

If it was a dream I know not, God has many and subtle ways
 To reveal His love to mortals, that their hearts may sing His praise;
 But I'm sure I heard the angels choring in the midnight sky,
 Of this Christmas, sweetly, strongly: "Glory be to God on high!"

—Margaret E. Sangster in Demorest's Magazine.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

BY ELDER HEMAN C. SMITH.

PART I.

HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

I AM not so vain as to think that I can fully write the life or biography of the great and good man. Too little is known of him, at least by me, to do the subject justice, even were I competent. His work, however, has been so closely connected with the theme dearest to my heart, that, in the past I have been eager to learn as much of him as possible. Having gathered a little here and a little there regarding him, his people and his country, I will take pleasure in compiling it; and, if by so doing others are benefited, I shall be gratified.

He was a person of sufficient importance to call forth the voice of inspiration concerning his work, even before he was born—some of the things said of him prophetically we may refer to hereafter.

He was, as is generally supposed, born in the town of Hebron, in Palestine, a few months before the birth of our Lord. He was the son of Zacharias, a Jewish priest "of the course of Abia," and of Elizabeth, a cousin of Mary, the mother of Christ. Being entitled to the office of priest, according to the Jewish law of lineage, and also being of a prominent family, he naturally commanded more respect among the Jews than did Jesus; and of him it was said: "The people believed that John was a prophet."

The Christians also revered him because he was the forerunner of the Lord and was commended by him. So his popularity was then great, and has continued so until this day, although among the priests whose authority he rejected and who were jealous of his popularity it was said: "He hath a devil."

From an early day, he was considered in England the model Saint, and great

festivals were held on St. John's day (June 24th), which was dedicated to him.

Hebron, the place of his birth, is twenty-one miles south-west of Jerusalem, situated in the narrow valley of Eschol, famous for the large clusters of superior grapes of the same name, as well as for olives and other fruits. Around this historic city are broken hills, divided by rich fertile valleys, rising sometimes to the altitude of three thousand feet above the Mediterranean sea. This is, doubtless, the "hill country," where Mary visited Elizabeth.

East and south of Hebron lies the great "Wilderness of Judea," which is a barren uninviting country known in Bible times as "Negel, or South country." From Hebron northward and westward it is but little better during the rainless season; but, in the spring, the bald, grey rocks which have so long been a monotonous sight are covered with green verdure and beautiful flowers; while down the ravines, until now so dry, rush torrents of sparkling water, all of which disappear at the approach of the heated season. The soil on these hillsides is universally thin and scanty, producing verdure in abundance while wet with the rains of spring, but quickly drying when the scorching rays of the sun penetrate the shallow soil, impressing one with the aptness of the expression, "The grass which *to-day is*, and *to-morrow is cast into the oven.*"

In this sometimes romantic and sometimes monotonous place, was spent the childhood of John. No doubt he often wandered over these hills in company with his childish companions, now gathering the sweet cyclamen, peeping from the roots of trees or from the hillside rocks, now pausing to admire the great clusters of "white briar roses," which everywhere abound; or, looking towards

Jerusalem, the spot towards which the eye of every Jew lovingly and with reverence turns, he saw the gold-bedecked pinnacles of the majestic temple, reflecting the rays of the morning sun.

While a feeling of awe stole over him at the sight of this sacred structure, he probably received from the Holy Spirit, which was to fill him from the hour of his birth, the first impressions which finally weaned him from the ritual of temple-service and enabled him to see the utter emptiness of the formal rites by which the priests and Levites thought to find favor with God. We think this is no overdrawn conclusion, for we are assured that he was ordained by an angel when but eight days old. If so, he was doubtless attended by angels afterward, for surely he needed, in view of his future great work, other instruction than he would get from his parents.

Though they were righteous and feared God, they were living in an age when (in consequence of the condition of the people as described by Christ, "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition") it could hardly be expected that they would be able to mould the mind of the boy for the important work to which he was appointed; hence the necessity of these divine manifestations.

John, unlike Jesus, was not born of lowly and indigent parentage. He was of one of the first families of Judea. The only son of his parents and the son of their old age, he would naturally be indulged, petted, and his every fancy gratified. It was unnecessary for him to learn any trade or avocation, for he was born a priest, and his business was to minister at the altar. He only must be pure, and to be that he must become so simply by outward acts of purification according to Jewish custom, as dictated by the Rabbis. If he ate without washen hands, or returned from the market without washing he was defiled. Should he touch a dish of clay or pottery, the inside and bottom contracted, he was unclean. There were six kinds of water he might use for purification, all differing in degree of virtue. First, the water of a pool, pit, cistern, ditch, or hill water that had ceased to flow; second, water that still flowed; third, collected water, to the amount of forty seahs; fourth, spring water, to which had been added drawn water; fifth, flowing

water which was warm or impregnated with minerals; and sixth, pure spring water.

Hundreds of equal or more absurd things were to be daily observed among the common people, to say nothing of the endless ritual of temple-service with which John, as a prospective priest, was expected to become familiar. His anxious parents, wishing to see him an accepted and honored priest, sought diligently, no doubt, to impress these means of purification upon his growing mind.

Even this, however, was not enough; he was to be no common priest. He was to be called the "prophet of the highest." He was to "be great in the sight of the Lord," so he must have more than a common preparation. His parents must dedicate him as a "Nazarite" for life. "The Nazarite," says Geikie, "was required to abstain altogether from wine and intoxicating drinks, even from vinegar, or any syrup or preparation of the grape, and from grapes themselves and raisins. No razor was to come upon his head; he was to be holy and to let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

To guard against any legal defilement from a corpse, he was to go near no dead body, even if it were that of his father, mother, brother, or sister; because the consecration of God was on his head, and, if by chance, death came where he was, the defilement could only be removed by a seven-days' uncleanness, to be followed by shaving his head and presenting a special "tresspass-offering." "Thus especially 'holy' the life-long Nazarite stood on an equality with a priest, and might enter the inner temple."

