

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
Rev. THOMAS W. HENRY,
OF THE
A. M. E. CHURCH.**

Page 3

PREFACE.

In offering this little work to the public, I feel it my prerogative to say that I have offered it to gratify the desires of some of my most intimate friends, as well as to the African Methodist Episcopal Bishops, Elders, and the membership composing this Church. It will be found to contain many hardships and privations in this life, and will also give a faint idea, to the younger clergy of this day, how I, as one, have shouldered the burden and gone forth, pushing forward the work of Christianity in a ministerial capacity. In the infancy of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, there were more obstacles than one to overcome. South of Mason and Dixon's line, we contended against the masters of slaves, in many instances driving us from the State; while some would leave calmly, others would leave within a hairbreadth. In the Northern States, on the other hand, we had trials and contentions

T. W. HENRY. BALTIMORE, January 22, 1872.

Page 5

**LIFE
OF
REV. THOMAS W. HENRY.**

PART I.

I WAS born January 1, 1794, in Leonardtown, St. Mary's county, Md., being born a slave, and owned by an English gentleman named Richard Barnes, who was at that time the Master of nine hundred and sixty-nine slaves. My grandmother, Catherine Hill, came to this country with my master, she being the first slave that he ever owned. She was the mother of my mother, and gave birth to twenty children, and was the housekeeper to my master from the time of his arrival in this country until his death, which was in April, 1804; and she lived seven years after his death, and died August, 1811, at the good and ripe old age of one hundred and nine years. My mother was also his servant. Her name was Jane Henry, who gave birth to twelve children, all slaves to my master, and at his death he willed all the slaves to be free; but the laws of Maryland forbid owners setting slaves free who had attained to the age of forty-five years, and this caused some of my master's slaves above that age to be sold. A nephew of my master, named John Thompson Mason, put this clause into execution, and sold a great many. Among those sold were James and William Henry, brothers to my father. Richard Henry, who was a servant to Richard Barnes, was my grandfather; and Thomas Henry, who was my father, was a servant to Richard Barnes.

Page 6

My father's mother, whose name was Jane Henry

I was raised in the Catholic faith, and followed that denomination until I was nineteen years old, and was catechised as well as could be reasonably expected from an uneducated boy.

During my term of service at Hagerstown, Washington county, Md., which was with a Dutchman named Daniel Rikehardt, he was a very reasonable man so far as feeding and clothing are concerned; but he was a very stirring man. I thought that I could not stand the hardships that were being devolved upon me, and I saw that he had white apprentices that were working as hard as myself; but this did not satisfy me, and I concluded to vacate the premises. I told him that I would not serve him, and he sold me to a man named Vendal Gilbert, to finish my unexpired term. It was at this time of my life that I discovered that I had done wrong. It was then I lost my feather bed

Page 7

that I could go with him, if I was so disposed. He went to Hagerstown, where he

knew another blacksmith by the name of Abraham King, and conversed with him in reference to me, and he very readily agreed to take me, and on the 1st of January, 1819, I went with him. I will say that during my stay with Mr. King, I found him to be, not a master, but a father. He was strictly a religious man

It was in this family that I embraced religion, in 1819; and I am thankful to the Lord that such a course was taken in my youthful days. There was at that time a camp-meeting held in Virginia, just across the Potomac river, in the woods adjoining a farm owned by a Mr. Peter Light; and at this camp I first felt the Spirit of God moving upon me. It is true that the oldest son, John King, and his two sisters (Sophia and Eliza) made every effort in their power to have me go to this camp. On the grounds, throughout the first night of my visit, I was in deep meditation concerning my soul's salvation. I, being raised a Catholic and tutored in that denomination, thought it strange that such a feeling should overpower me in anticipation of my future welfare. On the same morning, at public services on the ground, the minister that preached showed me plainly that I was trusting in the arm of flesh. I know that all of the Roman Catholics in that day stood in great fear of the priest; and I further discovered that I was one of them. The minister that preached gave me to understand that I should stand in fear of Christ, and Him only, and believe in His merits. Then I thought that I would lay hold of his advice and adhere to his doctrine.

Page 8

As soon as I began to lay hold of the teachings of the minister, the priest with his doctrine came fresh to my memory, as I had been taught to believe in God and the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints and the forgiveness of sins, and to enter into life eternal in the last day, as soon as I leaned upon that doctrine, and to have the fear of God before my eyes, as I should have had. My spirit, in striving to seek God, sank and left me. Then I consulted my mind, and concluded to take hold of the doctrine that the minister had taught me in the forenoon. I labored and toiled hard, by day and night, asking God to forgive my sins. Whenever I would think of the doctrine of Roman Catholics and that of purgatory, it appeared to my mind that there was a dark well over which I was hanging, and this appeared to be very visible whenever I felt that I was leaning or wandering from the doctrine that was spoken by the minister on the camp-ground; and it was revealed to me that, whenever I should believe in the teachings of the minister, my soul's salvation should be made. Then I laid hold of the doctrine of the minister with all my heart and soul. I had been often in the state of thinking that I was hanging over this well, and it would appear to be

deeper than at other times. But when I would think of the words of the preacher, I would apparently be drawn up from the well.

Myself and my young employer, John King, used to sleep in the same room, and his two sisters in the adjoining room; and at bed time, John in my room and his sisters in the next were all offering their prayers for the good of my soul. I thought that all the family were on the way to Heaven except me. I requested the girls to remove my bed out of John's room into a large open room. This was done

About this time I found myself hanging over the well for the last time. I called nightly on the Lord, that he might convert my soul and save me. It appears

Page 9

to me as though there was something that took hold of me and snatched me from over this well, and landed me some distance on a solid rock; and I thought that I was broken in many pieces. I do not know what time I came to myself, as I had been to a prayer meeting that night, and it appeared to me that I had been there all night or nearly so; and I judge that it was about three o'clock in the morning when I came to myself, and I felt the weight and burden of sin had vanished and the joy and peacefulness of the Lord dwelling in my soul. From that time until the present day, I have been able to read my title clear.

I felt so happy that morning when I came to my consciousness that I had never seen such a morning in all the days of my life. The moon was pouring forth her beautiful light, and I never saw such a splendid shining in all my days. It had such a silvery brilliancy, that I had never seen before. There stood before two windows, in front of the house that my employer lived in, two locust trees; and, as I went to the window to see what was the matter with the moon, the two locust trees were bowing, as though they were giving praise to the living God. Never did I feel more like shouting than I did that day. My employer's bedroom was directly under mine, and his bedstead was directly under mine; and I will state here that, although I was happy, I had my presence of mind, and did not alarm my employer, or disturb him in his slumbers, at any time.

The morning that I first found grace I went to the shop and blowed up the fire, when John King (who, I thought, knew nothing of my change) walked close to me, and told me that I had a fine time last night. I thought, before then, that none of the family knew anything about my embracing religion. I felt somewhat ashamed when John approached me and told me of my fine time; and that was

the first and last time that I have ever felt ashamed to hear the name of Jesus called.

John King, my young employer, was a good Christian

Page 10

all his days, and like a brother to me; and his last words in this world were

Oh, how I long for thee.

He died in the year of the great epidemic, 1832, at the age of thirty-nine years, and his name will ever be remembered by myself and those who best knew him.

About eighteen months after I embraced religion, I felt that I was called upon to advise my many friends and acquaintances to seek the salvation of their souls. It is worthy of note here to mention that, in my early days, I was fond of such sport as dancing and frolicking in such a manner as is the custom with most boys of that age, but this was not to a very alarming extent with me. There were a great many of my associates that believed in me and followed me in such vices as I have mentioned above. I loved them, and felt sorry to let them go on as they were, and I wondered whether I could not advise them to leave off their worldly habits and profit by my persuasion. Then my troubles began, and before this my troubles were with God and myself; then the devil introduced himself in the subject, and this made three. I thought, as it were, that I heard the voice of a man saying to me,

Page 11

Mary's county and saw some of my relatives and friends, and while I was there it was rumored that my cousin was murdered in the woods in St. George's Manor, which is in St. Mary's county, Md.; he had been murdered about thirty-six hours before I heard of the occurrence, and he had been hunted for even this long before he was found. When he was found he was laying a little distance from where the deed was committed, and a slight snow-storm had nearly covered his body with the snow. A jury was sworn, and rendered a verdict that he came to his death by some unknown person or persons breaking his neck. A gentleman who was riding by this place stated that he saw several girls fighting with a boy, which gave sufficient reason to state that the girls had taken his life.

