

**The Autobiography of Jacob Bower: A Frontier Baptist Preacher and
Missionary**

Illinois, 1857

The Autobiography of Jacob Bower

[The following autobiography was found in manuscript in the Library of Shurtleff College, Alton, Illinois. It was prepared at the request of the *Illinois Baptist Pastoral Union*, and was completed in 1857. Jacob Bower is representative of the average frontier Baptist preacher, and his autobiography is a revealing human document. He was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1786 of Dunker (German Baptist) parentage; came to Kentucky with his father when a youth of about nineteen years; was converted under Baptist influence in 1812 and about two years later began to preach. Some twelve years later he removed to Scott County, Illinois, because he disliked the idea of raising his family in a slave state. Here he continued in the ministry. In 1832 he accepted an appointment as a missionary under the Home Mission Society and for many years did valiant work, organizing new churches and forming circuits. From 1832, the year of his appointment as a home missionary to 1848 he traveled 40,925 miles; preached 2,931 sermons; aided in organizing 14 churches and ordained 12 ministers. His missionary work was performed in both Illinois and Missouri.]

To the Illinois Baptist Pastoral Union

Dear Brethren:

At a meeting of the pastoral Union held in Jacksonville October 1847. I, together with several other brethren was appointed to present a biographical sketch of my life to the next pastoral union to be held at Winchester in october 1848. And as we all failed to do so, we all, with an addition of six or seven others, were reappointed to present a sketch at the next meeting of the union to be held in Griggsville on thursday preceeding the 3rd saturday in oct. 1849.

I was born in Manheim Township, Lancaster county in the State of Pennsylvania, on the 26. day of September in the year of our Lord 1786. When I was about three years old my Father emigrated to what was then called the back woods in Westmorland county. Early in the month of May before I was six years old. I was sent to a German school, and by the time I was six years old, I could read the New Testament.

Thank God for pious parents

I had a sister too young to go to school with me. My parents belonged to the denomination of christians called Tunkers, as early as I can recollect, my Father kept up regular morning and evening worship in the family. Commonly he would read a chapter in the German Testament, then sing a hymn in German, then say a prayer in the same language, and were taught to sing with them. We were instructed in such lessons as we were able to understand, such as this. Be good children, all good children when they die will go to a good place, wher Jesus is, and many pretty Angels, and they would be happy forever. Bad children when they die will go to a bad place, where there is a great fire, and the Devil and his Angels tormenting the wicked forever. These instructions were ingraven on my mind, I have never forgotten them, and were a means of continual restraint from being wicked. In January after I was six years old, the Lord took my good Mother home to Heaven, and I wished very much to go with her to the good place she had gon to. I was yet unconscious of sin in myself, and my anxiety to die and go to the good place wher Mother was, greatly increased.

Sometime in July following, my Father brought home a step Mother, and it was not long before my anxiety to die increased more & more. Often I would steal out and sit down by myself and weep with anxiety to die and go to the place where Mother was. Thus it continued with me till one morning in the month of May after I was seven years old. About

the break of day, my Father, as his custom had been, was offering up his morning thanksgiving to God. And while he was praying, I desired that I might die and be where Mother was. But suddenly a thought came into my mind, that if I died I could not go to the good place, and I would never see Mother again, for she was good and had gone to the good place. But I was bad, and if I died I must go to the bad place, and be tormented forever as Father had been telling me! This thought made me weep aloud as though I had been shipwrecked; when Father ended his prayer, he asked, "What ails you?" I said, I don't know. From that time I date my first awakening. I mention this because of some who are sceptical in relation to a child so young becoming conscious of sin & punishment. Oh the great responsibility which rests upon parents with respect to the early education & training of their children. This kind of teaching, and the restraining grace of God, made a lasting impression, and had a powerful influence on my conduct in future life, so that it was often said of me, that I was quite a moral youth. I was kept from immoral practices. I lived a farsee, trusting in my good name, and innocence, till I was in my nineteenth year.

My father hired me for twelve months to a man who was a respectable citizen, and an assistant Judge, he lived within one mile of a Baptist Meeting House. He was a warm friend to the Baptist cause, and his wife was a member of the church, and every first Saturday in each month, he would send me to the meetinghouse to clean out the spring, which gave me an opportunity of being at meeting and hearing preaching once a month. I distinctly recollect a scene which transpired one afternoon at a baptizing, after the preacher came out of the water he gave a most thrilling exhortation – I was situated on the opposite bank of the stream with some other youths, but even I was aware I found myself overwhelmed in a flood of tears, and I could not help it. I found myself on the other side among the multitude but could

not recollect how I got there. When the congregation was dismissed, I wrung the tears out of my handkerchief. It was expected by some that I would soon unite with the church, I was a long time much concerned about my poor soul.

But alas for me, after this I fell into a snare of the fowler. One day a company was collected to repave the highway; and a certain individual who professed himself to be a Universalist, he and the old Judge had a long argument on the subject, each of them made two or three speeches in turn. I began to think that if Universalism was true, there is no need of being so much concerned about my situation, I hoped that all would be well enough at last, and began to grow more careless about religion. About this time, I went in company with some eight or ten others about thirty miles to a Universalist love feast, as it was called, I stayed among them (I think) three days & nights, the result was that I embraced their sentiments more fully. I was taught to believe that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, who tasted death for every man, he came not to condemn the world, but to save the world, and that he would do it, and he would not lose one of Adams race, but he would save all. I came to the conclusion that, if all the world are to be saved, I certainly would be included, therefore I was sure of Salvation. This kind of wind blew off all my convictions and trouble about my unhappy state. I was rocked to sleep in the cradle of Universalism for a little more than five years. Another circumstance occurred which drew me still deeper into the pit: two men of my acquaintance emigrated to the state of Indiana soon after my years service expired with the old Judge, who persuaded me to go along with them. I consented & went, and stayed with them about five months. During this period I learned more wickedness, than I had learned in all my life. I became an inebriate, and fell into many immoralities. But by the restraining grace of God, I was kept from irreverently using his

name. After my return from I—a in March 1807, I lived with my Father and made a crop. In December following I was married and went to house keeping. And notwithstanding I had wrapped myself up so secure in the doctrine of Universal salvation. Yet at times it would cloud up, and lighten & thunder so severe from Sinais mountain, and cause me much uneasiness for days together. However, the supposition of being saved at last would quiet me again.

My Father had previous to this emigrated to Shelby county K—y about 160 miles from where I resided in Muhlenberg county. About the first of October. 1811. I and my wife paid them a visit – stayed with them about ten days. A universalist Minister resided in the vicinity, and I made him several visits, who strengthened me some in the faith, I was very fond of his company.

But when the time arrived that we must leave for home, I felt unusually solemn. My father accompanied us about four miles to a large creek, and now the time came that we must take the parting hand. I put on as cheerful a countenance as possible, and said, Well Father, come let us take a parting *dram*, perhaps it may be the last we shall ever drink together. I dont want to drink a drop, said he, I have something to say to you, Jacob, Well Father, said I, what is it? “I want you to promise me,” said he, “that you will serve God & keep out of bad company.” Well Father I will, said I, Farewell, Farewell. I started to go across the creek, which was about thirty yards across, and as my horse stepped out of the water to rise the bank, instantly my promise stared me in the face. Although he had given me the same council, and in the same words, perhaps an hundred times before, Yet it never produced such an impression on my mind as now. To serve God and keep out of bad company rung in my ears all day long, I had promised my Father, and God heard it, that I would do it, but alas

how can I, and he expects that I will do it. I began to feel in a way quite different from what I had ever done before. (begin here)

By the direction of my Father we stopped with a very pious, good old Baptist, who was acquainted with my Father – put up with him for the night, I was restless – walking about – eat no supper, often the deep sigh – my face in my hands &c. My good old host made some enquiries about my Father, his family &c. and said that he thought very highly of him, as being a pious good man. Not thinking to what kind of conversation my reply would lead us, I told him what the old Father had said to me at parting, and that I had promised to do so and the state of my mind in consequence of it. The good old man soon discovered what the matter was with me. Began most earnestly to exhort, and direct me to trust in the saviour. At the same time quoting many passages of scripture for my encouragement. But it was all dark to my understanding. I slept but little all night.

Early the next morning before it was quite light, we were on the road. But not without the good man's benediction. Soon we met large companies of Negroes, we passed several companies, at length we met an old man walking by himself, I stopped him, and enquired of him, where they were all going so early this morning. The old negro said, "we are all going to Beards Town to see a fellow servant hung to day for killing his fellow servant." I started on with this thought, how does that man feel, knowing that he must die to day. Suddenly, as if some one had asked me. And how do you feel? You don't know but that you may die before he does. All of a sudden, (ah I shall never forget it) as if a book had been opened to me, the inside of which I had never seen: I got a sight of the wretchedness of my heart – a cage of every unclean and hateful thing. (ah thought I. Here lies the root of bitterness, the fountain from whence all my sinful actions have flowed. My mind & heart have always been

enmity against God, who is so holy that he cannot allow of no sin, however small it may appear in the sight of men. How can I ever be admitted into Heaven with such a heart? it is utterly imposible. Lost, lost forever lost. Right here, and at this time my crumbly foundation of Universalism gave way. I discovered a just God, who, I thought, could not save me and remain just. I could see no way of escaping eternal punishment.

This day passed away as did the day before, almost in entier silence – four days brought us to my own house, at the sight of which I felt a momentary gladness. My sister who had kept house for us during our absence, met us at the gate and said, “why, Jacob, you look verry pale, have you been sick since you left home? I tryed to pass it by, and made some evasive reply, as though there was not much the matter with me.