As a Nazarite, when he accompanied his parents to the temple he had access to the inner courts, and from the first appearance of light when the watchman upon the walls cried: "Priests, to your ministry; Levites, to your stations; Israelites, take your places;" until the last evening rite was performed, he had opportunity to observe the conduct of those who ministered at the altar as God's high priests. His keen eye must have observed their pride, corruption and insincerity, as well as the hollowness of the ritual service. While he revered the temple of his God, how his righteous soul, stirred by the Holy Spirit, must have revolted at

the corruption there, made as it then was "a den of thieves and robbers."

Returning to his quiet home at Hebron, he would carefully and sorrowfully reflect upon these things, doubtless questioning the necessity of first one rite and then another; until, tired of this daily routine of perplexity and doubt, he resolved to quit his comfortable home, the society of friends, the pleasure of social life and retire to the wild solitude of the desert "to be alone with God."

While coming to this conclusion, what mental struggles he must have passed through, as he saw one by one the sacred things of his fathers sinking into nothingness! For it is well-known by some that, even under the influence of the Holy Spirit's promptings, the traditions of childhood, the teachings of revered parents and honored spiritual leaders, even though manifestly wrong, are not abandoned by the human mind without a struggle that tries men's souls.

With these considerations, we cannot be surprised that some of the forms and ceremonies of the times still clung to John in after life, which Jesus so mildly disapproved in the following language: "No man putteth a piece of new cloth onto an old garment;" and, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles."

About one mile from Hebron, by the side of a pure well of water, surrounded by vineyards, solitary and alone, stands a giant oak, one of the largest in Pales-

tine. In imagination we see John wending his way thither to rest from the heat of the sun. There, in silent and painful meditation he contemplates the dark and spiritually benighted condition of his people. But, anon, a ray of joyous light shines in his thoughtful countenance as he thinks of the promised Deliver, whose coming he is assured is near. His mother has told him the circumstance of Mary's visit, of the cheering testimony then received, and of the prophecy of the good man upon his own head, "Thou shalt go before the Lord to prepare his ways." He has heard the experience of his father with the angel at the altar, and now as he pours forth his soul in agonizing and anxious prayer, the whisperings of his constant teacher, the Holy Spirit, tells him that he must soon begin his work; but oh, how to accomplish it!

Surrounded as he is, the mental struggle is intense. Can he fill his appointed mission without resigning his place of birthright as a Jewish priest? Or must he declare against the corruption and apostasy of the times, and abandon the religion of his fathers?

Still undecided, doubts and fears causing intense mental anxiety, yet calmed and cheered by the Spirit's presence, he seeks the wilderness solitude where he can learn of God, undisturbed by influences of social and religious life in Hebron and Jerusalem.

To be Continued.

SPIRITUAL REMINISCENCES.—No. 2.

IN THE LIFE OF SISTER ANN DAVIS, OF LYONS, WISCONSIN.

WRITTEN BY F. M. COOPER.

SOME time after the incidents recorded my father made arrangements to move up to Missouri. We were all intending to go with him with the exception of my sister Jane, whose husband was opposed to the work. We all felt very sad over the matter, and frequently held extensive conversations as to what was best to be done under the circumstances. One day sisters Mary and Jane were engaged in conversation with me in my father's house on the subject of our moving to Missouri and leaving Jane behind, when

it was suggested that we would pray over the matter there and then. We all united in prayer before the Lord; the gift of tongues rested upon me and the interpretation was, "Tell Jane to get ready to go up to Missouri, for she will go."

Mary and I rejoiced over the reception of such a glorious message, but Jane seemed to doubt it. She said she could not see how it was possible for her to go, and she could not see any prospect of the way being opened. Mary said she was certain that Jane would go, even if an

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PART II.

IN THE WILDERNESS.

SO little is known of John while in the wilderness of Judea that we can not with any certainty follow the thread of history. It would have been an interesting book had he written his life, and even more so had some of his thoughts and meditations in the wilderness been made a matter of record; but, alas! no such thing was done, or if done it was not preserved. In fact no word of his remains on record as penned by himself, consequently we must depend on what others have said for all we know of this great prophet. At what age he commenced his hermit life in the desert, and how long he remained there we have no means of knowing.

The Calmet says: "Chrysostom and Jerome believe that John was brought up from his infancy in the wilderness, without eating or drinking." This opinion was founded upon the saying of Jesus: "John came neither eating nor drinking." But this certainly does not mean that he neither ate nor drank anything, for we are told, "his meat was locusts and wild honey." Jesus could only mean that he was abstemious in his diet, and as the angel has said of him, he drank "neither wine nor strong drink."

In an age so troubled and unsettled in politics and religion, a life of solitude was no doubt a welcome relief, and in it the troubled and anxious soul found rest. The wilderness to which John retired extended from near Jerusalem on the north to the southern extremities of Judea; from near Hebron on the west to the river Jordan and the Dead Sea on the east, and even beyond. It was as desolate, wild and uninviting as could well be imagined; a dreary waste of chalky and flint rocks, broken and rent into chasms and gorges by earthquakes and convulsions, sometimes a thousand feet deep, and only thirty or forty feet wide. Only such vegetation grew on the rocks and ridges as could survive without water. In the valleys and ravines there was nothing more luxuriant than the "white broom bushes." In the north part of this wilderness one

can only travel by following the rifts and gorges of the rocks, and then a whole day may be passed without seeing a living creature, except perhaps the desert partridge, or, rarely, a fox or vulture. Farther south it is said to be absolutely inaccessible; that there the rushing torrents of winter floods have hollowed out gorges from one thousand to fifteen hundred feet deep, sometimes a mile in width.

The Hebrews call this section "Jeshimon," "the appalling desolation." It gradually slopes from its highest elevation of about three thousand feet near Hebron eastward until it terminates in almost inaccessible cliffs from one thousand to nearly two thousand feet above the valley of the Dead Sea.

Throughout this entire region no water could be found until the river Jordan was reached, except the solitary spring of Engedi; or where it had been caught in hollows of the rocks from passing showers, or in the very rare cisterns hewn in the limestone. The one spring of this wild region, Engedi, gushes from beneath a rock on a small plateau five hundred feet above the Dead Sea, and one thousand two hundred feet below the top of the cliffs, flowing in a long cascade over the bluff into ditches below, once used for irrigation. The waters of the spring are pure and sweet, though rather warm to the taste.