Myself and friends met together and took a coffin to the woods and placed the body in it

After a few days, I returned to Leonardtown, in the same county, and stopped with my brother a few days, and started for Hagerstown, Washington county, Md., and found my employer, his family, and all my friends, who bid me welcome, with joy. My employer hired me as soon as I returned home, and he had but little to do, but insisted that I should stay with him all that winter. At the expiration of the winter he wanted me to make his home mine

Page 12

home for about two months, an old friend of mine died in the county, whose name was Abram Linch, who belonged to a good man named Jacob Bosdetter; but, at the time of his death, he had got free from his master, and was driving a team for Michael Huffard. I received notice of his death the next day, and proceeded to Mr. Huffard's house to attend the funeral ceremony. At this time there was a very heavy snow on the ground, and the corpse had to be carried about four miles, to a farm owned by Richard Crummel, to be interred. Then began my troubles again. I still felt it my duty to say something, and read six verses of the eleventh chapter of John. I still thought that I had no authority for such action, but trusted that God would put me right.

On Easter Sunday of this year I took myself a helpmate in this life, whose maiden name was Catherine Craig, and who belonged to Jacob Pouless, who lived in Hagerstown at that time. I had not moved any of my goods from Mr. King's yet, although my wife lived directly across the street from Mr. King's. My wife's mistress requested her to urge me to bring my goods from my employer's house and place them in her's, as she thought that the general opinion of the people would be that I was not welcome in her house. I then concluded to take my goods to my wife's house.

At this time I had become a full member of the M. E. Church, and had never told anybody that I had read any part of a burial service over the dead; but this had reached the public in some way which I was not aware of, and the old members of the church were very glad to learn of it, as they were often in need of some one to assist them in that direction. There was an old brother (a waiter), who belonged to Mr. Benjamin Galloway, by the name of Jas. Brown, who frequently attended to the burying of the dead when he was at home; but when Mr. Galloway would travel off to other places he would take old man James

Brown along with him as his waiter, and, in consequence of this, it would sometimes happen

Page 13

that we would have no one to attend to the dead for as much as three or four months. I soon discovered that this was working bad for me. The old members of the church had by this time thought that I could serve them in a different capacity than singing and praying. They then requested me to bury the dead in the absence of old Brother Brown. I told them that I did not know that I could neglect my business as much as this would require; and I thought that I was still laboring under a cloud of fear, and that Satan was telling me that I wanted to be a Methodist preacher. I stood still, and asked God what I should do.

At this time I was working with a pump-maker by the name of John Horn, and he had to make a pump for a man that lived about five miles from Hagerstown; and when we had made preparations to go to his farm, and had placed all the tools in the wagon, there was a tremendous storm came up, and we deferred going until the storm was over. I took a large coil of rope from the wagon, and placed it in the basement of the house and laid down on it; and as I lay there in deep meditation on what was before me to do concerning the things of the Lord, there was a wonderful peal of thunder, and a great blaze of lightning ran around the room where I was lying. There was a short interval between the thunder and the lightning, and in this interval I heard a voice that was too distinct to be mistaken. I was perfectly awake; and the voice said this:

We then started for the country, after the storm was over. I thought that I would have some chance to talk with the Lord behind some tree in the woods. I drove out of town, and, after getting on the way, requested Mr. Horn to drive, while I alighted and walked. He said no; that I would drive, while he would sit on the wagon, as it was too muddy to walk. I took this to be a temptation of the devil, as I wanted

Page 14

to pray on the road as we were going down. We went down and finished the pump and returned home.

I shall now tell you of a vision that I had, although there are few who believe in them. Some four months after we returned from making this pump I had this vision. There was a gentleman who lived about six miles from Hagerstown, by

the name of Samuel Ringgold, who had a waiter whose name was John Francis. After the death of Gen. Ringgold, Francis was set free, and he came to Hagerstown to live, which was in the month of February. He was in bad health at this time. I had a vision that I had a procession or burial following me from Mr. Jacob Hess's house to Mr. John Hoffman's corner. We then entered Church street, which runs west opposite the German Reform Church. Just between Mr. Hoffman's and the German Reform Church was a wonderful hill. You can judge, from the wall around the church, what kind of a hill this was. As I passed down this hill westward, toward the new jail, I looked back, and the people had not crossed the hill yet; and when I had reached the corner of Church and North Potomac streets, just in front of the new jail, and just as I stepped upon the pavement, there was a mighty gulf just at my heels. I was ordered to turn around and stand across the gulf and help my people over. This was the very same procession that followed John Francis to the grave

A few weeks after this, one of the brothers was speaking to me concerning my charge of the church as an exhorter. I here told him of another vision that I had. There were two Virginia ministers came on this circuit in this year, whose names were Edward Smith and Mr. Brent. Brent I had never seen before, as I was generally away when he came; and before I had seen him even at this time, he was taken

Page 15

sick, and after about two weeks illness he died. The same night that the Rev. Mr Brent died I had the above-mentioned vision, which was: That I was traveling from Hagerstown to Washington, by way of Capitol Hill. After descending the hill and going up Pennsylvania avenue, there is a large conservatory on the south side of Pennsylvania avenue, between First and Third streets, and just on the edge of this lot I saw Rev. Mr. Brent, walking on a perfect sea of glass, as it were, going towards the Capitol. As he drew near me, I knew him better; and he wore a lead-colored cloak, and was riding an iron-gray horse. As he passed, I discovered that he was looking after me just as I was looking after him. This was on Friday night, and the next morning, as my wife was preparing to go to market, I told her that Brother Brent was dead, which eventually proved to be as true as my dream. This was before sunrise in the morning. The German Reform Church bell always rang whenever any of the Methodist congregation died in Hagerstown; and just as I had finished telling my wife of my vision, the bell rang, and I told my wife that my dream was verified.

A few days after the death of Brother Brent, I was conversing with Leonard Kenard, an old member and exhorter in the Old-side Church; and in my conversation with him, I related my vision, and he urged me to communicate this fact to our leader, and by this means I should be enabled to come before the church and give my experience as a new beginner in a ministerial capacity. Then there was a leader's meeting called, and, of course, I attended, and was examined by Rev. James Reed, the elder in charge, and he pronounced me as being capable of preaching the Word of God according to my feeble ability. He therefore licensed me, for one year, to lead prayer-meetings, bury the dead, and, in emergency, to baptise children, whenever they were very sick. This license I retained until our elder was changed, and Rev. James A. Sewell was placed on our circuit. In the first year of Rev. Mr. Sewell's appointment, we had a

Page 16

camp-meeting in the woods of Andrew Hogmire; and it was on this ground that Rev. Jacob Gruber was tried for preaching. He gave bail for appearance, and, on the day of his trial, preached the same sermon in the court-house.

On this camp ground they held a Quarterly Conference meeting. Enoch B. Kensall, my leader, came to me and told me that they would hold this Conference, and that I must attend. This was the first time that I was ever in a Quarterly Conference. Here I was asked a great many questions in regard to my knowledge of the scriptures; and among the questions asked, was, how much godly sorrow a person must have, to work an evangelical repentance. I told them that I did not know, but I thought he must have enough to forsake sin and hate it; which they all laughed at. Brother Sewell remarked that the reply was good enough for him. He then licensed me to go into all the world and do all the good preaching that I could put together.

About two years after this, there was another elder came on our circuit, whose name was Edward Smith. He held a Quarterly Conference, and the white and colored all met together on this occasion, which was the first Conference where the white and colored had met together. Brother Smith proposed having a camp-meeting the following summer. Some of the brothers were opposed to this. Brother Smith thought it his privilege to put it before the Conference, and he did so. He tried the strength of the Conference to ascertain whether he could get a majority for the camp-meeting. The majority were against it, only by two. The elder did not think that there had been fair play, and stated that four brethren had not voted, who were colored. Two of the white brethren who had opposed it

said it was not so; and they further asserted that the laws of the State of Maryland did not give the same privilege to the colored brethren as it did to the whites. Elder Smith replied that the laws of the State of Maryland did not govern the business of the Methodist Church.

