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EV. L. E. BILL, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR
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"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."
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Where did the Baptists come from?

A bright star rose on the darkness of the northern century, and threw its light over the continent of Europe. It was the darkest hour of that long night of papal oppression. Over that darkness and gloom, from the Avon to the Tiber, a band went forth from Lutterworth; a light from the center of Britain. A memorable spot is that little village, with its old, rotering church still standing. Near that village Richard III. buckled on his armor for the title of Bosworth field. Near it Wolsey shone, and with him the power of popery in England. There, too, stands the memorable battle ground of Nassy, where Cromwell and Henry triumphed over the defeated despot Charles.

Lutterworth! Associations cluster round it more potent in its influence than the clash of arms or the fall of kings. The lone voice that went forth from it, the light that gleamed from it in the fourteenth century, is heard and felt still—must echo and beam through all time, and all eternity. It was the voice of truth, truth which cannot be silenced; it is immortal. Chains cannot bind it; time cannot weaken it. Eternal is its nature; eternity is its guardian. John De Wickliffe, rector of Lutterworth, was the chosen instrument to announce that truth, and bear aloft that flame torch through the world's valley of the shade of death.

On the banks of the Tees, in Yorkshire, John Wickliffe was born, in 1324. With Bradwardine, and Occam, and Duus, and Scotus; the luminaries of the age, he passed his early manhood in Oxford University. He entered the clerical order, and held before him the highest honors in the church. But, like Luther, God's word had found entrance into his soul, and, in obedience to its teaching, he rose away from his heart the weeds and wrappings of error which encased and densified it. On, step by step, he struggled into light, until, on the Bible, and the Bible alone, he took his sublime and defiant position. Among the principles he advocated, were that the church consisted only of believers—the saved; that baptism was a sign of grace received before, and consequently should be administered to those only who professed to have received grace.

"It was in 1371," says Walsingham, "that Dunn and Wickliffe read the accused opinions of the Berengians, one of which undoubtedly was the denial of infant baptism." Thos. Walden, who was familiar with his writings, called him "one of the seven heads that rose out of the pit, for he denied the baptism of infants, that heretic of the Lollards of which he was so great a leader." And farther, Wickliffe, in the eleventh chapter of his *Trilogues*, as quoted by Danvers, states that "believers are the only subjects of baptism."

In his adherence to the Bible as his only rule of faith and practice; in his denial of grace or pardon communicated in baptism; in his rejection of infant and avowal of *Christians' baptism*; and in his clear definition of a church as an assembly of baptized believers—Wickliffe was a Baptist. Among Baptist heroes and martyrs must his name be enrolled. As one of them he was reviled while living, and, forty years after his peaceful death, his ashes were violated by the foes of faith.

But Wickliffe did not stand alone. Those sands were around him, and followed him branded and burnt, and driven from the haunts of men, these Wickliffites—these Baptists—were found scattered throughout England. "They were as numerous," says Sir William Newbury, in his *History of England*, "as the sands of the sea."

Here, then, we have found these people in the midst of the fourteenth century. Where did these Baptists come from? Did they originate with Wickliffe? Did the "morning star" of the reformation usher in the advent of the Baptists, whose existence previously was not? Let us see. The term "Lollard," says Milner, in his *History of Christianity*, "was affixed to those who professed a greater degree of attention to acts of piety and devotion than the rest of mankind. Of these, Walter Raynard, a Dutchman, was apprehended and burnt at Cologne. This is the whom I have already called Reynard Lollard, in the account of the Waldenses, and from whom the Wickliffites are supposed to have acquired the name of Lollards." That these Lollards were Baptists is evident. The denial of infant baptism we have already seen was the great heresy of the Lollards in the Dutch Martyrology is an account of one L. Clifford, who was arraigned as a Lollard, and confessed and recanted, acknowledging that they renounced infant baptism. And Fox, in his *Martyrology*, has extracted from the register of the Bishop of Hereford, one of the charges, of which the Lollards were found guilty, "that faith ought to precede baptism."

