

THE Welcome Visitor

"Surely I Come Quickly. Even So, Come, Lord Jesus."

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OUR PIONEERS.

DON'T TEAR THE OLD CHURCH DOWN.

WHAT! Tear the old church down, you say.
And build a modern one
That we can look upon with pride,
And boast of when 'tis done,
With lots of little rooms below,
For festivals and fairs,
And one big room for preachin',
With its pews and easy chairs?

What's wrong about the dear old church
We've worshiped in so long?
The walls are good, the clapboards tight,
The windows sound and strong.
I'll own the roof is leakin' some,
But that can be made right;
A shingle stuck in here and there,
Will make the old roof tight.

I tell you, brethren, that old church
Seems like a life-long friend:
Sweet memories now clustering there,
Will last till life shall end.
Each timber, joist, and board, and nail
Seem speakin' with a tongue,
And tellin' of the good done there
Since you and I were young.

Beside that dear old altar there,
Just fifty years to-day,
I knelt and begged for pardon, and
Christ washed my sins away.
And though old Time has thinned my hair,
And bleached it white as snow,
That altar is as dear to me
As fifty years ago.

The sermons that were listened to
From holy men of God,
Whose bodies now are lyin' cold
Beneath the church-yard sod,
Seem ringin' in my ears to-day,
As full of gospel truth
As when I listened to them in
The sunny days of youth.

I seem to hear the preacher say,
Come, brethren, let us pray:
And all the congregation kneel
In the good old-fashioned way.
I seem to hear the thrilling shouts
Of "Glory" and "Amen"
Responding from the people's hearts,
And echoing again.

I seem to hear the good old hymns
We all so loved to sing,
That used to swell from every heart,
And make the old church ring.
There's one now ringin' in my ear—
"Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

'T would seem too much like sacrilege
To tear that altar down;
I fear God wouldn't bless the deed,
But rather on it frown.
No, brethren, not a dollar will
You get from my old hand,
I'd rather give five hundred more,
And let the old church stand.

I beg you, let the old church stand,
And when this old gray head
Shall lie beneath the springing flowers
In the city of the dead,
Then you can tear the old church down,
And build one new and grand;
But while I live, O heed my prayer,
And let the old church stand.

—Selected.

ORGANIZATION OF THE OHIO CONFERENCE.

Retrospective.

On Feb. 8, 1862, the Seventh-day Adventists organized their first church in Ohio at Lovetts Grove near Bowling Green. The Ohio Conference was organized in 1863 at Wakeman, O., with Oliver Mears as president, H. T. Baker as secretary, and P. Ferciot as treasurer.

The officers of the Conference for the years 1864-1873 were as follows:—

1864

President, O. Mears; Secretary, H. F. Baker; Treasurer, John Mears. The Conference was held at Portage.

1865

President, O. Mears; Secretary, Joseph Clark; Treasurer, John Mears. The Conference was held at Lovetts Grove.

1866

President, I. N. Vangorder; Secretary, Joseph Clark; Treasurer, John Mears. The Conference was held at Lovetts Grove.

1867

President, Elder J. H. Waggoner, had credentials; Secretary, Joseph Clark; Treasurer, John Mears. The Conference was held at Lovetts Grove.

1868

President, Elder James White, had credentials; Secretary, Joseph Clark; Treasurer, John Mears.

1869

President, Elder J. N. Andrews, credentials; Secretary, Joseph Clark; Treasurer, John Mears. First camp-meeting with conference was held at Clyde, O.

1870

President, William Chinnock; Secretary, H. Hodgson; Treasurer, O. F.

Guilford. Conference and camp-meeting were held at Clyde, O.

1871

President, William Chinnock; Secretary, E. W. Hutchins; Treasurer, John Mears.

Licensed.—H. A. St. John, O. Mears, A. A. Hutchins, William Cottrell. Conference and camp-meeting were held at Mansfield.

1872

President, William Chinnock; Secretary, A. A. Hutchins; Treasurer, John Mears.

Ordained.—H. A. St. John.
Licensed.—William Cottrell, O. F. Guilford, Sanford Rogers. Conference and camp-meeting were held at Mansfield.

1873

President, O. F. Guilford; Secretary, A. A. Hutchins; Treasurer, John Mears.