Page 17

He then referred to the Discipline, and showed that those who attend Quarterly Conference are elders, local preachers, stewards, exhorters and leaders, and none others. He then asked a reconsideration of the vote, which was granted, and the result was two in the majority for camp-meeting. This was from the votes given by the colored brethren. After this, confusion reigned supreme for a while, and I expected that the Conference would be broken up that day.

I received orders from Rev. Mr. Smith to go on in legitimate duty, such as I had been licensed to do before. This placed on me the onerous duty of attending all funerals and burying the dead throughout the city of Hagerstown and about the country as much as twenty miles around. I went to bury a man at Ringgold's Manor, on Judge Thomas Buchanan's farm, and from that day (which was the Sabbath) my services began in the Manor.

I then began the ministry in the M. E. Church. The next three years were filled by itinerant preachers; and in 1834, a colored girl, belonging to the steward of our church, suffered a serious misfortune, which pains me to relate

Page 18

and clearly state that we shall not buy and sell men, women and children with the intention of enslaving them? He then turned his back on me, and said, *harness*. I replied that

The steward mentioned in the preceding page, and a young exhorter, remarked, after the elder left:

Page 19

fast; and myself and the steward will be up to your house to-morrow, at eleven o'clock. gulleys, branches, creeks, and such like, which I consider a little unpleasant after a heavy snow storm, and finally reach Cumberland the same day.

The second night of my arrival in Cumberland, I preached to a mixed congregation of white and colored, in a white church. Rev. Lipscomb was in charge. I preached from the nineteenth chapter, seventeenth verse, of the Book of Genesis:

The next morning I was visited by a Mr. O'Neill, an exhorter of the M. E. Church, who told me that there was an appointment made up for me to preach the next evening; but the appointment had been opposed by the elder in charge, and Mr. Pigman, a local preacher of the same church, stated that the elder had no right to oppose me, and that he was not all the church, and he wanted to hear me preach the same sermon again. I told the brethren that, if there was any confusion in regard to the matter, I would rather not preach at all. All this transpired on the 26th day of December, and I told the brethren that I

Page 20

had an appointment that night at old Sister Betsey's, along the creek (better known as Will's creek); and that night I filled my engagement at Will's creek. On this occasion the Lord was with us, and we had a glorious time.

I took leave of the friends on the 27th, bade them farewell, and departed for home. On my return, I stopped at Mr. Prater's, preached a sermon, and proceeded to Hancock, stopping again at Mr. Brent's. I left Mr. Brent's for home, and reached it on the 29th. I had written to my friends at home that I would be there to preach on New Year's day, in Bethel Church. Rev. Jeffrey Golden, who was a circuit preacher of the A. M. E. Church, had no particular boarding house, and I took him to board with me. I had written to him, stating that I had left the M. E. Church and requested him to write to Bishop Edward Waters, for a license, by my return[.]On my arrival at home my license was awaiting me.

The sexton and other members of the M. E. Church came to my house on the 31st of December to know whether they should prepare the church for my birthday sermon, which it was usual for me to preach on this occasion, and I told them in as emphatic a manner as it was possible for to do, that they might prepare the church, but not for me, as I had engaged to preach that sermon in Bethel Church. It will be remembered by the readers of the Scriptures, that it was in Moses' fortieth year when God called him to the throne to take charge of the Church, and according to accurate calculation, I was just forty years old when I came to the A. M. E. Church, in her wilderness of condition, from the

year 1835 to 1837. I can only say that I was with the Elder, him and myself, and wending my way until 1837, when I was ordained Deacon by the Right Rev. Maurice Brown, at Baltimore, Md. In 1838 I was ordained Elder in full by the same Bishop. Thus ended my career in the M. E. Church, of which I was a member from the year 1819 to 1835, and on New Year's day of this year I,

Page 21

with the assistance of Almighty God, began my pilgrimage in the A. M. E. Church.

After being ordained Elder by the Right Reverend Maurice Brown, I took up my pilgrimage. My first commission was the charge of Bethel Church, Frederick, (now Frederick city,) in Frederick county, Maryland. Here I preached my first appointment, and my next was at my old home, Hagerstown, which is just twenty-six miles from Frederick. Our membership in Frederick, at that time, was fifteen, and the church was very much in need of repair, as it was in a bad condition at that time. The membership at Hagerstown was much more than that of Frederick, as we boasted at least forty-four members; this church was a small log building, covering about twenty-four feet by twenty-four feet, which was all the ground that we owned. I found it necessary to search the hills and valleys to get the people together in the good work of fairly establishing a church worthy of its name. I next started down in some of my old tracks in the neighborhood of Ringgold's Manor; the brethren of the M. E. Church were holding a Whit-Sunday meeting in their church. I had hired a horse and was riding along very slow, and met one of the members on his way to Hagerstown; he told me that he had heard that I had left them, but that he expected that I would return again. I asked him if he saw the horse that I was sitting on; he said he did; I then told him that I would not return for a lump of California gold as large as the horse that I was riding. He went his way, and I went on to his church. Before I got to the church I could be seen for some distance, and there was a large crowd before the door of both white and colored, who met me and took my horse and hitched the bridle to the fence. They had expected two or three of their ministers that day, but they disappointed them. They then asked me to take the appointment, which I refused, and told them that the hour for the regularly appointed ministers had not passed, and they might consider my acceptance of such an invitation an infringement

Page 22

upon their rights, but at about half-past eleven o'clock, seeing that the regularly appointed ministers would not come, I filled the stand, and was received with much pleasure and comfort, and I felt myself to be filled with joy, and spoke with more energy than I thought I was master of.

I wanted to leave at the close of the services, but they insisted upon my staying, and I could not well get out of it. To pass away the time they held an anxious meeting in the afternoon and preaching in the evening. During the time of the anxious meeting there was a young white member of the M. E. Church who asked me the difference between his discipline and mine. I took my discipline from my pocket and requested him to examine it; he found no difference, and said that the Articles of Faith were the same.

At night I was requested to preach, and I strove to preach the doctrine of repentance. I saw that night what I never saw before

On this occasion there were a great many anxious souls who fell out with their old master and sought a new one to serve. That night, when the meeting closed, I went home with a brother, James A. Handy, a member of that church at the time, and the next morning I returned to good old brother Stonebraker, where I had left my horse. Here I found several young ladies, who had attended the services the previous evening, and I was enjoined to hold prayer, and after prayer and breakfasting I started for home. I have a few words to say about Mr. Stonebraker as a christian man. There was a man in the Manor by the name of Van Brashears, who lived on a rented farm and had several colored men as hirelings; this was about 1832. This Van Brashears had his niece living

Page 23

with him as housekeeper, and I had learned that she was a very respectable lady. We colored people held a bush meeting in a woods near Long's school house. We had all the benches from the school house in the woods; the minister that was to fill the afternoon appointment was prevented by a heavy storm and we all had to pack ourselves in the school house. The minister arrived and began his sermon in the school house. There was a large writing desk in the middle of the school house, and several ladies were seated on the desk; among these ladies was Mr. Van Brashear's niece. The thunder and lightning was very severe, and the minister prayed that God would thunder to the conscience of the people. After the minister had asked this blessing, there came another awful clap of thunder. The young ladies who sat on the desk gave a terrible scream and fell to

the floor. This minister's name was Rev. Lebanon Grose. Van Brashears had learned that his niece was one of the girls that fell, at the time of the thunder storm, in the school house, and he said that he had heard often of her going to these nigger meetings, and now he knew it, and would forbid her coming into his house again. Mr. Stonebraker told her that he wanted her to come to his house and make it her home as long as she lived, as he had plenty of land, and as much bread as she could eat all her life-time. This I was told by one of his neighbors. In a few weeks after this occurrence she was seized with bilious fever, and died in the full triumph of faith.