Along its banks grow a dense thicket of shrubbery, in which the songs of birds may be heard, making a strong contrast with the desolate region around. Below this, on the shore of the Dead Sea, was a veritable oasis, made fertile by the waters of the spring where the town of Engedi was situated. In the cliffs and gorges above Engedi were many caves, in some of which—where the deadly viper, lurking among the stones, the scorpion, fox, vulture or raven were the only signs of life—doubtless John took up his abode. In some of the gorges leading down to Engedi the superstitious Essenes had a colony in John's day, but they were doubtless avoided by him, as he was not there to commune with men.

Probably he may sometimes have wended his way down the gorges, climbed the

steep path to the spring and quaffed the fresh, pure water. There standing on the little plateau he would listen to the melodious notes of "black grackles" in the thicket or watch their golden wings flit from rock to rock on the rugged heights above him. Before and far below him lay the blue waters of the Dead Sea in majestic stillness—the lowest body of water in the world—nestling there surrounded by the wild scenery of broken mountains, inaccessible cliffs, perpendicular heights and awful precipices, cut into deep gorges and chasms by the action of rushing waters and earth's convulsions. While looking at the rough cliffs of the farther shore, had he been permitted to lift the veil of futurity, he would have seen himself there imprisoned in the almost unapproachable fortress of Macherus, where he finally met his death to satisfy the whims of an unscrupulous ballet dancer, prompted by a wicked woman.

Whether he ever visited the little town of Engedi, the colony of Essenes or his own home in Hebron, we are not permitted to know. Probably he did not, for when he finally made himself public he "had his raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins," a garb well fitted to his rough life in the caves of the wilderness, but one which he would not probably have worn had he been mingling among men, and especially among the priestly families of Hebron. "His meat was locusts and wild honey." From this we would suppose that bees were to be found in the holes and caves of the wilderness, and their sweets helped to sustain the Baptist during his hermitage. Not an unpalatable thing this; but one instinctively revolts at the thought of eating locusts. John, however, had no alternative. He must eat what he could find, or abandon his lonely life, which under the circumstances, he could not consent to do. We are assured, however, that the locust is more palatable than we have supposed it to be.

According to the law of Moses they were clean. It is said that heat and dryness are favorable to the production of the locust insect; so in the country where John was sojourning they would naturally be very plentiful. The Calmet says: "The locusts are commonly eaten in Palestine and the neighboring countries. There is no difficulty in supposing that

the word '*akrides*' used by Matthew, speaking of the food on which John subsisted, might signify these insects. The ancients affirm that in Africa, Syria, Persia, and almost throughout Asia, the people did commonly eat these creatures."

"Clenard in a letter from Fez, (A. D. 1541), assures us that he saw wagon loads of locusts brought into that city for food." Buckhardt says: "The Bedouins eat locusts, which are collected in great quantities in the beginning of April. . . After having been roasted a little upon the iron plate upon which bread is baked they are dried in the sun, and then put into large sacks, with the mixture of a little salt. They are never served up as a dish, but every one takes a handful of them when hungry."

Chambers says: "Locusts are eaten in many countries, roasted or fried in butter. They are also preserved in brine or dried in the sun. Thus they appear in the markets of Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Madagascar &c., and are even exported as an article of commerce." They are said to taste very much like shrimps, and why should they not be as clean?

When all has been said which can be said regarding John's sojourn in the wilderness, how unsatisfactory and hollow it seems! How one longs to get some idea of the feelings and experiences, the anticipations and hopes, as well as the sorrow, pain and disappointments of John, as silently he communed with God, or patiently waited till his isolation ended and he was permitted to mingle again with men! How he must have longed to again visit his quiet home at Hebron, to see the loved ones there and communicate to them those grand and important truths which he had learned while in solitude he communed with God! But how would they receive him? With open hearts would they receive the message he bore, or would he be treated as an apostate from the faith of his fathers, and as an enemy of Israel, unfit to mingle with the people of God?

Young friend, if you are ever called upon to go to those beloved, warning them to abandon the fanatical superstitions of the past and accept the gospel, you may form some idea of the feelings of this man as he left his self-chosen solitude and returned to his father's house. We are left in ignorance as to whether he was permit-

ted to rejoice by seeing loved ones receive the message of truth, or whether, like many a servant of God in these days, he was turned sorrowfully from the hearts and homes of those he loved.

But all this time he has been gaining strength by association with God and communion with his own heart; so when he again appears he no longer hesitates to rebuke in scathing language the evils of his time, and fearlessly compare the Pharisees and Sadducees who came unto him

to the venomous vipers with which he had been familiar in his wilderness retreat.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias, emperor of Rome, and the year of our Lord twenty-eight he again appeared among men crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," which Matthew declares was in fulfillment of a prediction of the prophet Esaias.

(To be continued.)

OBSERVATIONS.—No. VI.

God mend his heart who can not feel
The impulse of a holy zeal,
And sees not with his sordid eyes,
The beauty of self-sacrifice!

* * * * *
Life saved for self is lost, while they
Who lose it in his service hold
The lease of God's eternal day!

—Whittier.

IN our last we promised our readers that in this issue we would briefly review the book written by Gen. Booth, entitled, "In Darkest England, and The Way Out."—Of course it will be a brief, very brief glance at a work which is attracting to-day the attention of tens of thousands of the human race, and the stirring contents of which are awakening men and women to a realizing sense of the condition of abject poverty, misery, and degradation in which unnumbered thousands of the human family drag out a miserable existence, living we can not call it unless we call it a living death. Gen Booth starts out by drawing an analogy between the description given by Mr. Stanley of the condition of the dwellers in the dark and tangled forests of Africa and the unfed, unhoused poor of England. He says:

"The Equatorial Forest traversed by Stanley resembles that Darkest England of which I have to speak, alike in its vast extent—both stretch, in Stanley's phrase, 'as far as from Plymouth to Peterhead;' its monotonous darkness, its malaria and its gloom, its dwarfish, de-humanized inhabitants, the slavery to which they are subjected, their privations and their misery. That which sickens the stoutest heart, and causes many of our bravest

and best to fold their hands in despair, is the apparent impossibility of doing more than merely to peck at the outside of the endless tangle of monotonous undergrowth; to let light into it, to make a road clear through it, that shall not be immediately choked up by the ooze of the morass and the luxuriant parasitical growth of the forest—who dare hope for that? At present, alas, it would seem as though no one dares even to hope! It is the great Slough of Despond of our time.

