Who gave it, and there enjoys the eternal glory. Now who does not see through the mist of this sophism? Where is any part or particle of the resurrection of the dead in this system? What dies? The body only; and according to this hypothesis that which dies never rises again, only the spirit in a spiritual body which never died. There is no resurrection of the dead in this theory. But the apostle argues the resurrection of the dead, even these vile bodies of ours, that they shall be changed and fashioned like our Saviour's glorious body, that this "mortal shall put on immortality, that this corruptible shall put on incorruption." He maintains that

it is sown a natural body, but is raised a spiritual body. That it is sown in corruption, but it-yes, it is the same body-it is raised in incorruption.

All this shows the identity of the body, and that this identical body shall be not only raised from the dead, but shall, in that process, be changed from natural to spiritual, from mortal to immortal, from corruption to incorruption. Flesh and blood, in the present depraved state, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven; neither shall corruption inherit incorruption. This corruption, as we have before said, was brought on us by sin, and was not an heir to any spiritual blessing, but the heirs were redeemed from all sin, and all the train of its evils, yet corruption itself was not redeemed. Christ saw no corruption. Corruption is not essential to the existence of man, was never redeemed, and will never be raised with the just. It has polluted our flesh, and in this pollution flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

The apostle having triumphantly proved the resurrection of Christ, and by the parallel representation of the two Adams, the earthly man and the heavenly Man, and how each of these represented his respective seed, family, or crop, shows how by the earthly man came mildew, blasting, dishonor, and death; on the other hand how the heavenly Man redeemed His brethren by executing His and their Father's will, in which were all the provisions of their legal redemption; and that He never restored them to all or any part of the natural life, honor, dignity, crown, or dominion, or any of the natural blessings which were lost by transgression, but redeemed them, and so removed every legal barrier out of the way, that they as heirs, might be called from slavery, bondage, and death, to receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. This was a spiritual, heavenly, and eternal inheritance reserved for them in heaven-an inheritance which he never had before the fall, and of which we have no account that he had ever thought or heard of.

The heavenly Man, in Whom God hath chosen all His children as heirs, and in Whom every spiritual blessing, grace, and the promises are sure to all the seed, by Him came also the resurrection of the dead. Having clearly settled these points beyond any reasonable cavil, the apostle proceeds to show the process more definitely, by which the resurrection of the dead and the change which is to be effected by it, together with some of the glorious results to be realized by the victorious heirs, when death shall be swallowed up in victory. This process is gathered first from the resurrection of Christ. His body was raised from the dead really, and its identity could easily be demonstrated; it was not some spiritual body, but the same body which was nailed to the cross. The print of the nails in His hands and of the spear in His side, proved this identity. His saying to Mary, "Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have," not only proves the body, but also proves that it was not some spiritual body which His spirit had assumed.

The resurrection of the dead is a very different thing from an ascension to heaven. Christ rose from the dead about forty days previous to His ascension to heaven. This intermediate space was to give His followers the fullest opportunity of testing the real identity of His bodily resurrection, and also to give Him the fullest opportunity to teach them the nature of His kingdom, their own commission and field of labor, and to show distinctly, in order of time, all the process of the resurrection of the body itself, and also the change to be wrought on the body, making it a spiritual body, yet proving it to be the same body. That it was the very same is clear from the strict search for His body in sepulcher, forthwith after the resurrection, and it was not found. The very body which the women would have embalmed was gone, and the angel said: "He is not here, He has risen, as He said." Also Peter and John, when they went in and searched for the body found the linen cloths and the napkins, but the body they found not. The resurrection of the identical body in which He had died was the point at issue. No one on any side

pretended to say that He had risen in a spiritual body, and that His body of flesh had not risen from the dead. No, it was the resurrection of the real body that was contested. On the one hand His friends declared that He was risen; and on the other hand, seeing His body could not be found, His enemies labored to bribe witnesses to say that the disciples had stolen Him away. This evidently shows that all respected His real body of flesh and bones which had been nailed to the cross and crucified.