From this place I went to a place called Red Hill, in Pleasant Valley, in Washington county, Md.; there I found true friends, as Mr. Jacob Snavly and wife, who took me in and cared for me and my horse for at least nine years. This is a sample of the olden friends. My appointment was at the school house on Red Hill for nine years in succession, and I could always find a good congregation of good christians. From this place I moved on to a place called Brinn's Antietam Iron Works, in Washington county. This Mr. Brinn was a long and tried friend of mine; his

Page 24

father made me a present of a church on his place before he died, and when Mr. Brinn moved from his works at Catoctin; he left the doors open for me, the same as his father left them. I had long wanted to see Mr. Brinn, and he had told his servants that he had wanted to see me as long as I had wanted to see him. I had always made it a practice to start out early in the morning, and for this reason had never seen him. On one of these occasions I had left something behind

Having gone so far about Mr. Brinn's Antietam Iron Works, I had forgotten to mention one fact. This place was said to be one of the wickedest places in Washington county prior to my taking charge of the Circuit, which takes in this place. Mr. Brinn told me that he had a very fine set of young men there to work and attend to his business, and said he,

Page 25

did not wish any of his men to marry slave women, and he would rather they should marry free women and bring them on the place, and he would have them there with him, that he might do and care for them as he liked; he stated further, that he had plenty of land and timber to build them houses, just as they wished

to have them built: he further gave them more privileges than any white man had on his place; he also offered the men all the refuse from his mills, which was an immense quantity of fuel, which no white man on the premises could disturb

This good man told me that the white help had a spirit of animosity against his servants because they were so well treated. He had occasion to leave home for several days, and while he was gone the agent and some of the white hands had some words with the colored servants; they wanted to catch them and tie them and whip them. Mr. Brinn exclaimed:

Page 26

and could not be seen. They stayed away from the forge and watched for the return of Mr. Brinn, their master, and when he returned he said to me,

I went from Antietam to Middletown Valley, in Frederick county, where I took charge of a white church, which was given to us by the United Brethren. The white friends were very kind to us in this part of the country. Dr. Horatio Clagett, who lived close by the white church, and who had several servants, gave orders to them that they should take every care of me and my horse as long as I should remain with them.

On one occasion

Page 27

who had volunteered his services to protect us from any imposition that would likely befall us. When we opened the meeting Mr. Grimm had not got in. As we were singing, a strange voice wanted to know who was at the head of the meeting. I saw that Brother Thorrin was somewhat surprised, and I rose to my feet and informed Mr. Barnes that I was at the head of the meeting. He then asked me who I was, and I told him my name. He asked me if I did not know that I was holding my meetings contrary to law. I told him I did not know that. He said that I must go with him to Squire Crampton, not very far from the church. I requested that the meeting proceed no further, until Mr. Grimm arrived.

I went with the constable to the squire's, and he presented me as holding negro meetings contrary to law. The squire then asked me if I was cognizant of that fact. I told him that I was holding the meeting exactly according to law; that the

law was, that no free negro or mulatto should be allowed to hold religious or tumultuous gathering, unless there was an ordained white man as a protector; but there was a proviso in the law that, where there was a citizen who gave permission to hold meetings on his or her premises, there was no violation of the law. I further told him I believed that I had studied every point of the law, and he said that I knew it sufficiently to proceed.

Mr. Barnes, the constable, not being satisfied with the way things went, followed me back to the church, and by the time we reached the church Mr. Grimm was there, and the meeting was progressing finely. Just as Mr. Barnes attempted to step into the church behind me, Mr. Grimm caught him by the collar and thrust him back. What happened between these two, outside, I cannot tell, as I was seated behind the speaker.

The meeting went on glorious all that day; but at night it was an uncommon meeting. The people from far and near were there, and both white and

Page 28

colored seemed to be after the one thing

I had an old, tried friend in Hagerstown, named Joseph J. Merrick, and I had worked for him about thirteen years before I had traveled in the ministry. He had often invited me to come and see him, as he only lived a little way out of town, and I went to see him. He asked me how I made out with old Barnes. It was from Mr. Merrick I learned that Messrs. Grimm and Barnes had sharp words

From this place, I crossed the mountains to a place called Burketsville. I had a faithful local preacher there, named Resin Oltron, who was well known in that part of the country. He went to a man named Mr. Shafer, and asked the privilege of holding meetings in a large school-house that stood on his place. The trustees of the school-house made no objection to our holding meetings in that place, and we continued to hold our meetings about eighteen months.

Brother Resin Oltron heard of another church, which stood down in a valley, between Middletown and Burketsville, on the farm of a Mr. Buyers. We were granted permission to hold meetings in this church, with the consent of the trustees. These meetings we held for two years, more or less, with very good results, as there were a great many converts at this church. I have often felt myself under many obligations to Mr. Buyers for his generosity in granting the

privilege of using this church.

From Burketsville, I rambled in the valleys until I came to a place called Burline, about three miles below Knoxville, in Washington county, Md. Here we secured the dwelling of Mr. Jacob Black, whose wife was a member of the A. M. E. Church, who made everything as agreeable as possible to accommodate us. I held meetings at this place for about

Page 29

two years, and I must say that we had as good a time as could be expected in that day. A great many souls were converted to God there. I then took a tramp to a place called Knoxville, at the foot of Payne's Hill, or the old burnt mill. There was an old colored man and his family, who lived on a farm owned by a man named Casper Weaver. This colored family had belonged to Mr. Weaver, and he put them on his farm to make a living for themselves. This Mr. Weaver was at this time the president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, I think. The colored family consisted of the husband and wife, five daughters and three sons. With the permission of this old man, I opened meeting at his house. I think that the old man was about sixty-five years of age, and his wife about sixty. I am happy to say that the old man and his wife were truly converted about six months after I opened meeting at his house, and all of his children confessed to be truly converted to God in less than two years, except the youngest son, who was about twelve years of age.

I was still visited by my old friend Barnes, the constable, who had interfered with me at the white church in Pleasant Valley. At one time I loaned him my Discipline, and also my constitution of the A. M. E. incorporation; but this would not satisfy him. The gentlemen in that part of the country told me that I need not mind him, but just to proceed with my regular legitimate business; and they told the old man to hold his meetings, and they would protect him. Mr. Weaver had left word that Mr. Barnes had better keep off his farm.

The Lord blessed me on this occasion, and it seems that He blessed nearly everybody that came there. The people met together from every direction. They came from the lower part of the Maryland tract and up the Potomac on the Maryland side, from Harper's Ferry, and a great many from a considerable distance in Virginia, to our Christmas and Easter meetings, which were more like camp-meetings. I often thought to myself, and it looked just that way to me, that a

Page 30

heaven on earth had begun. We went on there with these meetings for about five years, with these good blessings attending us during that time; and I am thankful to say, God was with us.

I heard of a lot of ground up in the Manor that could be bought on very reasonable terms. This lot belonged to Mr. Jacob Rikehardt, my old employer's son. It was close by old Mr. Hogmyer's camp ground, where the Rev. Jacob Gruber was arrested for preaching a sermon from this text:

We purchased the lot and put the church on it. I consecrated the church, and named it the Daughter of Bethuel, after Jacob's wife's grandfather (Genesis, chap. xxviii). We held divine services in this church for about four years, and the membership and congregation increased daily, and much good was done in the name of the Lord. There were about fifty-seven members that I had got together when I was a local preacher at this same church, and, although the M. E. Church was much opposed to me on account of my leaving that Church, in the space of four years there was but one man who was not a member of Bethuel. At the expiration of the four years the church was burned to the ground, and I will safely assert that no white man burned it.

The members and congregation, after the church had been burned, held their meetings wherever they could get a place to hold them, sometimes at one place and sometimes at another. I often felt sorry for the burning of Little Bethuel, for, as Jacob said, it was God's house and heaven's gate to many precious souls.

About the year 1859 I left Washington County Circuit, and was placed in Eastern Maryland, which embraces Cambridge, Ivorytown and West River. I left this circuit again in 1859 and did not return until

Page 31

May, 1865 When I returned to Hagerstown the people in the Manor heard that I had got back, and they invited me to come down and preach a funeral sermon, which I accepted. I then had the pleasure of seeing all of my old friends, and as they expressed it, they had the pleasure of seeing their old preacher again. Though some were dead and some had scattered, yet there was a goodly number who had not defiled their garments; they had the promise that they should walk with him in white. After the funeral sermon was over I asked them if they had no place to worship in. I was then standing in the old Providence Church. This

is the same church alluded to in the preceding pages, which was built on Mr. Kaufman's ground, and was used as a Methodist Church, and it being very old and unpopular with the white people, I asked the brethren if there were none of the Kaufman family about there, that they could be consulted, and they informed me that all of the Kaufman family had removed to the West. I requested them to write to Mr. Kaufman and learn of him whether he would sell the church, and if so, at what price. I further requested them to use my name in the letter, that Mr. Kaufman might fairly understand my project, and that they would let me know how he answered them. I never heard from the letter, but learned since that they bought the church.

