

## THE SOWER

A Weekly Department of Religious and Secular Thought Contributed by REV. JAMES A. TURNER, Pastor, M. E. Church, Patton, Pa.

### A PRINCE AND A LEADER IN ISRAEL.

Nearly sixty years ago a young man, regal in bearing, noble in countenance, and ardently idealistic in spirit, having sold his few worldly possessions, came up from the hilly farm-lands of Morgan county Ohio, and entered the portals of the Ohio Wesleyan University, driven thereto by the spirit of a holy idealism and a passion for learning which burned within his soul, hoping that he might acquire an education sufficient to enable him to know thoroughly and teach efficiently, to a hungry world that so sadly needed it, that great body of literature known as the Holy Writ, and thus to satisfy a deep and urgent longing that had cried insistently in his heart for realization since his early childhood.

Having, after years of hard work, sacrifice, and devoted application to his studies, finished his education, and taken to himself from this same College-town of Delaware, a bride to be his companion through the coming years, this young man, James Elmer Turner, by name, turned his face to the frontiers of the great uncivilized West and journeyed over its vast reaches until he arrived at the little town of Oxford in the southeastern section of one of the great territories of the United States, where he assumed charge of a Methodist Mission school which was being conducted in that Mormon-settled mountainous section of what in later years became a part of the State of Idaho.

Here, in this raw frontier station of human civilization, the young missionary entered upon the initial stages of that unique and remarkable career which brought him in the course of time to a position of high eminence in the realm of those who have shaped human destiny.

Always the idealist and the dreamer, this young man had dreamed dreams and seen visions of a time when men and women should know their Bible as they knew their spelling book, and, looking toward the realization of that ideal he had originated a new system of consecutive and systematic Bible study, published a series of graded text-books for young and old, and de-

icated his life to the high task of carrying this Light of the Ages over land and sea and to the ends of the earth.

Because of his love for the great Book of Books which he studied and taught with a passionate devotion and a deep intellectual and spiritual penetration and grasp he became in the course of time one of the world's greatest scholars, authors, lecturers, and teachers in the realm of things Biblical. His new system of Bible-study, his graded text-books, were the first of their kind, and his correspondence courses and weekly publications went to students all over the world. He edited and published the Bible School Teacher, the Bible School Booklet, the Bible School Primer, and the Bible School Book, the latter a one volume commentary on the Bible, the only thing of its kind in print even today, and a book of great merit and practical usefulness.

The Author's primary efforts in the field of Bible teaching were in the days when he was studying at the University where he conducted classes in Bible composed of students whose interests inclined them in that direction. Later, in his mission-school work at Oxford, Idaho, he developed his system of teaching, and took many classes of adults and young people through consecutive courses of study in the essentials of that great literature.

The early field of labor in Oxford was one of unusual color and interest, being in that part of what is now the southeastern section of Idaho, it was in the heart of Mormordom. Language utterly fails one in attempting to describe the living conditions prevailing among this mountainous Mormon people. (One of the school's nearest neighbors was a Mormon who had 16 wives and 64 children.) And polygamy was common. Ignorance, superstition, squalor, filth, poverty and destitution were rampant everywhere. Crime, brutality, murder, theft, falsehood, and vileness of all kinds reared their ugly heads on all hands. Human life was cheap, and conditions of domestic horror were so common as to hardly excite comment by a resident, though almost beyond belief to the uninitiated. Reading of those rampant conditions of life in that country in those days freezes one's blood and chills one's soul.

