

**Erastus P. Williams' Diary – 1836**  
Transcribed by Paul G. Zeller & LDS missionaries & Ruth Finn with Judy Safford

**January 1836**

Friday January 1<sup>st</sup> 1836 I threshed rye part of the day. Truman and wife, and Mr. Hopson and wife came here this evening. One year has now closed and another began, shall I spend it in sin and folly, or in trying to do my duty? Almighty Saviour! Help me to decide this question as I ought. Oh lead me in the path of duty.

2<sup>nd</sup> Hazen staid here last night. C. and I went to Mr. Paige's this afternoon a visiting.

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Clear, cool, and pleasant. Communion day. I went to meeting and heard an excellent discourse from these words "Be ye also ready." He stated the number of deaths in town the past year to be 15 members of the church & oldest person 86-average age 34. he recounted the various blessings of God the past year and his various dealings with us, and our land and world, the uncertainty of life. He introduced his text. Oh all who heard him would lay it to heart and be also ready. Franklin Corbin visited us, and Lyman Eaton was expelled from the church. Dr. Ingram and family united by letter last Sabbath.

6<sup>th</sup> Finished threshing and cleaning rye. I went to singing school at the academy this evening. Truman had a son born unto him this evening. Joy to him, may he live and grow up in the fear of the Lord and be a blessing to his parents, his friends, and his country. The snow has fallen about 10 inches since yesterday morning.

7<sup>th</sup> Began to thresh oats. Made a set of quilt frames. Aunt Safford came here. Settled with Mr. Gage this evening and borrowed 50 cents of Aunt Barker to balance his account.

8<sup>th</sup> Dea. Joiner came here and took up his note. He brought a note of Mr. Denison against me to offset in part against his.

9<sup>th</sup> Cleaned up oats part of the day. Went to Broad brook this afternoon. Charlotte went to Truman's. A heavy snow storm this evening. Thus ends another week. Time goes faster than my work does, and I fear my worldly business prospers more than my souls concerns. My heart is rebellious.

10<sup>th</sup> Sunday Cloudy and comfortable weather. Forrest and I went to meeting. Mr. W.'s text was in Matthew 12=43 4 and 45<sup>th</sup> verses. He had an interesting sermon. He pointed out the man that is partly reformed for a reason and turns back and turns back to his old ways again. "The last state of that man is worse than the first." Too much of his discourse is applicable to me. Oh that I would live most as I ought.

11<sup>th</sup> Did chores and errands all the forenoon. This afternoon threshed oats.

12<sup>th</sup> Went to Mr. Corbin's to a lecture by Mr. Washburn this evening. Mr. C.'s children were baptized.

13<sup>th</sup> Finished threshing and cleaning oats. Went to singing school at the academy this evening. Very warm and pleasant for a week or two past. Cooler this evening.

14<sup>th</sup> Cyrus and I went to Norwich.

15<sup>th</sup> Cold and blustering this afternoon. I have done up my (other folks) puttering chores and business and got back to Royalton without freezing. Put up at Cyrus's.

16<sup>th</sup> The coldest morning we have had for a month. Went home this morning.

17<sup>th</sup> Sunday A little more moderate. Aunt B. and children went to meeting. I staid at home with my wife. I hardly know what have been my feelings but this I know I do not enjoy myself as I wish. My heart is hard, my feelings dull, my faith small, my love cold, my humility pride and my sins great and numerous. Why am I thus? Heavenly Father wilt thou send down thy holy spirit into my heart and help a poor worm of the dust to love and serve thee as I ought. Oh help me to feel my weakness, my dependence on thee, my lost and helpless state, my utter wretchedness without an interest in the all atoning blood of Christ. Help me for his sake to do my every duty.

18<sup>th</sup> Stormy. I went to Wright's mill with a bushel of corn and waited till two o'clock for it. Ryland and Isabel went to Middlesex.

19<sup>th</sup> Made a wood box.

20<sup>th</sup> C. and T. Temple and their wives made us a visit today. I went to Mr. Warren's and swapped 3 ½ bushels of rye for 2 of wheat.

