

to be one, and I am afraid that I shall commit sin in trying to tell you or any other christian what I have passed through, and what I hope the christian's God has done for my poor soul. I believe if the work of grace has ever been commenced in my soul it was when I was a child. Before I was twelve years old I use to hear grown folks sing hymns and when they would sing about the death of Jesus and about his wounded side I would forget all childish plays and sit and listen at them. I do now remember words that I heard sang before I had learned a letter in my book. I reckon some will doubt this but I know it is good truth. I must pass on and mention things that are more on my mind than anything I have yet mentioned: As I grew in age I also grew in sin, but after a while I thought I would try to get religion. I would hear other folks talking about getting religion and I thought if others could get it there would be some chance for me to get it too. I learned some little prayers and would say them night and morning and would read the Bible and go to preaching to both Baptist and Methodist, but still I did not feel any change until one day I was taken very sick, when my self and two other children were at work when I stopped and went in the house, I soon got better but still I could not eat or drink. I felt like I was condemned and was not worthy to expect doing anything and God had made. The words that the Baptists use when they commenced were in my mind nearly all the time, especially when I would try to eat or drink—I then felt like I was eating and drinking damnation to my own soul. I then began to try to pray for some relief. The family thought I was very sick, and I was—so sick. But, I did not try to tell any one how I felt because I did not know what was the matter with me—the worst of all diseases is light compared with sin, on every point it rages, but rages most within—these are true words. I often repeat them. After a few days this great burden left me. I don't know how it came nor how it went I felt much lighter after this burden was removed from my mind, but still I would often think about what I suffered while that heavy weight was on my heart and mind. I knew that the weight of sin was still in my heart and could not see any way to remove it. I was so prone to serve Satan and to walk in the dark paths of sin. I could not see how I could ever be saved. I would read the Bible but could not understand much of what I read about; when I read that Jesus was taken and put to death I would think what hard-hearted folks they were to betray and kill one when he was so good and clear of all guilt, but he had taken our sins upon himself and had to die for us that we through him might have eternal life.

Yes, I now believe that it was needful for him to die but I could not believe it until I felt the need of a Savior, if I ever have. I would often feel very sad and imagine that I was forsaken by God and man, but while I was in this awful condition I had a dream that I cannot forget. I thought I saw the Savior standing upon a beautiful hill and white fowls were coming to him from all parts of the earth. That was the greatest and prettiest sight that I ever saw. It was made plain to me that it was the Savior. I called him and he turned his head and looked at me, though he did not speak, there was a deep valley between me and him so I could not go to him, and I believe that valley was sin—and we can not go to him until this valley of sin is removed from our hearts. This dream would cause a little comfort to reach my troubled mind, but yet I was afraid that I never should cross that deep valley and be with the Savior and his beloved flock that was around him. Yes, I would often think that I was forever lost and could never have a hope of heaven. I traveled on in this way a long time, perhaps ten years or more, and did not say a word to anybody about my feelings. I would often think that I was dying and think that my poor soul must sink in endless punishment, but I struggled hard to keep my troubles hid from every body. Some of the family would often ask me what was the matter with me, and I could answer—nothing. Late one evening I was alone meditating and grieving over my lost and ruined state and imagined that I could not live any longer, when these words came plain upon my mind—lean upon the Lord and trust in his word, that is all that is required for you to do. These words revived my feelings a little while, but I soon began to wonder how I could lean upon the Lord and I so full of sin, and these words were applied to my heart—doubts and fears shall follow you to the grave but shall not enter there. These little sparks revived and strengthened me some but still my troubles were not gone. I lived in this condition until after my last brother was married, which was four years last March. Soon after he was married I was walking along one day thinking how desolate I was left, I had no father nor mother, no single brother nor sister to associate with, and imagined that I was without any friends on earth or in heaven, and these words came with joy to my heart—how can you call yourself friendless when God your friend is ever nigh? Oh! christians, I tell you all, I did not feel friendless then. I had been to see a lady who was a member of the Baptist church and was on my way home when this great joy came to my heart; I never had said a word to her about my feelings, but I then wanted to go back and tell her what great comfort and peace of mind I had found, but I