Again, the identity of the body is evinced clearly by the circumstance of His eating and drinking with His disciples after His passion, as they affirm. Spirits do not eat such food as broiled fish and honeycomb. This risen body was the same body of flesh, and not a spiritual or aerial body. The full time, and all the circumstances which transpired during that time, seem to put the question of the resurrection of the real body of Christ beyond all reasonable cavil, and to strip the infidel of every plausible subterfuge.

The process of the resurrection of the identical body being fully demonstrated, we shall here remark that, as we have found in the testimony, several circumstances show His having flesh and bones which spirits have not, and His eating and drinking with His disciples, which seems incompatible with the belief that His body at that time was a spiritual body. I understand this matter to teach, first, the resurrection of the body, and after this is fully shown, then at His ascension up to His Father, when the bright cloud invested Him, that in this part of the process the same body becomes spiritual, yet the same body, but changed from natural to spiritual. The body of flesh and bones in which He appeared to Mary and in which He ate and drank, was not left behind when He ascended up. Enoch and Elijah had not left their mortal bodies behind to decay, but they were translated or changed in the process from natural to spiritual. The saints also, who shall be alive and remain on earth until the second coming of Christ, shall not sleep, but they shall be changed. They will not exchange these bodies for some other bodies, but these bodies shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. In this sudden change or translation I understand that, as in the ascensions in the cases referred to, the process was so instantaneous, that the different parts of the drama can hardly be distinguished. But in the case of Christ the process is slow and distinct, so that every part may be fully tested, He being the resurrection and the life. This slow process was much for our instruction, and we find it in every case of translation of the general resurrection of the dead, and of the change that awaits those saints who live and remain till the second advent of the first fruits of the harvest.

The apostle speaks of bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial, and he shows that the glory of the bodies are different. The one is suited to the earthly state, the other will be suited to the heavenly or celestial state. I understand that this mortal body, while it remains mortal and corruptible, is a terrestrial body, but the same body shall be raised incorruptible, glorious, immortal, and will then be a celestial body. The glories of the bodies are very different. All that is meant by this is a fair description of the different glories of the body in its earthly state, and its heavenly state; and to illustrate these different glories he introduces the many bodies of the visible heavens, the sun, the moon, and the different stars. The different glories of all these bodies may illustrate the different glories of the terrestrial and celestial state, the process of the resurrection and the changes connected with it. He next speaks of the glories achieved, the victory given, and the transports enjoyed by the risen and changed saints. The language of our text beautifully expresses this: "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" The apostle has said above, that "this mortal shall put on immortality."

Now, when that is past at the future appointed time, when they shall have put on this incorruption and this immortality, then their warfare will be ended, and their enemies forever sunk in eternal defeat. The

saying will be realized in a joyful reality – “Death is swallowed up in victory” – Death, that king of terrors and terror to kings, that last, that potent enemy, that relentless tyrant, who being armed by man’s rebellion, and the strength of a transgressed law, had been roaming in every country, and the earth and sea. A stranger to pity, a foe to sympathy and human kindness, with his scythe he has laid the earthly race like the mower’s withering grass, and all the glory of man has fallen before his triumphant march. For many thousands of years its march has been onward and uncontrolled by any earthly power. Neither age nor sex, high or low, king or peasant, master or slave, could bribe him to friendship or escape his vigilance. He first came into our coasts by the earthly man, “the first Adam”, and seized upon his whole, wide dominions, and reigned without a rival.