"And what a slough it is no man can gauge who has not waded therein, as some of us have done, up to the very neck for long years. Talk about Dante's Hell, and all the horrors and cruelties of the torture-chamber of the lost! The man who walks with open eyes and with bleeding heart through the shambles of our civilization needs no such fantastic images of the poet to teach him horror. Often and often, when I have seen the young and the poor and the helpless go down before my eyes into the morass, trampled underfoot by beasts of prey in human shape that haunt these regions, it seemed as if God were no longer in His world, but that in His stead reigned a fiend, merciless as hell, ruthless as the grave. Hard it is, no doubt, to read in Stanley's pages of the slavetraders coldly arranging for the surprise of a village, the capture of the inhabitants, the massacre of those who resist, and the violation of all the women; but the stony streets of London, if they could but speak, would tell of tragedies as awful, of ruin as complete, of ravishments as horrible, as if we were in Central Africa; only the ghastly devas-

destroy more Christs than the dungeon and the stake. And perhaps one reason why the Ober-Ammergauers have been able to give us the Christ we see this

year, is because in their secluded valley they have remained poor and humble in spirit, and have never forgotten the story that transformed the world.

CONTENTMENT.

Contentment knocked at a poet's heart;
The poet gave an impatient start,
To see such a stranger there.
Infinite longings, beautiful dreams,
Wonderful thoughts on numberless themes,
Metaphors rich and rare,
Sensitive sentiments morbidly sad,
Exquisite raptures, hopes half mad,—
For these there was plenty of room to spare,
But none for Contentment anywhere.

She next approached a philosopher's soul;
The sage put down some mystical scroll,
And a vexed look crossed his face.
Whether the will is bound or free,
Whether there was an eternity,
Whether all matter and space
Only exist as part of the mind,
These and more of a similar kind,
Were secrets long he had sought to trace;
Till found, Contentment could have no place.

She went to the house of a millionaire,
But the poor rich man was full of care,
And begged of her not to stay.
One who had only lived for fame,
Sighing at last for a loftier aim,
Told her to go away.
Those who had most of wealth and ease
Always appeared the hardest to please;
And even the people who seemed most gay
Asked her to call another day.

At length she entered a peasant's breast;
The poor man gladly received his guest
As an angel passing by.
Proud of his garden, pleased with his cot,
Plain though his fare, and humble his lot,
Gratitude beamed from his eye.
Peacefully here she hoped to remain;
But soon she heard the peasant complain
Of some small trouble, and then, with a sigh,
Contentment left earth and flew to the sky.

—Selected.

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BY ELDER HEMAN C. SMITH.

HIS MINISTRY.

PART III.

IN personal appearance a more unprepossessing person could hardly be imagined (looking from our standpoint) than was John the Baptist when he appeared before the people as a public teacher. His hair was long, he was unshaven, his face nearly or quite covered with beard which had always been allowed to grow unrestrained. His garment was of camel's hair. The Calmet says: "There is a coarse cloth made of camel's hair in the east which is used for manufacturing the coats of shepherds, and camel-drivers, and also for the covering of tents. It was doubtless this coarse kind which was adopted by John." (From the reading of 2 Kings 1:8 we conclude that Elijah was

similarly attired; and from Zechariah 13:4 we infer that such a dress was so common among prophets that those wishing to impose themselves upon the people as prophets donned this kind of garb to more effectually deceive.) Matthew says: "He had a leathern girdle about his loins." This probably does not mean what is now known among us as leather, the skins of beasts tanned. John would have little or no opportunity in the desert to procure leather. I think quite likely that he used as a girdle the skin of some wild beast in its raw state. Mark says, "With a girdle of a skin about his loins," which is likely more in keeping with our present use of words. What an uncouth object he would be to this generation! Should a man present such an appearance now he would only attract attention as an object of rid-

icule. Even then, in some circles, such a presentation was despised, for soft raiment was at least worn "in kings houses;" yet John as a prophet was not peculiar in this, as seen from the above citations.

He had not yet emerged from the wilderness when he began to preach, as we learn from these words: "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea." Yet he was near the river Jordan, so we can locate definitely the place where these ministrations occurred. Near the mouth of Jordan where it empties into the Dead Sea is the only place where the river and the wilderness are in juxtaposition; so it must have been right here, near Jordan's mouth, that John began his ministry. The Jordan here flows rapidly between double banks, confined to its narrower limits during the dry season, but rising to be restrained by the higher banks when swollen by spring rains. The river banks were lined by dense foliage of vegetation and with waving forests of reeds; hence the saying, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind?" On the higher terraces were beautiful groves and thickets of tamarisks, sycamores, oaks, acacias, willows and many colored oleanders, with an occasional clump of graceful palms. These affording a shady and pleasant retreat for those who came to his baptism from "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the regions round about Jordan." Back of these to the west were the barren rounded hills of Judea, rising from a thousand to twelve hundred feet and stretching out into the wilderness of which we have spoken. On the east of the river arose the more rugged hills of Perea to a height of two thousand to five thousand feet. In this region by the side of the rapidly flowing waters of the muddy Jordan, with rocky hills shutting in the view on either side, and where the narrow limits of the annual floods are said to draw a sharp line between "tropical luxuriance" and the barren desert, John began his ministry, crying, "Repent ye."