It was the morning of the 14th day of October 1811. when the arrow of the Allmighty was made fast in my heart, sometimes I was almost in despair, at other times I became careless and not so deeply concerned. But the ever memerable morning of the 17th day of December 1811. About 2 oclock A. M. when most people were in their beds sound asleep. There was an Earthquake, verry violent indeed. I and my wife both awoke about the same time, she spoke first, and said, Lord have mercy upon us, what is it shaking the house so? From a discription given of an Earthquake in Germany by a Tunkard preacher in a sermon when I was about ten years old, I immediately recognized it, and replied, it is an Earthquake. The Lord have mercy upon us, we shall all be sunk & lost, and I am not prepared. O God have mercy upon us all. I expected immediate distruction, had no hope of seeing the dawn of another day. Eternity, oh Eternity was just at hand, and all of us unprepared; just about the time the sun arose, as I supposed, for it was a thick, dark and foggy morning, there was another verry hard shock – lasted several minutes terrible indeed. To see everything touching

the earth, shakeing – quivering, trembling; and mens hearts quaking for fear of the approaching judgment. Many families ran together and grasped each other in their arms. One instance near to where I lived, the woman & five children, all gathered around her husband, crying O my husband pray for me, The children crying, Father, pray for me, O. pray for me, for the day of Judgment is come, and we are unprepared! The people relinquished all kinds of labour for a time, except feeding stock, and eat only enough to support nature a few days. Visiting from house to house, going to meeting Singing – praying, exoting, and once in a while ketch a sermon from a traveling Minister. Men, Women and children, everywhere were heard enquiring what they must do to be saved. This shaking continued more or less for near two years, sometimes just percieveable. Deiists & Universalist in those days were scarce. But in relation to my own views and feelings. I thought that the time had been when I viewed many others much worse. and greater sinners than I was, and if they were saved, my chance for salvation was as good as theirs, and I was pretty sure of being saved. But now it appeared to me, that surely no one was as great a sinner as I, none had such a wicked heart, and such vile thoughts. God sees and knows them all, and they are an abomination in his sight. The time has been when God would have saved me, but I have passed by the day of his mercy, and I mite as well give over all hopes of being saved, and return to my former pleasures again. But my heart would respond, no, for it is sin I know that has undone me, and I cannot consent to go back into the practice of it again. I became resolved to press forward, I would pray & serve God through he send me to hell, yet I will lye at his feet and beg for mercy as long as I am out of hell. Sin now appeared exceeding sinful to me, I strove to shun it all. Holiness appeared of all things the most desierable but I could not attain to it. I often tryed to pray in the woods, but I felt no better, I could find no relief for my troubled conscience.

For several days past, I had been thinking about giving up to God, and resign myself into his hands, for I can do nothing to save myself, and all I do is so sinful in his sight that he disregards my cries & prayers. But a foolish thought suggested itself to my mind, that I must not give up to God to do with me as he pleased, for I thought that the moment I did that, he would kill me and send me instantly to hell, and although I had long ago confessed that he would be just in so doing, Yet I was not willing that Justice should be executed, and I thought that as long as I was not willing, he would not do it. My tongue never can tell, nor my pen describe, the strugglings & anxieties I passed through about this time.

All nature appeared to be dressed in mourning, and the god of nature frowning, oh what a time of melancholy.

Well, on the afternoon of the 8th day of February 1812. I saw one of my neighbors & his wife, passing by my house – going to his wife's father's. I said to my wife, Robert & Anna are gone to her Father's this evening, suppose we go to your Father's and spend the night with them, (it was about three miles) she readily consented and we went; when we arrived there, almost the first news we heard was. "Your cousin Billy has professed to get religion and is as happy a man as I have ever seen." Joy filled my heart for only a moment, and despair seized upon my mind. Ah, thought I; God has mercy in store for everybody, and everybody can be saved but me, for me there is no mercy, God's mercy towards me is clean gone forever – I thought that I had seen the sun set, but alas for me I shall never see it rise again. Before the sun rises again I shall be dead and in hell. I ran away behind the barn and tried to pray to God for mercy – returned but felt no better reconciled. The more I tried to pray, the less hope I had of being saved. Just about midnight, I was sitting in a chair, absorbed in deep thought about my condition – I well recollect thinking, Oh how much I do suffer in this world, it appeared

to me as though the flames of hell kindled on me, where my greatest burdin was, right on my heart, I thought that my sufferings in this world were nothing to what they will be if I fall into the pit of ruin. Suddenly my thoughts turned to the sufferings of Christ, and what he endured on the cross. That he suffered in soul & body, his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, sweting as it had been great drops of blood falling to the ground; and all his painful sufferings for the space of three hours on the cross, and that not for himself; it was for sinners that he thus suffered that they mite be saved. The next thought that passed through my mind was. If it was done for sinners, it was done for me. I believed it. The storm calmed off, my troubled My troubled soul was easy. I felt as light as a fether, and all was quiet – pieceful – tranquil and serene. This transpired about midnight, and I had not slept for several nights previous, for fear that if I went to sleep, I would awake in hell. I thought of lying down. I first walked out of doors, and everything I could see, appeared intierly new. The trees (I thought) lifted their hands up toards Heaven as if they were praising God. I cast my eyes upward, and beheld the bright twinkling stars shining to their makers praise. They appeared as so many holes through which I could look & see the glory of Heaven. Glory to God. Thank God. Bless the Lord O my soul, was busily runing throug my mind – What is the matter with me. I never felt so strange before, strange wonderful – wonderful indeed. A little while ago I felt as if I were hanging by a slender thread over the pit of ruin. God would not have mercy on me – Hell was my portion. God was just in sending me there – This was the last call – the last time, and the last moment with me on Earth. Before morning I shall lift up my eyes in hell. My burdin – my distress of soul was too heavy to be bourn any longer. And now all of a sudden I feal so light – so easy – so happy, so full of glory, and so full of love to everything I see. And so full of love to God. What is it, what can all this mean? It did not then enter my

mind that this was religion; or that this was salvation. But in this calm and peaceful state of feeling, I laid myself down to sleep, when I awoke, the sun was just then rising, and a bright streak of light shone against the wall, which was the first thing I saw, and the first thought I had was, O the glory of heaven. I arose – walked out, and I never saw the geese – ducks – hogs and every living creature praising God so before. The birds were singing God's praise, and invited me to unite with them in singing the praise of God, for he is good and his mercy endureth forever.

This was the Lords day morning, and the 8th day of February, 1812 I recollected an appointment for a prayermeeting about six miles off, and I had to pass my house to get there. I made arrangements for my wife to come on after the day got some warmer.

I started very early and got to the meeting just as the people were singing. I thought that I had never heard such heavenly music; all their singing – praying – exhortation, shaking of hands accompanied with singing, was certainly the sweetest exercise I had ever witnessed. I wept all the time, the people seemed more like Angels than human beings, O how I loved them and their religious exercises. I had a faint hope that perhaps I would soon get religion. But a great desire to be a christian.

Late in the evening one of my neighbours and his wife, who had both of them been at the same meeting, came to spend the night with us, she had been a member of the baptist church about four years, and a precious christian. After supper was over, she said to me. "I have come over this evening on purpose to here you tell your experience." O. Mrs. Dudley, said I. If that is the errand you have come on, you will be disappointed, for I have no experience to tell. I think you have, said she, for I noticed you to day all the time of meeting, and I think that you have something to tell. Just tell me how your mind has been exercised of

late. I began and related to her the exercise of my mind & feelings from the time my Father spake his last words to me at the edge of the water under the bank of Beech creek in Shelby county the 14th day of October last, till last night about midnight, and how I felt to day at the prayer meeting, but this, said I, is no experiance. I have no religion, but I hope that the Lord will have mercy on me, for I am a poor sinner. She replied, “You speak the language of a Christian, and I think if ever you will be a christan you are one now.” Hearing this from one in whose christianity I had the utmost confidence, I began to think & say, why can it be possible that this is religion. O. Mrs. D. the news is too good to be true. Here my eyes poured forth a flood of tears. I exclaimed, Can it be possible, that God is so holy, so just, so righteous, can have mercy on, and save so great a sinner as I am? I have deserved the deepest hell, and I wonder that I am out of it to night. But, said she, “God is love else we all would have been in hell long ago.”

I believed what she said, and believing I rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In those halceon days, the following hymn expressed the sentiment of my heart & feelings.

Saved by Grace, I live to tell
 What the love of Christ hath done,
 He redeem'd my soul from hell,
 Of a rebel made a son.
 Oh! I tremble still to think
 How secure I liv'd in sin,
 Sporting on distruction's brink,
 Yet preserved from falling in.

In a kind propitious hour,
 To my heart the saviour spoke,
 Touch'd me by his spirit's power,
 And my dangerous slumber broke
 Then I saw and own'd my guilt;

Soon my gracious Lord replied
 Fear not, I my blood have spilt
 Twas for such as thee I died

Shame and Wonder, joy and love
 All at once possess'd my heart;
 Can I hope thy grace to prove,
 After acting such a part?
 'Thou hast greatly sinn'd, he said
 'But I freely all forgive;
 I myself the debt have paid,
 Now I bid thee rise and live.

Come my fellow sinners, try:

Jesus' heart is full of love;
 O, that you, as well as I,
 May his wondrous mercy prove
 He has sent me to declare,

All is ready, all is free:
 Why should any soul despair,
 When he saved a wretch like me?

