

but when the time arrived I wanted an excuse, and found one, a poor one I knew, but it would do. After that I became more miserable, lost nearly all interest in every thing but the Bible and the Church, even my natural ties, which had always been so very strong, I was scarcely sensible of. For the first time I seemed to understand something of the spiritual meaning of the scriptures, I was often frightened at the intensity of my love for the Church, I was afraid I loved the body more than the head. I would ask myself. Why do I love them so? Is it because they are Christ's? If so surely I must love him too. But I wanted to know it was Christ I loved. A few days before Christmas I was feeling very restless, I didn't feel like reading, or any thing else. In the evening I took the Bible and opened it at the 37th Psalm. I read the 5th, verse and that was enough. I felt that I could commit my way unto the Lord, I felt that I could trust in him, and I was sure he would bring it to pass. For nearly two days I rested. Such a sweet peace I had but once before known, and I again thought it would last. How mistaken. But since then, although I am nearly always restless and unhappy, at times miserable, feeling that I am denying my Lord, but without strength to acknowledge him, I do not feel just as I did before. Less confidence in self, and more in God, I hope.

Mr. Gold, if you can, please pray for me. Ask God to let me rest at home; if my inheritance lies on this side of the river to let me rest here, if not to enable me to cross.

One who hopes she loves you for Christ's sake.

MARY E. T. BARNES.

The preceding, as you see, has been written some time. At the time of writing I intended sending it, but a change came over me. I would like to write it over and make some corrections and alterations, but am too weak and nervous to do so. It was written during one of the darkest periods of my life.

On Sunday evening of July meeting, an awful feeling came over me, nothing looked natural, I seemed to be almost in another world; I walked out and was looking around and wondering what was the matter, when something seemed to whisper:

"Stay, thou insulted Spirit, stay,
Though I have done thee such despite.

I stopped and asked, what is it? It continued:

And vexed, and urged thee to depart,
For many long rebellious years."

I thought the Spirit of the Lord had been with me and I had rebelled against it, it is leaving me! I tried to ask it to stay, to beg God not to leave or forsake me; but the words died on my lips, I could not pray. Oh! how miserable, how helpless I felt. I came in and got the book (Methodist Selection) and read the

hymn through; it seemed to be the very breathing of my heart, but not one word of prayer could I utter. Soon after that I was sick, suffering severely, when I thought, why, Oh! why, do I suffer so much? And again something seemed to whisper: "He learned obedience by the things which he suffered." I asked who? "Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered." I thought, did Christ learn obedience by suffering, and shall I expect less? My God, I thank thee! Oh! it is good for me to be afflicted. Pain was pleasure then. For awhile I rejoiced, and when that passed I was encouraged, hope revived, but it was nearly three weeks before I felt quite natural. Then, if possible, I was more anxious to know what I was, and what I should do; I had been opposed to dreams, didn't want them, but then I was willing, even anxious to have a dream; I tried to pray to God to show me in any way what I was and what he would have me to do. That night in a dream I saw my blackness. When I awoke it troubled me; I thought I was nothing but a cast-away. Suddenly I thought, I am black but comely; at first it passed through my mind slowly, then faster until it became so rapid I could scarcely breathe; I got the Bible and turned to the 1st, chapter of the Song of Solomon, I read the fifth and eighth verses, and that was enough; I felt so thankful that I might feed beside the tents, if I got only the crumbs, they were good, they were sweet; but Oh! that I might enter and feast with the flock, yet I thought that sweet privilege was denied me, and I would try to be content. For a few days I was more reconciled, then the wish to enter again became powerful. I wanted to go the next August meeting, but I think it was shown me in a dream that I should go soon, but not then.

One night about the 1st, of Sep. a strange, helpless feeling came over me; next morning when I awoke, I seemed to have been to the bottom of the deep, fighting with its mighty powers; at last I gave up all, ceased to struggle and immediately arose to the surface, then I saw God, the Omnipotent God; he had been with me through all—therefore I was not destroyed, I felt he was able to save, and would go with me to the end of my journey, and I was glad because I was quiet.