To us who have heard the exhortation to repentance sounded from every pulpit of our acquaintance this doctrine would not appear strange, but to the people in John's time it was very strange and new. Among the religious sects of that day no such tenet of faith was ever taught as re-

pentance. The Pharisees, Sadducees, Esenes, Zealots and others were very strict in their way, and righteous in their own conceit; but for sin and uncleanness they required only *acts* of purification and ab-lution. For every sin, real or supposed, there was some ritual rite prescribed through which it was thought the defiled might be made clean; but no reference was made to inward and heartfelt repentance as a means or prerequisite to purification, hence the peculiar significance of the saying of Jesus: "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?" John also in his characteristic plainness said to the Pharisees and Sadducees: "O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" No wonder that not only John but Jesus found it necessary in the beginning of his ministry to say, "*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and that one of the peculiar characteristics of Christ's gospel was "that *repentance* and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

To this picturesque and lovely spot on the banks of the flowing stream, surrounded by desert and barren hills the people flocked in great numbers; and for what purpose? Not to see the reeds on Jordan's bank shaken by the wind, nor for the purpose of seeing "a man clothed in soft raiment." Had this been their object he might have been found in "kings' houses" in Machaerus, just across the river in the hills of Perea; but they went out to hear this peculiar man preach this strangely new doctrine. He had a word of counsel for each one; when the people, awakened to the conviction that their repentance must bear fruit, asked "what shall we do?" he said: "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." To the despised publican whose habit was to be extortionate in tax-gathering he said: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." To the inquiring soldier he said: "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

After a genuine and fruit-bearing repentance he required no works of penance,

no ritual ceremony, no acts of purification, no anointings or washings, save only the God-appointed "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." How this was administered it is not the purpose of this paper to discuss, but I will simply say that the claim that he could not have baptized by immersion in consequence of the shallowness of water is a mistake.

Geikie says: "Near Jericho," (and that is the region where John baptized), "it (Jordan) has a breadth of from ninety to a hundred feet, and a varying depth of from three to seven."

The Calmet quotes Burkhardt as saying: "The river where we passed it was about eighty paces broad, and about three feet deep; this, it must be recollected, was in the midst of summer."

Chambers says: "Where it enters the Dead Sea it is one hundred and eighty yards broad, and three feet deep; but a little way further up, it is only eighty yards broad, and seven feet deep."

Our imagination pictures many scenes of joy and spiritual comfort under the shady foliage of those magnificent trees while the waiting multitude listened to the plain yet forcible teachings of the man "sent from God." We can almost imagine we hear them sing with the poet of modern Israel:

"The old trees their arms outstretching,
As on earth they would lay hand;
On each other asking blessings,
In the forest dark and grand."

For some cause John moved a few miles farther up the river to Bethabara. We read that certain "things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing." One might suppose by this language that he was not there baptizing in Jordan, but when we remember that it was while at Bethabara that Jesus was baptized, and it is positively stated that John at that time was baptizing "in Jordan," the matter is set at rest, and we conclude that though tarrying at Bethabara on the east side of Jordan, he was baptizing in the river, where, according to Chambers, there was sufficient water to require a ferry for crossing.

The baptism of Jesus was no doubt the most important event in the life of John. Though they were second cousins, one resided in Galilee and the other in Judea; and it appears that they were not personally acquainted. John no doubt was daily

expecting the appearance of him of whom the prophets had spoken, and so he testified, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I." But Jesus remained in his quiet mountain home awaiting a fit moment to present himself to John. Though John did not know his person, yet he had doubtless heard of his marvelous conception and birth, and had often prayed while he earnestly longed for his appearance. At length Jesus of Nazareth stood before him. He who could fearlessly reprove King Herod for crime, who could sternly rebuke the proud and self-righteous, and in scathing language denounce the "generation of vipers" who came to his baptism; he who could brave the authority of the highest earthly priesthood, and rise in moral, spiritual and intellectual dignity high above the wisest, purest and humblest of his generation, felt at once his insignificance and inferiority when in the presence of this mild, gentle, unassuming person coming in meekness to his baptism.

Jesus had come to be baptized. Marvelous condescension! John, who could without compunction baptize those who had before come unto him, and even demand of them fruits worthy of repentance, now instinctively feels his unworthiness, and probably for the first and last time hesitates and draws back with the words, "I have need to be baptized of thee." But Jesus, with the calm light of inspiration and truth beaming from his eye, and shining in his devoted features, kindly entreated, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." The scene which followed I cannot describe. I have tried to imagine myself in John's place, to think what would have been my thoughts and feelings had I been honored with the privilege of performing this service, and had then witnessed the hallowed light which shone on the scene as the Holy Spirit descended, and the voice of God declared, "I am well pleased;" but my stammering tongue refuses to move, and my pen seems paralyzed in my hand. There is honor enough, however, to satisfy the ambition of any righteous man in being authorized to perform the ordinance, hallowed by this occurrence, for those whom Jesus condescends to call "my brother and my sister."

Once more we hear of John "baptizing

in Enon near to Salem, because there was much water there;" but as Jesus began to attract attention the people measurably lost interest in John, and his own words were partially fulfilled: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Sometime during his ministry, Herod Antipas had sought his counsel and was told in John's fearless and plain manner, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother Philip's wife." He could not do otherwise than to reprove the wicked and adulterous conduct of Herod and his so-called wife, Herodias. Herod had gone to Jerusalem to a feast, and while there became the guest of his half-brother Philip, and though pretending to be a zealous defender of religion, shamelessly entangled himself in intrigue with the wife of his hospitable host, though he had a wife, the daughter of Aretas, King of the Nabateans. They agreed that Herod should go home and send away his wife, and then Herodias should leave her husband and come to him. Herod's wife, hearing of his treachery, saved him the trouble by leaving and going to her father; but the other part of the contract was carried out. John's fearless and righteous reproof so incensed both Herod and his adulterous consort that they became his bitter enemies.

Herod soon afterward had him imprisoned, and for a long time kept him confined in the fortress of Machaerus, afraid to put him to death because of his popularity with the people, though often solicited to do so by the unscrupulous Herodias. Writers differ in their opinions of the real cause prompting Herod to cast him into prison. Some think the reproof mentioned the true cause; others think this only a pretext.

Josephus does not mention this cause, but says: "Now when others came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought best by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late." Whether he was moved by

spite because of the scathing rebuke he received for his wickedness, or whether he was, as Josephus seemed to think, jealous of his influence, matters but little. John was cast into prison, as many another man of God has since been, for no just cause.