I was feasting on the love of God, and contemplating on what he had done for me, oh, I had heaven on Earth, not a cloud, not a temptation, not a single cross met me. Till the thursday following. I was about forty rods from my hous, I was engaged in grubing, was thinking deeply on the great love of God as menifested in the gift of his son, and the mercy he had bestowed on me last saturday night, and how good and pleasant I had felt ever since. And that my troubles were all behind me, and shall live happy all the days of my life, for this is the way all christians enjoy themselves. But oh me. There was a roaring Lyon walking about which I had not discovered, seaking to distry my peace, and tranquil state of mind, and in part he succeeded. The first assault he made on me was this. "You are a poor miserable decieved wretch. You have just now been thinking that you got religion last saturday night, and you have been rejoicing about it ever since. But let me tell you, at that verry time that you think God pardoned your sins, was the very time that you was decieved. You let your trouble roll off your mind, and it is gon, and you will never get those convictions back again as long as you live. You have no religion and you will never have any." I found myself standing perfectly still with my matock clinched in my hands, surprized, and astonished at those kind of suggestions. I instantly recognized from whence they came, and as if some one had asked me the question. Do you not believe that if you pray to God sincearly that he will shew you whether you are decieved or not? Immediatly my heart responded, Lord I do believe it. Instantly I fell on my knees – the purport of my prayer was. O Lord God, thou knowest whether I am decieved or not, if I am, be pleased to show me wherin if thou hast not pardoned my sins, as I thought, O do send back my convictions again more powerful than

ever, and help me to repent truly and set me right. But if thou didst indeed forgive me, and has bestowed thy favour upon me in the pardon of my sins, please give me some token wherby I may know it, so that I may never doubt again. While I was in the act of rising to my feet, these lines occurred to my mind. "I will be with thee thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress." Glory to God, said I, this is enough I will never doubt it again, for these lines are sufficient to put all doubt to flight as long as I live. But the tempter was not gone, he stood close by watching every turn of my mind. "This, said he, is no answer from the Lord. It is only a few words of an old song that you have often heard, and you have just now thought on them." Thus I found myself in doubting castle e-ene I was aware of it. And for many years after I had serious doubts, and hard struggling of mind on that subject.

Sometimes my evidence would be so bright, and strong, that not all the Devils in hell could cause me to doubt or question the reality of my hope and interest in Christ. At other times not all the promises in the Bible could remove my fears, till the Holy Spirit bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God, an heir of Heaven.

About this time I had a great desire to be united with some society of christians. And in those days there were no societies in that part of Kentucky but Baptistst, Tunkars, and some Methodistst, and for a time I could not decide which of them to offer myself to for membership. I felt quite unworthy to be united with any, for I verily thought with myself, that if I was a child of grace at all, I was less than the least of all saints, and unworthy the name of a christian. I first thought of Uniting with the Tunkars. And if Mr. Hendrix (their preacher) had come into the vicinity, I would have been baptized by him. (by trine immersion) I thought that it must be the right way, or Father would not have been baptized that way. But I could not arrive at any decision on the subject. I therefore resolved to read the

new Testament, and go the way it pointed out to me, and unite with that church which practised, and walked nearest to the divine rule. I commenced at the first chapter of Mathew, determined to read the Testament through and through again & again till I could be able to decide. I had a German Testament, and when I could not well understand the English, the German would explain it to me. It was just three weeks from the time I obtained a hope in the saviour, till Hazle Creek Baptist Church Meeting; of an evening I would gather dry brush (sticks) to make a fire, light enough to see to read by. I read on and soon came to the conclusion that according to the book. Baptism must be recieved by immersion I could not tell what Baptism must be received by immersion I could not tell what Baptism ment. But the German Testament said *Taufen*, and this I knew was to dip, Diping &c. But here arose another difficulty, to know whether this *Taufen* ment once, or thrice. When I read to Rom. 6-4. Being buried with Christ in Baptism &c. I supposed that baptism must in some way resemble a burial. When I read Colos. 2-12 the words repeeted, I paused, and began to reason on this point – Lord teach me that I may understand thy word aright. lead me in the path thou wilt have me to walk. I thought that Baptism was a sign of a death – a burial and a resorection. And as the dead are buried only once, so baptism is to be performed only once, one immersion only to represent a deth to sin, a planting, or buri-ing with Christ, and rise to walk in newness of life.

I became perfectly satisfied in relation to Baptism. But I could not be satisfied as to myself being a proper subject. I resolved, however, that I would go to meeting, and I would tell the Church exactly, or as near as I could recollect, all how I had been exercised in my mind, and ask them to give me council, but I did not believe that they would receive me, for if they thought of me, as I did of mysel, they would be sure not to receive me. Council was

what I wanted. I went to meeting, and after a sermon by their pastor, Eld. Benjamin Talbert. the fellowship of the church was enquired for: a door was opened for to hear expeariances. I had not heard an experience related at that place for four years. But I ventured forward – told my tale, then asked for council. The moderator said, “Can any person forbid water?” In a moment I was thrown into the strongest kind of temptation. He extended to me the hand of fellowship for the water, I first thought of refusing my hand. Thinking that he was jesting – making sport of me. But old Brother David Rhoads gathered me into his arms, and all the members rushed forward to give me their hands, som wept aloud for joy, my jealousy was removed – singing and shaking of hands all through the crowd. That afternoon 16 persons were recieved for Baptism, and two came who wer rejected. The next day, being the first Lords day in March, 1812, I, with fifteen others were Baptized. And like one of old, for a time, I went on my way rejoicing. During that revival, 76 persons were aded to Hazle Creek Church, by baptism.

The thursday following about twenty of us (members of Hazle Creek church) went over Green River about 25 miles to Beaver-dam church meeting; on saturday 17 persons were recieved by experience for baptism, who were all baptized the next day. Among them was an old negro, they called him Squire, who related a most interesting experience of grace, when he was through, the Moderator said to him. “Well Squier, you told us that you saw that God would be just in cuting you off in your sins, and send you to hell did you ever see how he can remain just and save you?” he replied. “Wy it reason wid me dis way, I save de sinne for my sons sake.” When the question was put to him, I thought that I could not answer it. But when he answered it so clearly, it caused me to think of this pasage of scripture. “And all they children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. Why,

thought I, has the Lord kept this thing from me, and has revealed it to this poor unlearned negro? But even so Father, for thus it seemed right in thy sight. April meeting at Hazel creek my wife was Baptized, just one month after I was.

It was frequently said by the enemies of religion, the Baptist are all *shakers*, that when the Earth is don shaking, they will all turn back, and be as they were before. But here I will take the liberty to state, that I have witnessed about nineteen revivals of religion 11 in Kentucky, 6 in Illinois, and 2 in Missouri. And I have the pleasure of being acquainted with many, who were brought in, the time of the Earthquake, and these were as few, and perhaps fewer apostates among them, as any revival I have ever seen, many of them, no doubt are now in heaven, praising God for grace received during that ever memorable revival. There are a host of Ministers now preaching the Gospel in various parts of the land, who were converted in that glorious revival. *O, for such another revival!* It was but a few days, nay but a few hours after I obtained a hope in the Saviour, before my mind, yes my whole soul began to be drawn out with ardent anxiety for the salvation of my companion & neighbours, and for the Salvation of Sinners in general. I delighted in going to meeting, but when I went and saw poor Sinners in the open field, exposed to ruin & wrath, and as ignorant of the way of Salvation and their awful danger, as I had lately been. Something would prompt me to warn them of their danger, speak to them exhort them to flee the wrath to come, preach the gospel unto them. My mind was holy absorbed on this subject. After some days had rolled away in this way of thinking, suddenly, as if some one had spoken to me. The Lord is calling you to preach the Gospel to sinners. At this I became most wonderfully alarmed. I immediately called in question the fact, surely it cannot be, that the Lord would choose so mean – so unworthy a being as I to enter upon such an important work.

I thought that I was the least christian in the church, and the most ignorant & unlearned – the most unlikely instrument to do good in the Lords Vinyard, of any person I could think of. If the Lord wanted a preacher in this neighborhood, he would call Brother Dudley, or Brother Stump, or Brother Vaught, any, or all of them are much more likely to make preachers than poor me. And what can I do? here are Elders, Talbert, Tatum, Faulkner, Barham, Warden, Jackson, a host of great preachers, who have been long preaching, and warning the people, and they have not succeded in converting them. Surely I need not attempt to open my mouth to them. But hundreds of times it would dart through every power of my soul, and cause me to tremble like one having an ague. Wo, Wo, Wo is me if I preach not the gospel I would crye aloud, and say, Lord, how can I? I have no learning, I cannot speake in public to acceptance, I am not qualified for the great work. I live on poor land a grewing family to provide for, poor cloths to stand up in a pulpit; people will laught at me. I shall disgrace the cause – disgrace my wife, myself and all the church if I attempt it. Still all the time these words. Ah these words would be continually coming to my mind, like an unwelcome guest. Wo, Wo, yes there is wo to me already, and what will that wo be if I preach not the Gospel? For some months, like crazy man, in the woods, on my farm, standing, siting, walking – eating or talking the subject would be upermost in my mind; often when asleep, dream of preaching to multudes, and wake myself & wife. Often on my knees, praying to God to know what he would have me to do. But still it would roll accross my mind. preach the Gospel, And that pasage in Ezekel. 33. “Son of man, speake to the children of they people &c. But all the time fearing that I could not perform the task.” Somtime in the last week in Aprile 1814 I was out early one morning looking for my horses, walking along an old dim forsaken path, I came to a log which lay accross it. Here (thought I) I will kneel

