

**Fifty
Years
A
Mountain
Preacher**



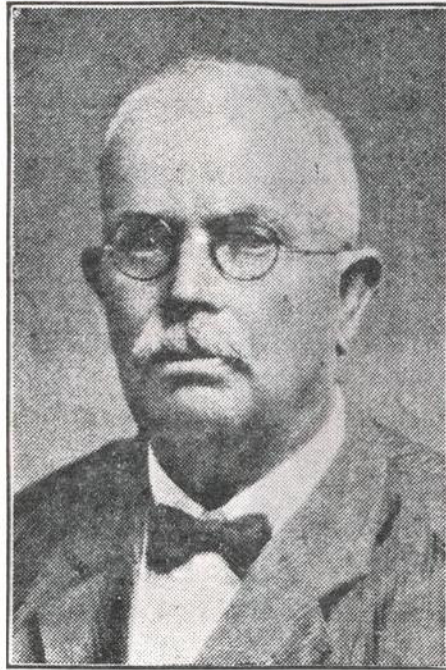
1936



Geo. W. Gibson
Arley, ALA



*Copied from the Library of
his great-grandson ~ Jack Payne*



G.W. Gibson
Picture at the age of 70

INTRODUCTION

After numerous requests from my children and friends, especially my ministerial brethren and my home church, where I have been a member for forty-nine years, I shall undertake the task, realizing how unworthy I have been in my own sight, and perhaps in many others, to write a short sketch of my life. The title shall be “FIFTY YEARS A MOUNTAIN PREACHER.” I am putting it down just as it has been.

I have never had any desire to be called great among men. I have filled some very responsible positions in life as well as a preacher and a religious leader; but I have never felt my importance as a leader. I have pastored fifteen different churches, organized fourteen different Baptist churches, but I did not at any time feel worthy of going into the pulpit to preach. It always seemed too sacred for me. I realize it was holy ground. Neither did I ever feel worthy of pastoring any church. It always seemed like I was not equal to the task, but now, after forty-nine years of service in my Master’s work, if I can leave some written word that will help my children and brethren, especially my young ministerial brethren, I will take pleasure in doing so.

I know some things that I shall say will be hard to believe, but not a word shall I say that I am not willing to call on my Heavenly Father to witness for me. I am sure there is no one living today that has a greater sympathy for young preachers than I have. I know the struggles that they may expect to go through and the many disappointments that they may meet.

Dear reader, just go with me for fifty years as a mountain preacher and let me blaze the way. I trust that you will see some of my tracks on some of these mountain trails and roads that you may chance to travel. Let me say just here that these fifty years have been very happy years. I have waded the creeks and rivers when there was ice on the banks to meet my appointments, went dim trails and if I should have died on the way, perhaps my body would not have been found for several days, then not except by the vultures of the air. Many a night in coming home I have had to feel my way, it being so dark that I could not see my hand before me. I have been so tired that I could not eat the supper that my wife had left on the table for me.

You say, “You have waded the streams?” Yes. Back yonder forty years ago there were no bridges across these streams. There was no way of crossing them, only where you could find a boat and there were but a few of them. The only way was to ford them on a horse or wade them. I had no horse, so my only way was to wade. We called it dog ferriage.

Right here someone will say, “Bro. Gibson, you made great sacrifices.” I did not make any sacrifices, I made an investment. Today, as will be seen, there are hundreds who are preachers and religious leaders whom the Lord helped me to win for him. So my life has been an invested life. Though poor in this world’s goods, but rich in heaven, some day I will be permitted to join that Heavenly Host. Many of them that God helped me to win have gone on before me.

If by writing this little book it will be any help to my children, or some young preacher, I feel like I will be well paid.

CHAPTER ONE

My father was Thomas King Caid Gibson, born in Giles County, Tennessee, April 15, 1814, of Irish descent. My mother, Charlotte Cranford Gibson, was born in Walker County, Alabama, in 1823. My parents were married quite young. There were eleven children born to this union. I am the only survivor.

I am the only preacher of the entire kin on both sides of the house before me. I now have two nephews who are preachers, one a Baptist preacher and the other a Methodist preacher. My mother joined the Methodist church at the age of fifteen and lived a consistent member of that church until her death. My father never joined the church until his 88th year, which I will have something to say about later on.

My father sold out in Walker County in 1868 and moved to Winston County that same year, where I grew up to manhood and have lived ever since. We had neither schools nor churches near us. The nearest school was five miles; also, the nearest church was the same distance. I walked five miles to school to learn my ABC's. The first school I attended was at old Center Springs in Winston County. The teacher was Ben F. Tingle. I was then twelve years old. He was a good teacher and took great interest in all his scholars. I thought then that he took particular interest in me, and I believe that he did. These schools were taught in the summer months, after the crops were laid by; only three months for the entire year. I did not get to go every day for something had to be done on the farm during this time. Sometimes we would not be through with the work when the school started. It always started July 1, which was too early to lay by the crops, but that was the time set for the opening of the schools. I learned my ABC's and began to spell. We invariably used the old Blue Back Spelling Book. It was the only kind we had and books were never changed until we learned it perfectly, and then we were allowed a reader and were taught to write. The teacher would set copies and you would learn to write by following the copy. We did not have any lead pencils like we have now, but used pen and ink. Then we had to learn to read, not mumble it, but read; and when you failed to get your lesson you must learn it over again, sometimes be turned back and learn it over again. I went to Professor Tingle one summer and I could read anything in print that was printed in English.

In 1874 we got a school a little closer, just three miles away. My brother, Isham P. Gibson, was the teacher. He was a good one and I am sure he took special interest in me. It was no trouble to learn. Of course, we did not have so many school books, but we had what was generally used in our three months schools. We had the old Blue Back Speller, Davies Arithmetic, McGuffey's First, Second, Third and Fourth readers. Instead of tablets and lead pencils, we had a slate and slate pencils. Now, dear reader, we took care of the books, each kind would do for many years for a boy or girl to study and it would be handed to some of the younger children who had grown up and were old enough to go to school. Books were scarce and high. They were not to give away.