Credentials.—H. A. St. John.
Licensed.—O. Mears, A. A. Hutchins, William Cottrell. Conference and camp-meeting were held at Lexington.

Thus I have traced the Ohio Conference from its earliest organization. We notice among the organizers of the work the names of such men as Elder J. H. Waggoner, Elder James White and Elder J. N. Andrews. It is a good thing to be born well, and no doubt much of the success and sturdiness of the Ohio Conference is owing to the men of strong convictions and strict integrity that controlled it during the earlier years of its organization. In this condensed report I have covered the first ten years of the Conference history.

All the laborers above named are now in the silent tomb, except Brother O. Mears, who resides at Clyde, O.; Brother H. A. St. John, who resides in California; and Brother William Chinnock, who resides in California. Other changes will be reported later.

D. E. LINDSEY, Sec.

"FAITH is not a blind, irrational assent, but an intelligent reception of the truth on adequate grounds."

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

AS we bid farewell to the old year and welcome in the new, we find pleasure in giving the readers of the VISITOR a glimpse of the past history of the Third Angel's Message in Ohio by those who had part in pioneering the work. We feel sure that this rehearsal of past experiences by the men and women whom the Lord called and used in establishing the "present truth" in our Conference will be read with interest and profit by all. God has told us not to forget the past but "call to remembrance the former days in which, after ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." "For his people in this generation the Lord has wrought as a wonder-working God. The past history of the cause of God needs to be often brought before the people, young and old. We need often to recount God's goodness and to praise him for his wonderful works."

It will not only be refreshing to the pioneers of this cause to thus relate their past experiences and recount the mercies of God, but it will, we believe, be incentive to those who have more recently connected with this work and at whose hands God will require a speedy finish.

As we thus take our last look at the old year and listen to the encouraging words from the dear brethren and sisters who have long borne heavy burdens may we greet with courage the untried future and enter upon the work of another year with renewed zeal and determination to hasten the final triumph of God's closing Message.

H. H. BURKHOLDER.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS: In answer to an invitation to briefly relate some personal experiences in pioneer days of the Third Angel's Message in Ohio, I will say that it was in the month of February, 1858, that my attention was first called to the Advent Message. I was then living about two miles north of Bowling Green, Wood County, and had never made a profession of religion. In fact what I had seen of some who did profess, and with whom I was most intimately acquainted in early life, led me to shun rather than desire religious influence. I was informed one day by a neighbor that a stranger was in the neighborhood delivering lectures in a schoolhouse and that he was attracting a great deal of attention and drawing large crowds. I concluded to go and hear him too,

and as a result, with many others, soon became deeply interested. The name of this lecturer was G. W. Holt. He continued his lectures about two weeks, as this was about all the time required to give a full course of Advent lectures at that time. His efforts were not in vain, for at the close of his meetings about thirty persons commenced to keep the Bible Sabbath. Among the number was my brother, John Mears, who urgently insisted on me doing likewise, but I did not. A little later, about the first of June the same year, Elder J. N. Loughborough and T. J. Butler arrived with a tent



OLIVER MEARS, OUR FIRST PRESIDENT

and I was solicited to assist them in securing lumber with which to seat the tent. I did so and another series of meetings was held. It was during these meetings that my wife and I began to keep the Sabbath of the Lord, and identified ourselves with the Adventist people.

In the summer of 1860 Elder James White and wife held meetings in a tent near our home which more fully established the believers in what is now known among us as the "Present Truth." From this time onward churches were organized in different places and the cause began to gather strength.

On May 27, 1863, at a general meeting held at Wakeman, a State organization, or conference was effected. It was decided that I should serve as president, H. F. Baker as secretary, and P. Ferciot as treasurer.

Thus the Ohio Conference started out with but few believers widely scattered, and with many difficulties to encounter.