down and ask the Lord once more, what his will is concerning me. I prayed most fervently as if my life was pending. I arose from the place, expecting that the Lord would make it manifest to me in some way, perhaps at meeting. But oh how I was surprized, when suddenly before I had gon a rod from the place, these words like lightnings darted through my mind, and thousands of times they have been a source of comfort to my disponding mind. And would inspier me with fresh confidence in God. "Fear not, I will be with thee, go on I will never lieve nor forsake thee." At this moment my confidence in God was so strong, that if it could have been posible that the whole world had been assembled at that place, I could have boldly declared to them what great things the Lord had done for me, and how he had coppassion on me, and have exhorted them to repent and believe the gospel. The next saturday and sunday, which was the first Lords day in May 1814. Was Hazle creek Church meeting in course. And on Sunday all the time Eld. Talbert was preaching. I was trembling like a lief. I recollected the promise God gave me in the woods; as soon therfore as the congregation was dismissed. I steped up on a bench and gave out. "There will be preaching next sunday at Brother Wellborns." And jumped off the bench and made for the door, as I passed on, several persons asked me, "Who is to preach." I said, come and see. That week passed off verry slowly, and with much fear & trembling, and much anxiety on the part of some of the brethren, who were apprized of what was pending. But I felt confident that I had a large share in their sympathies & prayers. When I went to fill my appointment, I soon discovered that the Lord heard prayer. The lane was litterly filled with horses, and the house with people. I trembled at the sight – but I retiered behind a high bank – prostrated myself on my face, and prayed to God to help me. Glory to God, he made good his promise to me in the woods. Yes, he did help, for if ever I was favored with the presence of the Holy one, surely

he was with me at this time. And I was much encouraged, for this was my first effort in speaking from a text. Several of the brethren encouraged me to make more appointments and I continued to do so. I will here remark, that no person need thank me for being a preacher of the Gospel. For if ever a disobedient servant was well whiped by his Master to make him perform his task, surely I was well shiped, and compelled to go to my work. often have I thought on a part of the Apostle Pauls experience; where he said, “To me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ &c.

Well I went on through many difficulties – discouragements & encouragements. Both of a temporal, and Spiritual nature. I made slow advances. Laboured incessantly on the farm all the week and tryed to preach on sundays. I had no books beside my English Bible & a German Testament, and a small hymn book. After a hard days work, I would gether dry sticks, and read at night by fire light. Somtimes I would borrow books, and make the best use of them I could, while I had them. Among those borrowed was, Bonnets Enquiries on the Christian Religion. Booths Reign of Grace. Bunyans Pilgrim, and his Holy war. All old books. I had no means to buy new ons. But of all the books I had, I loved my German Testament the best; for several reasons, I could understand it the best – my Mothers name – birth – age & Death were all recorded in it. But I was compelled to lay it by, and take to reading, and studying the english scriptures, and this was tedious for the want of a living teacher. The first book I bought after I began the study of the english, was Jones, Speling & prnouncing Dictionary. This book was a great help to me. But often, and I may say uniformly, when I went to fill an appointment, I would lieve my path and retier to some secret spot. Get on my knees – open my Bible—read and pray to God to help me to

understand his word, and that I might behold wonderous things out of his law. It was a habit I early got into. And I have not yet laid it aside, In this way I have got in possion of what little knowledge I have in Bible doctrine. In this way I went on as well as I could, from the 2nd Lords day in May 1814. Till the first saturday in October 1816. The brethren of Hazle creek Church thought that my gift was proffitable. Therefore the Church unanimously voted to give me written licence to preach the gospel, whersoever God in his providence mite direct. in October 1818, I moved to Logan county, (about 15 miles) and the church with which I united. Immediately called on me to submit to ordination and take the oversight of them, this was one of the most solemn tryels I ever met with. I felt unworthy of so high and holy a calling. My incompetency to fill an office of so great responsibility. But was necessary that I should submit to the decission of the church, and was ordained to the Gospel Ministry on the 27th day of February in the Year of our Lord, 1819.

And on the 16th day of August following I received license from the county court of Logan to solemnize the rite of Matrimony.

My progress in the Ministry was verry slow. It was almost five years from the time I preached my first sermon before I recieved credentials of ordination. I always was of opinion that my brethren done right in keeping me back, and so thoroly examine me on points of Bible doctrine. For I have since then seen some men ordained quite prematurely, as I thought, such as afterwards proved to be unsound in their views of Gospel truth, and who were a disgrace to the Baptist cause and our holy religion.

Soon after I recieved credentials of ordination, I recieved a call from three churches, to serve them as pastor, and break to them the bred of life once a month. Which call I accepted, and labored for them ten years, till I left Kentucky. And came to Illinois; during

which time I enjoyed eleven revivals, and Baptized many precious christians. Some of them I have the pleasure of continuing an acquaintance with till now, who are citizens of this state & some in Missouri who continue steadfast in the faith, and still adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

Havin a rising family to provide for – poor land to do it on, and limited means to do it with. And hearing a good report from Illinois, by brethren who had long sat under my ministry in Kentucky, who had emigrated hither, and had made a tryel of this goodly land; warmly solicited me to come hither also. In 1827, I came on a visit, preached several times, and the sound of the old bell – so delighted them, that they renewed their solicitations, and promised to assist me with all the necessaries of living for the first year. I explored the country pretty extensively – was pleased with it, and the people. And in November 1828. I landed on the spot where I now live, Scott county Illinois.

I had many objects to prompt me to come to his county. I did not like the idea of raising a family in a slave state, therefore I preferred bringing them to, and raising them in a free state. The soil was verry rich & productive, and I thought that I could give myself more to the Ministry of the word, and support my family with less labour. I arrived here on the 17th day of November, and the first saturday in December the Sandy Creek church meeting came on, I united with the church by letter, together with all who came with me, I think six of us in number. The church on the same day called me to serve them as their pastor. The spring following, we had quite an accession to our number, both by baptism & by letter, and the good cause went on most delightfully. Sometime in the year 1830, if I mistake not, A church was constituted in Sweets prairie. (Now, Manchester church) of members from Sandy creek church (now Winchester) and was called pleasant Grove, this church also enjoyed an

ingathering, some 37. perhaps were Baptized, in which that good brother P. N. Haycraft became a subject of converting grace – and became a useful Minister of the Gospel. I shall refer to his name frequently in the course of my narrative. There was as pleasant a state of religious dealing in this little church as our hearts could desire, for a considerable time all was prosperity.

But a certain individual in the neighborhood, who at that time was not the warmest kind of a friend to the Baptist cause, invited a Campbellite preacher to come and preach at his house, and the third time, (I think) he came, he organized a society, and drew off eight of our members, and this was a sad drawback upon us, and especially on my feelings, for some of them I had the pleasure of baptizing, and now we were compelled, according to the divine rule, to withdraw the hand of fellowship from them. But some of them, no doubt, were Christ's sheep, and it was not long before they came back bleating, and we received them into the fold again. In the summer of 1831 there was a call for volunteers to go to Rock Island against Black Hawk. I went with one of my sons to Winchester to fit him out for the service – gave to him the parting hand, and started for home – just as I was approaching my horse, a rifle was discharged by accident in a blacksmith shop. The ball passed through my left foot, desperately lacerating it. Which laid me aside for a long time. Sixteen months after it happened, there were fractured pieces of bones discharged from it. The first Saturday in October I was carried to Winchester church meeting. I sat and preached every time till the second Lord's day in May. 1832. when I ventured for the first time to stand on my feet – preached about half the sermon, then sat down and finished.

I recollect visiting Dr. B. F. Edwards, to obtain some council in relation to my wound. He said, "You will never fully recover so as to be able to follow the plow. But God has a

work for you to do, and you will be able to ride and preach, and you had better go at it as soon as you can, lest a worse thing come upon you.” Well I resolved to lieve my family in the hands of the Lord; for if I were in my grave, he would provide for them, and they will get along without me. So in March, I took a cruch – got on my horse – went and preached as much as I could. During the summer of 32. The pleasent Grove church, Organized and kept up a regular Sabath school, which resulted in the hopeful conversion of sixteen of the scholars, and they were addid to the church. The news of which reached the ears of some of the churche. in the Morgan Association. In September (if I recollect ritly) The Association met at plum creek church, when a resolution was passed, somthing like this. “We recommend to the churches composing this Association to have no fellowship either directly or indirectly with missionaries. The Bible society, Sabath Schools, and Temperance measures, so called, believing them to be the invensions of men in their present operation.”

The resolution passed. None voted against it except the deligates from pleasent Grove church. Immediatly I drew up a resolution, Cautioning the churches of the Morgan Association, to be ware of Daniel parker and his two seed doctrine. Brother Haycraft seconded the motion, it was put to the house, and lost – recieved no votes but the deligates from pleasent Grove church. On the Lords Day, Elden Crow. Davidson, and Henson filled the stand in the woods Eld. Crow preached first, his sermon was a continual abuse of Missionaries. Bible societies – Sabath Schools, and the cause of temperance. I was seated on the ground, leaning against a tree. I felt as though I could beare such abuse no longer. I spoke loud enough for the whole assembly to hear me. Brother Crow. We had rather here you preach Jesus to the people. He looked at me as if he was angry, and said, brother Moderator, I

call for order, who replied, Or-der. The next speaker was no less sparing of his abuse. But the Moderator (Bro. Henson) was pretty clear of it.