In 1878 my father moved near where Arley is now. We built a log school house, 18 feet square, fixed benches by using planks on blocks. My brother, Isham P. Gibson, taught this school, and I was one of the big boys in school. I could spell and read. Never allowed anyone to turn me down in school. I always stood at the head of my class and for this achievement; at the close of school my brother made me a present of a little Testament. The first one I ever saw. My father had a Bible but I did not know just what it was. Never read a word in it, but when I got this little ten cent Testament, I went to reading it. I kept it in my pocket all the time when I did not 'have it out reading it. I thought that it was the greatest book I ever saw (it was). Well, by reading this precious book, I

found out that I lacked something. I realized that I was lost. There surely never was a poor boy that was as miserable as I. I would cry but found no relief. This went on until the Spring of 1878, in May, it was Monday morning after the second Sunday, I went to the field to plow but I could not plow. I did the best I could until about nine o'clock. I hitched the horse up in the corner of the fence, got over the fence and went down in the woods, about 50 yards, and knelt down by the side of a mountain oak tree. I began to pray. I know what I said: "Lord, I am lost. Will You save a poor, ignorant boy that is lost?" I just kept on, I don't know how long, but it seemed that all at once a great burden fell from my poor soul, and I arose 'happy. I was never so happy in all my life. Well, I said to myself, "I will go right to the house and tell mother about it." But before I got to the fence, something said: "I do not believe I would do that, you might be mistaken and then your mother would be disappointed." Well, I went to plowing and I plowed better, it seemed, than I had ever done before. Well, I decided, when I go to the house to get dinner, I will tell mother. Now, here comes something that very few people know. My mother was an invalid. She was taken sick when I was fifteen years old. I had to do all the cooking, washing the clothes and sweeping the house. There were no girls in the family. There had been but they were all married off, so I was cook. There surely never was a boy that loved his mother better than I did. I never had the privilege of most boys, when in the teens, to go visiting and calling on the girls. I never left mother without someone to stay with her and prepare the meals. I had a sister that lived about one half mile from where we lived, and when she could, she would come and spend Sunday with mother. Had it not been for sister, Susan Hughes, I don't expect I would have gotten off many times. She is in heaven today, no doubt, being rewarded for the way she relieved this poor boy.

Well, I had no one to encourage me. It was not expected, at this time, for anyone to join the church until they were about 25 or 30 years old. So, I went on, never said anything to anyone about it. Something kept telling me that I could be mistaken. I learned a long time ago who "it" was ("it" was the devil).

On Jan. 1, 1880 I married Josephine Whisenhunt, a neighbor girl. I was 19 years old. I knew I was too young to marry but I needed someone to help me wait on mother and Josephine was the one I picked out, of course, there were other reasons, also. My wife was a member of the Baptist church and I wanted to be, but the old deceiver kept on telling me I could be mistaken. That same year they organized a Baptist church in the little school house, with six members. They named the church New Hope. That fall wife and I moved out to ourselves. Mother had improved and was able to do her cooking. The next Spring, 1881, my wife went to church on Saturday. All the members were expected to do this. I stayed home and fought the devil all day. I had decided to join the church if they would have me. The devil said: "I would not now. Tell your wife about it and see what she thinks about it." But I said "No, I am going to make the effort the first chance I get." So Sunday morning, the first Sunday in May, I was ready to go to church with my wife. Well, Brother Joe Baldwin was the pastor and preached to me, or at least I thought so. When he closed, he called for a song and said if there was anyone present who wanted to unite with the church, to come forward. They had hardly started a song when I rose and gave him my hand. Well, it looked to me like he thought he was shot at and not missed. I Imagined that everybody was about to leave the house. Nobody expected such as that. I think they all expected some people who were grown to join but not George Gibson. Well, they voted to receive me, just like they do now, then another song was sung, and they gave me the right hand of Christian fellowship. When my wife came, she hugged me. It sort of plagued me for her to hug me right before the crowd. I did not know what made her do it but I knew now, she was happy. Well, the teacher, Bro. Baldwin, announced that I would be baptized next Sunday morning at the usual place, which was about three miles from the church but near

Bethel church. The second Sunday in May was the regular meeting day at Bethel, so, all necessary arrangements were made. Sunday morning, at 10 o'clock, we met down at the ford or the river, where I had been many times as a boy. He read a scripture lesson and we waded into the water. Old Brother Harvey Estes, one of the best men in the world, started that old song

“On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand
and cast a wistful eye
To Canaan’s fair and happy land
where my possessions lie.”

I just know it was the sweetest music I ever heard. I had heard that song hundreds of times but never as sweet as it was that morning. The brethren extended me their right hand of fellowship and we went back to Bethel for preaching.



CHAPTER TWO

I sat there in old Bethel church, the second Sunday in May, 1881, and made the decision that has governed me for 54 years. I decided that I would do whatever the Lord called on me to do if it killed me, not knowing then just what he had for me to do. Next Sunday, the third Sunday in May, tested me out. A visiting preacher had an appointment at our little church and he did not know but very few that was there. He had never seen me before. He preached and then at the close began to call on someone to lead the closing prayer. He called on someone next to the pulpit, he asked to be excused. He kept on until he called on me. I never asked to be excused, I just rose and asked to let us kneel in prayer and so I thought, or rather the devil told me before we left the house, that I should have asked to have been excused, then the fight begun. The next Sunday, which was the fourth Sunday in May, it was decided to organize a Sunday School. The Lutherans had organized a church in the little school house and they were used to a Sunday School. Of course, I was in favor of it, though I did not know one thing about such a school. If ever I had heard of such a school, I don't remember it. The time came to organize and old Brother Jennings was nominated for superintendent and someone that did not know me very well nominated me assistant superintendent. I am sure they did not know just how green I was. I had never been in a Sunday School in my life but I never backed down because I had already told the Lord I would undertake anything for Him if it killed me, and decided that he wanted me to be assistant superintendent of a Sunday School. Well, I, felt very well helped up. I knew Uncle Lot Jennings was able in prayer and I would not have anything to do, only just to be there. However, I asked some that knew, what I was supposed to do. They said in case the superintendent was not present, I was supposed to open the Sunday School with prayer. Sunday came; Uncle Lot Jennings was not there. We all went into the house and sang about an hour, which was usually done before preaching, 'had intermission for a little rest and to get some water. So, out to the spring I went and fought the devil all the way to the spring and back. I doubt very much if I drank one drop of water. What should I do? There was a Methodist Brother in the crowd that was able in prayer. Should I call on 'him? That is what the devil told me to do, but just as we went in the house, I said I would open that Sunday School in prayer if it killed me, so I did, and won another victory. Then it was not so hard. Brother Jennings did not attend any more as he moved away out of

the community and George Gibson opened the Sunday School every Sunday until cold weather and we had to close. You see we had no stoves in our school houses. All schools were taught in the summer months. The only preaching we had in the winter was at some Brother's house. But, listen, in our community at that time there were now three of us that would lead in prayer: Bro. J.O. Farley, a Methodist; Bro. L.W. Addy, a Lutheran; and myself. So we organized a weekly prayer meeting. It was held at the neighbor's houses. I was a good reader and neither of the other two could read much, so it fell on me to read scripture lessons. I soon conquered the devil of embarrassment. That was my worst drawback - embarrassment. I was so timid. For more than two years we carried that prayer meeting on. The next year our little church had to disband. All the members had moved out of the community, so we went to Bethel.