Of these Lollard Baptists was William Skete, the first name in that illustrious roll of martyrs who died for soul freedom in Britain; and soon after, at the hour of midnight, one hundred of those down-trodden Christians assembled to worship God among the bushes of St. Giles, near London, hoping, at that hour and unfrequented place, to be freed from detection and molestation. They were tracked and murdered by the king and a troop of his cohorts. Among the Lollards was one illustrious man of full wealth, an courage

It was Sir John Oldcastle, Earl of Cobham. He was apprehended and brought to trial before the Bishops. He met them and their charge with fearless intrepidity. Nobly he avowed and advocated the doctrines which have distinguished Baptists in every age—Honor and preferment were before him if he would but recant disgrace, ignominy, and death; the reward of his steadfastness. He chose to be numbered with the scorned, down-trodden, vulgar Baptists; and, confident in shame and suffering, rather than abandon or betray the immortal principles that inspired them.

Faith, inviolable, heartfelt faith, shining before a shadow into the depths of a man's being, revealing the eternal verity of the thing believed—faith resting on a rock which the rush of a wrecked universe cannot move—this is the soul of true heroism. There, never was a hero without it. Dragged, amid insults, to Tyburn to be hung up by the waist and burned to death, his possessions confiscated, his family impoverished, his name cast out as evil, Sir John Oldcastle never wavered. This was the victory whereby he overcame the world, even his faith. In death he warned the people to follow nothing but the Scriptures; prayed for his enemies, and exclaimed, "I die in triumph!"

And so he received the crown which celestial conquerors wear. Pity or regret found no place in the hearts of his sanctimonious murderers. "He was an Anabaptist," said Parsons, the English Churchman, "and deposed to die as a traitor."

"No satisfied with his death," says Fox, "he clergy induced the Parliament to make fresh statutes against the Lollards. It was enacted, among other things, that whosoever read the Scriptures in English, should forfeit lands, chattels, goods, and life, and be condemned as heretic, should be hanged for treason against the king, and then burned for heresy against God."

No sooner was this act passed, than a violent persecution was raised against the Lollards.

In an old history of the Welsh Baptists are recorded the labors and sufferings of an intelligent, active Baptist layman, who, from Wales, passed into England in company with a preacher. His name was Walter Bute. Arrested and brought before the Bishop of Herefordshire, he confounded his adversaries by his fearlessness and acquaintance with the Scriptures. In the account of his trial, recorded by Fox, is his written answer to the Bishop:

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Walter Bute, sinner, layman, husbandman, and Christian, having my offering of Britons, have been accused to the Bishop of Herefordshire that I did err in matters of Christian faith, by whom I am required that I should give a written answer.

"If any man, of any state or sect whatever will show me that I err in my writings or sayings, by the authority of the sacred Scriptures, or a probable reason grounded thereon, I will gladly receive his information: But as for the bare words of any teacher (Christ only excepted) I will not simply believe, unless he shall be able to establish them by the truth of experience, and the example of God's word."

Such was the fearless denial of Episcopal and church teachings which Baptists dared to utter centuries before Luther was born, and which is their leading characteristic still. Walter Bute was condemned as an Anabaptist.

But from the ten thousand sufferers of the poor Lollards we must pass. There still stands at this hour the gloomy monument of their martyrdom, on the banks of the Thames—the Lollards' Tower at Lambeth Palace, London. Erected up as the place of their torture by the Bishop of Canterbury, in 1414, it stands there a witness to the triumph of truth. It speaks with an awful yet cheering eloquence.

And as the still, impotent foe to truth belted in its very neighborhood, the thronging thousands gathered to hear the untitled Bishop of the New Park Street Church, and asks, with derision, where did these Baptists come from? Let him behold that Lollards' Tower, where the implements of torture may still be seen, and it will tell their history, and prophetic tones, proclaim their triumph.

But still the question recurs, these Baptists, Lollards, Wickliffites—Whence came they? Was Wickliffe, then, their father and founder?