On our way home, one of my sons who obtained a hope during our Sabath School, said to me, "I had rather have been at home in our sabath school than at such an Association. I would have enjoyed myself much better there." Brother Haycroft said, "If the church represents herself again in the Morgan Association, I shall stay away." One or two churches in pike county, sent petetionary letters and messengers to this Association, but they were rejected. I supposed that some of them were fearful of geting Missionaries enterwoven among them. Brother Haycroft & myself began to consult on the propriety of organizing a new Association, consisting of pleasent Grove. Mt. Zion (new perry) and Blue River. These three small churches. At first I felt fearful to go into the measure, becaus of the fiew Ministers. Myself, and perhaps Brother Lewis, Allen. Brother Haycraft, and Brother Elledge were then Licetiate. But we corresponded with Eld. J. M. Peck, and other Brethren in the Ministry, who advised and encouraged us to trust in the Ministry, who advised and encouraged us to trust in the Lord, and go ahead. After some preliminary meetings, and avengments. A convention met accordingly at Blue River Meeting House in pike county on saturday June 8 1832. After a sermon by Brother Allen, the deligates from pleasant Grove. Mt. Zion & Blue River churches, went into a regular form of organization. Unanimously agreed to be know by the name of, *The Blue River Association of United Baptist.*

Lords day was spent in preaching, exhortation, singing and shaking of hands, and prayer to God that this little one mite become a great one, and that peace, harmony & prosperity mite reign among the church, and that God would gran an increase. The 6th Article of her constitution reads as follows. "Each church and member of this Association shall be

left free to act according to their views of duty on the subject of Missions. Bible societies, sunday schools, Temperance measures &c. And the supporting or not supporting either of them, shall be no bar to fellowship.”

Sometime in the summer of 1832. Two brethren of the committy of corrispondance at Alton. Eld. J. M. Peck, & Dr. B. F. Edwards, heard of my affliction – paid me a visit – sympathised with and prayed for me. The Doctor was still of opinion that I would recover, so as to ride and preach. They enquired into my pecuniary matters, found that my family were on the eave of suffering, and that somthing must be done for their relief, and that soon. The Doctor himself advanced eighty dollars toards our relief, which favour will never be forgotten by us, nor by *him* in whose sight a sparrow shall not fall to the ground without his notice, May he be rewarded at the resorection of the just. They also examined into my doctrinal view of the Bible. And wished to know if I would accept of an appointment from the Home Mission society. and receive one hundred dollars sallery a year, and give myself wholly to preaching the Gospel. I told them that it would be a great favour indeed, to assist us in our present needy condition. But I was resolved to do as I had always done – preach all I could pay, or no pay. As for any help from our Antimission folks, I expected non. And my views on the subject of Missions have not changed, they are the same as they always have been, when you (Dr. Edwards) was acquainted with me in Kentucky. They, then gave me to understand, that I mite expect an appointment from the A. B. H. M. society, and to hold myself in readiness to go to work. I have been doing all I could (said I) ever since the first of last March. On the 21st day of December following, an appointment came to hand, dated N. Y. Nov. 19th. 1832. I let the brethren of the pleasent Grove church know that I had recieved such an appointment, and that I felt myself under many obligations to the Board for their

kindness, not only to me as an individual, But also for their kindness to the church, & the people generally in the west; for that they certainly felt great solicitude for the prosperity of the Baptist cause. But the church had a different view of the subject. They looked upon it as being rather an insult, than as an act of kindness – called me to an account for accepting such an appointment. Why, (said som) it will be reported all over the country that our pastor is a Missionary! After a long and tedious debate on the subject, it was resolved that I must send back my commission to the Board without an explanation, or expression of thanks. I told them that it will be necessary to write back a letter of explanation, shewin reasons why I refused to accept an appointment. The church agreed that I should do so, and when I done it, I had to state the act of the church in this case. The rejected my letter—said that it must not go in that shape, for all the blame would rest on the church. I wrote a second and that was also rejected. I framed a third, which they thought would answer. The church then appointed one of the Deacons to take the letter and my commission to the post office, and see that they were safely deposited, and that offensive paper should go back from whence it came.

Now came on a trying time in the hystory of my family. I had already borrowed mony at twenty percent, to buy bred & meat, and other articles of living, and the question was now. how am I to raise that money? The church knew that I had become enthraled, by being laid aside so long in conciquence of my wound. And of course would have to sacrifice property to make payement. One of the Deacons started a subscription among the members of the church, to obtain relief for me – got perhaps one or two names beside his own. He told me that he was sorry that he had undertaken it, for, said he, there is so much opposition against it. I think that I shall make no further attempt. Burn, said I. burn the subscription paper and let it never be seen again, for I see plainly that the church and neighborhood are determine to

starve out me and my family, and I fear that they will succede. For the church would not be satisfied till I sent back my commission, which promised one hundred dollars to relieve us, and now they are not willing that a subscription shall be circulated, only because it looks a little like Missionary, if the church goes on in this way, God will surely curse us in some way or other. In about six weeks after my commission had been sent back, it came to hand again. In confidence, I told one of the brethren that it had been returned to me again, and I thanked God, and the corresponding secretary for so doing. I trust that God will yet provide for us. Remember, said I, that Mordcai said to Esther, when the decree went forth that the Jews shall all be slain in Shushan the palace. "If thou at this time altogether hold thy peace, then shall there deliverance arise from some other quarter." The church has hitherto held her peace, and they know that deliverance must come from some quarter, and now it has come from another quarter, even affar off. God has sent it. And I dont intend that the church shall know from whence it has come, lest they will send it back again. But, said he, the church *must* know it, this thing must not remain in the dark. The next meeting the church prefered charges against me, for recieving back my commission, knowing that the church was opposed to it. I plead for the cause of Missions, and for mercy, and that the church would not exclude me, for I could not see that I was worthy of death or of bonds. And I was not prepared at this time to recant, or make any acknowledgments. A motion was made – seconded and passed, to lay the matter over till the next meeting, and that the two Deacons be appointed to labour with me, and make report to the next church meeting. The let me know what night I mite expect a visit from them. I recollected the promise which God gave me in the woods in Kentucky many years ago, before I attempted to preach. "I will never lieve nor forsake thee." I read – rested with God in prayer, that he would remember his promise – Grant me his Holy Spirit to direct

me in the right way. Well, the time came, & the Deacons came. I gave them a cordial reception – they were seated. One of them opened the conversation. I said, brethren, let us pray first. Prayer was offered. And they commenced their labour – I heard them patiently through. Then I began to make my defence and said, “Brethren, both of you have been aquanted with me in K-y. a long time, even before I began to preach the gospel, and you have heard me all the time I preached there, and you know that I have undergon no change in my views on the subject of Missions. You have often heard me speak of the Burman Mission – of the brethren Judson & wife, Rice & Price, being the first Missionaries from America to that benighted people. You have heard me speake in favour of sabath Schools too, for you can certainly recollect the time when I went twice to a School House in your amediate vicinity in Butler county, and lectured the Sabath School. You know also that I highly approved of the Bible society auxiliary to the A. B. society, in Russellville. That although I was not a member of that society. Yet Elders. Warden, and Tatum, both were members of the Russellville Bible society, and distributed Bibles and Testaments. Look here, said I, has not Elizabeth, your wife, got a Testament, with P. Wardens name in it and A. B. Society stamped outside on the cover? Yes. Well that book was donated to her when she was a girl. Again, you know too that Sandy creek church in Butler county in which your brother C. had you membership, every year had a subscription paper for the benifit of Eld. Talbert, your pastor, and so at every church he attended, and you know that it was the custom in the churches in Kentucky, to get up, and pay anually a subscription for their pastor. And what is the reason that the same baptist who used to do it there, dare not do it in Illinois. I sincearly wish I was back there again, you would not see my face here again soon.

But you seem to be wonderfully alarmed at the word Missionary. and I doubt whether either of you know what it means. Her, (handing down Jones's Dictionary) look for the word, and see the deffination of it. Read. Missionary: one sent to propagate religion. Verry well, one sent to propegate religion. do you suppose that to be a true rendering? I supose it is, said one of them. Jesus Christ then was the first Gospel Missionary. Hear him, I am not come to do my own will, but the will of *him* who sent me, as the Father hath sent me, even so have I sent yu. Go ye therefore into all the world, and propegate religion among all nations &c. Christ was emphatically a Missionary and the Apostles were Missionaries. And brethren, you have often heard me say, that if I did not believe that God has sent me to preach the gospel, I would never attempt to preach another sermon while I lived. But if I call in question my call to the Ministry, I must also doubt my call to be a Christian. And now brethren you have heard what I have to say for my self & my Masters cause. You see that I am a whole soul Missionary. And if you consider me a preacher of the gospel, and you have no other charge against me, than that of being a Missionary – You must make your report to the church that your labours with me were unsuccessful, and if the church exclude me, and I shall have to stand alone. The presbyterians, and the Methodists understand themselves on this point, and they are all in favor of Missions. But the practice sprinkling in stid of Baptism, and I cannot unite with them on that account. And the Campbelites teach, that, no baptism, no remission of sins – denie the special agency of the Holy Spirit in conversion, and a special call to the Ministry. Therefore I cannot unite, nor travail with any church but the Baptist, and if they exclude me I must stand alone as long as I live, there is no other alternative for me.

By the time I was through making my defence, both my good brethren were in tears, they rose to their feet and said, No, you wont stand (atond) alone we will stand by you, and if

the church exclud you, they must exclude us also. Then was a weepin-melting time, both took by the hand, asuring me that they would stand by me. The God of Missions was in our midst, and granted us great grace in answer to our prayer.

