

grieve and mourn with the more intense bitterness. I occasionally found myself wondering why it was that I was brought up and trained to be almost religious as I thought and moral, by a strictly pious Baptist mother, and felt averse to intemperance, profanity, and immorality generally. I repeat again; I wonder why it was, that I could not find release from troubles of a guilty conscience, more ready than persons I considered more profligate, base and outbreaking in their practices. I have been made acquainted however long since with my poor sinful self, so that I have found my heart to be "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?"—Jer. xvii. 9.

At times I would backslide, and endeavor and determine to return again to this poor, sin-disordered world, and enjoy its pleasures, bitter and perishing as I knew them to be; but the eye that never slumbers was ever upon me, to check when going astray; and right here I feel the force of the following lines:

The Lord, from whom I then backslid,
First checked with some gentle sting.
Turned on me, look'd and softly chid,
And bade me hope for better things.
Soon to His bar He made me come,
Arraigned—condemned, and cast I stood,
Expecting from His mouth, the doom
Of those who trampled on His blood.
O! what a dismal state was this,
What horrors shook my feeble frame,
All prodigals can surely guess,
For they no doubt have felt the same. HART

Many of the children of God I am confident, have enjoyed at some little or least, of what is termed the pleasures of the world: but as for my part, I have been from my cradle, a child, a lad, a youth, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.—Isa. liii. 3.

I frequently heard preachers proclaim in the course of their sermons, that every Christian could tell the very day and hour when he felt the first wound from the arrow of conviction. Such remarks served but to add poignancy to my sufferings, and caused me to fear that my conviction was not from the Lord and could not of course lead to a happy issue. These and similar remarks I am well convinced from long experience, are founded in error, and lead to no good results. Had it not been for sovereign unconquerable reigning grace, I should have grown up to manhood, a vain, proud, self-conceited mortal. But I can say truthfully of myself that I felt as it were "killed all the day long."—Rom viii. 36. And to say with David, "I am like a Pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert, I Watch and am as a Sparrow alone upon the house top."—Psl. cii. 6, 7. I became afraid to look at my natural face in the glass, for fear I might be horror-stricken at the uncomely countenance of a poor sin-sick soul; yea! a worm and no man, Ps. xxii. 6. Many times in my hopeless condition, and viewing the many troubles with which I was surrounded, I was compelled with Jacob to say: "All these things are against

me," Gen 42: 36. Could I have had a mere glimpse of what was in reserve for my poor tempest tossed soul, I could have kissed the rod most joyfully that smote, and welcomed the hand that so sorely afflicted me. But I was in the bondage of sin, kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed, Gal. iii. 23. It pleased the Lord however at a time and in a way and manner, although unlooked for by me, to unveil his matchless glory and beauty, and splendor, and to call back the waves of error and unbelief, and "drive the dark clouds from the sky," so that I might rejoice in the soul-cheering presence of the sun of righteousness which had risen with healing in his wings, Mal. iv. 2, and to make my hitherto poor benighted soul rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1st Pet. i. 8. The Lord did not reveal his mercy, love, and hope to me in a whirlwind, neither in an earthquake, nor in a flaming fire; 1st Kings, xix. 11, 12, but in the still small voice of tender, but overwarming and unquenchable love, applying to, and binding up my poor wounded heart with the words: "Ye know that ye have passed from death unto life, because ye love the brethren," John iii. 14. The first impression of my mind was a most sensible realization of my ignorance, not to have experienced a hope in Christ long before, and to have rejoiced in Christ the Lord on simply reading the text just quoted; but experience has brought me to understand that I had to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord," Exodus xiv. 13, and, that the Lord hath ever had a set time to deliver Zion," Ps. 102 13. A very few moments however of thanksgiving and praise was I permitted to employ before the Lord ran upon me again, like a giant breaking me with breach upon breach, Job xvi. 15. The yoke alluded to in the outset, and under the impression of which I grew up to manhood was now unmistakably and lastingly riveted on my neck, and soon became a load intolerable to bear. Here I experienced a special, personal, individual call to partake of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, 2nd Tim. i. 8, and the following words: "Feed the flock of God," &c., 1st Peter v. 2, seemed to be whispered in my ear, softly and gently but reached the very core of my heart, and under the feeling sense of the weight and importance of the same I have prayed, groaned, cried, grieved, mourned, sighed, complained, begged, hoped, feared and trembled, and many times entertained hard thoughts of my Lord and Master for not delivering me from the sore trials and harrassing perplexities which beset my pathway. The awful responsibility and importance of attempting to preach the gospel increased in magnitude, while the words "Feed the flock of God" were indelibly stamped upon my memory, never to be erased in time. I was as hon-