One thing above all others, that made our work effective and that gave us courage and determination in re-

sisting the enemy, was a firm belief in the *very near* coming of Christ. Our unbounded faith in this event and that it was so near at hand added zeal to our work and joy to our worship. Many who longed to live to see the Saviour come in the clouds of heaven have fallen asleep. Among those who are resting from their labors is my dear wife who fell asleep the 13th of last April at the age of eighty-three. After spending sixty years of married life to be deprived of her in my declining years is a loss too great to be expressed in words. I now feel that my work too will soon be at an end, and that I will be called to rest a little season in the grave. If I am spared until the sixth of next month I will be eighty-five years of age. I will say in closing, for the benefit of all who may read these words, that after all these years of experience with the people of my choice, and careful study of the Message we are called to proclaim to the world. I am absolutely sure this work will end in a glorious triumph when Christ appears. My faith in the Third Angel's Message was never stronger than it is to-day. I have seen it assailed many a time by the enemy but it always came off victorious. May the Lord help us all to be true to the end.

OLIVER MEARS.

Waterford.

It was in 1866 when my attention was first called to the present truth, when Brethren I. D. Van Horn and Lawrence held a tent meeting at Bellville. The meeting was pretty well along before I attended it.

I heard a few sermons before they moved the tent to Fredricktown, but they did not have much interest there. By this time there was a challenge sent for a discussion. Elder Van Horn accepted the challenge, so they had a discussion on the law and Sabbath. It lasted three days and nights. Dr. Mann, his father and I attended it all through. We had to drive about nine miles. By that time we were pretty well satisfied that Elder Van Horn had the right side of the question, but we wanted to be sure before we commenced keeping the Sabbath. Quite a little company accepted the truth at Bellville.

I promised the Lord if it were made plain to me that the seventh day was Sabbath, I would keep it. Many times after working hard all day I would sit up till midnight and read, study and pray. We didn't have as much reading matter then as now; but we procured some tracts and I took the *Review and Herald* and that was a great help to us. I have taken the

Review ever since except one or two years. I would rather do without my meals part of the time than be without the *Review*. After studying the matter about two years I was fully convinced that this was the truth.

I was the first one that commenced keeping the Sabbath in our neighborhood. Dr. Mann commenced a few weeks later. We distributed reading matter and talked to our neighbors. Soon Brother Penn's family commenced keeping the Sabbath. Satan tried hard to hinder us. It raised quite an excitement among the neighbors. Some called us insane. They thought we couldn't make a living and keep the seventh-day, as we couldn't change work. We couldn't get our threshing done. I told them if it was the Lord's will that we should keep the Sabbath, he would open the way, and so he did. We had no trouble getting our threshing done. The excitement soon died down and we had as many neighbors and friends as we had before.

By this time the Richardson family moved into our neighborhood. They were Sabbath keepers and we would meet on the Sabbath and study the Bible together.

By some means I found out that Elder H. A. St. John would come and hold meetings with us if we wished, and so I made arrangements to hold them in our schoolhouse. When we came together I learned that we could have but one meeting, and the house would be closed against us. I procured a meeting house a few miles north of us where Elder St. John gave a course of lectures and had a good interest. There were a few took their stand, among whom were the Caufmans and John Acton.

There seemed to be an interest about Chesterville, south of Waterford, so Elder St. John went there and held meetings which resulted in Brethren Iles and Talmage accepting the truth. The Carsons lived in that neighborhood. They had been keeping the Sabbath before the meetings. Later on Brother Oliver Mears was sent here and helped to organize a church.

About 1873 we began to make arrangements to build a meeting house and in 1874 we got it completed. In the meantime, Elders E. B. Lane, Canright, Burrell, Underwood, Gates, and others visited us, while others were added to our number so we had quite a company. When the Mount Vernon church was organized twelve or thirteen of our number joined it. Others moved away and some went to work in the cause, while others backslid. In this way our numbers got down to a few; but within the last year there has been quite an increase.

Some have been added by baptism, some who had backslid took their stand again, and others moved in from other places, so our meetings and Sabbath-school have been very encouraging.

One thing that we have to encourage us is that we have sent out five ministers: Dr. Mann, D. E. Lindsey, I. S. Iles, Lovel Iles, and G. A. Irwin. While three of them are laid away, we can see fruit of their labors. It was Dr. Mann that started the work at Corsica and other places. His last effort was in George A. Irwin's neighborhood, but he was laid away before his work was finished there. It was completed by D. E. Lindsey and W. H. Saxby.

It was through some of the sisters of the Waterford church that reading matter fell into the hands of D. E. Lindsey and first called his attention to the truth. He came to our place and was baptised by A. M. Mann near our church. Besides the ministers named other missionary workers have gone out from the Waterford church.