Well, the next church meeting this refferance was called up and the Deacons made report. "We found Eld. Bower steadfast, we could do nothing with him. We found that he was of the same opinion that he was in Kentucky, when he was our pastor there. And he explained maters and things so plain to us that we found that his was right and we are wrong, and if the church exclude Eld. Bower, She will have to exclude us likewise." After much consultation, and many remarks by the brethren & some of the sisters too. A motion was made – seccoded and put to the church to know, whether the church was satisfied with Eld. Bower. All hands up (as it was thought) the question was reversed. Two voted against him. These two suffered exclusion sooner than to live in a church which had a Missionary for their pastor – one of them soon united with the Campbelites. The other, I believe has not united with any church. The next question was to know what Eld. Bower is to do with his commission he recieved from the Board. Decided, that he keep it and act under it. Thus a whole church was converted in one day (except two) to be in favour the sistem of Missions. Amediatly the church rose up and went to work; and the Lord granted us additions of such as shall be saved. The church approving of my measures – sent me forth into this wide field to labour as requiered in my instructions from the Board. And had their hearty co-operation and prayers.

About this time our good brother Haycraft (that I mensioned before) began to exercise his gift in the Ministry, and was a great help to me. Pleasent Grove church (now Manchester) was the only Missionary church in the state of Illinois that I had any knowege of

except Rock Spring – Edwardvell, & Uper Alton. These churches were constituted in an Association some time in 1832. The first Missionary Association in the state. Composed of three small churches. The Blue River Association (of which mention has been made) was composed of three small church, and was the second Missionary Association in the state – was constituted in June 1833.¹ As I have already stated, I continued in pastoral relation with the Sandy creek church (now Winchester) for four years and two months – And the Lord abundantly blessed us with peace – prosperity – good fealing & brotherly love. But when the Morgan Association denounced Missionaries, and kindred institutions, at their session on plum creek in 32. This being understood by some of the members of the church, the began to be fearful that the Association would exclude them if they continued, a Missionary as their pastor. At their Feb. meeting 1833. Old Brother Reeder brought up a query into the church to know whether the church would continue me as their pastor, and fearing exclusion. The Resolved, 19 to 13 to dismiss me as their pastor. And that neither I nor any of the members of pleasant Grove church be allowed to commune with them. Yet they invited me to preach for them once a month as usual. I remarked, that I could not understand their proceedings. You have turned me off from being your pastor, and yet you invite me to preach for you at your stated meetings. Old Bro. G. replied. “We push you off with one hand, but will hold to you with the other.” But the church then called Eld. J. C. Rogers to serve them as their pastor. He served them perhaps two years, during which time the church had no communion. Some ten or a dozen of the members were excluded, and the church was reported to the Morgan Association as being Missionary & in disorder, wherupon the Association excluded her – wrongfully, for they had never acted on Missionary principles. But the Association said

¹ The South District was a Missionary body. J.M.B.

in her minutes. "We hope there are a few names in sardis which have not defiled their garments with Missionary operations, we advise them to come out of her, and constitute themselves into a church and we will receive them." Thirteen or fourteen members took the council of the Association and constituted what is called Friendship; half mile west of Winchester.

Being under appointment from the H. M. society, and was required to labour all the time. I formed circuits and preached at the same place once a month. I had one circuit of two weeks, in the Military Tract & one of two weeks in Green – Magoupin & Morgan. The Lord was wonderful good, in causing my labours to be a blessing to many. In some places I found most rigid prejudices existing against Missionaries, and I could not obtain a hearing. And in some places where I had been invited to preach, as soon as it was known that I was a Missionary, the hearers would drop off, till I was compelled to change my route. I preached in a new open Schoolhouse in Brown county, in an Antimission neighbourhood, and during religious exercises they (and some of them were members of a Baptist church) were cutting down trees within eight or ten rods of the house. But notwithstanding the prejudices of so many, who closed their eyes & ears against all information on the subject of Missions. And although the opposers would circulate abominable lies, and tell the people that if they went to hear a Missionary they would be taxed, and be compelled to pay twentyfive cents for every sermon they heard, and every one that was baptized, they would have a tax of fifty cents to pay, and every year a tax of one dollar. Yet many there were who would not believe such slang. But where ever I went I would explain the Mission cause, and as fast as it was understood & believed, there the good cause gained the ascendancy. And by the time my first year expired, I had more invitations to preach, than I could possibly fill. I would hunt out and

preach for churches who wer destitute of preaching, until they could be supplied with a pastor. In october 1832. I assisted in the organization of Mt. Zion (now perry) church. For this church I preached monthly, until Eld. Jesse Elledge was ordained July 14, 1833 and for some time after.

The Lord wonderfully blessed this church, almost every meeting, he granted her a refreshing season. Every communion season (May & September) the church would attend to the ordinance of washing feet. The members often got happy – clap their glad hands and shout Glory to God. and so it was with Blue River. Pleasent Grove & Sandy creek churches, as long as I Ministered unto them. On the fifth day of october I constituted, what was called Salem in pike county, and preached for them about two years. But some year after I ceased to labour for them She lost her visibility. And on the 15th day of october. I assisted in the ordination of Wm. Browning, of Mt. Zion church.

This year ending Nov. 19th. 1833. I rode 2037 miles and preached 264 sermons, & Baptized 52. Ordained 2 Ministers and constituted 1 church. On the 8th day of March 1834. Eld. John Logan & myself, constituted what was called Bethany (now Payson) church. I think, on seven members, he & I agreed to supply them in turn every other month, until the obtained the servises of Eld. Fisher from Quincy. On Saturday the 29th day of March seven Ministers met in Winchester, in order to hold a protracted meeting, we had eleven Such was the opposition against the Mission cause at that time in this place, that a good old Sister remarked to me. “The people say that all you preachers are Missionaries, and they are affeared of being taxed, is the reason why they will not turn out to hear them.” Eld. R. was pastor of this church at that time, and this was the kind of influence he exerted over them.

A certain man in Green county, had invited me to preach at his house, and I had done so several times. But on Monday June 23, a good congregation had convened, when I got there – told me before I entered his house that he forbid me to preach in his house any more, for he heard that I was a Missionary, and all the people that heard a Missionary would be taxed twentyfive cents. I told him that I had often heard so too, but it was false, nevertheless I will not intrude upon the people in your house, I preached there no more. This was in the neighborhood of a church which I constituted the second Lords day in May 1832, called Mt. Giliad in Green co. and continued to preach for them two years, and they had united with the Blue River Association. Some of the members took an alarm at such taxing reports and thirteen of the members, and a licenced preacher among them; drew off—organized a new church, and united with the Apple creek Association. And the church was left in peace and prosperity for a time.

On Saturday June 29th I constituted a church in Magoupin county called Hony creek, on seven members, it was afterwards visited by some Antimission preacher, who scaired them on the subject of Missionary taxation till they consented, and were reorganized, and joined the Apple creek Association, this church was lost for the want of the right kind of instruction, but it was too far for me to attend to them.

Having preached two tours at Rhoads-s point, and the Baptist in that church appeared to manifest so much kindness, and respect for my manner of preaching, I left a number of appointments. But when I got there, (August 20) I was informed by their pastor, that the church had the matter under consideration, and had resolved, for the sake of peace among themselves, and the Applecreek Association. Not to suffer me to make any more appointments in that vicinity, and he was requested by the church to inform me on the

subject. I visited them no more but left them in peace. But the great author of Missions, (who is always mindful of the persecuted few) was pleased to hear our prayers, in raising up, and sending forth more labourers in this destitute field. Raised up our good Brother P. N. Haycraft, to be a flaming torch, and a bold champion in the cause of Missions. And on the Lorday, a August 24th, he was set apart by solemn ordination, to the Gospel Ministry, by a presbytry, consisting of Elders. Jonathan, & Joel Sweet, and myself. But it seemed that we were not allowed to enjoy his labours long, for God had appointed him another field to labour in, and he had to go to M-o to do it. At the Salem (united) Association held in McDonough county in September 8th. Brother West was examined, and ordained by a presbytry of Eld. Logan, Bartlett. Clark, Hale. & myself. In october the 9th 1834 the Baptist Convension of Illinois was organized in Brother A. Hix-s Barn near White Hall, in Green c. o. Such was the opposition manifested by the Antimission Baptist, that they would not allow us the privilege of holding our meetings in their Meeting House. A good brother remarked, as though he had been inspired by the spirit of prophesy. "Well let them keep their old shanty, it wont stand there long." Just so it has turned out. But it pleased the God of Missions to remove every obstacle out of the way. Applecreek church was removed from that place – their pastor became a fallen prophet – left this country not with the best kind of a name! But God was pleased to smile on our efforts, he enlarged our borders – lengthened our stakes & strengthened our cords, until the little one has become a great nation, and now fills the whole land.

On the saturday following, oct. 18th I went to Mt. Giliad church meeting, to the house where they had all along been in the habit of holding her meetings – and to my astonishment, and surprize of the whole congregation too. The good man of the house, publicly forbid me

from preaching in that day. But, said I, it is our church meeting day in course, and you voluntarily gave us your house for that purpose, and our rules of decorum requires the conference to be opened & closed by prayer & praise. You may pray and exhort, said he, but you shall not preach in my house any more. So we opened our meeting as usual – Noticed those offending members who had abruptly broken off in disorder, and formed a new church, and excluded them. (he one of the number) Then exhorted the church to steadfastness in the cause in which she had embarked. And to carry it tenderly towards our erring brethren, that they with loving kindness might be won, and be restored again to the bosom of the church. “Hush and sit down, said he, or go out of my house, for you might as well preach as to be talking in that way.” And this was the last time the church met in his house. But the new church he bid welcome. But the church in a short time gained more than she had lost, and there was not a Dog left in the church to bark against the cause of Missions.

In the Year ending Nov. 19th, 1834. Rode 3133 miles. preached 299 sermons. Baptized 14. ordained 2 Ministers. Constituted 2 churches. And in the year ending Nov. 19th. 1835. Rode 2900 miles, preached 152 sermons, & Baptized 2. Saturday, March the 5th The church at Sandycreek, called me again to take the pastoral care of them. Soon these excluded members were all restored again.