It must be remembered that Wickliffe was denominated by his persecutors. The leader of the Lollards. It is evident that thousands of these Lollards hailed him as a great light, whom God had raised up and sent forth into the darkness. That he adopted their principles, and became one of them, there is little doubt. But why were they called Lollards? Now Mosheim, with whom there is a general agreement among historians, states that "Walter, a Dutchman of remarkable eloquence, and famous for his writings, who came from Mentz to Cologne, was burnt there in 1322." Fuller and Perry state that he came to England in the reign of Edward III, from the Waldenses, among whom he was a great teacher of the Gospel. That this man's name was Walter Raynard, is most evident, and Lollard a term of reproach, was given to him and his brethren because they were accustomed to sing psalms and hymns. Abelly says the word is derived from *loben*, to praise, and *her*, Lord. But, however this may be, the fact is unchangeable, that Walter the Lollard, shining light in the

midnight of papal darkness, after passing from country to country, lifting his eloquent voice and scattering over the wintry seed-fields the germs of truth, passed through England to build up the scattered flock of Christ there, and then breathed out his great soul amid the fires of martyrdom, before John Wickliffe was born.

That this Walter Lollard was a Baptist, is unquestionable. He came from the Waldensian Baptists to England, and found Baptists there, henceforward called Lollards. And these English Baptists, who welcomed this eloquent teacher among them, may be traced to a still higher date. At the time when the Norman nobles of William the Conqueror were crushing out the spirit, the language, and nationality of Englishmen; when a foreign priesthood and a foreign tongue were forced by cruel edicts upon the prostrate Saxons—there were those who still dared to avow their deathless attachment to the simple truths and ordinances of primitive Christianity. During the reigns of William and his son Rufus, they were subjected to insults and persecutions, and were denounced by the imported Popish Bishop, Lanfrank, of Canterbury. Gascony and Guienne, the domains of the Dukes of Normandy, were, at the conquest, attached to England. The intercourse between the latter and the pioneer mountains, became general and intimate. "In Gascony the heretics," says the old monkish historian, Sir William Newbury, "were as numerous as the sands of the sea." A company of these Baptists were found in England in the tenth century, and is thus described by Henry in his history of Great Britain, which, in substance, corresponds with Napier, Collier, and Lyttleton:

"A company of about thirty men and women instructed the attention of the government by the singularity of their religious practices and opinions. They were apprehended and brought before the Council of the Clergy at Oxford. Being interrogated about their religion, their teacher, named Gerard, a man of learning, announced in their name, that they were Christians, and believed the doctrines of the Apostles. Upon a more particular inquiry, it was found that they denied several of the received doctrines of the church, and refusing to abandon their damnable heresies, they were condemned as incorrigible heretics, and delivered to the secular arm to be punished. The king, (Henry II.) at the instigation of the clergy, commanded them to be branded with a red-hot iron on their foreheads, whipped through the streets of Oxford, and having their clothes cut short at their girdles, to be turned into the open fields all persons being forbidden to afford them any shelter or relief under the severest penalties. This cruel sentence was executed with the utmost rigor, and it being the depth of winter, all those unhappy persons were pressed with cold and hunger."

A further account of these people and their treacherous treatment, is found in the Dutch Martyrology or "Martyr's Mirror," which places the date in 1161, and gives abundant evidence that they were Baptists. Their leader was branded on the forehead and chin, and, as they were driven, bleeding and naked, out into the wintry fields to die, he raised his voice in triumph, singing—

"Blessed are ye when ye are hated, beaten, and despised," etc.

But they did not all perish. There were among the crushed Saxons a hatred to their foreign oppressors, kings, and priests, and a common sympathy for those who suffered from Norman cruelty. The seed was scattered, and a half century afterwards, Walter Lollard preached among these same Baptists, Waldenses of England.

The Lollards, the Wickliffites—the suffering, struggling pioneers of the Reformation—we have found them away amid the darkness of the Middle Ages—found them weak, yet fearless; few, yet mighty; poor, yet powerful—sublime in their sufferings, and triumphant in their prostration. Baptists they were, whether represented by Wickliffe, or Lollard, or Gerard. The power of man, the gates of hell could not prevail against them.

But from the Lollards, and from England with its blessed and elevated by the truths they cherished, let us pass still upward, marking this or them as a milestone in path of time.