I will say to the readers of the VISITOR that my courage in the truth is as good as ever. I am glad to see that the work is moving on. There has been a great change since I came into the truth. GEORGE BISEL.

THIS Message first reached us in 1867-8 when Elders R. J. Lawrence and I. D. Van Horn pitched a tent in Fredericktown, O., and held a series of meetings.

Though we heard but one sermon and the elders visited us only once, a lasting impression was made and we continued to investigate by studying our Bibles and the literature furnished us. The *Review* became a regular visitor in our home and the truth looked plainer and clearer to us as we studied.

In 1873 Elder H. A. St. John came to our place and held meetings in an unused church (Harmony was its name) about two miles north of Chesterville.

The doors of the church were soon closed against him but he with a goodly number of hearers repaired to a nearby schoolhouse where he continued to proclaim the gospel in its fullness.

At this time my wife, Mrs. S. A. Talmage, now sleeping, and myself with a few neighbors (among them Elder J. S. Iles) commenced the observance of the Lord's Sabbath and to walk in all the light given.

By his help we have continued in this way which grows brighter and brighter.

The believers at Bellville, Appleton near Newark, and other scattered ones attended some of these and subsequent

meetings, some driving a distance of more than thirty miles, so eager were they to meet with those of the same precious faith and to hear the word proclaimed by the living preacher.

We were baptized and became members of the Waterford church at its organization in 1873, our names having been dropped from the Methodist Episcopal church book on account of our new faith.

We are longing for the time when this threefold message will have been proclaimed in all the world; for that glad day when our dear Saviour will come and take his people to be evermore with him; when we shall meet our loved ones now sleeping; when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;" when "the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped;" "when the lame man shall leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb sing." Yours in the blessed hope, J. N. TALMAGE.

Clyde.

DEAR VISITOR: By request I take this opportunity to write you concerning the Advent or Miller doctrine. It was in the forties that myself and wife attended the lectures that were being given on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. The predictions and their fulfilment were so conclusive that we could not but believe them.

At that time we belonged to the Freewill Baptist church in York township. There was such an opposition to the truth that we left the church and have never regretted our decision and joined what was known as the Miller doctrine.

At this time there were companies in different localities: in Fremont, Pleasant and York townships, and the towns of Greenspring, Norwalk, and Castalia. There were three or four families in each company, and the meetings were held in the different private houses and schoolhouses. These were glorious meetings. There are only two or three of that company left. They have been laid away, and if we prove faithful we shall meet them at the resurrection morn.

I would state that the companion of my youth departed this life, December 26, 1851, fifty-three years the twenty-sixth of the present month. On that night just before she went to sleep she repeated the little verse:—

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

It was about midnight. I was wakened by a peculiar gurgling noise she was making, and in a short time without a struggle she was dead. I am trying to so live that I can meet her where there will be no more sorrow nor death, and be with all the redeemed.

My prayer is that we may be unbroken families in the earth made new. I remain yours in the truth,

C. STREETER.

Clyde, O.

(Brother Streeter will be ninety years old next April.—ED.)

ELIZABETH YOUNG HUTCHINS.

THE subject of this sketch was born to Charles and Nancy Scothom Young in Sandusky Co., O., March 2, 1825, in a newly made log house which had no floors but mother earth, one door and one window with a greased paper to admit the light. It is said that she was the first white child born in that section of the county.

Elizabeth Young grew to womanhood accustomed to the hardships and privations of early pioneer life. In early life she attended a course of lectures given by a pious man who taught the near approaching and the coming of the Lord. These lectures caused her to meditate seriously on the signs of the times and to search for the truth.

In the year of our Lord about 1844 another sojourner by the name of Emory Loren came, urging the people to prepare for the second coming of the Lord for the day was nearly at hand. These first two good missionaries did not instruct in regard to the Sabbath. In the year 1846 the subject of this sketch accepted the faith of the Seventh-day Adventists under the preaching of Elder Joseph Bates.

There were six members who claimed the faith at that time and were baptised by the elder, formed a class and held their devotional meetings at their private houses for many years, there being no churches of their faith in the county at that time.