Just one word here about the little church I joined, New Hope. I was the only person that ever joined that church after it was organized. So in 1883 we put our membership in the Bethel church. We had to walk more than five miles, but we did not dread that. We never missed a service in warm weather. Nobody went to church in the winter months because we had no methods of heating. Preaching, if any at all, was at some Brother's house but we had prayer meeting often at someone's house. So, I became somewhat of a prayer meeting man and 'had talked to the folks very often but I did not think I was preaching. On Saturday before the second Sunday in May, 1884, Bro. W.J. Tingle offered a motion that the church license me to preach. Right there I had another fight with the devil. He told me: "to stop that right there; you can't preach." But I just sat there and the motion was carried. The pastor was not there, he lived about 16 miles from the church. It was announced that we would have services the next day. So, Sunday we all met, a pretty good crowd, after the usual time spent in singing. The 11 o'clock hour came. Some Brother got up and said: "I make a motion that Bro. Gibson preach today. I don't think it necessary to wait any longer. I don't think Bro. Baldwin will be here." I have learned that you can always get a second to a motion in the Baptist conference. They voted on it and it carried, and I was just licensed to preach the day before and now called on to preach. I had already told the Lord I would do anything He called on me to do if it killed me. So, I went up into the stand. I felt like crawling in an auger hole and pulling the hole in after me. I go up and read a chapter, so I did not make such a blunder at my reading. The next thing was to take my text. Like all young preachers I had more text than I could preach from, for this was my text: "Never man spake like this man spoke." So at it I went but I soon finished and dismissed. I wanted to get clean out of sight of anyone; I felt just like I was the laughing stock for everybody. Before I got out of the meeting house Bro. Burrell, a preacher, and a member of Bethel church, asked me to go with him the next Sunday to Liberty Church, a little church that he had organized about seven miles in another community. He wanted me to go the next Saturday. Well, I said I would go, so, it was arranged between us for me to come to his house Saturday morning, take dinner with him and go on to the church that evening. It was only a few miles from his house and preaching was about 2 p.m. We reached the church on time and not a one did I know but Bro. Burrell. The whole community was out and when I tell you that don't suppose that there were over fifteen people there, you will say that there are mighty few people in the community. The ladies were barefooted. It came about this way: The day before, a member of the church, who lived in the community, happened to a misfortune of losing his house by fire. He and his wife were in the field at work when their house was burned. They lost all their clothing except what they had on. His wife was barefooted in the field, which was not uncommon in the summer months. The other good sisters came by where she was staying at her father's but she said that she could not go because she had no shoes. They all agreed to pull off their shoes and go barefooted to church if she would go. They said there would be no preacher there but Bro. Burrell and they would not be embarrassed to let Bro. Burrell see them barefooted. Bro. Burrell was one of the best men in all the world, but there I was.

They said afterwards they were very much embarrassed, but I am sure that they were not half as embarrassed as I was. After Bro. Burrell called on me to preach, I read my scripture lesson and used this for the text: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." I have used that text many times since but not any better than that evening. Long before I closed, every lady in the house was crying for joy.

I spent the night in the community with old Bro. Ward, one of the members of the church. Sunday morning, we all went back to the little log school house, which was 16 feet square. People were on time. Bro. Burrell asked me to preach again today. Well, at it I went. Don't know just how I came out, but I quit on time to give Bro. Burrell some time to preach. The name of the little church was Liberty, which you will hear from later. Just here, let me tell you something about Bro. Burrell. He was one among the most faithful men I ever saw; his great handicap was that he was bad to stutter. His method of work was to find a place somewhere in the country where a few people lived that wanted preaching, just so he could find two or three it was enough. He believed the Bible where it says "where two or three meet together agreeing on any one thing, he would be with them." He would start up a monthly meeting. He preferred a school house or some vacant house. As soon as he could get as many Baptist together that wanted a church, he would organize them into a church, serve them until he could find a preacher that he thought was more capable than he was,, then he would secure that man's services and go on to some other place. No man deserves greater honor than Bro. Burrell for the developing of many young preachers. He is due the credit of starting this unworthy preacher out right.

He was a true pioneer preacher and as I often said, he was the only real pioneer preacher I ever saw. He was not what some people call an able preacher but he could inspire a person to undertake the task for the Lord. He is in heaven today receiving a rich reward for his faithful work. I conducted his funeral when he died. I have conducted hundreds since but never have I conducted the funeral of a man more faithful than Bro. Burrell.

So, I spent the balance of the Spring and Summer Sundays in Sunday School, attending meeting where other preachers would do the preaching up till the first week in August. Bro. Burrell had taken hold of one of the oldest churches in the country, that had gone down, just a very few members were trying to hold up the cause. I arranged with them to hold a protracted meeting at the church the first week in August. We called them protracting meetings those days.

He told me that he wanted me to go with him to old Herman in Walker County. It so happened to be the only Baptist church in that part that I knew anything about. When I was a boy, I mean a small boy, at that time I was just a boy, in fact, I have never been anything else but a boy, and belonged to this church, one of the first persons I got acquainted with after we moved to Winston County, Bro. Dave Best and wife. We lived close neighbors to them. They always seemed to like me and when I went to their church it sure did them lots of good, I thought, and I believed it did. Afterwards I was their pastor in another church.

Bro. Burrell and I took it time about and stayed with them nearly all the week I don't know the results. In fact, I never did make any inquiry about the results of my efforts anywhere. I left that to the Lord to look after the results.

Then it soon developed that I was called on to go to other churches and help in protracting meetings. About this time, the Methodists organized a church in the little school house in my community and, of course, they held a protracting meeting and I was there and took an active part. I had the pleasure

of leading my youngest brother to Christ. I suppose the first one, as far as I know, that I led to Christ. They insisted on my becoming a member with them. I remember the answer I made. I said, "You don't want a hypocrite in you church, do you?" And they said, "No." Well, I said, "I would be one." "No, you are no hypocrite," they said. I said, "I would be one, for I am a Baptist and I would be a hypocrite in the Methodist church. When the Lord saved me and I was led to join the church, by reading that little Testament, I was a Baptist. All the way no scruples about it, just a plain Baptist. Never have been dissatisfied one minute with the Baptist doctrines."

In 1888, Bro. Burrell was on the lookout for some place to organize a Baptist church and he found six Baptist in and near our community. We had built another school house two miles north of the first one and held school in it. We could get more people that were in reach of this one than the first one that was built and besides the Methodists had built them a very good meeting house for their church. We secured letters from Bethel church and organized a church, named it Union Grove. Bro. B.F. Shanks was our first pastor and he was a young preacher, just had started out but was ordained before I had but begun preaching, so I was still doing all I could helping in meetings. I never did put myself forward, never sought a pastorate in all my life. I don't know just how it came about, but a little church had been organized just on the line of the Cullman and Winston Counties. Bro. James Hilton organized the church. He was doing missionary work for the Clear Creek Association and found a few Baptist in that community and organized them into a church. They named the church Mt. Zion. He recommended me for pastor. I was not ordained and about this time, this same little church where I preached my second sermon called me, too, so, two churches had called on me for pastors. So, it was necessary to ordain me. So my church voted to ordain me. The time was agreed to do this work and on the sixth day of July, 1890, Bro. Burrell, D.B. Ford and B.F. Shanks, the pastor, proceeded to examine me for ordination. I had no trouble in answering alt the scriptural questions and they proceeded to lay their hands on me, then a song was sung and all Christians were invited to come forward and give me their hand. Well, my old mother, one of the best women in the world, came and that was the first time I ever heard her shout. She rejoiced so much; I know what it was all about—there was her son, one that loved her so much that he stayed with her when she was sick. I think till this good hour, I can almost hear her shouting in glory.