21<sup>st</sup> Washed and oiled my harnesses.

22<sup>nd</sup> Cousins Elvira, Henry and John came here this evening.

23<sup>rd</sup> I finished a cupboard that I began some time since. Cousins Polly, Nancy and Wm. Safford spent the afternoon here. I went to Mr. Fox's and to the village this evening. Thus closes the week and thus

24<sup>th</sup> Sunday Clear and pleasant but very cold. C. and I went to meeting. Mr. Tracy preached from Mark 16-15 "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." A child of Mr. Brown died this morning.

25<sup>th</sup> The greatest snow storm but one I ever witnessed. It being plump 18 inches and some say more. I have done but little today but chores and to honestly that is about all I have done lately.

26<sup>th</sup> I have been breaking roads and colts most of the time. The roads are all blocked up. The southern mail due last [night] but not come this morning. 4 Boston teams went up having come but 5 miles today and 5 yesterday and have left part of their loads behind.

My wife went to Bethel and bought her a gown, the first gown cloth that was ever charged to me.

27<sup>th</sup> Mr. Gage took our team and carried our ladies down to Truman's and then went to the village. I went to Randolph with a gentleman from Waitsfield and got back about 10 P.M. Very cold riding.

28<sup>th</sup> Went after my wife before sunrise but she would not go home with me. I went again this evening and she finally consented to go with me if Desire would go too. Very cold and tedious being out.

29<sup>th</sup> Extremely cold this morning. My work today has been painting. A poor old blind man and crazy woman with a little boy, a little dog, and a poor old horse stopt here and requested keeping. I excused myself on account of our beds being full. Did I do right? If my father and mother or any other friends had stopt I should have kept them and why not such wretched beings as these. They surely are to be pitied and need food and lodging as much as others, and they have souls as precious as our own and Christ died for them as well as me.

30<sup>th</sup> Went to the village and paid for the Chronicle. Went to Mr. Paige's and paid him \$3.00 for sugar. Went to Mr. Willis' to hire money but did not succeed. Went to Truman's and made a short stop and then went home.

31<sup>st</sup> Sunday More moderate weather. Snowed a little all day. Went to East Bethel to meeting. Mr. Kimball a Baptist preached from these words "It is high time awake out of sleep." Truth certainly in general and if others are asleep where am I. If others are early and stupid how much more so am I?

## **Feburary 1836**

Monday, Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> Carried mother to Uncle P. Safford's and then went to Mr. Kent's to hire money, but did not succeed. Money goes easier than it comes, and so does every thing else that I want, and that which I do not want, sticks close. I want to be free from sinful passions instead of being the servant of sin. I want to be a Christian-a child of God and yet how little progress I make in the Christian life. So little that I often fear I have lost my faith and have become a hypocrite. One thing is certain, if I fail of salvation the fault will be my own. God has done every thing for me that he could, and if I will not be saved I shall have to say God is just.

15<sup>th</sup> Monday This month is half gone and it plagues me to tell what I have been doing. It has been very cold and stormy. The snow is very deep and drifted and I have done little but chores. Have been to father's a visiting. Have been to E. Bethel. To Royalton and to I don't know where. Have tried (faintly) to draw wood but have given it up. Have been breaking roads and wallowing my cattle through the snow, have fretted and scolded for trifles have suffered anger in my bosom. Alas! Too many times and have I truly repented of the sins I have committed in my past life, in a fortnight past, the day past,

even this evening? Can I say that I have? Alas, my obdurate heart my weak faith, my proneness to sin, my ingratitude, my wicked rebellion, my slothfulness in duty and yet how often warned of the shortness of time, the uncertainty of life, last week five funerals in town. Mr. Woodward, an old gentleman, Almond Perkins a town pauper and idiot, Miss Rix about 15, a child of Mr. Davis & a child of Mr. E. Parker. Yesterday Mrs. Tracy wife of the editor of the Boston recorder. May that mercy that has spared so far help me to realize the necessity of being also ready, amen.