S. H. F.

tion of combustion is proceeding yonder?" No! I would call out "Fire! Fire!" and then everybody would know what I meant. So, if the Bible says, "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness," am I to stand here and mince the matter at all? God forbid! We must speak the truth as it is written. It is a terrible truth, for it says, "the children of the kingdom shall be cast out!" Now, who are those children? I will tell you. "The children of the kingdom" are those people who are noted for the externals of piety, but who have nothing of the interior of it. People whom you will see, with their Bibles and Hymn Books, marching off to chapel as religiously as possible, or going to church as devoutly and demurely as they can, looking as sombre and serious as parish bendles, and fancying that they are quite sure to be saved, though their heart is not in the matter; nothing but their bodies. These are the persons who are "the children of the kingdom." They have no "grace, no life, no Christ, and they shall be cast into outer darkness."

Again, these people are the children of pious fathers and mothers. There is nothing touches a man's heart, mark you, like talking about his mother. I have heard of a swearing sailor, whom nobody could manage, not even the police, who was always making some disturbance wherever he went. Once he went into a place of worship, and no one could keep him still; but a gentleman went up and said to him, "Jack, you had a mother once?" With that the tears ran down his cheeks. He said, "Ha, bless you, sir, I had; and I brought her gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, and a pretty fellow I am to be here to-night." He then sat down, quite sobered and subdued by the very mention of his mother. Ah! and there are some of you, children of the kingdom, who can remember your mothers. Your mother took you on her knees and taught you early to pray; your father tutored you in the ways of godliness. And yet you are here to-night without grace in your heart—without hope of heaven. You are going downwards towards hell, as fast as your feet can carry you. There are some of you who have broken your poor mother's heart. Oh! if I could tell you what she has suffered for you when you have at night been indulging in your sin. Do you know what your guilt will be, ye "children of the kingdom," if ye perish after a pious mother's prayers and tears have fallen upon you? I can conceive of no one entering hell with a worse grace than the man who goes there with drops of his mother's tears on his head, and with his father's prayer following him at his heels. Some of you will inevitably endure this doom: some of you, young men and women, shall wake up one day and find yourselves in outer darkness, while your parents shall be up there in heaven, looking down upon you with upbraiding eyes, seeming to say, "What! after all we did for you, all we said, are ye come to this?" "Children of the kingdom!" do not think that a pious mother can save you. Do not think, because your father was a member of such-and-such a church, that his godliness will save you. I can suppose some one standing at heaven's gate, and demanding, "Let me in! Let me in!" What for? "Because my mother is in there." Your mother had nothing to do with you. If she was holy, she was holy for herself; if she was evil she was for herself. "But my grandfather prayed for me?" That is no use; did you pray for yourself? "No, I did not." Then grandfather's prayers, and grandmother's prayers, and father's and mother's prayers may be piled on the top of one another till they reach the stars, but they never can make a ladder for you to go to heaven by. You must seek God for yourself; or rather God must seek you. You must have vital experience of godliness in your heart, or else you are lost, even though all your friends were in heaven. That was a dreadful dream which a pious mother once had, and told to her children. She thought the judgment day had come. The great books were opened. They all stood before God. And Jesus Christ said, "Separate the chaff from the wheat; put the goats on the left hand, and the sheep on the right." The mother dreamed that she and her children were standing just in the middle of the great assembly. And the angel came, and said, "I must take the mother, she is a sheep; she must go to the right hand. The children are goats; they must go on the left." She thought as she went, her children clutched her, and said, "Mother, can we part? Must we be separated?" She then put her arms around them, and seemed to say, "My children, I would, if possible, take you with me." But in a moment the angel touched her; her cheeks were dried, and now, overcoming natural affection, being rendered supernatural and sublime, resigned to God's will, she said, "My children, I taught you well, I trained you up, and you forsake the ways of God; and now all I have to say is, Amen to your condemnation." Thereupon they were snatched away, and she saw them in perpetual torment, while she was in heaven. Young man, what will you think, when the last day comes, to hear Christ say, "Depart ye cursed?" And there will be a voice just behind him, saying, Amen. And, as you inquire, whence came the voice, you will find it was your mother. Or, young women, when you are cast away into outer darkness, what will you think to hear a voice saying, Amen. And as you look, there sits your father, his lips still moving with the solemn

curse. Ah! "children of the kingdom," the penitent reprobates will enter heaven, many of them; publicans and sinners will get there; repenting drunkards and swearers will be saved; but many of the "children of the kingdom" will be cast out. Oh! to think that you, who have been so well trained should be lost, while many of the worse will be saved. It will be the hell of hells for you to look up and see there "poor Jack," the drunkard, lying in Abraham's bosom, while you, who have had a pious mother, are cast into hell, simply because you would not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but put his gospel from you, and lived and died without it! That were the very string of all, to see ourselves cast away, when the chief of sinners find salvation!