CHAPTER THREE

I was now pastor of two little churches. The place of holding the meetings for the Liberty church was changed about three miles north of where it was first organized, where several Baptists had settled, moving there from Jefferson county.

The first time I went to Mt. Zion, they were working on their meeting house. It was Friday evening I went over there. Not a one knew me but I managed to tell them who I 'was and they were pleased that I had come.

Saturday was meeting day and I preached the best I could, so Sunday back again to the church and preached. Some pretty strong people were members of this church, so it did not embarrass me for I knew I could only do the best I could and no one could beat that. Their meeting days were the second Sundays in each month. Liberty's was the third Sunday. These churches were only about

three miles apart so the third Sunday I went to Liberty. Several that belonged to this church I had never met before so it was almost a new congregation. I went regularly to these two churches. Don't think I missed a time. So it was not long till the year was out. Mt. Zion had a rule not to elect their pastor annually, a plan I like today, but Liberty elected their pastor annually. I knew they would not think of calling me for another year. Not a single addition by letter, not a single conversion, as far as I knew, but the question came up about calling a pastor and I was elected unanimously. Well, what must I do? Should I tell them that I could not serve the church? Something said, "Keep your mouth shut." That I did, but not to the Lord.

I went home with one of the brethren for dinner. Don't think I ate much dinner. I didn't want to eat. I wanted to pray. I wanted the Lord to tell me what to do. So, as soon as after dinner I went off in the woods and got down on my knees and there I spent the balance of the evening. The Lord did not answer me. I begged him to tell me what to do. Just before dark, I went to the house, thinking the folks would not understand my being absent so long. I ate a little supper, I reckon. Soon was off to bed, but not to sleep. Could not sleep, just prayed till a very late hour. I reckon I got a little sleep but no answer.

Next morning, after breakfast, I went back in the woods. Just knew the Lord would tell me what to do but he did not tell me what to do.

The hour for preaching came. An unusually large crowd was there that day. Well, it was a very pretty day and folks would go a long ways to meeting in the summer months. So I got up to preach, but no answer yet what to do about giving them an answer. I preached the best I could and the Lord took care of the situation. Everybody was very quiet and at the close I asked if there was anyone who was lost and wanted to 'be prayed for to come and give me their hand. I think the brethren sang a song. Anyway, they came. The first I remember was Dorse Hamner one of the wickedest young men in the community. He just fell on the altar and from him others. They just came begging to be saved. Well, this was the third Sunday in July and the protracting meeting was not supposed to come up until the third Sunday in August but, dear reader that revival went on for five years. We continued the meeting for eight days and people were saved at almost every service for eight days and nights. Several joined the church and I did my first baptizing the following Sunday. The Lord answered my prayer that day in His own way. I never asked Him any more about serving liberty Church. He had answered it in the salvation of many souls and I have said that revival went on for five years.

I continued to preach for them for five years longer and I had a revival every service. By this time I had more churches to call me than I could serve. So Liberty agreed to let me go to serve other churches.

The next year another little church was organized about twenty miles from where I lived and they called me. It was many years that I never knew what made them do it. Not a one of the members had ever seen me and I never knew how they came to find me out. The name of this church was Friendship, twenty miles northeast of where I lived.

One day a bald-headed man rode up to my gate and asked me if that was where Preacher Gibson lived. I told him it was and invited him down. He came in and told me who he was and what his business was. He stayed until after dinner and before he started back home, he wanted to know if I could be pastor for their little church. I told him I could. Just had two churches and I saw no reason for an excuse and, in fact, I never offered any. He told me the days of their meetings. I told him that

I would be there. I had nothing to ride but an ox. I plowed steers to make bread for my wife and two children; Just two at that time. I didn't care to ride a steer that far anyway.

Saturday morning before the fourth Sunday in October, out I started twenty miles to the little church. When I say Saturday morning, I mean it was hardly good daylight. It was a long ways to walk but I never did like to see a preacher about an hour late so I got there by 11 o'clock. I preached the best I could although I was a little tired. I went home with one of the brethren and spent the night. Next day was Sunday. All the people in the community was out but one man. I will have something to say of him later.

It was agreed that Saturday meeting would be at 2 p.m. to give me a little more time to get up there. So, I went on the balance of the year. They called me at the close of that year for another year. I never said anything to the brethren whether I could serve or not, neither did I to the Lord. Of course, there had not been a single addition to the church nor a single conversion as far as I knew.

This man that did not attend church lived in sight of it. His good wife was a member and one Saturday, the first of the second year, she invited me out to their house. She said that her husband never went to church. I went and he treated me very nicely. Next morning, he told me to come back when it suited me. I never invited him out to church, never said anything to him about his religious condition. It didn't impress me to do so. It went on and that winter he came down to my house and spent the night with me. I never asked him if he was a Christian. He was some five or six years older than I.

I continued to serve the church for the balance of that year. Just one person joined that church and she had been converted somewhere else but all this time the Lord had been getting in His work with this man who didn't attend the church. He was a profound infidel. He didn't believe in God nor devils. He had been a wild-catter, gambler and fighter. He had moved into this community, where the little church was, from northeast Georgia.

He afterwards told his story. He said when I first began to come up there, he was perfectly disgusted to think of a preacher walking twenty miles, wearing homemade clothes, brogan shoes, a fifty-cent felt hat to preach. Where he came from preachers went dressed up. They wore broadcloth suits, rode in fine buggies and there I was preaching, wearing homemade jeans.

Something had taken place in his thinking. He said he had come to the conclusion that there must be a God somewhere. I would not be preaching for those people, walking twenty miles, without some remuneration at all. He knew those people did not pay me one cent. I had been given a pair of Jean socks by a good old sister. So, to let him tell the story, he said that something kept on telling him that there must be a God somewhere though he had never believed it. That fall after my time was out and they had called another man to serve them, he was in the field pulling fodder and he could not stand it any longer, so, down on his knees in that fodder field he went and surrendered to my God and his God. He said he rose from his knees and understood what made me walk twenty miles to preach. He said he wanted to preach and tell the folks about my God and his God. He joined the Baptist church at once and went to preaching. Though he began late in life but, dear reader, he has won more infidels to Christ than ever I did. It seems that God just gave him a message to carry to infidels.