21<sup>st</sup> Sunday Cloudy and warm. Our thaw has commenced I hope. Went to meeting and set in *our* pew for the first time. Miss J. Rix's funeral sermon was preached. The text was Miserable comforters are ye all. It is 3 weeks since I have been to Royalton to meeting. What have I gained by staying away? Nothing! What have I lost? It is hard to sit in judgment on my own conduct, and though constrained to put the best side out. I find enough every day and every hour to make me loath myself and say, *miserable man that I am*. What makes me miserable? I am surrounded with peace and plenty, health and friends, and have no more vexations than others; then why am I unhappy? Is it because I do not govern myself and keep my hasty temper under? Is it because I am trying to deceive myself and my friends by pretending to be what I am not? Is it because I never know the love of Christ nor felt it in my heart? Is it not rather because I do not live up to my professions? When I look back on my conduct since I made a profession what do I see? What have I done for the cause of my redeemer? In what have I denied myself for the sake of promoting his interests. Heavenly Father! Will thou for thy son's sake look down on me, the most wicked man and feeble of thy children and help me to give up to thee. Help me to be thy servant, thy child. Help me to do my every duty. If ever I am saved it will be by free grace alone for I cannot of myself break the fetters of sin much less atone for past sin. Oh! Save me now and get glory to thy great name.

29<sup>th</sup> This month has fled. "Time! What an empty vapor tis how soon it flees away." It is a few days over a year since I was bound in the bands of matrimony-since I could call *my wife*; -have I acted like a kind indulgent husband, or have I caused my wife more misery and anguish than joy? Oh how much do I see in my past life to condemn? How often have I spoken short and pettish. Nay more, how often have found fault and chided without cause? Is it possible that I can be cross to one that I could not be happy without? How frail is man, I am the weakest of the weak, and wickedest of the wicked. Have I not solemnly promised to break off from every known sin? And is it not sin to feel hard and cross to them around me. Is it not sin to pray for forgiveness and then commit the same act again? In view of sin how often am I led to exclaim: oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? Reason and justice say it is no more than I deserve. Mercy says repent, forsake, believe and trust in him that is able to save, and yet so much sin, rebellion, deceit, unbelief and malice as my heart is filled with. What can be done with it? Again mercy cries, Christ is able, willing and ready to save from every sin. Oh that I might have more faith to look to Him as to my only hope, my only refuge. Heavenly Father wilt thou help me to look to thee through Christ for mercy. Save Lord or I perish. What my work amounted to this winter? Nothing hardly. The snow has been deep that it has been almost impossible to do any thing. I have done my chores and that is about all. Last Monday I went to father's and him on the back track. Tuesday to Mr. Davis' in

Randolph to hire money. Wednesday it rained all day. I went to Mr. Webster's and hired \$300 of him. Thursday the windiest day there has been this winter. I did not do much. Went to the village after the doctor Friday and Saturday drew wood. Drew a load of hay for Mr. Anderson. Sunday Mr. Wilder from Rochester preached.

### March 1836

March 9<sup>th</sup> 10 1836 Charlotte is 28 years old today [she was born March 10, 1808]. Will she live 28 years longer to be a blessing to me and to society? But I have no business to ask such a question. God only knows if it was best or right for me to know. I should have known it. If I do my duty that is all required of me. Our lives are in His hand and when He sees fit we shall be called home. Are we prepared to go to judgment? An awful question, yet one which it stands us in hand to be able to answer; and can I? Alas, my heart, but what have I to do with my heart, Christ has command of me to give my heart to him and he will cleanse it. Oh that I could make a full, entire and new dedication to him every day and every hour. How prone to wander - to forget and insult my bleeding Savior. Almighty God thou alone art able to save me from my sins. From eternal perdition help me to believe in thy son. Help me to love thee.

9<sup>th</sup> This month is 1/3<sup>rd</sup> gone but I have not 1/4 of the work I meant to do. Time waits not for me. This month has been very tedious so far. Today is most moderate day we have had this two months. A little rain this afternoon. I have been drawing wood and browsing cattle. Last Monday (7) went to town meeting. David Wheelock bid off the town poor of 5 years for 575 dollars a year. Last Sunday was communion day. A precious time to Christians. Oh that I could feel more sensible of its importance and meaning. A collection for the Tract Society was taken. Was the widow's mite cast in? Last week I went to Randolph by Dea. Kinney and got my note. It amounts to \$500.