Jesus, the heavenly Man, comes out from God, appears on earth, invades this tyrant in his wide dominion, assails him in his own citadel, where Golgotha and the Roman cross bore witness to his power, presence, and ferocity. Here, in the very midst and strength of these veteran hosts, “the heavenly Man” bursts up the grave. Death yields, and Jesus rose the third day, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. So, by the heavenly Man came the resurrection of the dead. When this power of the resurrection shall have exerted its quickening energies on all the heirs of promise, and they shall have put on incorruption and immortality, then the triumphant shout will be heard in all the victorious throng of the redeemed: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” The earth once opened her mouth and swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; so this form of expression is used to show a signal and final defeat on the one side, or an everlasting and decisive victory on the other. The victory is so signal and triumphant that the vanquished are lost beyond all possible hope of recovery – the whole possibility of ever reviving or regaining strength to war any more forever. This shall be the tyrant Death’s hopeless condition in regard to all the army of the heavenly Man, by Whom came the resurrection of the dead. Death is swallowed up in this glorious victory. Then all the heavenly, immortal throng shall give vent to their grateful feelings in the soul-stirring acclamation: “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We shall now review the subject, and briefly notice a few things that we have but lightly touched. The earthly man was acting for his progeny. He was under a conditional plan or system, by which came all our pains, dishonor, guilt, death, and hell itself. You are ready to say these are round assertions. We will examine them. Was not Adam a good made, innocent, upright man? crowned with glory, and set over all the lower part of God’s new and good creation? All was then in subjection to him, and under him. This station and his life he held upon conditions. If he obeyed, he remained in his honor and his life. But if he did not obey, and ate of that one tree, he lost all. “Of all the trees of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it.” This one tree was forbidden, and all others were free. This condition, small as it may seem, wrought the ruin of a good world. How soon he failed to keep this condition! He ate, and we see the scepter fall from his hand, the diadem from his brow, and the crown from his head. The world is in wild confusion. No longer is man a monarch; no longer are the beasts in subjection. The very little mosquito will suck his blood, and a reciprocity of fear and carnage marks the footsteps of the man and beast, and fish and fowl; a world is ruined; death is reigning; murder, pestilence, and every sin is exhibiting its deformity, and hell is yawning wide to receive into its hopeless gloom the guilty wretches, who, on the conditional plan, have lost an Eden, a crown, a vast dominion, and lost it forever.

The order of that system is slavery, its ministry condemnation. It cannot give life, and there is no justification by its deeds. It gives strength to sin; it ministers death. All this it does, when its conditions are not kept; and it can give life to none, but sentences all to death. “So by man came death, and death

has passed upon all.” We have all sinned. Under this system the earthly man has brought death and left all his long progeny under its oppressive reign.

The heavenly Man, on the other hand, came as we have seen, to execute a better testament, the promises of which are made sure to all the seed. No conditions weaken its comforts. No condemnation embitters its ministry. No conditions render its promises void, or turn them into a curse. “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more.” This covenant, ordered in all things and sure, this which contains the “sure mercies of David”, this unconditional ministration of the Spirit, is that which brings to view the “heavenly Man” in all His life and death, by Whom came the “resurrection.”

Some people call our doctrine hard. I have often said that we preach salvation to the lost, life to the dying, clothing to the naked, food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, and a triumphant resurrection to the dead, and all from first to last without one condition to be performed by the sinner, but all by grace. They say that our system is too circumscribed and contracted. This we deny; a conditional plan can reach only the good, the obedient, the righteous, and such as have done good. How far does this boasted system reach? To none. When God looked down from heaven upon the earth to inspect man and his doings, He saw there was none good, none that sought after God, none that did good, none righteous, “no, not one.” Now since the great broad conditional plan, as it is called, can bring its blessings only to such as do good, and could bless no others, then I conclude that this plan can benefit none. While those are preaching to moral free agents, and to the good, etc., do let me preach the gospel to the poor, to them who are without strength, to them who are naked, and hungry, and thirsty. Let me say to the poor ungodly sinner: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” Let me tell the helpless sinner that Christ is able to save to the uttermost. Though their sins be red as scarlet or crimson, let me tell those that He can cleanse them white as wool or snow. If I see one like Saul or Manasseh, breathing out threatening and slaughter, let me preach Christ to them whom he persecutes. If I see one like Mary possessed of seven devils, let me tell such, that Jesus receiveth sinners. If I pass by the tombs, and see one like the Gadarene possessed of a legion, do let me tell him of Jesus Who will clothe him, and bring him to his right mind. If the conditionalist can find a good, righteous man, a moral free agent, he may preach to him; for as Christ “came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,” I have but little to say to such, and I cannot find them. Let me preach to sinners, for these I can find everywhere, and the gospel of the grace of God is the gospel of their salvation. Its language is, “The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost.”