Once more we pause at this juncture (as we have several times done while writing this article), and think how utterly powerless we are to do the subject justice. We cannot enter into his joys, comforts, hopes, fears, disappointments and anxieties as he lay there, pondering on the work of the past and the anticipations of the future. How his heart must have sunk within him, and how bitter must have been his feelings when he feared lest he had been deceived in Jesus. For notwithstanding all he had seen and witnessed, there came an hour of darkness and doubt, such as come to all of us at times, when it seems the heavens are clothed in sable darkness and earth brings only disappointment which wrings our hearts with bitter sorrow and woe.

John doubtless shared in the Jewish opinion that the kingdom of the Christ was not only a spiritual one, but in some sense a temporal one, and thought Jesus would arise in worldly majesty and power and make the kingdoms of this world feel his kingly authority. Probably he anticipated the crumbling of Herod's dynasty when the prison doors should be opened and the should be free. Jesus, however, as his movements were anxiously watched by John, betrayed no such purpose or design; so "when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" He had not lost faith that a deliverer would come, but from present indications to him this was not the man, though like the disciples after the crucifixion he had "trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." He had everything to depress him. From the wild freedom of the wilderness, from the exciting scenes along Jordan's banks, from the glorious experiences that caused his heart to swell with exultant praise at the baptism of Jesus; he had been suddenly torn and confined in the lonesome dungeon of "the Black Castle." Standing at the barred window of his dungeon his only outlook was upon "black lava crags

and deep gorges, yawning in seemingly bottomless depths."

No wonder that over the mind of this brave and noble man came a momentary cloud of darkness, for with all his greatness and goodness of soul he was only a man, and his trials were such as would appall the stoutest heart. No wonder he felt, as you and I, kind reader, have often felt under less trying circumstances, that God had forsaken him, or that he was of no consequence in his kingdom. But presently the messengers returned. Jesus had not told them directly whether he was "the one" or not, but this was the message brought: "We saw the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead raised, and heard the gospel preached to the poor; and these are the gracious words he bade us convey to you: 'Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.'"

Reader, did you ever, after moments of doubt, gloom and sorrow, when you felt downcast and forsaken, have a ray of heavenly light illumine your soul? Then can you form some idea of this lonely prisoner's ecstatic joy when these words greeted him, and he thought, the Spirit bearing witness, "Surely this is he of whom it is written, Say to them that are of a fearful heart: Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears

of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

How completely did this saying of the prophet suit the condition and circumstances of this tried soul! Did you never have a like experience, and when reading God's word, while trouble pressed sore upon you, feel to exclaim, "Surely that was writted for me?"

How John must have rejoiced and resolved, "I will never be offended in you;" and as Paul afterwards expressed himself, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heights, nor depths, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Of how John passed his time in prison, or how long he remained there, we are entirely ignorant; but on a festal day when king Herod was entertaining his guests in the royal palace at Machaerus, the executioner without a moment's warning entered the cell of John. But let us draw the curtain upon the scene. I have not the heart to describe the horrible picture presented to my mind. We are all familiar with the result. How the life of one of the grandest and best of men was sacrificed to satisfy the demands of a wicked, adulterous woman, and to keep the pledge of a weak, treacherous and cruel king.

(To be continued).

BENEATH MY ROOF-TREE.

One dewy morn, when waking birds
Their first low notes were trilling,
And perfume from each hawthorn hedge
The wandering wind was filling,
I saw serene Contentment pass,
With steps that scarcely swayed the grass.

So wondrous sweet and fair beyond
All other friends I thought her,
That every day through woodland way
And flowery field I sought her,
And called and called again her name,—
But never answering whisper came.

Then vexed that she would not reply,
I cried in accents fretful:
"Contentment, where thou listest, go;

Nor will I be regretful,
I fain would have thee with me dwell;
But, since thou wilt not, fare thee well."

I sought my cot, where needlecraft,
The spinning wheel's swift whirring,
And housewife cares, gave wings to time,
And kept the life-tide stirring;
Forgot were wimpling burn and fell,
The sunlit mead and dusky dell.

A light footfall; a gentle knock;
A snowy kirtle fluttering
Within my door; a longed-for voice
My name in soft tones uttering;
And lo! beneath my own roof-tree
The long-sought one stood seeking me

—Virginia Harrison.

GREAT TRUTHS.

“Great truths are dearly bought. The common truth,—
 Such as men give and take from day to day,—
 Comes in the common walks of easy life,
 Blown by the careless winds across our way;
 Bought in the market at the current price,
 Bred of the smile, the jest, perchance the bowl;
 It tells no tale of daring or of worth,
 Nor pierces even the surface of the soul.

“Great truths are greatly won, not formed by chance,
 Not wafted on the breath of summer dream;
 But grasped in the great struggle of the soul,
 Hard buffeting with adverse wind and stream.
 Not in the general mart 'mid corn and wine;
 Not in the merchandise of gold and gems;
 Not in the world's gay halls of midnight mirth,
 Nor 'mid the blaze of regal diadems;

“But in the day of conflict, fear and grief,
 When the strong hand of God put forth in might,
 Ploughs up the subsoil of the human heart,
 And brings the imprisoned truth-seed to the light;
 Wrung from the troubled spirit in hard hours
 Of weakness, solitude, perchance of pain,
 Truth springs, like harvest, from the well-ploughed field,
 And the soul feels it has not wept in vain.

HORATIUS BONAR.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

BY ELDER HEMAN C. SMITH.

PART IV.

HIS LAST APPEARANCE.

WHEN death ends the earthly life of man it is customary to allow the narrative to cease. Possibly a hope or belief that it is well with him may be expressed, but nothing more.

This man, however, seems to be an exception, and it was because of this that we were prompted to write of him. We can not follow him into the unseen world and speak of his experiences there; but his work connected with this world and its inhabitants seemed to be incomplete at the hour of his death. Of this (though we may fail to clearly set forth the importance of this marvelous truth,) we have sufficient information to enable us to safely speak. Of him the angel said: “He shall go before him [Christ] in the

spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,” etc. This, John most effectually did during his life ministry, never pointing the people of his generation backward to the days of *their* fathers, to the law of Moses or to the empty forms of Jewish worship, but ever turning their hearts to the days of their children, to the *future* excellency, development and peace of Christ's kingdom; indicating in the words, “He must increase,” the fact that Christ's kingdom would be a progressive one, and in the future arise in magnificence and grandeur.