10<sup>th</sup> Rained hard all day. Mr. Gage went to Randolph (11 miles) with my mare and sleigh.

11<sup>th</sup> Broke a road to the woods. Went to Mr. Fox this and carried a scotch Canadian.

12<sup>th</sup> Cooler with a strong with a strong N. W. wind. I went to Bethel to see Mr. Childe the surveyor.

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday Clear and Pleasant in the morning but windy and stormy the evening. Forrest and I went to meeting. Mr. W's text was "of prudent man foreseeth evil and hideth himself but the foolish pass on and are punished." Wm. Woodworth was published to a lady in Calais.

14<sup>th</sup> Mr. Childe came and measured the land. Mr. Fox gave me a deed of 40 acres, 1 at 12 1/2 pr. Acre. I gave him my note for 76.34 and paid him the remainder. Snowed most of the day.

16<sup>th</sup> Clear and pleasant. Chopt at the door.

17<sup>th</sup> rainy. I went to mill this eve.

18<sup>th</sup> Went down to Truman's swapped mother for Aunt Sena.

19<sup>th</sup> Went to Bethel with Aunt Senah. She bought a few yds. callico. Went to W. Bethel and bought six bushels of wheat for \$10.00. Went to father's and hired James for four months from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. There goes the week, thus goes time, thus comes eternity. Oh that I could realize how fast I am hastening to the grave-to judgment-to heaven or hell whilst I have so much at stake it seems astonishing that I feel so little concern about my future destiny even whilst I am writing. I feel cold and indifferent. My mind is wandering every where, but where I want it to go. If I could keep my mind where I would have it and keep temper and guard my tongue and watch my thoughts and give up my heart its rightful owner and live humble and do my every duty and fear God as I ought-I could then look back at the close of the week with composure but now alas what do I see? Nothing but sin, sin, sin. Oh! That could live one week as I ought. Oh that I could embrace the Saviour as I ought. That I could trust in God and be at peace. Jesus have mercy.

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday Clear and pleasant. Aunt B. and I went to meeting. Mr. Southgate preached from these words "Ye are the salt of the earth. Ye are the light of the earth." A *gentleman* run against Mr. Kinney's sleigh and tore it to pieces and struck his sister and tore her clothes very bad and hurt her worse. The gentleman was a stranger. He did not stop but kept along about his business.

31<sup>st</sup> This month is gone but winter is not. Hay and grain are gone, but the snow is not. Truly this is a hard winter and long will it be remembered. Corn and rye \$1.00, oats .50, wheat \$1.67, potatoes .34, hay \$15.00 and everything in the same ratio. The snow has settled half or more but it is very deep yet. The hills remain covered, but God rules. Oh that I could but realize it as I ought. But Whilst has kept a steady course what have I been doing? Upon a retrospective view I have to answer not much. It has taken me half of my time [to] do my chores and how has the other half been spent? Today I began to tap the sugar place. Then went to the village and paid the postage for the quarter ending today. Then went to father's after James but did not get him. Yesterday I drew two logs to the sawmill. Went to Bethel after a grist. Last week I bought 6 bushels of wheat of Deacon Kinney and paid him \$10.00 for it. Went to Bethel and got it ground but this I noticed before thus has passed my time traveling to the grave, *prepared or unprepared*.

### **April 1836**

April 1<sup>st</sup> Friday. I worked in the sugar place most of the day. Warm and pleasant. The snow runs better than the sap does but there is snow enough yet.

2<sup>nd</sup> The stage came on wheels tonight. It has been on runners ever since the 24<sup>th</sup> of Nov. A child of Rev. M. Tracy's was buried last week.