We have shown that this 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians speaks only of the resurrection of the just; yet we have said that other parts of the Scriptures do most unquestionably teach the resurrection of the wicked, as in John: “The hour is coming when they that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” Here both the righteous and the wicked are included, and their final state assigned them. Also in Revelation we find, as in all cases where the just and the unjust are raised, that the just are raised first. So here, the just are described as rising first and living, but the rest of the dead lived not again till a space of time represented as a thousand years had passed. John beheld this scene: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things written in the books, according to their works.”

Here we have books opened, and all the wicked dead, who lived not for a full space after the just had risen, and their names found in the Lamb's book of life; but now, after this space is all past, all the dead stand before God, and then the books were opened. What books were these? Evidently these were the books of the law-the five books of Moses. "There is one who judgeth you, even Moses in whom ye trust. They that are under the law shall be judged by the law." The law is the conditional system, and every conditionalist desires and expects to be judged by the books of the law, according as his works shall be. As they who have lived under the law, shall be judged by the law; so when these are to be judged (and for this purpose they stand before God the Judge), the books of the law, out of which they are to be judged, are opened, and they are judged out of the things written in these books of the law, according as their works shall be, or according as their works shall compare with the requirements and conditions which the law demands.

This is what all conditionalists desire and contend for, to stand on the conditional plan, and to be judged according to their works. So the books and their works are compared, and they are all "cast into the lake of fire." This is the second death. Such was the final fate of all whose names were not found written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And such are the awful results of the conditional plan, and so true were my words when I roundly asserted that the system of condition had more of misery, confusion, and of hell itself, than any other system ever taught by men. It is the law, the ministration of condemnation and death. By its deeds or conditions "no flesh can be justified." May the Lord save His people from the curse.

Now, in the close of our discourse, I would ask you all, does not the gospel of the grace of God, the good message of Christ and the resurrection, the gospel of your salvation, open a more vivid prospect before us, than all the schemes and systems which philosophy, criticism, speculation, or the wisdom of the world has ever devised? As we have seen, "by man came death" and all its gloom; we look at it with dread and repulsive fear. Its gloom is deep and dark; not one bright star to guide, or one bright beam to cheer the lonely traveler! -all-all is gloom! But hark! in accents soft and melodious as seraphs sing, we hear it proclaimed: "By man came also the resurrection of the dead;" "death is swallowed up in victory;" the gloom recedes. Clothed in bright immortality and incorruption we behold the saints arise. This is the hope of the gospel. When our friends drop into the arms of death and are locked up in the grave, we see and know that we are not restored back to Eden-to what Adam lost. No, but by the "heavenly Man came the resurrection" to immortality and a crown of righteousness, and to a victory which God gives through our Lord Jesus Christ. This causes us not "to sorrow as others who have no hope."

My habit, on occasions of this kind, is not to say much about the virtues of the dead. On this occasion there is no need of it. He has long lived among you. The hundreds now around me show respect for his memory. His life was the testimonial of his religion; he lived the Christian; his example is before you. He died as the Christian, without a murmur or a fear. He gradually sank down, step by step, for over one year. His pain was not so severe as to make him desire death as a retreat from misery. But with a calm resignation, he submitted all to the will of his God, and without a sigh or a groan, or the distortion of a muscle, he fell asleep like an infant. I have now a vivid recollection when, over thirty years ago, I baptized him and his deceased wife; and from that period to the day of their death, I have always found them sound in the faith and order of the gospel. I believe his neighbors and numerous relatives, many of whom are now before me, will feel a hearty response when I say he lived his religion, and died as he lived, trusting in God, whose service was his delight in life, and whose grace was his solace in death. May we so live, and die, and share the glories of a glorious resurrection. Amen.