I served about eight successive years on the Washington and Frederick County Circuit. In 1845 I was removed from this circuit and placed on the Chambersburg and Carlisle Circuit, and at the time of this change, brother William H. Gaines was placed on the Washington and Frederick County Circuit, who died in about two months after taking charge of his duty. I was at the time his presiding elder, and my family were living in Hagerstown. Brother Gaines and myself made arrangements that we should help each other, and he to make his rounds and hold his first quarterly meeting at Hagerstown, that I might assist him and administer the sacrament for him. I told him that it would be best for him to preach his forenoon

Page 32

sermon at Long's school house, and then come to Hagerstown to preach the sacramental sermon for me at this place. This was one of the greatest Sabbath days that I ever witnessed in all my life. I had promised him that I would preach the forenoon sermon at Hagerstown for him, which I did, and at the hour that preaching should begin the people were on hand, and after services had fairly begun and I was about to read my text, a message came that Elizabeth Snyder (a first cousin to me and a mother to Otho Snyder, who was one of the trustees of the church,) had fallen dead in her house. As trouble and sorrow filled the hearts of the congregation, they were dismissed. Mrs. Snyder was a respectable sister and a mother in Zion. At two o'clock we all met at the church again to meet Brother Gaines, but he did not come at the hour appointed, and I opened the meeting with singing and prayer. As he did not come, and the time was flying, I read my text, preparatory to preaching, and before I had spoken many words there came a message that Brother Gaines was seen coming into Hagerstown, barely hanging on his horse. We dismissed the meeting as soon as possible and ran to learn the cause of this message. When we reached the stable, Brother

Gaines was lying a little distance from the horse, as though he had fallen; we took him down to brother Otho Snyder's, where he generally lodged, and sent for a physician, the best in Hagerstown, whose name is Charles Magill, who pronounced his case a stroke of apoplexy in the head, which broke a muscle and caused instant death. I did not reach the house until about eight o'clock; I saw the doctor and his student standing in the door; I asked about his case, and he told me that he was a dead man

Page 33

for myself, on Monday morning, that what the doctor had said was true, that he could not live.

On the same Monday we had to attend the funeral of Betsey Snyder. About two o'clock of the same day I went up to see Brother Gaines, and just as I entered the house he expired. On Wednesday evening his wife arrived and on Thursday morning he was buried. The funeral of Brother Gaines was unsurpassed in Hagerstown, as everybody, white and colored, rich and poor, all turned out to pay their last respects to a brother who was a little above a stranger to most of them. I was not able to perform the funeral ceremonies, as I had been overcome with grief and sorrow at the loss of such a dear friend, and solicited the favor from a brother of the M. E. Church. He was a useful and righteous member in the church. I then returned to my circuit in Pennsylvania.

I wrote to Bishop Paul Quinn, stating the death of Brother Gaines. In a day or two the Bishop came on to Carlisle; there was a local preacher, named William Webb, to be ordained a deacon in the Church of God. I assisted in the ordination, and after that the Bishop made the change again in the Carlisle Circuit, and in two months I was back on the Frederick County Circuit. The minister who performed the funeral ceremony of Brother Gaines was named Jas. Brown. All the friends that I had left in this place were very glad to see me, and received me with pleasure and joy.

At the close of that year (1845) I bade my old brothers and sisters in the Lord farewell, and proceeded to Washington, D. C., and took charge of Union Bethel, in that city. At the time that I took charge of Union Bethel, Rev. M. M. Clark had charge of Israel Bethel, in the same city; he was appointed on a mission in Europe, to represent the A. M. E. Church in a church convention. This action threw Israel Bethel under my charge. Rev. Mr Clark had charge of Allen's Chapel, at Good Hope Hill, in the District of Columbia, at the time that he was

called away, and this gave me the duty of three churches at the same

Page 34

time, namely, Union Bethel, Israel Bethel and Allen's Chapel, which I held for eighteen months.

When I entered upon my charge at Union Bethel, I met with three very stern difficulties, which I thought almost insurmountable: the first was, that the church was paid for, but not one cent had been paid for the ground. In about one year I had surmounted this difficulty and had collected the money and paid for the ground. This lot had been purchased from a gentleman named Col. Bumford, and at the close of the year he had returned home. I sent the trustees to him to pay the money for the ground, and they paid him the money, and twenty dollars over, in mistake. I ordered them to return and get the twenty dollars; they said that, as he was an old gentleman, they would not go for a day or two. I told them that I would not trust him

Page 35

difficulty was with the church. It seemed as though they had lost all knowledge of the Discipline and of the true form of godliness

The first sacrament that I held, I preached to prepare the hearts of the people for the Lord's Supper, as I had found them very much unprepared. I told them who I would expect to come to the Lord's table and also those whom I would reject. Out of about forty-eight members I only had twelve or thirteen to take the sacrament, and the others sprang from their seats and ran out of the church, as though it was on fire.

There was a Methodist member of the old Foundry Church, whom the members had dealt with for some time, and I had often visited him; he had asked the members how they liked me, and they told him that they did not like me very well, as I was an old mountain man, and talked a good many old-time things, and that I did not suit them. The next sacrament day, Mr. Miller (for this was his name) came to the church with several others of his church. My text was,

At the second sacrament, and in the second month, Mr. Miller, Mr. Bouldin, his father-in-law, and several other members of the Foundry Methodist Church, came to my church, and after my sacramental discourse I extended an invitation to all who felt themselves worthy to come forward and partake of the sacrament.

Mr. Miller, Mr. Bouldin, and all the

Page 36

others of Foundry Church, came forward and partook with us. When my members saw the good example set before them by members of another church, they rushed to the altar, each and every member. There were about two large tables served, which amounted to about one hundred and twenty members of other churches and my own members together.

The next morning (Monday) I went down to Mr. Miller's store, and he told me that some of the members had been down that morning before I had got there; he said they told him that they were all very glad to see him there, and said,

At this time there was a young minister named Roswell (a son of Rev. George Roswell), stationed at Georgetown, D. C., and Mr. Miller told these members that, with such men as young Roswell and Thos. W. Henry, ten of them would set the world to rights. From this time to the close of my ministration in this church, I had but little or no trouble with my members, as everything moved on in harmony and peace. It was after that time that the members often would meet in the streets and talk of the good that had been accomplished by members of other churches taking sacrament on the occasion mention above.

Having charge of three churches, and exerting myself to my utmost capacity, and having to preach three times a day, with no rest, I became partially blind in one eye, which greatly retarded my movements

Page 37

in the good work. I wrote to Bishop Brown, at Baltimore, Md., and asked that I be relieved of one of the churches, in consequence of which, Rev. William Moore took charge of Israel A. M. E. Church, which somewhat relieved me. I will mention here that when I left Union Bethel A. M. E. Church, at Washington, I left her quite decently repaired and in a comfortable condition and paid for, the ground clear of every incumbrance.

In the spring of 1848 the Annual Conference met at Washington, D. C., and at this time there was an agency required to collect funds for the Zion A. M. E. Church in Baltimore, Md., and I received the appointment from Bishop William Paul Quinn. I began my labors and collected something over one hundred dollars in that year. About sixty dollars I supported myself with, and the balance

I returned to the Conference fund. In 1849 Rev. John L. Armstrong was appointed agent for this church, and relieved me. Rev. John L. Smith had another appointment, and himself and Rev. John L. Armstrong met and exchanged appointments.

Rev. John L. Smith, in the spring of 1850, reported that the result of collectorship for Zion Church had brought it a little further in debt, and he left and joined the Baptist connection.

In 1849 I was appointed again to the Washington and Frederick County Circuit, in the State of Maryland. I served one happy year on this circuit

Page 38

also in the room. She requested these two young men to meet her in Heaven. She was a member of the M. E. Church. She told me that none of her brethren had been to see her, and that when she was gone she wanted me to preach her funeral sermon. She also said that the brethren of her church did not know her life, and they could not preach her funeral sermon. After her death, I strived to preach the sermon to a very large congregation of both white and colored friends.

That same evening I left Sister Watts and went to see the wife of Brother James Brown, who was a member of the M. E. Church and an old acquaintance of mine, more especially in the church, as he was a true type of Christianity. I found Brother Brown's wife in the last stage of paralysis. She requested me to pray with her, which I did, and after lingering a few hours she died. I conversed with her, and she manifested as much Christian fortitude as any one I ever saw before or have ever seen since.