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. Clear and pleasant spring like weather. I did not go to meeting. Why? It was bad going! Will that excuse answer for every neglect of duty? How prone to make that or some equally small excuse for every omission. If I was really a Christian should I not feel more engaged in Christian duties? Sometimes (and often too) prayer is a burden. Sometimes all is dark and gloomy. Sometimes nothing but anger and confusion within. Every little trifle angers and chafes me. Again nothing but unbelief, anguish and despair. Then duty present itself and conscious asks does God require this of you? His commands are trust in me. Believe in whom I have sent. Give up to me and be at peace. If thou believeth, then thou shalt be saved. Then I think I will not give up to such feelings again. I try to pray and to believe and when I can exercise faith I am comparatively happy. Why do I not always? Because I am a wretched guilty sinner. If a sinner (says conscious) the more need of prayer. Christ came to save such. He came to save me. Oh that I could realize it more

4<sup>th</sup> James came here today. Ryland went to Mr. Davis's. I boiled in a dozen pails of sap. Warm and pleasant weather.

8<sup>th</sup> Aunt Barker came from Truman's this morning and crossed the river on the ice. Truman came home from Norwich last night. He sold his land for \$15.00 per acre. I have boiled about 50 pails of sap. Went to the village this evening with 35 eggs the first I have ever sold. Settled with Lyman. Some thunder and lightening this evening - the first this Spring. I went to Randolph and bought some corn last Wednesday and gave \$1.00 a bushel.

9<sup>th</sup> Rainy this afternoon. Boiled sap, out fencing stuff, etc. This week is gone and what creature has been bettered by me? What good have I done? I am still the object of sparing mercy and why does not my heart burn with love and gratitude to him who is the author of all good. "Could my heart so hard remain if I knew a Saviour's love?" Oh that I could love, praise, honor, adore and serve my creator as I ought.

24<sup>th</sup> Sunday Clear, cold and windy. I staid at home to take care of my lambs. The old sow ate up one this morning. When I look at the snow banks the thought crosses my mind they may as well be eat as any way and then again we have the promise The seed time and harvest time shall never fail. Seed time is fast passing and no ploughing or sowing yet. Thursday I ploughed a little, the first that has been done in the neighborhood this Spring. I think grass does not grow yet, and hay is gone. Many cattle are almost starved. Grain is very scarce. This is truly such a time as I never witnessed before, but the same God reigns now that has reigned years past when man and beast were crowned with plenty. Three deaths in town - Mrs. Dewey died without a moments warning. Mrs. Dutton was sick not a week, and a child of Mr. David Paige.

## May 1836

Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup> 1836 Warm and pleasant weather smiles, and earth rejoices, our long and tedious winter has at length yielded to the mild beams of Spring. For 2 or 3 days grass has grown fast, but there is a good deal of old snow in sight yet, but the prospect is that

the season will [be] earlier than last. I have been to meeting. Mr. W. preached from the words "If a man love me I will keep my words and my father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." An excellent discourse. Shall I profit by it? I feel that I ought to profit by something for I am getting very cold. My heart is growing hard, my feelings dull. It seems sometimes that I have lost my faith, if I ever had saving faith, but who is to blame? Surely God doth all things well. No one is to blame but myself. Why do I live as I do? Why do I not live as it is my privilege to?

7<sup>th</sup> Cool and cloudy with a little rain. I have been ploughing, harrowing and rolling on the meadow today. Luther Kinney worked here with his horses yesterday. James went home sick, but I hope he will be back soon. Dea. Parkhurst's wife was buried. She died with a billious complaint. By her death her family, and neighborhood, the church and society have sustained a severe loss, but what is our loss is her gain and though mysterious are the ways of providence yet we know all things are ruled for the best. Oh that I feel sensible of the justice, wisdom, mercy, long suffering, and goodness of God. Oh that I could live humble before him. Time moves apace and so does spring work but not so fast as the season. I have mended some fence, ploughed some and sowed about 8 bushels of peas, rye and oats. I am not done sowing yet. Last week went to Sharon and bought 60 lbs. of clover seed for 15 cents pr. lb. Bought herds grass seed for 3.00 pr. bushel.

