

Editor's Note: The following information was taken from The Gospel Ambassador No. 4 April 1st, 1847 page 1ff. This is a wonderful testimony of God's grace in converting and maintaining a sinner through the ministry of James Wells. It is a truth the needs to be told and told boldly that Wells was a great soul winner. His earnest desire for the salvation of souls shines through in his preaching and teaching. I have not been to tell who "Quartus" was. Within the testimony is an important word of caution: not to make too much of any of God's servants (James Wells or any other gospel worker). We are all but sinners saved by grace that the Lord Jesus Christ may receive all the glory. The editors of 'The Gospel Ambassador' during this time were J. Tyler (Brighton), Kent and Richards (London). It was published from July 1842 to Dec. 1847.

A True Witness of the Power, Mercy, and Truth of God

"Thou shall remember all the way the Lord thy God has led thee."

The Lord was pleased to give me a tender conscience when I was very young, so that I could not sin cheaply; for when I was but a hoy I often felt concerned for my soul and sorrow on account of my sin, and though as I grew up I mingled with other youths and partook of their sports, yet I was not permitted to run into the extremes of sin. So that even then the Lord preserved me from evil though I knew him not, and in his own time was pleased to spoil me for this world, its pleasures, and its toys, and led me to seek my all in him, and I cannot but adore the riches of his grace who remembered me in my low estate with that mercy and favor that he hears to his own; and the manifestation of his favor to me was as follows: — I was a teacher in a Sunday-school, and in me the scriptures were fulfilled, it was "the blind leading of the blind," for I knew not the meaning of the name of Jesus, neither was I acquainted with his wondrous work; but while this was the case there was a secret something working in my mind, which said that "the way I was going on was not right, and if I continued to go on in the same way it would not be well with me," and this secret something continued to work till it brought about a reformation in my conduct, made me an attentive reader of my bible, and caused me earnestly to set about going to heaven; but, alas, it was in mine own strength and on the ground of works I expected to get there, and "being quite ignorant of God's righteousness I went about to establish a righteousness of my own," "for in those days I knew not that " Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes." Thus I was permitted to attempt to build upon myself; but it was but an attempt, for I could never complete my foundation, much less raise my building, for I could not attain to that perfection in the flesh that I sought after, for though I admired the improved appearance of the 'old man,' the secret something was still within saying that "there were things going on that were not right," but I hoped in time to get rid of these things, and then I thought I shall have hope; but the lust of the flesh would live and work within, destroy my hope and cause my foundation to give way. Thus the Lord in mercy destroyed my works that I might not be destroyed. About this time a professor said to me, "There is a young man, a Mr. Wells, preaching in Prince's Place. I would have you go to hear him." I went, and he was commenting on Eccles. iii. and there was a charm in his ministry that at once bound me to it. The hearing of him was the introduction to a new state of things, and indeed "old things passed away and all things became new," for a mysterious change took place in my feelings, and I felt an interest in the ministry of the word that I never felt before. When I, for the first time, heard that "human nature was depraved," I embraced and heartily believed it, for I had felt it; and when I heard that we "were helpless," I also believed it, for I had felt the same; but when the preacher