And the church began again to travail, and put on a different aspect, they thanked God & took courage. At their August meeting I Baptized three. And broke bread to them. This was the first communion they had for three years. And the church had a season of prosperity – for more than two years. But, about this time I witnessed a most deplorable circumstance in Pleasant Grove church. A great falling off of members – at September – October – November & December meetings, so many of the members took letters, and moved away, some to Louis

Co. M-o, and some to pike county Illinois. Among them was our good brother Haycroft, who we trusted would be a great help to our little Zion. And both of our Deacons, so that the church sustained a gred loss. This was a heavy drawback upon my fealings, and I have not survived it yet. But the Lord will have his own way with the children of men, and we must submit. November 19th. No reappointment from the Board. But this year 1836. I Rode 2710 miles. Preached 142 sermons and Baptized 3.

In February 1837. While on a tour of preaching. I was confined in Quincy eleven days, with congestive feavor. But the Lord was gracious – raised me up – sent me to work again. March meeting, a reformation commenced in Winchester and Sandycreek woods, which resuled in the happiet convension of many souls. Many obtained a bright hope in the Saviour, and shouted praise to his name for what he had done for them, and many of them are yet living witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, and have thus far adorned the doctrine of Christ their Saviour by a well ordered walk & a godly conversation in the world. This year the church licenced Brother A. T. Hite to exercise his gift, in the church, who has also gone to M-o.

This year 1837. Rode 1565 miles, preached 183 sermons. Baptized 63. 1838. I continued my labours as though I had been under appointment by the Board. And on the 29th of October, I attended the ordination of Eld. T. H. Ford, in payson, Adams county. The presbytery was composed of Elders Fisher, Bailey, Trabue, Elledge, and myself.

On the 3d day of November, Elders Hobbs & Davis were ordained at Centerville church Adams county. presbytry. Elders. Logan. Elledge & myself. This year 1838. Rode 29.17 miles. Preached 176 sermons. Baptized 3 and aided in the ordination of 3 Ministers.

Note. Where churches were supplied with a Minister, I always preferred that the should do the Baptizing.

1839. The church in Winchester having now increased to a goodly number of members, and during the late revival, all the male members being active and both old and young members, would bear a part in prayer meetings and the were sufficiently able to sustain a pastor all the time did at my suggestion, give Eld. Bailey of Carrollton a call, who accepted, and took the pastoral charge of them, half the time for four years. This loosed me so that I was at liberty to Itinerate more extensively. August 14th Elder Thomas Taylor was ordained to the Gospel Ministry in Manchester, Scott county, presbytry. Elders Bailey, Meriam, and myself. During this year 1839. Rode 2623. miles. preached 210. sermons. And aided in the ordination of 1 Minister.

1840. Saturday January 25. I assisted in the organization of Mt. Sterling Church. presbytry Elders. Logan. Botts. Parks. and myself.

Saturday May the 9th I assisted in constituting a church Adams co. called Richfield (now extinct) presbytry. Elders. G. B. Davis. J. Elledge. N. Parks. and myself. May 10th. The same presbytry examined, and ordained to the Gospel Ministry Brother M. W. Coffee. Who was amediatly called to the pastoral care of the church. Both pastor & the church are no more! Sat June 13th The church in Pittsfield was organized, by Elders D. Hubbard J. Elledge & myself. On Lords day I Babtized four, and supplied them occasionally for a time.

September, October & November, was the most sickly time I have been during my Missiony labours. This year (1840) Rode 3133 miles, and preached 200 sermons. Baptized 9. constituted 3 churches. ordained 1 Minister.

1841. Thursday Aprile 1st. The church at Big Spring scott county; was organized presbytry. Elders. Bailey, Sweet, Tailor & myself.

This year 1841. Rode 2361 miles. preached 189 times. constituted 1 church 1842. Fryday January 28th Elder Moses Lemon & myself commenced a protracted meeting at Mt. Gilead church. Green co. In eight days 76 persons professed a hope in Christ and we baptized them. At this meeting I relinquished my pastoral labours with them, haveing served them as pastor for near ten years. And Eld. Moses Lemon accepted a call, and supplied them. I know not how long.

February 21st. I went to St. Louis and preached seven sermons for the African Baptist church. The church was much stired up – settled all their difficulties and disputes, and invited me to return and preach for them again. I went home – made arrangements – and returned again in March 24.

And preached about 30 sermons for them, and about 80 professed a hope in the Saviour, and Eld. J. B. Mechum Baptized them. This was a most interestin meeting. I enjoyed as much of the divine presence at this meeting as I have done at any time since I left Kentucky. On one occasion while I was preaching, with a most powerful fealing in my whole soul, and a state of deep fealing in the congregation. The old collerd pastor was siting in the pulpit behind me; frequently saying, hai-hai-hai. At length he sprung to his feet and exclaimed with a thundering voice. “I will not hold my peace when truth comes with such *power*. Hai.” And soon nearly all the professing part of the congregation were on their feet too, hollowing, Glory to God. Hallalujah. Hallalujah. Glory Hallalujah. Bless the Lord. praise the Lord. Hallalujah. AMEN. AMEN. &c.

I think I may safely say, that I never saw a congregation of professing people enjoy themselves so well no where. They appeared to be a happy people indeed indeed. At the close of this meeting, when I was about to lieve them (and to their praise I would say it) the

collected more for me, than I have ever received from any congregation for the same time of service. They sowed bountifully – they also reaped bountifully. After this large accession to their numbers, they pulled down their old house, and built a splendid Meeting House on the same lot of ground; and soon had it paid for.

The month of June I spent with the churches in S. Louis c. o. preaching almost every day. Then I took a tour in Ballard & McCracken counties in Kentucky, and returned home, July 21st, in this tour I travelled about 700 miles, and preached 63 sermons, and delivered one or two Temperance lectures.

The last of July & first of August, I attended a protracted meet at Ramneys creek M. H. pike county M-o. and preached 24 sermons, with their pastor Eld. A. D. Landrum; there were between 30 & 40 professed a good hope in the saviour and were Baptized.

The 4th Lords day in August, I attended the Blue River Association, and was appointed by that body to correspond with the Missouri Association held at Salem M. H. on Cold water in St. Louis county 2nd saturday in september. The Board of that Association employed me to preach for the churches in that Association for three months. I spent a part of September and october November and a part of December, I preached almost every day – was wonderfully favoured with the divine presence – had sweet liberty in preaching all the time, and Baptized 21 happy converts – heard of the hopeful conversion of 210 persons. This was a year in which I enjoyed much help from the Lord. and I trust that much good was done. To God be all the Glory.

This year 1842. I travelled. 2793 miles, and preached 241 sermons and witnessed the hopeful conversion & baptism of 112 persons.

1843. A few days after I arrived home from this tour in M-o, I was attacked with

a violent cold – cough – pains in my back & breast. which laid me aside from labour for a long time. And when at any time I made an attempt to speake, it was attended with much pain. I often went to meeting, when I had doubts. whether it was duty to go.

But on Saturday January 21st The Church in Manchester gave me a call to serve them one fourth of the time for one year. and (as reported by their Deacon) that the church would remunerate me for my services, I consented & done so. But at the end of the year, the church voted to give me *nothing* for my services. The *Negro (slaves) on St. Louis were possessed of more honesty & liberality!!!*

I have good reason for thinking that I left my field of labour in M-o contrary to the mind of the Lord. My labours there, were abundantly blessed, and it was good to my own soul to be there. But after I returned home, it was an up-hill business all the time. I had promised the Lord, and the people, that I would return and preach for them after I had paid my family a visit. But I was well chastened for this *lie*. And I am not done grieving about yet.

On Saturday Feb. 18th. Eld. Bailey & I. constituted a church in Martins prairie, Green c. o. called Bethel; and on saturday March 25th I was called to serve them as pastor, which I accepted, and preached for them three years. But in consequence of debility, I could not travel and preach much. This year 1843. I only travelled about 1660 miles, & preached 86 sermon, & baptized 17. witnessed the hopeful conversion of 54 persons – aided in constituting 1 church.

1844. January the 6th during a protracted meeting in Winchester I was taken violently with Bilious cholic & spasmodic affection of the diaphragm; was confined one month, and continued feable a long time. In March I started on a tour to Ohio. on a visit

to some friends there and returned on the 3d day of May in some better health. On my return, I received another box of Bibles & Testaments from the city Bible society N-y. to distribute among the destitute in the west.

But on Wednesday October 30th At the request of the Board of the Salt River Association, M-o. I commenced, and laboured three months for that Association. Visited all the churches (excep two) and preached to many destitute settlements – many prejudices against Missions were removed. and I left the churches generally in a prosperous condition. This year 1844. I traveled 1822 miles. and preached, 132 sermons.

1845. This year was mostly spent in the same business and many interesting incidence transpired, some of them I will notice, as I find them in my journal. I met with frequent opposition. Not only from the Devils chuildren, But also from people professing to be the people of God. On a verry cold day, I stoped at a house to warm, in S. p. Grove, while warming, I asked the folk if the stood in needs of Bibles, or Testaments. One of them said “Are you one of those Hell fire preachers, that goes pouring down hell fire & brimstone upon the people, and preach up Eteranl Damnation to a part of the humain family. We are all Universalist in this timber and you cannot sell us any of your Bibles.”