How must our fathers have been filled with inspiring hope and holy joy as their hearts were “turned to their children.”

After John's death, the crucifixion of his Master, and the taking away of the apostles, “darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people.” The pure principles of the gospel were

denied, corruption reigned, and it seemed that the hope once centered in the children was lost. No wonder the hearts of men grew faint and weary, and there came upon the world a time now known as "the dark ages," when men groveled in spiritual, scientific and moral darkness, presenting such a picture as to make us instinctively shudder at the depravity of our race.

It now became necessary, therefore, lest the Lord should "come and smite the earth with a curse," that the hearts of the children should be turned to their fathers, that the peace and benign influence of the gospel, once enjoyed, should be enjoyed again; and the authority restored to organize again the kingdom of God, that in its purity and power it might develop and grow until the inspired hope of the fathers should be fully realized in the children.

But who is to begin this work? Who sound the note of inspiration which will turn the "hearts of the children to the fathers," causing them to receive the first impulses of joyous expectation as they are promised the blessings once experienced? Who be instrumental in restoring the authority, which holds the keys by which men are to become citizens of Christ's kingdom?

Why, the voice of inspiration long before the first appearing of John or the earthly pilgrimage of the Christ said, "I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and *he* shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers." This man John, coming in "the spirit and power of Elias," (Elijah), fulfilled the first part of this prediction. Is it unreasonable that he should fulfill the latter part? John said: "I am not that Elias who was to *restore* all things," but says Jesus: "He was the Elias who was to *prepare* all things."

This being a *preparatory* work must have had reference to John. It being his calling, therefore, to "prepare *all* things," it follows, that as he prepared the way before the first coming of our Lord by "turning the heart of the fathers to the children," so he should prepare the way before the second coming by "turning the heart of the children to their fathers," thus forming a connecting link between

fathers and children through the authority to administer in gospel ordinances.

Jesus said: "Elias truly shall first come and restore all things; but I say unto you, that Elias *is* come already." The words, "Elias *is* come already," certainly had reference to John; and though he was not the Elias to *restore* all things, yet he was the Elias to *prepare* all things, consequently the effect of his mission was to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers." The position that he was the one to go before and prepare the way is put beyond the possibility of controversy by these words of Christ: "This is the one of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."

Turning to Malachi who wrote this prediction, we learn that the events to attend the mission of this forerunner were not fulfilled when John and Christ were upon earth; so we must look for a second appearing of John to prepare the way before him, ere Christ "shall suddenly come to his temple," "sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," purifying "the sons of Levi [the priesthood] and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness," ere the "offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years;" and ere the Lord "come near to you to judgment." As he mingled with the fathers in turning their hearts to the children, so in some way must the influence of his ministry be felt among the children in turning their hearts to the fathers; and no system of religion having for its object the restoration of gospel peace, power and love is the proper one unless the personal ministry of John the Baptist is connected therewith.

When Christ shall be revealed without sin unto salvation, *that* people who have not received the ministrations of him who was to "*prepare all things*" will find themselves totally unprepared to meet the Lord in peace. Serious thought, but true! In this connection we introduce a quotation from Doctrine and Covenants sec. 26, par. 2: ". . . John I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, jr., and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto this first priesthood which you have received, that

you might be called and ordained even as Aaron; and also Elijah, unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth might not be smitten with a curse."

Thus John came in the spirit and power of Elias (Elijah) who holds the keys, to point our fathers to our day; and then, after the darkness of the past, came again to ordain these men, Joseph and Oliver, to the power or priesthood, that in the spirit of Elias they could call our minds back to the pure gospel principles received and enjoyed by our fathers. Thus the prophecies are fulfilled, and the hopes of the fathers realized in our day, as thousands have testified and can testify, to their great satisfaction and joy. It is marvelous in our eyes, yet true.

This is the last we know of John, so we close with the testimony of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, concerning this visit and their ordination under the hands of John the Baptist, not as conclusive testimony of the truth of their claims, but as corroborating the testimony of Jesus and the prophets; and the only testimony extant of the fulfillment of predictions made of, and promises made to us the children of our hopeful and inspired parents. Consequently, if their testimony is not true, the inspired utterances of the prophets on this subject have not had a fulfillment to this day. I submit it for the consideration of the thoughtful.

Joseph says: "While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he *ordained* us, saying unto us, 'Upon you, my *fellow-servants*, in the name of Messiah, I confer the priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.'" Compare this with Malachi 3:3.

Again, Joseph says in continuation of the same event: "The messenger who visited us on this occasion, and conferred this priesthood upon us, said that his name was John, the same that is called

John the Baptist in the New Testament."

Oliver Cowdery said: "After writing the account given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent, it was easy to be seen, as the prophet said would be, that darkness covered the earth and gross 'darkness the minds of the people.' On reflecting further, it was easily seen, that amid the great strife and noise concerning religion, none had authority from God to administer the ordinances of the gospel; for the question might be asked, have men authority to administer in the name of Christ, who deny revelations, when his testimony is no less than the Spirit of prophecy, and his religion based, built, and sustained by immediate revelations in all ages of the world, when he has had a people on earth? If these facts were buried and carefully concealed by men whose craft would have been in danger, if once permitted to shine in the faces of men, they were no longer to us; and we only waited for the commandment to be given, 'Arise and be baptized.' This was not long desired before it was realized. The Lord, who is rich in mercy, and ever willing to answer the consistent prayer of the humble, after we had called upon him in a fervent manner, aside from the abodes of men, condescended to manifest unto us his will. On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the gospel of repentance. What joy! What wonder! What amazement! While the world were racked and distracted, while millions were groping as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld, our ears heard, as in the blaze of day; yes, more, above the glitter of the May sunbeam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature.

Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, "I am thy fellow-servant," dispelled every fear. We listened, we gazed, we admired. 'Twas the voice of the angel from glory; 'twas a message from the Most High. And as we heard we rejoiced, while his love enkindled upon our souls, and we were

wrapped in the vision of the Almighty. Where was room for doubt? Nowhere! Uncertainty had fled; doubt had sunk no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever.