went on to speak of Christ Jesus Jehovah's way of justifying the ungodly, he went at once beyond my depth, I could not follow him, for I had never before heard of such a precious Savior, nor had any told me of this wondrous friend, and I gazed upon him with sorrow, for I felt I knew him not. Now the Lord was pleased to put his hand again to the work and "the fountains of the great deep (of self) were broken up," and the doors of "the chambers of imagery" were thrown open, "and I went in and saw, and behold every form of creeping things and abominable beasts," and with Paul I felt that "out of the heart proceedeth murder, thefts, adulteries, and all the things that defile the man," and though I strove against these things for a long time I found that still "out of the heart proceeded all the things that defile the man." I was led on in this way till I saw that sin was as natural to me as my breath, that it was interwoven with my nature, and that the law of depravity in my members was an immutable law and that there was in it a dreadful necessity leading me to sin, and that according to the constitution of things I could not be anything else but a sinner before the Lord ; this was a sore trial to me, for I felt that things that my nature loved and impelled me to do, were sin against the Lord, and that in them was the transgression of the law of God. The Lord also was pleased to shew unto me his sovereignty and his immutability. These, his perfections, were in my soul's estimation as firm as his throne, for I felt that the throne that He sat upon was a throne of sovereignty, and that in the exercise of it "He had mercy on whom he would, and whom he would he hardened" Being brought here my mouth was completely stopped, yea, "I put my mouth in the dust and went softly," and felt that I had no claim upon the Lord, and that if ever I received anything from the Lord he must bestow it upon me sovereignly. These feelings led me to tell the Lord that if he were pleased to slay me that I had nothing to say against the righteous display of His sovereignty; but Lord, I also said, I cannot be content to be cut off, for I cannot help clinging to thy mercy, and if thou cut me off, I shall mourn for ever and ever. Sometimes there would be a fearful working of the law of depravity in my members, and then distraction and despair would seize upon, and drink up my spirit, and then I would make up my mind to think no more of divine things; but the nail was fastened in a sure place, and these things gave to me so that I could not give them up. Yea sometimes desire would rise in my soul toward Jesus and his precious work, and there would seem to be in his offices a sweet adaptation to my case. At length the time of deliverance came, and it was on this wise I was hearing Mr. Wells. He described my case (my heart began to get large within me, and a softness stole over my spirit,) and after he had described my case, he went on to speak of the Lord's "Knowing all about us from everlasting, and in the face of this, His knowledge of us. He set His love upon us. "I sensibly felt the burden roll from my mind, and there was the removal of the sins of that land in one day. I came out of the chapel as joyous as an uncaged bird, and I said, "It is all gone." Often after this the Lord was pleased to visit me by the means of the same instrument. I was on my watch tower looking out for his coming, when the doors of His house were open, I was found in His earthly courts, and I loved the place where he was pleased in my soul to record His name. His ordinances were like cups filled with sweet wine, and I could say of his word. I have esteemed the words of thy mouth, more than my necessary food, for it was "a light to my path, and as a lamp to my feet," and I can truly say of those happy days, that it was as though I only lived for the truth's sake. Business, friends, and the world were nothing to me. It was Jesus and Jesus only. Since this blessed period, bitter have been my trials, sore my temptations, and many my fears, for in the hour of temptation and inclination to sin I am often compelled to ask if the above experience was of the Lord. When this is the case, sometimes he has been pleased to confirm me in the same, by repeating the vision in its power and its sweetness. The dear Lord having been pleased to make Mr. Wells such a blessing to my soul, I esteemed him highly for his work's sake, indeed I thought too highly of him, for it was as though he had a patent for preaching, and that no one could or ought to preach but him, for if he went from home to preach, if it were for one or more Sundays, those were sore to be fasting days to me, and if the supply preached the truth clearly a strange feeling of jealousy would rise in my mind. Joshua was not more zealous for His Moses, when he said, "Master Moses forbid them," than I was for my beloved W. But the matter is not so now, I still esteem him highly, and there is not one of the Lord's ministers that lies so near

my heart as he does, yet I rejoice in the promise of the Lord, "I will give unto her pastors after my own heart." But to return, the Lord having brought me thus far, and settled me in his dear truth, new designs began to rise up in my mind, and when I was favored to pour out my soul to the Lord, I found that the Lord would make use of me in his church, was a desire that formed a prominent part of my petitions. I was exercised much about this matter for some time, till at length I was moved from London to work in the country, into "a land where there was a famine, not of bread, nor of water, but of the hearing of the words of the Lord." This was a great trial to me and my wife, for she knew and lived in the power of the truth, to leave the ministry of our beloved pastor, a table spread with the choicest gospel fare, and to go into a the wilderness that produced nothing but briars and thorns; but the Lord would have it so. We had heard that the truth was preached within three miles of us. We went (and before we got there, my poor wife said if we cannot hear him, what shall we do?) to hear, but we could not gather anything, for the field was sown with divers seeds; and we had hitherto been so well fed, that nothing but the choicest of the wheat, nothing but pure grain would do for us, so that the preacher's chaff found no place in us; but we were not alone, there were a few who knew and loved the truth, and this few requested me to speak to them; which I did twice a week for some months; and during the time I was thus engaged, I was much indulged with light and warmth in my soul let into the truth, and often received answers to my petition, which the Lord led me to make to Him, and the few that attended said that their souls were blessed, and that they thought the Lord intended to make a minister of me." After a while I began to think a little of myself, and thought I could preach as well as Mr. So and So, and began to desire to get away from the few to whom I believe the Lord made a blessing, and my thoughts were, if I could but get up to London. The Lord was pleased to bring me to London, but not in the way that I wanted. In the country I had employment for my hands, for my mind, and for my tongue; while in town I had not employment for either for some time, and I wished myself in the country again, for the Lord was not pleased to open any door for me to speak in His great name, and I became dumb. My supposed greatness passed away as the early dew, and I dwindled in my own esteem till I became as a little child weak and helpless, yet I was a child, and indulged with the privileges of a child, and favored to believe that in the whole the good hand of the Lord was manifest towards me, instructing me, and leading me about and teaching me that "No flesh should glory in His presence; but he that glorieth should glory in the Lord" Amen. QUARTUS