After he had been preaching, he decided to visit a brother and other kin and some of his old neighbors and tell them about that God he once did not know. It was announced that he would preach in that community and, of course, they came out to hear him who had been such a terror. The Lord

blessed his message. His brother, who was an infidel, went out to hear him and he won him and all the family, besides many others.

He is still living, I reckon. When he comes in our part, he always calls on me and he has to relate his story of how he was led to Christ.

So that was what the Lord wanted me to do, to serve that little church and to lead that infidel to Christ that never heard me preach until after he was saved.

Now, reader, this story may fall on dull ears, but I know that was what the Lord wanted. Jesus said "As ye go, preach" and that was what I was doing.

The Lord sometimes leads in a mysterious way.



CHAPTER FOUR

In 1894, Bethel Church called me for one and one-half years, and the one year was to finish out time that the pastor could not serve. So, Bethel was a very dear spot to me. It was there I had gone to school when a barefoot boy. Those people were very dear to me and they seemed to appreciate my feeble efforts in preaching. So, I began preaching for them in May. I preached there the rest of the year.

The month of August was the time for the protracted meeting. Now, we called them protracted meetings, not revivals, as we do now. Our protracted meetings lasted about three or four days but this one that I am going to tell you about lasted longer than that. We began, of course, Saturday, had services Saturday night, Sunday night but not much interest until Sunday night. I am sure much praying had been done. Sunday night the house was crowded. I took for my text this scripture: "For we know if this house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the Heavens." Second Corinthians 5:1. Well, the Lord sure did bless our feeble efforts. There were 27 conversions that night. At the close of this meeting, I baptized 42.

While the meeting was going on, some of the brethren from Blooming Grove Church, over in Walker County, came to see me about helping them in a few days meeting. Their pastor was an old man and still held on to the idea of just holding a protracted meeting about three days and closing out. So, it was agreed that I should assist them in a meeting, which was held in September. The third Sunday in that month, I got there Sunday night. I was still preaching at Liberty on the third Sunday, so, I made it all right for Sunday night. All the old people knew me, having been raised near this settlement. I preached Monday. The pastor preached Monday night and left, then I had to do all the preaching, but I had good help. The brethren and sisters were praying for Bro. Gibson. I know they were.

Tuesday night Bro. J.P. Drummonds, he was just Jim Drummonds then, was saved, among many others. He is my pastor now and a good one. I have been associated with many a preacher but never have heard no man preach that had at his command as much scripture as he has. When he is preaching, he can hold a crowd spellbound for an hour. Later on I was his pastor for twelve years and he has been mine for twelve years.

Well; at the close of the meeting, I baptized twenty-seven members. Bro. J.P. Drummonds, my present pastor, was one among them.

That same year, that is, in the fall of that year, my home church called me and I continued to serve my home church for twenty-four years, except for one year.

In 1905 I had the pleasure of leading my father into the church. I don't know just what impressed him most in my life, but I was the only preacher in all the family on both sides. One day we were talking, he said, "Son I want to join the church." Well, it was not our meeting day but I called in Bro. James Gilliland, who was pastor of our church, at once. I got a few of the members together. Bro. Gilliland opened the service. Didn't preach, just gave an opportunity for church membership. My father joined. He asked to make a statement and this is what he said:

"Sixty-two years ago the Lord saved me. I have lived out of the church every since. My life is wasted so far as the church is concerned. Now, I want to join the church and he baptized. I can't be of any help to the church but what few days I do live I want to live in the church."

He was then eighty-eight years old. I understood how I had something to do in leading him to church. I had been praying for him many years. I prayed to let me live to see him make a change. I know the church didn't save folks but it was a place for saved folks, and somehow I believed he had been saved but never had joined the church. It was a great joy to me to see him join the church and be baptized. He only lived two years after he joined the church, but every time he was able, he went to church. I was pastor of his church when he died.

In 1905, we moved our church from where it was organized to Arley and named it Arley Baptist Church and it still carries that name. Our reason for moving was that we could get land to build on at Arley and we wanted to build a meeting house of our own. We were using the school house where we were. Now, we have a nice meeting house, Sunday School rooms and plenty of seats.

Well, I will drop back a little and let the reader learn how some other things came about. I was soon in demand to organize churches, and without naming them all, will say I have assisted in the organizing of fourteen different Baptist churches, pastored fifteen in Winston, Walker and Cullman counties.

One thing was holding me down among some of the churches, and also some of the preachers. They didn't agree with me on foot-washing, missions and Sunday Schools. I was one of the few preachers that didn't hold to foot-washing, as a church ordinance. Some of the churches would not have me for pastor on that account. I was accused of being too proud to wash my brother's feet. Well, I didn't understand the scripture to teach, literally, foot-washing as a church ordinance, but it wasn't long until that died out and many years ago most all the churches abandoned the custom, and the preachers quit advocating it. The hardest thing I had to contend with was the mission question. I believed in missions and preached it and took in collection for missions. I couldn't understand my Bible to teach anything else but missions as part of the program in carrying on his work. After a long struggle, it came out all right.

In 1896, I was called to a church named Bethlehem, near Fall City, that's the Clear Creek Falls. I served that church for 23 years. Bro. J.M. Hilton, one of the most able preachers in all the country, had served the church most of the time, from its organization in 1872. So, it was no trouble to serve that church. They were developed along sound Baptist doctrines. It seemed that the Lord just lead me there all the time. A few years after I began preaching there, we decided to build a good meeting house. So, we went, to work. The brethren were all poor people but good people, and like old Nehemiah's folks, had a mind to work. I agreed that they had been paying me for my services and

that money should go into the, expense of building the house. They had been paying me \$50.00 a year, so I contributed fifty dollars toward the expense, but went on just the same as if they were paying me for my time. So, we got the house completed and put a stove in so that we could hold services in the winter months. It was a real joy to go to Bethlehem every third Sunday and Saturday.

I had a great admiration for children. Always did love children and they usually took charge of me when I went to Bethlehem. They had a way of securing my promise of going home with them. Their parents didn't ever look after my place for staying at nights or dinner. I was very careful of not making many promises. Never disappointed a child. Among the many boys that seemed to take a special interest in me and seeing that I went home with him as often as possible was Frank Atkins.

When they grew up in the teen age and the Lord began to save them, Frank was among them. When he was thirteen years old, we were holding a protracted meeting in August and one day I went to Prank, who was sitting about the middle of the house, put my hand on his head and said, "Frank, I am praying for you. Your mother and father are praying for you." He surrendered and was saved, and I had 'the pleasure of baptizing him. He is now pastor of the Northport Baptist Church, in the city of Tuscaloosa. He is one of the most able preachers in the state. Just had to tell you about Frank Atkins. He became a live member of the church and never held up until he graduated from Howard College. He is fully competent to fill any pulpit in the state.