Not wishing to enter upon a controvercy with a man in his own house, I replied; “I always tryed to confine myself to the truth, as I found it in the Bible, that tells me that God will separate the righteous from the wicked at the last great day. The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life Eternal, and again, all that are in their graves shall come forth – they that have done good, to the section of life, and they that have done evil to the resorection of damnation. And I am bound to preach the truth, and if offend the wicked I cannot help it.” Well, said he, You cant sell us any of your Bibles. Have you a

Bible (I asked) Yes sir, said, Because if you had told me that you had none, I am authorized to *give* you one, but as you have one I have only one word to say to you. Read it prayerfully, and do as it tells you. Love God & keep his commandments.

Not many days after this, I happened at W. a little vilage where was a protracted meeting in progress by the presbyterians. I sought a private interview with their preacher Mr. S. – told him that I had been informed that he stated in a sermon a few days ago in that place. That the A. & F. B. society was an entier Baptist concern, and that the had altered the common version to read immerse instid of Baptize, he said that he had made such a statement. And that he had it from good authority, and he believed it to be a fact. I shewed him a cobby, he saw the letters. A & F.B.S. he examined, and found that the version was not altered. Now, Sir, said I, you see that you have made a false impression on the minds of the public, and you are made sensible of it, will you do me, and the public the favour to correct it? he refuse to do it. I am an agent for that society (said I) And it will devolve on me to correct all such eronious reports, which are prejudicial to the progress of the cause. so I took the liberty and don it.

In many plases I found myself called on to correct the same kind of mischievious reports, put in circulation by the pedobaptist. I carried the Bible question with me. By which means I succeeded in heading all such reports, and set the truth before the public mind. In the year 1845 I travelled 3040 miles and preached 125 times, beside many lectures on the Bible cause. 1846. I spent in the same way, and traveled 1917 miles and preached 121 sermons. 1847. I laboured the whole year in the state of Missouri, after preaching three months for the Wyaconda Association, I preached regularly once a month for six churches who were intierly

destitute of preaching, and to other destitute neighborhoods. Rode, 2973 miles and preached 134 sermons.

1848. I preached for three churches, all in Monroe county, M-o. Rode, 2386 miles. and preached 133 sermons, and returned home in September. And have been Idle a long time. Since the General Association of M-o was organized, I have attended six out of nine of their meetings, and also many disstrict associations. The General Association of Illinois, and many district Associations. Of which I have not made mention in my narative – I have notised in my Journal, all the General Associations, district Associations, protracted meetings, Communion, the number of hopeful conversions, the number of Temperance lectures and exhortations, I have delivered. But I think it unnecessary to mention them here.

At all the church meetings, and protracted meetings I attended where there were a number of persons to be Baptized, I never would Baptize any, except where I was specially caled on by the church or their pastor to do so. When I recieved an appointment from The Board of the H. M. society, I thought that I was authorized to Baptise individuals on a profession of their faith in Christ. wheresoever I found them in my field of labour, who requested it, or demanded it at my hands. Having done so in five instances, and in some instances eight or ten miles from any church, and gave them a certificate of Baptism to unite with any Baptist church in General Union, who when they offered their certificate to the church most convenient to them, the preacher who supplied the church (and who was under the same kind of an appointment that I was) thought that such a cours of proceeding was out of order. And with some difficulty those persons obtained membership. He therefore prefered charged against me, for baptizing persons in the bounds of his labours, which had to be settled by a committy of Brethren. Therefore to avoide giving an offence to any of my preaching

brethren. When any requested baptism at my hands, I would always tell them to go to the nearest church, to them, and be baptized by a regular pastor. Some have expressed their surprize at this, and asked if I were not fully authorized to administer the ordinances of the church, and if so why refuse to baptize them. which made it necessary to give an explanation. I have witnessed the hopeful conversion of some hundred under my labours, and should have been delighted to have baptized them, but for this very cause. I have long been convinced that there is too great an anxiety existing with some of our Ministers to increase numbers irrespective of vital and sound piety, and to swell the number of Baptisms in their reports to the corresponding secretary of the Board, and this no doubt is one cause why we have so many unworthy persons in our churches, who know nothing of a change of heart affected by the Holy Spirit. And now, even now while I am writing, I tremble for the safety of the ark in which we are sailing, *The Baptist cause*; and the greatest curse that can exist among us is, false religion. False religion in an individual or in a church, is a sandy foundation, and that structure which is built upon it will surely fall, and great will be the fall of it. O God, deliver us. Deliver our Ministers, our churches, our brethren & Sisters, and the universe from a system of false religion and let pure and undefiled religion predominate throughout the universal world, and that all which the Father hath given to the Son, may be raised up at the last day.

Since the date of my first appointment by the Board of the H. M. society, Nov. 19th 1832 (ie) in sixteen years I have travelled about 40925 miles. and preached 2931 sermons. Aided in organizing 14 churches, and ordained 12 Ministers.

It is my desire, and prayer to God, that this imperfect biographical sketch of my life, may be a blessing to my posterity. The Church. and the World. AMEN.

JACOB BOWER.

Oct. 18th 1849 Rejected by the General Association in Griggsville because of length.

The above transcribed this 15th day of July. in the year of our Lord 1859.

Biographical sketch continued from Oct. 18th 1849 to July 23, 1857.

After I returned from Mo. in 1849. A church in Jersey county requested me to serve them with the gospel once a month for one year. This year they built a good Church House. The next year 1850. They invited me to preach for them twice a month. Their house was dedicated – a protracted meeting held, the church was blessed with some valuable additions, and their hous paid for. I collected money and paid off the debt & interest of \$195,00. And \$8,00 to aid in paying for lamps – gave them \$18,17 of my own salary of \$100, as They have since enjoyed several gracious revivals. May the chief Shephard preside over – and bless them abundantly. On Sunday the 22nd day of June 1851. I preach my last sermon for them. The Lord was very good to me – blessed me with good health, so that I was able to fill all my engagements with them for two years, and failed only one Sunday – it rained so that non met. In 1852 & 3 I preach twice a month for 18 months for Winchester church. *This is my home.* In 1853 they united with the Carrollton Association and numbered jut 200 members. They also have been blessed with many gracious revivals.

On the 28th day of Feb. 1850. I went to St. Louis – spent 11 days with the collerd brethren – I preached 14 sermons for both the collered churches. Meachum – Pastor of the first, & Anderson of the second collered Baptist church. 10 wer baptized, & 10 more were recieved for Baptism the sunday after I left. Both churches wer much revived, they desired that I would visit them again soon, I am anxious to see them again, for I have not been with them since.

On the 4th day of Sept. 1851. My wife & I took a trip to Ohio. She was sick most of the time we wer there. During our stay there, I preach once in Lafayette; and in Covington twice. In Urbana 3 times – Jacksonville twice, we were absent two months.

In the year 1852, I rode 1086 miles – preached 67 sermons deliverd 50 exhortations – attended 42 prayer meetings – made 111 religious visits – spent 99 days – gave one Temperance lecture – attended one protracted meeting, & baptized 3. Recieved \$5,50. 1853. was spent in much the same way.

1854. January 10 I attended a protracted meeting at Kingston Church Adams Co. Eld. Wm. Hobbs Pastor. Eld. Osburn was in attendance and don all the preaching. 7 Or 8 were aded to the church by baptism I spent 14 days at this meeting – preach only twice – gave several exhortations.

Feb. 12. I went to Belmont church and preached 14 times, in 8 days – Rainy – Sleet & snow – unfavourable wether for meetings. I preach in many different plases this year wheresoever I had an invitation.

Here closes eighteen fifty four. And I do grieve I've don no more, But when I take a retrospect. Of duty which I did neglect. Yet find but fiew that I pass-d by. When called to preach I did comply. Affliction too I suffered more. than I have done for years before Full eighteen weeks, was I confind. Yet the good Lord was very kind. Jan. 16, 1855. I started on another tour to Ohio, was gon from home, three months & five days.

While in Ohio, I preached ten sermons – delivered three exhortations. While at Paris Ill on my way home, I stoped with Eld. Ryley, and preach 12 sermons – gave 2 exhortations. After my return from Ohio, I accepted a call from the Belmont baptist church. On the 20th of May I began and preach 11 months, 50 sermons. Recieved \$41,00.

May the 6th 1856. My wife & I made a trip to Decatur Macon Co – spent the summer with some of our children – staid 4 months – During our stay in that part of the Lords morral vinyerd, I preach 27 sermons – assisted Eld. Talmen in 2 communions. and gave 2 S-S lectures. Attended the Carrollton association at Verden on thursday the 11th of September. A delightful Association.

July 31st I sold my farm in Scott Co. and on the 6th day of Nov. we moved to Winchester. Eld. P. Bennet Pastor of the church have the pleasure of attending four or five meetings in a week. But I am deprived of the happy priviledge of preaching the blessed gospel of the son of God. I feal as a fish out of the water.

June 25, 1857. I had the happy priviledge of attending Shurtliff Colledge commencement in Uper Alton where I had the pleasure of grasping the friendly hand of many of my old acquaintance and good brethren, and shared withem their kind hospitalities and renew our former aquaintence. It was altogether the best commencement I have ever been at. The gradates certainly did great honor to themselves – to faculty & the institution.

Among the many happy greetings of beloved ones, was my good old friend & warm hearted brother J. M. Peck. which to me was the cowing part of all, from the fact that I had the pleasure of having his company in my Buggy to his mansion at Rock Spring, there I spent one week with him most agreably, and recieved many good lessons of instruction – I preach twice in his church house (oakhill) Then accompanied him to Bethel church meeting on saturday, where he filled the Moderators chare with dignity and honor to himself and the cause of God. On the Lords day he preached an excellent Sermon siting in a chair, on account of phiscial debility. But he is slowly, and I hope permanently recovering his health –

May the Good Master spare his useful life yet many years is the desire & prayer of

JACOB BOWER

Winchester Scott Co. Ill. July 23d, 1857.