I didn't know the Yearly Meeting commenced on Friday. That morning my husband went down on business, when he returned and told me preaching had commenced, I thought my last chance was gone, for I thought I would never offer to the Church at the water, yet I felt it was then or never; if I did not go death or derangement would inevitably follow. For a while I was almost raving—reason seemed like being dethroned; At last I said, Oh! God, am in thy hands, do with me as

seemeth good unto thee, and I became quiet. That night I dreamed that my husband and I had joined the Church. It appeared that some one had given me something to keep 'till he called for it. Others came and inquired for it, it didn't seem that they told any falsehood, but I concealed it and that moment was miserable; I remarked to my husband, we shall never be happy 'till this is known, he replied, there is nothing wrong in it; I told him perhaps not—any thing but concealment, but I was sure I should never be happy 'till it was known. Next morning it troubled me; I thought it might be warning me not to go to the Church, perhaps there was some secret sin which I had not discovered, but I soon forgot the dream entirely, I went down not knowing and even fearing to think what I should do. That day and the next I scarcely knew whether I was most happy or unhappy; I felt that I was with the people I loved more than all the world besides, for if I love anything, if I know what love is, I love those I believe to be christians, the Old Baptists in particular; yet there seemed to be something wanting. After getting home on Sunday evening I was miserable; I didn't know what I said to the Church, I knew I did not say half that I wanted to, but at the time I didn't feel that I could speak another word. My husband in trying to comfort me told me he hoped I had said nothing wrong, then I remembered my dream. At first I thought I would have my name taken off, but it seemed I could not bear that, for I felt that if the wealth of the world and all its glory, and a home with the people of God, were placed before me, to choose which I would, I would scorn the world, I would turn from it with perfect contempt, when it would separate me from those I loved so much; yet I was afraid I was not fit to be with them, and if I was not I didn't want to be. I was very unhappy until the next Thursday, that was a day of rejoicing. I saw, or thought I saw, the hand of God in all, I felt that I had not gone in my own strength but he had carried me in that way to show me my weakness and his power, and I was glad it was so; I am always glad when I feel that God rules. But since then I have been very unhappy at times; I have been waiting, hoping you would come to see us and I could tell you my troubles, but I am afraid to wait longer. I have had a few seasons of rejoicing, sometimes seem to be walking in the light, generally I am groping in the dark, stumbling at every step, but there are many promises which comfort and encourage me. I am sure God is ever with his people, though they may not always be sensible of his presence yet he is with them in the night as well as in the day; if they fall they shall rise again. Brother Gold, it is good to fall sometimes, it is so sweet to be raised by Jesus. I

believe all things work together for their good. If I am one of them nothing can hurt me. There is much more I would like to tell you, but I am very weak and tired. Please pray for me, I desire and feel that I need the prayers of the righteous.

Yours in much love,

M. E. T. B.

December 28th, 1874.

Remarks:

Sister Barnes, the writer of the communication above, united with the Church at the Falls of Tar River, last September. She has gone over Jordan, and rests on the Jerusalem side; still there are wars and conflicts for the Israelite on this side of Jordan; because the Canaanite is still in the land. Though a conquered foe, he is turbulent still, and if he gets an advantage is insolent as a tyrant, and if pressed to the wall as deceitful as a kissing Judas.

Sister Barnes narrates with striking distinctness her temptations on the existence of God. This is one of the tempter's fiery darts. What deadly poison its entrance injects! Yet how triumphant the healing when God reveals himself.

One common temptation of Satan is to induce christians, especially young ones, to believe they are deceived in their hope. They are ready to agree with him, and that moment they begin to doubt their comforts and peace. What is gained by listening to this deceiver? Nothing ever was, or ever will be. The word of God exhorts us to resist him and he will flee from us: "Wherefore didst thou doubt, O, thou of little faith."

Sister Barnes has many afflictions, but she has many comforts too, and richly feasts on heavenly truth. Among the many lovely members at the Falls she is one whose company the godly will much enjoy we believe.—[Ed.]

COTTON GROVE, MADISON Co., TEX.,
March 17th, 1875.

Dear Brother Gold:—

YOU will find it somewhere in the Bible where the Lord forbade his children from marrying the daughters of men.—Are not the daughters of men the institutions of the world, gotten up by men? I learn from books (Masonic books) that many years ago there was a worldly institution gotten up that people called *Masonry*. Well, the question is: Did any of God's people join it? I don't know! I have known a few Old Baptists to join it, at least, men that were with the Old Baptists a while. But I have thought: If they had been Old Baptists or the sons of God, they would not have left the Church and run off after a worldly institution. This is one of the daughters of men, as I view it, and the Odd Fellows is another daughter, as I view it. But I don't know of any of our order that joined it, but still it is a lovely daughter, liable to deceive men. And, there was a Know Nothing party which was another nice daughter and