Much vicious opposition was constantly in evidence against any uplifting Gentile or Christian influences. The Indians were pretty much in evidence to complicate the situation, and were a great deal of a nuisance most of the time. The reader can imagine the state of mind of the missionary's

young bride, who, when often alone in the humble little house which was the manse, was besieged by bands of hungry Indians who pressed their ugly faces against the window panes and demanded food, or, if possible, forced their entrance and took what they wanted. The writer well remembers accounts related by his mother of some of those terrifying and nerve-racking experiences, and of how she was almost paralyzed with fright on many occasions, when, alone with her infant sons, she had to barricade herself in the house from intruding bands of treacherous Indian savages. Indeed it was a colorful and exciting life; those days in Idaho, over half a century ago. Many interesting and exciting as well as unpleasant and sometimes terrifying experiences were gone through by these missionaries of the Gospel among these wild and woolly savages and near savage Mormons,—which would make interesting reading. In marked contrast to the degenerate human phase was the striking beauty of the surrounding country,—a veritable garden of Eden in beauty of majestic snow-covered mountain peaks, flowered valleys, rich soil, luxuriant verdure and clear, dry climate.

It was during the middle part of those interesting and eventful years at Oxford that the first two children of the manse were born,—the eldest son, Ariel Reuel, on January 3rd, 1888; and the writer, James Aubrey, on April the 7th, 1889,—fifty years ago, tomorrow.

In the fall of the year of '89, when the writer was six months of age, the young missionary brought his family back East, and resided awhile in his erstwhile University town of Delaware, Ohio, where he continued his unique and successful career as a lecturer, Bible teacher and evangelist, which activities subsequently took him into various assemblies, conventions, conferences, camps, chautauqua circuits and churches of all denominations over the eastern part of the country. Later he incorporated the American Bible University in the State of Ohio, where students were trained for special work, and from which headquarters went out a weekly publication to a large body of correspondence students in every country in the world,—the first of its kind on earth.

Ariel Reuel, the eldest son, and the writer, with the help of Lillian, the oldest of the four sisters, spent their school years in the University where they received their various academic degrees, while at the same time doing the work in the large printing office necessary to the publication of the weekly paper, pamphlets, books and literature that went to the four corners of the earth and, incidentally, farming and cultivating the large acreage of land in connection with the University estate. The supervisor of all these multitudinous activities, during the absence of the head of the institution, was, of course, the same wife and assistant who had seen such strenuous days in the far West, and who was assistant editor of the weekly paper, and who wrote an entire page of expository material each week for the young people, in addition to the other great variety of duties and activities incident to this large enterprise. With a school, students, a family of six children, a large printing plant, a large farm, editorial work, an immense house, and a thousand other little things on her hands to keep her busy, she lived an active and effective life. Many people have lived to over one hundred years of age and have not done even a fraction of what she did in her forty-six years of life.

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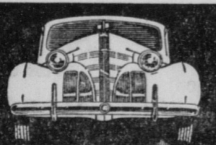
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Should the reader care to read some interesting books on the Mormonism of that early day, we would cite Deputy U. S. Marshal Fred E. Bennett's book, "A Detective's Experience Among The Mormons." And James David Gillilan's book, entitled, "Thomas Corwin Iliff." Both these books make reference to the work of the writer's father in the far West. Dr. Iliff was the District Superintendent of the writer's father while out West, and baptized both the writer and his brother, Ariel, in Oxford, Idaho.

### PATTON METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

James A. Turner, pastor.  
 Church school at 10 a. m. Preaching at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Epworth League at 6:30 p. m. Mid-week Bible Class, Wednesday at 7:30 p. m.

Have you gotten your copy of the UPPER ROOM? There are a few left. Have you ordered your copy of the Central Pennsylvania Conference Journal? Better do it as soon as possible. Thirty cents per copy.

Give the pastor the name of any person or persons who desire to come into the Church Fellowship on Easter Sunday. Also keep in mind the fact that Easter Sunday has been designa-

ted as Cash Offering Day. Make it a thank-offering, in view of the significance of the day, and what it means to you.

Don't miss the coming mid-week Bible studies. They are growing more and more interesting as they continue.

"My boy, treat everybody with politeness, even those who are rude to you. For remember that you show courtesy to others not because they are gentlemen, but because you are one."

"Money talks — but generally it says goodbye."

Martin Vanbee

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