The same night I left Sister Brown, I went to see Deborah Peeker, a member of my own church, whom I found very sick. I asked her of her hope in futurity. She told me that she did not feel as happy in the Lord as she always did feel

Page 39

same night, she died. Thus ended the lives of three God-serving Christians.

Sister Peeker was a wonderful old Christian, and I was an eye-witness to what I will relate of her. She was brought from Easton, Md., to Baltimore by a widow lady named Mrs. Holliday, who also had several youngsters that belonged to

her, among whom were two children of Sister Pecker. Her mistress allowed her to work where she chose, which is called levy-free; and she worked at the Fountain Inn Hotel, on Light street, Baltimore city. She received information that her children had been sold to a trader, and that they were on the boat to be carried South for the auction block. As soon as this was told her, she left everything and made her way to the boat as fast as possible. The boat was laying in the stream, and she could not get aboard to bid her poor children goodbye. She returned to the hotel, grieving and mourning, in as much distress as a heart could bear; and before she reached the hotel, she fell upon her knees and began to pray, in her usual way:

To prove the fruitfulness of her prayers, I will relate another circumstance connected with Sister Pecker's life. She removed from Baltimore to Hagerstown with five children

Page 40

be crippled in one hand, and returned her to jail again. Deborah, thinking that her last child would be sold from her, prayed to God to deliver her daughter. This daughter of Deborah had a child about thirteen years living with Mr. Alexander Neale, in Hagerstown, at the time. I was at Deborah's house one day, and noticed that she went up stairs several times, and I heard her praying for her child, which was then in jail. While I was at her house, a gentleman stopped at the door, and asked if there was a girl in jail to be sold. She told him that there was, and he went to the jail and brought the girl out, and went from the jail to Mr. Neale's and bought the daughter of Catharine Pecker (granddaughter to Deborah). He took them both down to St. James' College, in Washington county, six miles below Hagerstown; and in less than three years they were both free.

I will just here remark that the vessel which was driven ashore on the British flats, with Deborah's sons on board, had another passenger, who was raised in Washington, D. C., named Henderson Davis, an itinerentpreacher in our A. M. E. connection, belonging to the Philadelphia District.

There is considerable labor connected with my life that has been omitted in the preceding pages, which I will mention here. During my ministration in Hagerstown, and Frederick and Alleghany counties, Md., I found the people to be very poor, and most of them slaves. Finding this to be the case, I determined to exert myself to my utmost ability. I purchased a horse from a gentleman

named George Rider, and I paid for the animal partly in cash and partly by wood-chopping. I found that my horse was indispensable, as I was to preach at two different places on the same day, which was sometimes as much as twenty-six miles apart. Whenever I found myself pushed, I would turn in to anything that I could get to do. Sometimes I was called upon to go to quarry rock

Page 41

our old church was growing no larger, and the membership and congregation was increasing; that we wanted a new church, and that we wanted a burial-ground, as the old one was filled up. I was acquainted with a gentleman named Samuel Hitt, who owned two very pretty lots for a church. I consulted this gentleman about the purchase of them, and he agreed that I should have them for two hundred and fifty dollars, to be paid in fifty dollar installments. In less than one year I had collected the money and paid for the lots, and was digging the foundation for a church. Myself and the trustees employed Mr. John D. Middlecalf to put up the church. Rev. Alfred Heilvinstine, a pastor of the German Reform Church at Hagerstown, laid the corner-stone, and preached the sermon in his own church. In August, 1840, the church was finished, and dedicated to God by Right Rev. Edward Waters, third Bishop of the A. M. E. Church, assisted by Rev. J. J. Herbert and Rev. Alfred Heilvinstine. The friends of Hagerstown and the surrounding country rendered much assistance on this occasion.

After this I found my duties to be as laborious as ever. We had our ground and our church on it, but our church was not paid for. We had other expenses, also

From this time up to 1856 I was stationed, respectively, at Port Deposit and at several other stations

Page 42

of the Baltimore County Circuit; and in 1856 I returned to Hagerstown, and found that the brother who succeeded me had paid five hundred dollars, which left the church still two hundred and fifty dollars in debt.

In the spring of 1856 I appointed a jubilee meeting to be held, which was very largely attended; and, with only three collections, I raised the two hundred and fifty dollars, which wound up the debt of the church. All credit is due to the members and congregation for their generous response when asked for relief for the church.

By my request, I was reappointed on the Washington and Frederick County Circuit by Right Rev. Daniel A. Payne, on account of sickness in my family. Rev. James R. Sterret was appointed on the Cumberland Circuit, and I was appointed his Presiding Elder. Now my troubles begun. Bishop Payne saw this as well as myself. Brother Sterret inquired of Bishop Payne who was to make out the appointments of the Quarterly Conference. Bishop Payne told him that it was the duty of the Presiding Elder. I discovered, by this time, that Brother Sterret was either maliciously or wilfully opposed to me as being his Presiding Elder. The Conference raised, and I returned to my circuit.

When I got home I made out the appointments of the quarterly meeting for the whole year. Brother Sterret's first Quarterly Conference was to take place about the 1st of June. I wrote him to this effect, stating that I would be with him. He wrote me word that that time did not suit him, and that he had made arrangements to hold his Conference at another time, and he had engaged the services of a white minister to administer the sacrament. I then wrote to him about his next Quarterly Conference, which would take place in August. He wrote me, in answer to this, that the time would not suit him, as he had held a bush-meeting and there was a revival, and it would not do to break up the revival to hold a Conference. I then wrote him word that I would be

Page 43

with him on the 11th of September and hold Conference, if the Lord was willing.

At this time Rev. John Gaines was holding a camp-meeting in the neighborhood of Chambersburg, and requested Brother Wm. H. Russell to come up and help him; and my disappointment with Brother Sterret gave me also an opportunity of complying with his request. Brother Russell and myself went to the camp, and met Rev. Daniel W. Moore and Rev. Jas. A. Shorter, and we had a glorious camp-meeting. When the camp raised I returned home.

Rev. Wm. H. Russell was not traveling that year, and I took him with me to witness what might occur. I made arrangements for leaving, and stopped at Hancock, Washington county, Md., to fill an appointment, and I secured the services of Brother Russell to fill the appointment. There I learned the secret, from the steward and trustees, that Brother Sterret had ordered that, if I came up there to preach, they should lock the doors against me, and not allow me to enter the pulpit. This the trustees told Brother Russell, and he inquired the cause, and

wanted to know if Brother Sterret and myself had had any difficulty. He told the trustees that they had better not follow the orders of Brother Sterret, as such an action would criminate them, and they would all be subject to be turned out of the church. They did not close the church; and Brother Russell and myself went on to Cumberland to hold the Quarterly Conference on the 11th of September.

When we reached Cumberland I learned that Bro. Sterret had held his quarterly meeting on the very day in August that he had objected to, to me, in consequence of his bush-meeting revival; and on the 11th of September he was in Baltimore. I called a Quarterly Conference on that day, and I learned that he had used his influence with the trustees to stop me from holding the Conference; but I held it, although the steward, Brother John Murdock, opposed me. Brother Sterret expelled a man and his wife for an action that would not look well to publish.

Page 44

I left for home, with instructions for the next Conference to be held in March; and I staid at home, attending to my regular business, until the March Conference should take place. In the early part of March I returned to Cumberland to hold the Conference. Brother Sterret had held the quarterly meeting the Sunday before I arrived; and this was to dodge me. I went to his house, and asked him if it was not time that we should be getting to Frostburg (as I intended to hold the Conference there). He told me that he had held the quarterly meeting, and that he was not going with me to Frostburg. I went to Frostburg and administered the sacrament, and returned to Cumberland on Monday, and appointed the Conference to take place that night. I held the Conference, and laid over in Cumberland until the next Sabbath, when I held the sacramental meeting. I appointed Brother Sterret to preach the forenoon appointment, and Brother Russell to preach the sacramental sermon. After this, I administered the sacrament; and I intended to read and explain certain parts of the Discipline bearing upon sacraments, when Bro. Sterret arose and began singing and yelling at the top of his voice to stop me if possible. The congregation cried out that such proceedings were shameful in the house of God

Page 45

and I preached without molestation. I made an appointment that I would preach the following Monday night; but Sterret, his steward, and as many of the trustees as he could influence, opposed my preaching, and he had men stationed

on the sides of the road that lead to the church to prevent me. I had a cousin in Cumberland, named James Henry, who heard of the plot to keep me out of the church. My cousin, who was a member of the M. E. Church, foiled Sterret in his plan, and engaged me to preach in his church that night. I preached in the M. E. Church to a good congregation. On the following morning, as Brother Russell and myself were passing down the street, we heard Sterret reading aloud from a newspaper that the only difference between the M. E. Church and the A. M. E. Church is that the M. E. Church has Presiding Elders and the A. M. E. Church has none.

