

despair, and nothing but the mighty power of God kept me from laying violent hands upon myself, and although I began sometimes to be convinced that it was a mystery that never was, nor never could be known or unfolded by men or angels; yet when the devil would come again with his infernal snares, and tell me that I had almost found out the mystery, and that if I would try once more I might unfold the whole, I would again summon up every faculty of my soul to follow the suggestion.

So like a fool, swift for destruction bent,
Then reinforced and to the battle went;
Nor would retreat until a venom'd dart
Turning with fury to my bleeding heart;
Then would my tortured soul despairing cry,
Forgive me Lord, and save me, lest I die!"

But the Holy Spirit led him—at last so long undecided—to give himself up to Christ. The light and joy which succeeded his spiritual darkness was unspeakable and full of glory. Being of an ardent impulsive temperament, he threw open his soul to the full reception of God's love—this was in 1775, when he was 27 years of age. He says of that moment, "Redeeming love broke into my soul with repeated Scriptures with such power that my whole soul seemed to be melted down with love. Attracted by the love and beauty I saw in His divine perfections, my whole soul was inexpressibly ravished with the blessed Redeemer. O how I now desired to be for God and Him only, and to live to His glory and the good of souls! O the astonishing wonders of His grace, and the boundless ocean of redeeming love! Millions and millions of praises belong to His name! O how shall I make the least return? O what a wretch I have been to stand out against such love! I have long and often wondered why God did not have mercy on me and convert me; but now I saw it was my own fault, and wondered why He waited so long upon such miserable rejectors of His grace. O how black appeared all my righteousness which I saw I had hugged so long! And O the unspeakable wisdom and beauty of the glorious plan of life and salvation. O free grace! free grace!" Almost instantaneously with his conversion came the desire to preach Jesus to his fellow men. He wrote in his journal, "In the midst of all my joys, in less than half an hour after my soul was set at liberty, the Lord discovered to me my labor in the ministry and call to preach the gospel. I cried out Amen! Lord, I'll go, I'll go, send me, send me." So he went "not disobedient to the heavenly vision." His first sermon was preached in an old French house in Falmouth, on the property now occupied by George Young, in the year 1776, from Prov. 9: 12, 'If thou art wise thou shalt be wise for thyself,