14<sup>th</sup> A very hard frost this morning [illegible] all but warmer than yesterday. I planted corn part of the day. Went to Randolph this afternoon and bought 15 bushels of corn for which I paid 15 dollars. Grain is very scarce and high as well as everything else, excepting old horses. Yesterday was a cold raw windy cloudy day. I began to plant corn. Went home with mother this forenoon after I had finished breaking up greensward [green turf]. I have broken up between 4 and 5 acres some of which I have stocked down again and some I shall plant. Thursday I went to Royalton and then to East Bethel, and then home again, doing errands. James is ploughing, drawing manure, etc. Wednesday I mended fence and run after the hogs. James worked Dea. Kinney drawing manure. Very warm and dry. The ground is dry and baked. Monday and Tuesday Luther Kinney worked here with his horses ploughing.

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Went to meeting. Mr. W preached all day from one text. His discourses were good, his arguments clear and his instructions excellent, but what good will the best of preaching do unless sinners will learn and give heed. What good will it do me if I do not try to gain instruction, and treasure up the truths I hear? How can I do even this without the aid of the Holy Spirit? How can I have that aid without faith without doing what God has commanded? Almighty God wilt thou work in me both to will and to do thy good pleasure. Help me to love and serve thee as I ought. Thou knowest all my sins and transgressions. Thou art acquainted with my heart and knowest all the pride and hatred. All the impatience and insubordination that is within. Oh! Send down the quickening influence of thy spirit to lead me to submission and resignation to thy will. May my heart be filled with a sense of thy mighty power and goodness. Give me repentance and patience and faith. Help me to love thee. Oh wilt thou for Christ's sake do all that for me

which thou seest I need, and save me from my sins now and finally save me with an everlasting salvation and to thy great name be all the glory.

15<sup>th</sup> Sunday James and Aunt B went to meeting. I staid home, and how it will appear in the day of judgment that I have spent this day? Have I not awful reason to fear that the account will be against me? Father of mercy! Wilt thou for the Redeemer's sake send salvation into this wicked sin polluted, hardened heart. Oh save me from my sins. Thou alone art able.

25<sup>th</sup> This day I was for the first time in my life honored with the title of father. My wife had a daughter born unto her. God has laid new duties on us. How incapable to meet the new obligations. Oh that I could have a realizing sense of my weakness, of my dependence on God. Oh that I could look to him for strength and cast all my cares on him. Almighty God help me to throw myself upon thy mercy and trust thee for time and for eternity. Help me to feel truly thankful for all thy mercy and live humble before thee. Grant me the aid of thy holy spirit at all times.

28<sup>th</sup> 3 o'clock AM; here I sit with my sleeping wife and child, whilst around me save the clock and rooster are still and silent as the grave. This is hour for meditation both retrospective and prospective, yet such is the confusion and tumult that is raging within that I can think of nothing but my own misery. And what is the cause of my feelings. Am I not the destroyer of my own happiness. Who is there that wishes me unhappy? I trust no one. Then why do I feel so? Is it because I am a hypocrite - a professor of that which I do not possess; but my child cries. ½ past 6 P.M. This eventful week is drawing to a close and oh what reason have I to be thankful to my heavenly father that it is as well with us as it is. My wife and child are doing well and I am able to take care of them. Yet when I think that the obligations of a parent are resting on me - when I think of my inability to fulfil my former obligations, again I am called.

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday rainy. It began to rain last Sunday and has rained every day since. James and Henrietta went home last night. Mrs. T. S. Davis staid with Charlotte, and I carried her home this morning in the rain. I have spent the day at home as I have 2 or 3 Sabbaths before, but I shall probably have the privilege of going to meeting again soon.

31<sup>st</sup> Warm and pleasant wind southerly. My work does not keep pace with the season. Have not half done planting potatoes, yet my fence is not half mended, my sheep are not washed, my oats are not all sowed, my ploughing is not finished, my woodpile is not all cut and my debts are not all paid, but I have strength and ability to work yet and I hope soon to see through the cloud that envelopes my work. This morning I went to Mr. Brooks and got my plough mended, and broke it again before noon. Yesterday planted potatoes near Wight's line. Went to Truman's, and got my plough. Last week I did little but chores. This week I hope to do something but I cant tell.