est in regard to this matter as it was possible for a mortal worm to be, and I really thought that for a servant of God to feed the children of God with the bread of eternal life, his own mind must first be illuminated by wisdom from above, and his soul be made acquainted with the teachings and mysteries of the Spirit of the glorious gospel, and no man destitute of the above qualification could, in my opinion, discharge this highly important duty so as to honor and glorify God in the pulpit, and I really felt within my poor humble self, that I lacked every qualification that a Minister of the gospel should possess. I went forward however in the condition, seemingly to me, like that of Abraham when he went out not knowing whither he went, Heb. xi. and tried in weakness, fear and much trembling, to preach the preaching I felt the Lord had bid me. Jonah iii. 2; I stood so very short a time, and made so very many and signal failures that it became wellnigh universal for my brethren and friends to hang their heads, and to manifest otherwise, their deep mortification, on my rising before them in the pulpit; and scarcely could one be found who did not entertain serious doubts of my being called to preach; and as regards my sad feelings, no mortal tongue could tell, nor heart conceive the deep anguish of soul I was compelled to pass through for the space of two years or more.

Amid the many trials, and perplexities with which I was surrounded, I was haunted almost daily with the following passage of scripture: The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn &c. Isa. 61. 1:2. I was very often wellnigh deterred never more to attempt to preach. I frequently rose before a congregation with a view of trying to preach, and then would take my seat at the end of five minutes. From experience and observation I have been made to thank my Lord and master, for my having been thus dealt with. I have been taught in the first place by experience, a lesson of humility, which I could not obtain elsewhere, and the same lesson has to be repeated now while I am in my sixty third year, to keep me reminded of God." 1 Cor. iii. 5. And observation has caused me to see in others, the vanity and self importance which might have been more abundantly developed in my case, but for the rigid discipline, through which the Lord in mercy led me, for my good and his name's glory; under the mighty hand of God I am compelled to remain in his service, and feel that I have long been a complete slave to the church

and I have been mysteriously sustained up to the present time. I remember that on one occasion, when low down in a low place, Isa. xxxii. 19; I had a view of Jesus in a blaze of lightning, and the words followed, "my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Mat. xi. 30. These words very much refreshed my drooping spirits when almost in despair. I have continued in the defence of the gospel, till it has become to me, a most delightful employment; and I go forward now in the ministry with a cheerful heart though I have met with many things, and calculate to continue to meet with many things, that are sore and trying; some of my trials come from a feeble constitution, a nervous frame, unfaithful friends, unkind brethren, and graceless professors; but a sense of pardon and my final acceptance with God and hope of heaven outweigh them all; and I feel to say with Paul that I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom. viii. 18.—I have met with divers individuals in my intercourse with mankind and especially some I deemed sound in the faith, clearly manifesting by both word and action a spirit of envy and jealousy, and I have seen attempts put forth by such to check the good standing and usefulness of others, in a way and manner to say the least of it, ungodly and reproachful; but I thank and bless God that He hath kept my feet from such snares of satan, as might lead me to envy, slander, persecute, or backbite a brother, and I humbly beseech and pray him to keep me from such evils. I honestly confess however, that I have been guilty of many faults and indiscretions, over which my soul has often mourned with sorrow upon sorrow; one fault and besetting sin among others I will here name, trusting that my bringing and presenting it to you may possibly result in good to some one; and that is and has been, talking too much, and indulging in levity, which you know has never been considered an indication of wisdom; and I have very frequently seen stupid, heavy headed dunces pass for wise men because they spoke little, as Solomon says: "Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding." Proverbs xvii. 28.

I have been a Baptist in Principle from the day I experienced a hope in Christ, and I was fully persuaded in my own mind when I joined the church to which I belong, that it was the only organization on earth that could be strictly called the church of Christ, and though I may seemingly differ from some of my brethren in regard to what we term practical duties yet I ever contended for every doctrine or practice of our old orthodox brethren who are gone before us, and I desire from my heart, while I know it is in vain, that we all could unitedly see and ask for the old