Now list to me a little while—I will not detain you long—while I undertake the painful task of telling you what is to become of these "children of the kingdom." Jesus Christ says they are to be "cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth."

First, notice, they are to be cast out. They are not to go; but, when they come to heaven's gates, they are to be cast out. As soon as the hypocrites arrive at the gates of heaven, Justice will say, "There he comes! There he comes!" He spurned a father's prayers, and mocked a mother's tears. He has forced his way downward against all the advantages mercy has supplied. And now, there he comes. Gabriel take the man. The angel, binding you hand and foot, holds you one single moment over the mouth of the chasm. He bids you look down—down—down. There is no bottom; and you hear coming up from the abyss, sullen moans, and hollow groans, and screams of tortured ghosts. You quiver, your bones melt like wax, and your marrow quakes within you. Where is now thy might? and where thy boasting and bragging? Ye shriek and cry, ye beg for mercy; but the angel, with one tremendous grasp, seizes you fast, and then huris you down, with the cry, "Away, away." Add down you go to the pit that is bottomless, and roll forever downward—downward—downward—never to find a resting place for the sole of your feet. Ye shall be cast out.

And where are you to be cast to? Ye are to be cast "into outer darkness," ye are to be put in the place where there will be no hope. For by "light," in Scripture, we understand "hope," and you are to be put "into outer darkness," where there is no light—no hope. Is there a man here who has no hope? I cannot suppose such a person. One of you, perhaps, says, "I am thirty pounds in debt, and shall be sold up by an' by; but I have a hope that I may get a loan, and so escape my difficulty." Says another, "My business is ruined, but things may take a turn yet—I have a hope." Says another, "I am in great distress, but I hope, that God will provide for me." Another says, "I am fifty pounds in debt; I am sorry for it; but I will set these strong hands to work, and do my best to get out of it." One of you thinks a friend is dying, but you have a hope that, perhaps, the fever may take a turn—that he may yet live. But, in hell, there is no hope. They have not even the hope of dying—the hope of being annihilated. They are forever—forever—forever—lost! On every chain in hell there is written "forever." In the fires, there blazes out the words, "forever." Up above their heads, they read "forever." Their eyes are galled, and their hearts are pained with the thought that it is "forever." Oh! if I could tell you to-night that hell would one day be burned out, and that those who were lost might be saved, there would be a jubilee in hell at the very thought of it. But it cannot be. "Forever" they are "cast into outer darkness."

But I want to get over this as quickly as I can; for who can bear to talk thus to his fellow creatures? What is it that the lost are doing? They are "weeping and gnashing their teeth." Do you gnash your teeth now? You would not do it except you were in pain and agony. Well, in hell there is always gnashing of teeth. And do you know why? There is one gnashing his teeth at his companion, and mothers, "I was led into hell by you; you led me astray, you taught me to drink the first time." And the other gnashes his teeth and says, "What if I did? you made me worse than I should have been in former times." There is a child who looks at her mother, and says, "Mother, you trained me up to vice." And the mother gnashes her teeth again at the child, and says, "I have no pity for you, for you excelled me in it, and led me into deeper sin." Fathers gnash their teeth at their sons, and sons at their fathers. And, methinks, if there are any who will have to gnash their teeth more than others, it will be educators, when they see those whom they have led from the paths of virtue, and hear them saying, "Ah! we are glad you are in hell with us, you deserve it, for you led us here." Have any of you, to-night, upon your consciences the fact that you have led others to the pit? O, may sovereign grace forgive you. "We have gone astray like lost sheep," said David. "Now a lost sheep never goes astray alone, if it is one of a flock." I lately read of a sheep that leaped over the parapet of a bridge, and was followed by every one of the flock. So, if one man goes astray, he leads others with him. Some of you will have to account for others' sin when you get to hell, as well as your own. Oh, what "weeping and gnashing of teeth" there will be in that pit!