**June 1836**

Wednesday June 1<sup>st</sup> 1836 The spring month are gone, where? To years beyond the flood. Washed sheep, carried mother home, and finished planting over corn. Rather of a joke to have to plant corn the second time, but some have planted the 3 and 4<sup>th</sup> time. Very warm and very pleasant.

2<sup>nd</sup> I am rather of a shiftless concern. Sick all night and not far from it today. Worked on the black piece. Warm and dry.

7<sup>th</sup> Training and inspection day. D. Bowen Capt. What shall I say? Nothing. This is the most shiftless training I ever attended. Suffice it to say that rum has been plenty though not at my expense. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> training that I have refused to pay for the rum, and unless I alter my mind no one will ever get drunk at my expense.

9<sup>th</sup> Finished planting potatoes and sowing oats. N. Kinney worked here with his horses. Went to mill this evening. The first time I have harnessed the mare since she foaled.

13<sup>th</sup> Mr. Lyman came here to work on the corn house. Warm and dry.

14<sup>th</sup> Moved the corn house down to the foot of the hill and for want of team were obliged to leave it.

15<sup>th</sup> Team enough this morning, moved the building on to the spot where I wanted it without difficulty.

## July 1836

July 12<sup>th</sup> This is the first opportunity I have had to write a word for most a month. My work is all behind. Potatoes are not all hoed, corn hoed but once, grass fit to cut and fence to mend, but my work ever so behind. I have this to comfort me. I have not been idle, have worked hard all the time and my health and strength are good. Today mended fence on the line between Capt. Dutton and I hoed beans on the meadow and potatoes on the new piece and ground a new scythe for L. M. Billings. Yesterday mended fence around the lower pasture and turned the cattle in for the first time this spring. Carried *my wife and child* to Truman's a visiting. This is the first time Charlotte has been visiting since last winter and now she may make up lost time. Sunday I went to meeting on foot. Mr. Reed preached, but I was so sleepy that I did not get much good. A stony ground hearer, or rather seed sown by the way side. Saturday went to town meeting the object of the meeting was to see what the town will do about the new road up the branch. Tied the mare to a post, she got quite uneasy and jumped on the hook and skinned a spot on her leg as big as my hand. This is the profit of leaving my work and going to town meeting, but it is a bad time and may I have grace to give up myself to him who will save all that come to him.

17<sup>th</sup> Sunday I have spent the day at home with my wife and child reading what? Affecting scenes. Have I spent the Sabbath as I ought? Have I got and done all the good I could? Alas! How many misspent Sabbaths will sin in judgment against me? Heavenly

Father, wilt thou for Jesus' sake have mercy on me unworthy as I am save me through his blood. Oh! That my past sins might rise before me in such awareness as to humble me and turn me to the rock of ages. Help me to realize my stupidity. O break the icy shell around my heart and may my bosom glow with love for him who died for me. Be with me and guide by thy good spirit and in death save me for Christ's sake.

18<sup>th</sup> began to hay a fortnight earlier than I began last year.

23<sup>rd</sup> Have got in here and at home and Mr. Gay's 23 loads of hay this week. Good weather most of the time.

### August 1836

2<sup>nd</sup> Finished haying. Norman Eaton helped me get in the last load of hay and 3 loads of oats off the meadow. Cloudy with signs of rain which is needed very much. A remarkable day. Cold season corn is small and late. There is but little that is too hard to roast if we have early frost. There will but little sound corn in the country. English grain is good. Oats remarkably so, hay and potatoes light. I cannot tell what I have been doing for a month past, but I guess not much! The last day of the month I made a bargain with Wm. Wight for 17 sheep. I am to keep them 4 years and return 34. They are to risk them. Yesterday went to Father's. He is very sick and has been 5 weeks. Henrietta is sick, but is getting better.

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Communion day. Mr. W had a very appropriate sermon in the forenoon, but his remarks at communion table were better, none could hear him and feel unconcerned. He warned us of the uncertainty of life and the necessity of being prepared for death and said it not probable we should all meet around the table again. Our next communion, probably, someone now present and in health would be called from time to eternity. Oh that this remark might induce each and every one to a close and faithful self examination that we might be prepared to go when called. Shall I attempt to say anything of my own feelings or thoughts. Let this suffice "*When I turn my eyes within all is dark and dead and dreary.*" My heart I find is not worthy of so much confidence as I once thought. The longer I live the more I am concerned of the total depravity of my heart. Oh that I could realize my state.