"But, dear brother, think, further think for a moment, what joy filled our hearts, and with what surprise we must have bowed, (for who would not have bowed the knee for such a blessing?) when we received under his hand the holy priesthood, as he said: 'Upon you my fellow-servants, in the name of Messiah I confer this priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon the earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.'

"I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion, but you will believe me when I say, that earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, can begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No, nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit. Man may deceive his fellow man; deception may follow deception, and the children of the wicked one may have power to seduce the foolish and untaught, till naught but fiction feeds the many, and the fruit of falsehood carries in its current the giddy to the grave; but one touch with the finger of his love, yes, one ray of glory from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior, from the bosom of eternity, strikes it *all* into insignificance, and blots it forever from the mind.

"The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel; the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth unsullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me past description, and I shall ever look upon this expression of the Savior's goodness with wonder and thanksgiving while I am permitted to tarry, and in those mansions where perfection dwells and sin never comes, I hope to adore in that day which shall never cease."

While reading these testimonies our hearts can but respond to the sentiment of the poet:

"Oh the angel bright has come
With a message from on high,
And every nation, kindred, tongue,
Shall hear it bye and bye."

Such was the work and calling of *John the Baptist* so far as we know, and most certainly believe.

In concluding the interesting series of articles upon John the Baptist we take occasion to insert the following scraps of history, furnished us from the biography of Elder Zenas H. Gurley, Senior, by his son. Many of the Saints who loved Bro. Gurley with a fervency of feeling which only noble and generous natures like his can awake, will remember hearing him relate these incidents, and will, we feel sure, be glad to see them in print. We thank Bro. Zenas for his kindness in furnishing them to us.—Ed.

PLEASANTON, Ia., Aug. 17th, 1890.

MRS. M. WALKER,

Dear Sister in Christ:—According to your request I send you extracts from father's biography, which, in brief, is an account of remarkable dreams and visions. He says:

"I was living in Moriahtown, Ontario, and had been very sick for some months, not expecting to live, being very much reduced in flesh and strength. At this time I dreamed that the latter days had come. In my dream I walked out upon a large square of ground where I saw thousands of people standing, whose countenances showed sorrow and anguish, clearly indicating that which is represented in the thirtieth chapter of Jeremiah. At the same time I saw two stands for preaching among them, occupied by two tall, slender men of round shoulders. I walked near to one of them, and recollect of witnessing the truth of his preaching, for at each point made I would say, 'That's true, that's true.'

"While thus engaged, a man came to me and informed me that John the Baptist was preaching some six miles distant, whereupon I immediately accompanied him to the place where John was, and while on the way remarked that I was thankful that I lived in the days of the prophets and was privileged to see some of them. When we reached St. John, we found him preaching to a people who had the same paleness of countenance

that the others had, and then for the first time in my life I heard the gospel of Christ in plainness and in the following manner: The people whose faces were pale like the features of death asked him, 'What shall we do to be saved?' He answered, 'Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sin, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' I remarked at the time, 'That's a little different from Methodism, but I guess he knows what is right.'

"In a short time the scene changed and certain ones present were to receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, there being three besides myself. We took our seats before the stand, and St. John and my conductor laid hands upon us, and I felt the fire of God pass from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. (As before stated, I was very sick and confined to my bed most of the time for months previous).

"The congregation having now dispersed, I walked with St. John, and he said to me, 'Havn't you been sick for some time?'

"(I had forgotten all my sickness) when I answered, 'Yes.'

"He said, 'You will get better now.'

"During our conversation many questions were asked and answered, among which I asked, 'Will I see you here again?'

"He answered, 'No, but you will see me hereafter.'

"I think this circumstance occurred about the middle of the week and by the next Saturday I was restored to perfect health."

Let the reader keep in mind the fact that father first heard the gospel as taught by the Latter Day Saints in the winter of 1836-7, and united with the church in April of 1837; that the foregoing dream or vision was received by him some years previous and when he was a Methodist exhorter and local preacher.

Shortly after the reception of the above he received another of which he says:

"I dreamed I was a traveling preacher, poorly clad, carrying the Bible and a new Book, that I was told was just as true as the Bible; but it was not the Bible. This was two or more years before I heard of the gospel."

As the foregoing relates to father's call to the ministry, etc., it would seem but

proper to give his account of the circumstance which occurred shortly after, in which he heard the voice of his Master. He says:

"At this time I was engaged in shipping some potatoes from Bass' Landing to Brewer's Mill, over a small lake of two or three miles in length, by about one half mile in width. On my return from my second trip, my boat being empty, I noticed that I rowed it with wonderful ease, scarcely an effort, when presently I heard terrible thundering in the west. Looking up I saw but a small, black cloud. Very soon the thundering was repeated, once, twice. By this time I had reached the middle of the lake, and looking to the west I beheld to my consternation and dismay, a hurricane of about twenty rods in width approaching me in all its fury, being clearly visible by its havoc in destroying trees of all sizes. I was in direct range of about its center, and as the monster came rapidly on had but little, very little time to try to prepare for it. Not being able to swim, I thought to hold the prow of my little boat to the wind, and as my oars were strong and I accustomed to wield them, concluded there was some safety in the position; but, Alas! how feeble is man in all his power! The wind struck my boat and wheeled it around instantaneously, and as it was turning upside down, I realized that I must perish, and that all efforts on my part were vain. So stretching both hands toward heaven I cried aloud, 'Save, Lord, else I perish,' the words had hardly passed from my lips when the boat dropped back into the water and a bright light shone round about me, and out of it I heard a voice clear and distinct above the roar of the wind saying, 'Your life is spared that you may warn men to repent.'

"The storm passed over me and I, in safety rowed to the beach, but on reaching the shore the storm was still so terrific there that I dared not venture into the woods; so I returned to my boat and out upon the water, waiting until the anger of the monster had subsided.

Fraternally.

Z. H. GURLEY.

NOTE.—I presume that all who read this will recognize the Book of Mormon in the "new book" which father carried with the Bible, which is correct.

Z. H. G.