went on home and did not speak of my joy to any body. I stayed at home a few days and then went to see this same lady again. I had a great desire to talk to her and tell her what troubles I had passed through. I told her of some of my troubles and some of my joys. I did not try to tell her all, and she said she thought I was a christian. But, by this time I had so many doubts I was afraid that I was deceived and also had deceived this lady friend who I believed was a christian. I lived in this condition two years. I loved christians but I was afraid to let them know it. I would want to shake hands with them and be in company with them, but I could not feel worthy of their fellowship. I still feel unworthy of their fellowship, and I expect to feel so as long as I live, but if I can feel the presence of Jesus in the hour of death that is enough and ten thousand times more than I deserve. I will pass on and mention where I went to see a lady that had been very sick and thought that she was going to die—when I went in she told me that she was getting better but she thought a few days before that she was going to die and had no hope of heaven—her words went to my heart. I thought what a dreadful thing it was to see death staring us in the face and no hope of heaven to lean upon. I felt sorry for that poor woman and thought much about the words I heard her speak, and would sometimes wonder if I should feel as she did when death comes to take me from time to eternity. But when I would be wondering how I should feel when death comes I could often feel a little spark burning in my heart which would comfort me through all my doubts and fears. One night I went to bed very early and thought I would have a deep meditation on this woman and her feelings, and thought that I wanted to have her feelings just enough to know how she did feel, and I believe I had her feelings to pass over me like a cloud of darkness coming and going as quick as thought and then a gleaming view of heaven was placed before my spiritual eyes which caused me to feel perfectly happy. I was not asleep at all but still my heart and mind were gone from everything in this sinful world, I could not see heaven plain like I wanted to see it, but it was made plain to me that death was the vale that was between my spirit and the beauties of heaven, and after death all of these beauties and joys would be open to me.

Readers, this was greater joy than I ever can tell you anything about. I can never tell anybody how I felt. Oh! I was perfectly happy until I arose and found that I was still in this world of sin. I was happy after I aroused and found that I was yet in this world, but my happiness was not perfect then because I must and would have some of the care of the world on my mind. This hap-

piness lasted two weeks before I had any heavy doubts to cast me down. I had been sick a long time so that I could not work much, but while I was so happy I thought that I was well and strong, I could sing and work every day; but, after these two weeks of happiness passed away doubts began to come and I believe they will follow me to the grave.

Dear children of God, you must closely look this over and see if you can call it a christian's experience. I don't think I have written more than half of what I wanted to write but I will say a few more words and then close for I am afraid I have done wrong in writing any at all: I want you all to pray for me. If I am a saint surely I am the least of all.

Mr. Gold, I have had a great desire to see and talk with you a long time but I could not get the opportunity of doing so, but after a while I had a glorious conversation with you in a dream. I tried to tell you some of my troubles and some of my joys and you told me that it was my duty to be baptized. I then told you that I had no way to go to the water and you told me that you would carry me all the way. Then I thought that you were resting near me, in your shirt sleeves. I then arose on my feet and told you that I would not deny God or Christ any more.—I then woke up and our conversation was ended. I sometimes feel it my duty to be baptized but I am so afraid that I should be doing wrong, I sometimes think that if I am now forced to the church, by the mighty powers above, I shall stay away. If I do wrong by staying away and have to suffer for it I know my suffering will not last long. If heaven is my home I shall soon be there and then my suffering will come to an end, and heaven will afford me sweet repose. I want to do my duty if I could know what it is, but, oh! I do not know what to do. I hope you will ask the Lord what I must do.—I must close—written by

E. N. BRASWELL.

We feel impressed with the conviction that the true place for all such people, as the writer of the above communication, or all that have a good hope through grace of everlasting life, is in the household of faith. When the Lord reveals himself to poor sinners as their Savior they should go home to their house, (the church) and tell their brethren what great things the Lord has done for them. Here they will find peace and rest, fellowship and comfort, in this duty, for there is great reward in keeping God's commandments.—They will show then that they are loving Christ, by keeping his sayings. He says, "if ye love me ye will keep my sayings." Does one feel impressed with the beauty and holiness of baptism, and though he feels unworthy, yet does he feel a desire to follow Christ here? This is good evidence that he should be baptized. This is the way the Lord impresses it on his children. Does one love the brethren; then let him tell them of it, and they will show him whether they love him or not. Does one feel that he would love to serve the Lord if he were worthy and knew how; that is good evidence of such a call.—Ed.