Now shut the black book. Who wants to say any more about it? I have warned you solemnly. I have told you of the wrath to come? The evening darkens and the sun is setting. Ah! and the evenings darken with some of you. I can see gray-headed men here. Are your gray hairs a crown of glory, or a fool's cap to you? Are you on the very verge of heaven, or are you tottering on the brink of your grave, and sinking down to perdition?

Let me warn you, gray-headed men; your evening is coming. O, poor tottering gray-head, wilt thou take the last step into the pit? Let a young child step before thee, and beg thee to consider. There is thy staff—it has nothing of earth to rest upon; and now, ere thou dies, bethink thyself this night; let seventy years of sin start up; let the ghosts of thy forgotten transgressions march before thee eyes. What wilt thou do with seventy wasted years to answer for—with seventy years of criminality to bring before God? God give thee grace this night to repent and to put thy trust in Jesus.

And you middle-aged men are not safe; the evening lowers with you too; you may soon die. A few mornings ago, I was roused early from my bed, by the request that I would hasten to see a dying man. I hurried off with all speed to see the poor creature; but, when I reached the house, he was dead—a corpse. As I stood in the room, I thought, "Ah! that man little thought he should die so soon." There were his wife and children, and friends—they little thought he should die; for he was hale, strong, and hearty but a few days before. None of you have a lease of your lives. If you have, where is it? Go and see if you have it in your chest at home. No! ye may die to-morrow. Let me therefore warn you by the mercy of God; let me speak to you as a brother may speak; for I love you, you know I do, and would press the matter home to your hearts. Oh, to be amongst the many who shall be accepted in Christ—how blessed that will be! and God has said that whosoever shall call on his name shall be saved; he casts out none that come unto him through Christ.

And now, ye youths and maidens, one word with you. Perhaps ye think that religion is not for you. "Let us be happy," say you; "let us be merry and joyous." How long, young men, how long? "Till I am twenty-one." Are you sure that you will live till then? Let me tell you one thing. If you do live till that time, if you have no heart for God now, you will have none then. Men do not get better if left alone. It is with them as with a garden; if you let it alone, and permit weeds to grow, you will not expect to find it better in six months—repeat worse. Ah! men talk as if they could repent when they like. It is the work of God to give us repentance. Some even say, "I shall turn to God on such-and-such a day. Ah! if you felt right, you would say, 'I must run to God, and ask him to give me repentance now, lest I should die before I have found Jesus Christ, my Saviour.'"

Now, one word in conclusion. I have told you of heaven and hell; what is the way, then, to escape from hell and be found in heaven? I will not tell you my old tale again to-night. I recollect when I told it you before, a good friend in the crowd said, "Tell us something fresh, old fellow." Now, really, in preaching ten times a week, we cannot always say things fresh. You have heard John Gough, and you know he tells his tales over again. I have nothing but the old gospel. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." There is nothing here of works. It does not say, "He who is a good man shall be saved," but "he who believes and is baptized." Well, what is it to believe? It is to put your trust entirely upon Jesus. Poor Peter once believed, and Jesus Christ said to him, "Come on, Peter, walk to me on the water." Peter went stepping along on the tops of the waves without sinking; but when he looked at the waves, he began to tremble, and down he went. Now, poor sinner, Christ says, "Come on, walk on your sins; come to me; and if you do, he will give you power. If you believe on Christ, you will be able to walk over your sins—to tread upon them and overcome them. I can remember the time when my sins first s'ared me in the face. I thought myself the most accursed of all men. I had not committed any very great open transgressions against God; but I recollected that I had been well trained and tutored, and I thought my sins were thus greater than other people's. I cried to God to have mercy; but I feared that he would not pardon me. Month after month, I would not God, but he did not hear me, and I knew not what it was to be saved. Some times, I was so weary of the world that I desired to die; but then I recollected that there was a worse world after this, and that it would be an ill matter to rush before my Maker unprepared. At times I wickedly thought God a most heartless tyrant, because he did not answer my prayer; and then, at others, I thought, "I deserve his displeasure; if he sends me to hell, he will be just." But I remember the hour when I stepped into a little place of worship, and saw a tall, thin man step into the pulpit; I never seen him from that day, and probably never shall, till we meet in heaven.

He opened the Bible and read, with a feeble voice, "Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and beside me there is none else." Ah! thought I, I am one of the ends of the earth; and