I went home to Hagerstown, and found my wife still lingering and very low; and on the 27th day of August, 1857, she expired, leaving a blessed testimony behind her.

In the same year (April) our Annual Conference met at Baltimore, Md. When the characters of the preachers were examined, Sterret brought a charge against me, to the effect that I had told Brother Jones and his wife that he (Sterret) had three children in Frederick and two in Hagerstown. I replied that, as wicked a man as Sterret was, I never heard anything of the kind said of him

I left the conference and went to Cumberland and asked Bro. Jones about the three children. He gave me a letter, which I read to the conference on my return, stating that I had never mentioned such things as had been charged against me by Sterret. I handed the letter to Rev. A. W. Wayman, and he urged me not to trouble about it any more. I dropped the subject, and said that God would fight my battles. Conference

Page 46

arose and I was appointed on the Lewistown and Hollidaysburg Circuit.

In October, 1858, I took occasion to visit Hagerstown, my old home, to look after my affairs. After the death of my wife, I found that Sterret had come to Hagerstown to collect money for his church at Cumberland, and he was taken sick. Rev. Savage L. Hammond was pastor in charge at Hagerstown; he told me that he had told Sterret that I was in town; he, knowing that we had some misunderstanding, wished to know of Sterret if he did not want to see me. He replied that he had nothing for old Tom Henry to do. Brother Russell called to see him, and asked the same question, and he received the same reply. Brother William H. Turner called to see him and asked the same question, and he received the same reply. He was lying at the house of Rev. Chas. C. Reeder with

an attack of bilious fever, and it was considered that he was getting a little better at one time. I went to see an old sister that lived next door to where Sterret was sick. Brother Reeder saw me passing, and remarked to Sterret that I was next door, and did he want to see me? With much reluctance he said

When I received my appointment from Bishop Payne on the Lewistown and Hollidaysburg Circuit, I was requested to get Brother Jacob Brooks in chains and keep him so and bring him to conference, in consideration of his favoring the sale of a part of the church ground to the trustees of the Zion Wesleyan connection.

In going to my circuit I stopped in Chambersburg, and while there I saw Brother Edward Proctor; he told me that Brother Brooks had been in Chambersburg and preached, and was taken sick and was placed on the cars and sent to his home in Harrisburg. I

Page 47

told him that I was ordered by the conference to silence him; he replied that he was silenced already, for he was dead. I found that I was between two parties of trustees

I completed my appointment on the Lewiston and Hollidaysburg Circuit in 1859, and I met Conference at Baltimore and received my appointment on the Easton Circuit. Rev. John R. Henry was at this time on the Havre de Grace Circuit, and I was appointed to preside over him.

Just before I took the Easton Circuit, there had been two of our ministers interrupted by the civil authorities for preaching in the State; and for this reason I thought it best to make myself safe in the State, and I secured a certificate of protection from John Thompson Mason, who lived in Baltimore.

On entering my circuit in this part of Maryland, I was informed that there was a physician living in this locality whom I had known for many years, named Horatio Graves. I had not seen him for twenty-four years, and I learned of his whereabouts and found him to be a true type of a gentleman. I informed him of my errand, and he gave me advice as to how I might best get along with the people in this part of the State. He told me to go on with my regular meetings, and, whatever I done, not to make myself familiar with the slaves or go to the people's houses or quarters. To further protect me, he gave me another certificate of protection, which was more like a true history of my life as he

knew me. He told me that he would protect me to the last, as long as I kept within the bounds of my duty; and, should I be taken sick, he would attend me free of charge.

Page 48

About this time, I heard of the raid at Harper's Ferry by that good old saint, John Brown. As there was considerable said about John Brown, I was anxious to know as much about him as possible, and I would get and read the papers as often as I could. When viewing the pluck of the man, I felt that he was led by a supernatural hand to go into Virginia with about twenty men and subdue the State. I had never before heard of that John Brown, and did not know that there was such a man living. Whenever he was interrogated, I never knew him to flinch from the truth, at any time. This caused me to think that some awful event would transpire. This happened in 1859; and we will take a glance at preceding years: Look, for instance, at the fertile hills of Charlestown, W. Va., literally stained with blood.

At that time (1859), the Rev. George T. Watkins was teaching school in Baltimore. I had put my youngest son, Louis M. Henry, under the tuition of Rev. Mr. Watkins. On November 9th, 1859, I went from Cambridge, in my circuit, to Baltimore. My son was boarding with Rev. Wm. H. Smith, at No. 12 Little Monument street. My object in coming to Baltimore was to pay my son's expenses and give him his winter clothing. The next day I was told by one of the family of Brother Smith that there was something in the paper about me. She then read the account of the capture of John Brown, and that they had found a letter on his person, written in his own hand, addressed to Thomas W. Henry. This was merely a memorandum for him to find me with. The paper further stated that I was an old clergyman, and had been in Hagerstown, in this State, for many years; that

After hearing this news read from the paper, I went down the street to see the man who had given me my first certificate as a protection on the Easton Circuit.

Page 49

I forgot to mention above that the newspaper referred to stated that John Brown's allusion to the said T. W. Henry showed pretty conclusively that he (Henry) had been one of his confidential friends. I saw Mr. Mason, and the first thing he said to me was that he had just read the news of my being in

partnership with old John Brown. I told him that I heard the same thing myself, but I did not believe it. I further told him that the paper stated that I had sold out and had been living in the North, and it was utterly impossible for me to receive a certificate from him as a protection on my Easton Circuit in June and be living several years in the North at the same time; and I had not been out of the State of Maryland, on any occasion, since he had seen me last. He told me that he would step up the street and see Mr. Reverdy Johnson, and be back in a few minutes. When he returned, he asked me if I would like to go up to Charlestown and face John Brown; to which I replied that, where my character was at stake, I would go anywhere, to face John Brown or any one else. He then wanted to know if I would be in town a few days, and where he could find me. I told him he could find me at No. 12 Little Monument street. He said that he would come or send for me in a couple of days. This was on the 9th of November, and I waited until the 19th of the same month. The Sunday before I left, I went down to Short street to see a friend named Benjamin Sayles, who I requested to take me to the Philadelphia depot on the following Monday morning. He was too busy to come for me on Monday, but came Tuesday morning, and took me to the depot and left me there, seeming to be anxious to rid himself of me. At that time a colored person could not leave the city of Baltimore unless he was vouched for by some responsible white person. I looked around and saw a very fine looking gentleman coming toward me. He asked me if I wanted to get on the cars, and I said that I did. He told me not to go to the office, but to give him my baggage and get in the cars, and pay my fare after the cars had left

Page 50

the city. I was informed that, in about ten minutes after I left Brother Smith's house, two officers came for me. Brother Smith's wife told them that I put up there, and might be in after a while. They loafed around the house until midday, by which time I was nearly in Philadelphia. When we got about six miles from Baltimore the conductor came around for the tickets. He did not ask me for a ticket, but asked if I was going to Philadelphia. I told him I was, and he asked me for two dollars, which paid my fare. The gentleman that I had met at the depot had made this little friendly arrangement for me, as he knew that I was the widow's son.

I remained in Philadelphia, and saw John Brown's corpse go through the State. I learned, while in Philadelphia, that the Elmira Circuit (which takes in Oswego, Binghamton and Waverley) had been vacated for eighteen months.

On Christmas Day, 1859, I dedicated a church at Oswego, New York. I continued on this circuit until March, 1860, when I returned to Philadelphia, married my second wife (then a widow of Rev. John Butler), and met the General Conference at Pittsburg, Pa. When this Conference rose, I returned to Philadelphia and met the Annual Conference which convened in that city, Bishop Willis Nazery presiding, of whom I received my appointment to the Bordentown (N. J.) Circuit. On this circuit, I believe that I was a blessing to the people, and they were a blessing to me; for the Lord was with us.