In 1904 I was elected moderator of the Clear Creek Baptist Association. There was some talk among the brethren of electing me sooner but I was not a foot-washer and they said they could not support a non-foot-washer as moderator and, also, one that advocated missions as strongly as I did. After a two days discussion of foot-washing, I was elected the moderator, in which capacity I served twenty-three years in succession. At the close of those twenty-three years, I was getting too old to serve and I was relieved and J.M. Burns was elected, who served until this last session, when Bro. T.J. Motes was elected. Bro. Burns made a good one and Motes is going to make a good one.

In 1903 I was employed for part time as an Associational missionary. That was when I caught it. A preacher by the name of D.S. Smith, who was a Baptist and did not believe in Boards, challenged me for a debate, on the method of missions. This was the challenge: "Is the Southern Baptist Convention with Its Boards a Scriptural Method of Doing Mission Work?" G.W. Gibson to affirm, D.S. Smith to deny. An agreement was made and we secured the court house, at Double Springs, as the place for our discussion. Bro. Smith had made out the program and advertised the discussion and all his people came out to see him snow me under. We had no judges, just wanted to leave the results with the folks and the Lord. We began Friday before the fourth Sunday in December. A few of my kind was there but not many, but as the discussion continued for three days, more of my folks came out. I was to open the discussion each time until Sunday, when he was to open. He was a good speaker and we were good friends (and still are). It didn't break up our friendship. We could not afford to get mad. I was allowed one hour for opening and ten minutes for closing. I never spoke over thirty minutes in opening till Saturday night. He was speaking along the line of the so-called gospel mission plan. I was very familiar with their plan, having been reading one of their papers for eight years, and I knew all about their position.

About a month before this, they had organized a plan, and instead of calling their plan a board, they called it a committee. Their secretary was allowed so much or a certain percent of what was collected as his salary instead of a stipulated amount like our secretary. He bitterly opposed a board of any kind, but now they had a board and a secretary, and he had not caught onto what was going on. He could make a good talk but not much of an argument.

My brethren came to me Saturday evening And said, “Bro. Gibson, Bro. Smith is going to beat you.” I said, “Just wait until tonight, come out, I am going to lay him in the shade.”

So, that night, I drew his own plan on him and showed him that they had copied our plan and didn't save anything or leave anything out. Somehow, the Lord just came to my relief, which He always does. I stood my full hour and I expect a little more but I made good use of that hour. His folks were all there and a good many of mine. They came out to see that Board Baptist completely whipped but they were mistaken. When I closed and he rose to discuss the issue, to my surprise and everybody else, he would not have his own plan but just denounced that Tex-Canker convention and denounced everything they had done, but where he lost out was during these two days he had been circulating their paper and securing subscribers to the paper that had their plan in it. He had spoken several times to his brethren about subscribing for the paper and told what it stood for. Well, when he closed, which was very soon, I rose and told him I was surprised at his denouncing his own plan or the plan his own folks had put out. It was no trouble to see that he was whipped. His own folks had to give it up and that I had won on him.

Sunday came and he was to open the discussion and he hardly mentioned his position. So, that was the first and only debate I ever had on a religious subject.

Bro. W.B. Crumpton, Secretary State Board of Missions, objected to me entering into that discussion, but it could not be avoided. It was either put up or shut up, so, I put up. It resulted in good, for since that time, no one has ever attempted to oppose the organized work in our section. Bro. Smith and I are good friends today.

Among other things I was to do, was to carry a line of books, bibles and testaments, and other good religious books. Whatever was made on the sale of the books, above the cost, was to be my salary. I suppose it amounted to about ten dollars (\$10.00) per month. Didn't receive anything from the State Board of Missions, nor from the association, but went at the job as though I was getting a good salary.

I had with me, many little five and ten-cent testaments, which I gave to the children and to families that did not have a bible or were not able to buy one, so, it was seed sowing time. I made all the ends met, paid for all the books and had a great joy out of working for my Lord. In this way, I organized several churches and Sunday schools, and helped many a struggling preacher in his work. I always liked preachers and when I was a child, I didn't know but two preachers. I thought they were the only two that had ever been, and if they died we would never have any more preaching. I didn't think a preacher ever died. I had heard older people say that a preacher never died, that when they got old they turned to a grey mule and no one ever saw a dead grey mule, which, of course, was not true.

Every once in a while, someone who is grown and has grandchildren, tells me that they still have that little testament I gave them when they were just a child. Thank God for seed sowing.



CHAPTER FIVE

Back yonder, years ago, we had what was called district meetings. A program was prepared and certain subjects discussed. One was "Why I Am a Baptist." Our good brethren would emphasize the fact that they were Baptist, warp and filling, a yard wide and an inch thick. Well, I could not say all that. I could say that I was Baptist, warp and ready for filling.

In 1907, I secured the services of Bro. W.B. Crumpton, who was Secretary of the State Board of Missions, and Rev. J.H. Longcrier, pastor of the First Baptist Church at Jasper, Ala.

We began a church to church campaign at Blooming Grove, where I was pastor. This was the first time in the history of the Clear Creek Association that we had ever had visiting preachers to come among us. These brethren did not say much along the line of missions like we do today, just led up to that point. Bro. Crumpton would deliver a lecture along a better support of the pastor; tell some of his experience in his life as a missionary in other parts of the state. He knew just how to handle the situation. Bro. J.H. Longcrier would preach a soul-stirring sermon. My job was to introduce these brethren, find homes for them and secure conveyances for them from one place to another. We visited all my churches and many other places. We never took up a collection at any place where we went, just depended on the good brethren to furnish conveyances for Bro. Crumpton. I furnished a conveyance for Bro. Longcrier.

Well, we went right through the center of the association. I had arranged the appointments a month ahead, so most everybody knew we were coming. We had a good crowd. Some were disappointed, thinking we were going to take up collection everywhere we went. In that they were much disappointed. Sometimes word went ahead that we were just out after the money. Bro. Longcrier would answer that by saying we were after the people and not their money. Bro. Longcrier would always make the brethren and sisters cry. Yes, they sometimes would get to shouting. So that broke the ice. Not one penny did Bro. Longcrier or I receive for the time we spent, which was about three weeks. Bro. Crumpton was paid a small salary by the Board, but someone had to sow the seed and I took a great delight in helping in a weak way to do so.

From that time a visiting preacher was heartily received wherever he went, yet missions still had its opposition but Sunday Schools were not so very much opposed.