At the home of Jacob Huber of Greenspring, O., a true and faithful member of their faith, they had many and many a joyful time waiting for their Master.

In later years, the class which had grown to quite a large number, rented a hall in the village of Clyde to worship in. And now just across the street in front of Elizabeth Hutchins' home in Clyde they have a temple that they call all their own where they worship God according to the dictates of their faith.

The six who first formed the class have all passed to the silent beyond except Sister Hutchins who will be eighty years old March 2 next.

Elizabeth Young was married to Matthew Hutchins in 1843 and they two traveled down through life hand in hand in the Advent faith until one year ago this fall, her husband in a ripe old age, lay down his life with his labors to wait the coming of his Master.

I HEARD the Third Angel's Message preached in the fall of 1876 by Brother H. A. St. John and T. M. Steward. The following year I attended the Norwalk camp-meeting and was baptised by Elder O. F. Guilford.

In 1882 Brother Gregory, our State treasurer died and I was appointed to serve the remainder of the year as treasurer. The following year at our camp-meeting I was elected State treasurer and served for five years. The Lord has ever been merciful to me. I can say of a truth, "I have been young and now I am old yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread." I am past three score years and ten (seventy-one) yet the goodness of our dear Lord is still attending me. Though somewhat afflicted at present he has not forsaken me but is still my strength and support. Your brother in hope of eternal life,

JAMES ROWE.

AT the age of eighteen years I was converted and united with the Lutheran church. I had a bright experience in the forgiveness of sins, and was happy in the Master's service for some time. Several years later I was led into card playing and reading of novels. I lost the sweet peace I had in Christ, yet in those years he never left me for he led me in just the same wonderful way to give up those foolish and hurtful things and prepare my heart for the reception of the present truth, as in my former experience had been the case.

In March, 1870, I heard the truth of the Third Angel's Message preached by Elder I. D. Van Horn near Clyde, O. The following fall Brother Van Horn returned to our place and five were baptised. Two have fallen asleep, one apostatized and one sister and myself are still loving the precious truth. The Lord has been my comfort and stay for many years. He is still "the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

The Third Angel's Message is threefold clearer to-day than what it looked thirty-five years ago. It behooves us all to return to our first love for the coming of our Lord hasteneth greatly.

The same fall I had the privilege of seeing and hearing Brother and Sister

White at the first Ohio camp-meeting which was held at Clyde. I am sixty-one years of age, so have spent over half of my time in the Message.

MRS. JAMES ROWE.

DEAR VISITOR: I will try to comply with your request and give my early experience in the Message. When I came to Ohio to live I was a member of the Baptist church, in Niagara Co., N. Y. I brought my letter with me, but did not live near a Baptist church, so never united with one here.

Soon after I came, I attended the lectures given by Brother I. D. Van Horn, in the North Ridge church, in Townsend. At that time I had never seen or heard an Adventist. When he presented the Sabbath of the commandments, I became convinced. I think I first heard this truth in 1870, and united with the Clyde church in 1871. I have been a member of this church ever since, and have ever found the loving kindness and tender mercies of the Lord dear to me. I will be seventy-five years old in March. Yours in the blessed hope,

SARAH A. GREENMAN.

I FIRST heard the Second Advent doctrine in the year 1843, in Mansfield, O., where I heard Elder Bates speak about the second coming of Jesus.

Being then only fifteen years old, I had never heard such good words before; and ever since then have been a firm believer in the Advent doctrine, for it is dear to my heart, and by the help of my Redeemer I will walk in the light until my days are ended. I was baptised by Elder Cornell at Greenspring in 1854, and am now seventy-six years old.

MRS. ALTA SUGGITT.

(Sister Suggitt is still a faithful member of the Clyde church.—ED.)

WELCOME VISITOR: I accepted the Third Angel's Message by reading books, pamphlets, tracts, and papers furnished gratuitously by the families of E. C. Penn, and Elder A. M. Mann, (deceased.) I was baptised at the Mansfield camp-meeting by Elder J. H. Waggoner and united with the Waterford church at its organization some thirty years ago. I will be sixty-five years old in a few days.

W. S. BOONE.

New Straitsville, O., R. F. D. Number 1.

"THOU art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honor all the day. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fail-eth."