In the spring of 1861, I was appointed to Salem, N. J., by the Philadelphia Conference. I served the people of Salem with pleasure, as the Lord was with us here also. On this circuit, I had seven appointments, and, through the blessing of God, I purchased the first parsonage in the A. M. E. connection.

In 1862, Conference appointed me to the Lancaster (Pa.) Circuit. I found the church at Lancaster in a very bad condition. Through the exertions of Rev. Robert Boston, we got the church under a good slate roof. I found Rev. Mr. Boston to be a true and

Page 51

trustworthy brother. I had seven appointments on this circuit; and we had heavenly times until we came to Marietta, where I found two sisters in the church at variance with each other; but this had begun before I got there. Brother Hollin at the time was the elder in charge; and these two sisters had an altercation. Brother Hollin gave them a one-sided trial and turned the wrong one out of church. This caused me to interfere and allow fair play; and in doing this, I offended the other party. In consequence of this I was warranted and the case was dismissed, and after that a libel suit was entered against me, which was expected to be called for three terms. The result of the trial, when it came off, was my final acquittal, and the cost of the court fell upon the party who justly deserved it. I was on this circuit for two successive years, and had no difficulty with any of the friends except what has been mentioned above.

In 1864 I was appointed by the Philadelphia Conference to the Snow Hill Circuit, in New Jersey. I found the people on this circuit to be very peaceable and religious.

In 1865 I received my transfer back to the Maryland District. As liberty was proclaimed throughout our country, I made no hesitation in returning to my native home. In this year (1865) I received my appointment from the Baltimore

Conference, on the Baltimore County Circuit, and was stationed at Ellicott's Mills. The trustees of the church had rented a house from Mr. Broomsman, as a parsonage, which I lived in for nine months, and the trustees did not pay him the rent. Finding that there was trouble ahead, and to save the sale of my household goods, I bargained with Mr. Broomsman to buy the house and lot for the sum of four hundred dollars, which was to have been paid in four years. I also bought a lot adjoining the one just mentioned, for the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars, which I paid in cash. I traveled the circuit the remaining portion of the year, and at the expiration of the year the trustees owed me two hundred and fifty-one dollars. I told the

Page 52

trustees that if they would pay me one hundred dollars, I would give them the remainder, which they did.

In 1866 I was appointed by the Baltimore Conference to Long Green Circuit, in Baltimore county. When I left the circuit just mentioned they owed me about eighty-nine dollars.

In the spring of 1867 I accepted the superannuated relation at the Baltimore Conference. At the Conference a motion was made by Rev. D. W. Moore that I should have the sum of one hundred dollars as a support from the Church, which motion was carried. I thought that this was a very limited and scanty support, and expected to get some other support during the year. Several years previous to this we had gotten up a fund for the support of the superannuated preachers. Brother James A. Shorter was the treasurer of this fund while he remained in the Baltimore Conference. The constitution of this Fund Society stated that this money should not be used for any other purpose than to support the superannuated preachers. As long as Brother Shorter was treasurer the money was safe, and when he left the Baltimore District the money was wasted.

The money that was to be paid to me, according to the action of Conference, was to be paid every three months, in twenty-five dollar instalments. I waited six months, and got nothing. I then wrote to the Board of Directors, and they replied that Rev. Wm. H. Brown was the secretary of the funds, and that he was stationed somewhere in the South, and that I could not get any money just then. I troubled them somewhat, and they paid me seventy-three dollars, which left a balance of twenty-seven dollars due me for the year. Conference met at Baltimore in the spring of 1868, and I asked for the remaining twenty-seven

dollars that was due me. The inquiry was raised as to where the money from the funds was, and there was nothing in the funds to be paid to anybody.

In the spring of 1869, Baltimore Conference met at

Page 53

Frederick, Md. On the first of January, 1869, I was taken from the superannuated list by Bishop A. W. Wayman and placed in charge of Allen's Chapel, at Good Hope, D. C. I remained there until the first of April of the same year. I received a dispatch from Bishop A. W. Wayman, from Frederick, to be there on Tuesday, May 4th, at two o'clock. I there received my appointment to the Sarah Ann Street Mission, Baltimore, Md.

I then moved from Hagerstown to the Sarah Ann Street Mission, which cost me fifteen dollars out of my own pocket. When I reached Baltimore the trustees of the church had rented a house for me, at ten dollars per month. I asked the trustees how much they thought they would be able to give me, and they told me, from seven to eight dollars per week, which I said I would be satisfied to take. I received sixteen dollars for two weeks' services, and they next fell to four dollars, and from that to three dollars, and from that to two dollars, and to fifty cents, then to twenty-five cents, then to nothing. The trustees made out a bill of fifty dollars, to be sent to the Conference, to inform that body how much I had received from them during the year.

In 1870 the Conference sat at Hagerstown, Md. I was reappointed to Sarah Ann Street Mission. The trustees seemed to be very poor, and besides they had considerable expense on them, as the church and parsonage were both under rent at ten dollars each. Finding that it would be better to reduce expenses, I moved in with one of the trustees, and this made the rent a little less

Page 54

dollars again by the trustees, and I loaned them one dollar, which leaves them six dollars in my debt to this day, which I never expect to get. I went to Brother J. A. Handy, Secretary to the Parent Home and Foreign Missionary Society, and asked him for aid to the Mission in my charge. He told me to make out my bill and leave it at his office, which I did, and there it still remains, I suppose.

In 1871 Conference met at Easton, Md. The trustees of Sarah Ann Street Mission sent a bill of sixty-nine dollars to them; they looked at it and gave it to

me, and I have received nothing on that bill yet. At the close of the Conference the Bishop asked me if I would take another appointment, and I told him that I thought not.

The two years that I was at Sarah Ann Street Mission I bought all my wood and coal and carried it on my back from the yard, and this money came from my own pocket. In my early days I acquired some little knowledge of the art of mixing liniments and other medicines, and it was in this way that I managed to get along as well as I did under the trying circumstances that had been my lot.

In 1867 the trustees of Mount Gilboa Church, at Ellicott's Mills, rented my house and lot, situated at the same place, as a parsonage for the elder in charge. The first two years I was to receive one hundred and forty-four dollars, which was seventy-two dollars per year. When the two years expired they paid me nothing

Page 55

lived, and I took my bill to the constable, and it went from there to the Towsontown Court, where I sued for my money and got judgment against them, which still leaves the case in court. It is easy to perceive that I was compelled to hunt a living from some source more reliable than the last mentioned.

In the summer of 1872 I moved to Washington, D. C., and since my stay there I have still been keeping myself on the superannuated list. I have received as a support, since I have been here, forty-four dollars and eight cents, from elders in Washington. I have been forced to pay house rent, feed and clothe myself and buy my fuel with this amount of money. Any who live at this day and time will judge of the deficiency in supporting a man and wife. Thus it will be seen that there has been a thousand obstacles in my way in nearly all of my life.

In presenting this to the public, I will say that there has been many occurrences that I have omitted in consequence of not having a proper date

Page 56

possible to pass, I laid my body flat with the snow and slid along down with the reins of my horse to my arm, the beast walking and sliding as best she could behind me. After my descent I could see the candles burning at Burketville, and I had yet a mile and a quarter to travel, and did not reach the house of Brother Atrin until about eight o'clock.

Many other downfalls I have had. My wife was the mother of four children when I purchased her, and she, by right of her master's will, should have had her freedom at the age of thirty-one, and finding that my children were born slaves, I undertook to prevent such proceedings by purchasing her; I therefore began payments on my wife and one son in 1826 or 1827, and I had the promise of the purchase of my other two children, when I had finished paying for my wife and one son. My wife and youngest son, Thomas, I paid six hundred and fifty dollars for, with the understanding that I should have my next youngest son (Samuel) at two hundred and fifty dollars. I bought and paid for both my youngest children and my wife also, paying nine hundred dollars for the three. About the time that I had finished paying for these three of my family, it seems as though the price of the poor colored people had increased, and the remaining two of my children (who were yet slaves) were sold. The two last that were sold were a boy and a girl.

Another painful circumstance connected with my travels in this life, which is anything but pleasant to chronicle: In the month of February, 1855, my wife fell upon the ice and fractured a limb, which she lingered with until August, 1856, when she died.

Again