About two years after the orphans home was put in operation, I brought the matter to the attention of the brethren and asked, after I had made a talk on how we were going to help take care of the orphan children, to take up collection for the orphan's home. Well, this was the first collection that had ever been taken in the Clear Creek Association. I offered a motion that there be a committee appointed to make a report on the orphan's home at the next association. The moderator appointed me chairman of that. At the next association I had my report ready. I was well up on the job. I had attended the state conference and met all the children that were in the home at that time, heard them sing a beautiful song. So, I was ready for a speech and a collection. I don't think I spoke over twenty minutes and everybody in the house was crying, some just could not hold in and some almost shouted. The Lord used me for his glory. We had a very large crowd at this association and I managed to get my report in the first day. We always had the best crowd the first day. Many were standing in the yard, just as close to the door as they possibly could and they were listening with all their ears. We took up a collection for the orphan's home and got a fine collection. It seemed like everybody contributed something, so that broke the ice. No collection was ever opposed from then on and missions did not have much of an opposition. We just didn't do anything.

Well, I must skip a long ways. My dear reader will get tired of trying to follow the unworthy dust of my rambles over the mountains. As a mountain preacher, many a rich thing I could relate, some very amusing and some not so amusing, but let me just drop over a few years to 1920.

We had already had a committee on missions, we called it, but had not done anything. By this time some of our state workers got to coming among us. Dr. W.F. Yarborough, now pastor at Jasper, was the first Secretary of the State Board of Missions to show up. I was moderator and I gave him a hearty welcome.

In 1920, I, with Bro. J.J. Bartlett, was employed for three months as associational missionary. We worked through July, August and September. The executive committee, who was in charge of us, divided up the association. I took the east half and he the west half. This was done in order to cover the entire association. The Lord greatly blessed our efforts. We organized nine churches, received by baptism 141, by letter and restoration 80, organized twenty-one Sunday Schools and raised more money than it took to pay our salaries. We were to receive \$25.00 per month, but the Lord so blessed our labors until the money seemed to be the least thing in it.

At that time and many years before, I was pastoring four churches and continued to do so until a few years ago, when my health failed me and I had to retire from the pastorate. Now work is mostly in my community and among my home people. The most preaching I do now is conducting funerals. I am called far and near, where I have served people, to bury their dead.

Someone may want to know how I have cooperated with other denominations. I haven't been asked to cooperate with any except the Methodist and only then in my community. For several years there have been two Methodist churches in my community and I have often assisted them in their revivals and buried their dead. I perhaps have conducted more funerals for the Methodist folks than any of their pastors. One reason was that most of the time their pastors did not live in the community, and I, being handy, was usually called on to conduct the funerals of most all of them that Welt buried in the local cemetery.

Some one who is unfamiliarly acquainted with me may say that Bro. Gibson was a compromiser. No, not that. I preached Baptist doctrines in the Methodist churches, the same that I did in the Baptist church but I never was a denominational fighter. I never mentioned their beliefs, just did my best to preach the Bible.

I have baptized more people who come to the Baptist church from the Methodist, perhaps, than any preacher in all this country in one community, where I pastored a church for twelve years, I baptized every Methodist in that community. I find when a preacher preaches the Bible and gives the folks the truth that you can win them. At one of their meetings in my community, they were holding a revival meeting and I attended as often as I could. At the close of the meeting their pastor announced that Bro. Gibson and his people had greatly helped in the meeting and he would open the doors of the church and he wanted me to come out and stand with him and if there was anyone who wanted to join the Baptist church to come and give me their hand. I accepted his offer and to his surprise two of his own members came and joined the Baptist church. Well, someone had to make some remark about it. They said that I had been proselyting. I told them that I had not done that but if Bro. Freeman did not mind what he was doing in the opening of the doors of the Methodist church I would go and get everyone of them.

Sometime they would get a preacher that was jealous of me but he soon learned that his own people liked me, but he didn't get anywhere cold-shouldering me.

I never had much experience with other denominations. Baptists and Methodist were about all we had in this section. However, I had run into them in my travels, but when they found out that I had written a history of the Baptist church in this state and gave their doctrinal beliefs, they let me alone. They knew I understood what I was talking about. That was one thing I learned when I first began preaching and that was to lean what Baptists had always stood for and it wasn't any trouble for me to explain it, and while I let other people's beliefs alone, I preached what Baptist believed and I have found people are more open minded than you think. Some of my own people gave me more trouble than anyone else. I have found lots of people who have joined the Baptist church who are not really Baptist in everything that Baptist stands for. They would differ with me and give me more trouble than anyone else

Now, I am going to change the picture Just a little and take up some of the hard problems. You have styled this book "The Mountain Preacher," but what about the mountain stiller . . . just read the next chapter.



CHAPTER SIX

The mountain stiller comes in Just here. I was a terror to them. I never did drink whiskey as a beverage. Always hated it, so that fight began when I began preaching. There were plenty of stills in these mountains and they were not molested much, in fact, most Baptists would drink whisky, even some preachers did. I knew it was a growing evil and it would soon get a man and I learned early that it would get his influence.

Well, it came about in this way. In my community there were lots of people that would get drunk and it seemed they always had a spite at me. The first thing I did was to get a bill passed by the legislature prohibiting the sale of whiskey in my beat and then I said: "They can't sell it legally; now, I will see that they can't make it legally." I went to work with the help of one of my deacons to report every wildcat still in this section. That brought fire down on me. Many a time he and I would search these hills and hollers for stills. When we located them we would have the revenue officer come in and destroy them. Then when one was torn up and the operator put under bond, old George Gibson would catch it. Their sympathizers were just about as mad as they were. Sometimes they would say, "I will never hear old George Gibson preach again as long as I live." But they would cool down and come out next time.

Something that always surprised me (for a long time) was when one of their folks died, they would call on me to conduct their funeral.

I have gone, as I have said, day and night to hunt them up, generally, I had to go at night for they would have a watcher in the day. There is one thing I would never do and that was to deny reporting these stills. When I would report one, the first time I met the fellow (of course, he was mad) I would tell him in a friendly way that I reported that still and not to blame anyone but me. Well, he knew he was doing wrong. He would not raise a row with me about it. He knew I loved him but did not love his business. Of course, most of the time he would deny operating it. but he was caught at the still and that was the only proof we had.

It had become generally known that George Gibson reported So-and-so's still and it wasn't very long until other folks were with me. The mothers more often than anyone else for when their husbands and sons came in drunk and raised all manner of trouble, they got tired of it. Of course, their sympathizers would advise me not to report them and that I would be found on the side of the road dead some day or my body, if ever found, in some of these streams, but that did not bluff me. I just went on. However, there was a plot formed one time to kill me, but they gave it away to the wrong person. You see that I have been a Master Mason for many years and was a Royal Arch Mason and they gave this thing away to a Royal Arch Mason and that was enough. No time was lost until I was informed of it. They set the trap but I knew all about it and did not walk into it, so, they never undertook that again.

In 1909 we had on a fight over the state. We held an election to put prohibition in our state constitution. Then the fight was on in good shape. I was in demand everywhere to make prohibition speeches. They changed my name and called me "Politician Parson."

We always opened our meetings with prayer. One of their speakers in the crowd one day cast that in my teeth. I said: "Yes we do open our meetings with prayer and you whiskey folks open yours with a corkscrew." That silenced him. Of course, we lost in our count. Then the only thing to do was to fight demon rum locally, and I kept it up.

I reported one of my neighbors, who lives in sight of me, three times and every time we destroyed his still, he would get mad at old George Gibson, but when I would tell him I did it, he would cool off. At last he said, "I just can't make liquor as long as George Gibson lives." So he quit.

About a year after that I got seriously sick. In fact, I thought the time was up for me, so did the doctor, and to my surprise the first neighbor to come to see me was he. He said just as soon as he heard of it he came. He spent sometime with me. I appreciated it and to this good day he is as good friend as I have in the community.

So, now, after more than forty years fighting demon alcohol, I don't know of anyone in the community making whiskey.



CHAPTER SEVEN

In closing I want to say something about the children. As I have already said, I always loved children and most of them have always loved me. I want to now, just right out of my own heart and mind, tell, some of the incidents, in my fifty years as a mountain preacher, that have occurred.

The highest compliment that I ever had paid me was by a little boy about four years old. It came about this way: I was up in the northern part of my county a few years ago on some business. I drove up to the man's house that I went to see. He was over in the field picking cotton. He had just one child, a little boy about four years old., He came out to the car, talking to me just like he had known me for a long time, and I was talking to him just like I had always known him. He came up to the car and we were talking. That morning I put some big, red apples in my handbag that I usually take with me. I always tried to take something along to give some child, candy, apples, oranges, just something. I used to take a little testament to give some child. So, I reached down and got one of

those big, red apples that I had with me and handed it to him. He looked so pleased. He wanted to say something but he was so overjoyed by getting that big, red apple that he did not know what to say. I said to him, "You don't know who this is, do you?" (He didn't for he had never seen me before). His answer was, "I believe it is Santa Claus." That was the highest compliment ever paid me and I have had thousands of them paid me. Every little boy and girl thinks Santa Claus is the best man in the world.

Let me say, right here, in every community that I have pastored churches in, I have told the parents to be careful how they talk before their children for I could tell just everyone of the fathers and mothers how they liked me. It was the way their children liked me. This is the way I put it, "If you say hard things about your pastor before your children, I will find it out, for your child will tell on you. You may flatter me and make out to me that you like me, but perhaps before you started to church that very day, you would bless me out right before your children and your children would shy around, perhaps would not shake hands with me at church. I would say your children have not learned to act the hypocrite like you have." So, by this means, I would win their children.

Well I must tell my dear reader of an experience I had on my 69th birthday at my home church. I was still in the pastorate but happened to be at my home church the first Sunday in March. I told the folks if the children would be quiet and come out, I would preach there the fourth Sunday in that month. Well, that was my birthday. I told them I would tell them how old I was. So, the fourth Sunday in March I was there and an unusually large crowd was out. I could not account for it unless the people wanted to know just how long I would bother them. After Sunday School, I got up and preached. The Lord seemed to be in our midst, everybody seemed to really enjoy the services. Well, I dismissed the congregation and here the best time came. The Sunday before, the Sunday School decided that they would have me some birthday presents. Here came the Sunday School teachers and their classes with all their presents. I think everyone brought me something. The last class was the beginners.

Here I broke down. I just had to cry. Yes, I did cry. I could not help it. These little fellows with their presents was more than I could hold in on. I have some of them today and money would not buy them.

Well, we went out into the yard. I asked my wife if she was going with me in the buggy. The reason I did this was because some of the children that were married would go up home with us. They had cars and she would go with them. She said that she would go with some others in a car. Pretty soon the cars and trucks were all lined up, started out up the road toward my house. "Well," I thought to myself, "what does this mean?" My wife always prepared dinner Sunday morning before we started to church. That morning she had made a chicken pie. I thought to myself that we would have to cook more chicken pie for all that crowd. Well, of course, they got up to the house before I did and when I got in sight the yard was covered with folks. They were arranging trucks to spread dinner on. When I got to the house one of the boys took charge of the horse, put him up and told me just to rest. Dinner was soon announced and such a dinner this old preacher never had seen before. The Sunday before, while I was off preaching, they planned a surprise birthday dinner for the old man. Well, I could not eat much, not that it was not appreciated, but I was too full. I ate a few bites, got off under a shade tree and took a little cry. Well) we had a great time. Most all of the people had been raised in the community and I had known many of them all their lives. I baptized most of them, taught them in Sunday School and preached for them as far back as they could remember. I was full of joy and haven't got over it yet.

One thing I want to say right here and that is, all the people in my community have not liked me nor do they today but most of them did and do today. The children call me Bro. Gibson and that is the name I want to be known by, Just Bro. Gibson. I have had a few to call me Dr. Gibson. I don't like for preachers to be called Dr. So-and-so. Just call me Bro. Gibson.

Just this closing word and then I am through. Someone will say, as others have said, "Bro. Gibson, why did you not get out in a larger field? You were capable of pastoring some of our strong churches." I never did hunt a field. My Lord said, "The field is white unto harvest." I never was a candidate for pastorate of any church, never did accept the pastorate of any church where I could not be assured that the Lord was leading me there. I have been offered a field with a good salary.

When the Lord saved me and I fully surrendered to his service, I let him choose my field. I never have a desire to be a rambler. I have been asked several times, "Bro. Gibson; you have quit preaching entirely, haven't you?" NO. The Lord just seemed like helped me win more young men to him than almost any one other preacher. I have in mind today many that are able preachers, pastoring city churches. They were the ones that the Lord sent out. They are preaching today, so, I am preaching everywhere, in cities and towns and in the country. Many a young man that I have led to Christ is filling responsible positions, some are heads of colleges, some are teachers in colleges, some are doctors, some are bankers and thousands of others are in one kind or another of Christian work. So, I am preaching. Furthermore, the Lord has blessed me and my wife with, a fine set of children, seven boys and one girl. They love their old dad. They are scattered everywhere but they love their old dad. One, who lives in a city in another state, a few years ago, in writing me a letter, made this statement, "Dad' I had rather be a preacher's son than a president's son." I have a host of grand-children and great-grand-children and I can't tell any difference among them. I love them as 'Well as I do my own. So, reader, don't think I held back and did not look out for other fields.

I am living on the same plot of ground that I settled when my wife and I started housekeeping. Of course, I will remain here.

Well, I had better say something about what the churches have done for my support in a financial way. Well, let us just leave that to the Lord. I did not starve neither did my children starve. We had food and raiment and the Lord gave me thousands of souls for my hire.

Now, here in my old age, I am still trusting in the Lord for food and raiment. Somehow I believe he will provide. I have faith in him and trust him to the end.

GOODBYE.



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A friend and associate of Rev. George W. Gibson, who has continuously appreciated his service to his community, his county and our county, not only in Church work, but all things helpful.

A. B. LEGG

For 50 Years a

FRIEND