5<sup>th</sup> Mr. Bliss an aged man, member of our church was killed by being thrown from a wagon in Lebanon.

30<sup>th</sup> Finished getting in oats. My work has dragged this month. Chores have occupied me most of the time, but I have now a *hired man* and most probably my work will move now.

### October 1836

October 1<sup>st</sup> Shut up the old hogs. Hopson finished cutting up and getting in corn on the greensward. The frost a fortnight since spoilt  $\frac{3}{4}$  of it and damaged the rest, but I shall

have enough to use in the family for which I ought to be thankful. Yet how little gratitude do I feel the mercies I am daily receiving. Charlotte and I went to father's and staid all night. They are all better. Father after a confinement of 7 weeks with a typhus fever is now able to have his room. This is the first time for 18 years my father family have had waters, they have been blessed with health a great while but they now know what it is to be sick.

12<sup>th</sup> Cut up corn west of the house. Went to father's and got a cow. Charlotte stopt at Truman's and put up for the night. It is now 10 P.M. and I sit here musing and scribbling all alone and are my musings of the right kind. Oh that I could more fully realize my accountability that I am traveling to eternity but whilst one and another are dropping into their graves on all sides, I act as if I expected to live always. Yet I am in the road to the grave and every day brings me so much nearer and still the thought is continually rising. Death is a great way off, but – yesterday. Mr. Proctor was buried last Sunday. Mr. Washburn preached his farewell sermon. A council last week dismissed him. He preached at Uncle Davis' in the evening. Saturday dug potatoes, drew logs for Truman and lumber for Miss Woodward. Friday dug potatoes for Gay. Thursday husked corn. Wednesday muster at Bethel. All will remember the day. Cold rains and chilly wind most of the day. Very cold ever since. Tuesday chored and pattered Monday went to training or rather election of Col. And Maj. There passes my time although I do not accomplish much I am not lazy but it is bedtime. The representatives are going past all the time.

[Mr. Washburn's Farewell Sermon]

1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:14: Comfort the feeble minded This duty is enjoined among several others which christians owe to each other. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men There are mutual obligations binding upon all Christians. They are required to edify one another, and in another epistle, the apostle directs christians to follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. They are to endeavor to promote the work of grace in each other and thus labor to promote the good of the whole church: and as we have opportunity we are bound to do good to all men. Particular classes of men are often spoken of as needing a special interest in our christian efforts The text presents to our consideration one of these classes and specifies a particular duty in relation to it; "*Comfort the feeble minded.*" In discoursing on the text, my object will be, 1<sup>st</sup> To describe the feeble minded who are to be comforted, II<sup>nd</sup> To consider some of the causes of feeble mindedness; III<sup>rd</sup> How the feeble minded are to be comforted.

1<sup>st</sup> Who are the feeble minded? The Apostle certainly had reference to true christians for he would not direct comfort to be administered to any other. Our Saviour of the same class under the figure of "a bruised reed," and "smoking flax." proverbial expressions to denote a weak humble broken heart, in which there is but a glimmering of faith, a little

spark that is just beginning to kindle up. A wounded contrite heart bowed down under a sense of its infirmity. It seems to denote persons who follow Christ in fear and much trembling they have a little life but it is like that of a bruised reed or cane, apparently weak and trembling easily bent and twisted, but really strong and enduring: they have a little heat, but like smoking flax or rather the smoking wick of a candle before fully lighted into a flame or the smoking wick before the fire is wholly extinguished, or a like a candle just lighted which is liable to be extinguished by every breeze. But their contrition and self distrust and trembling faith should be regarded with special favor. "A bruised reed he shall not break and smoking flax shall he not quench till he send forth judgment unto victory. The power of the gospel in the heart shall prevail over opposition and fear until the victory shall be complete. The feeble minded are those whose carnal mind has been slain, their stony hearts softened. They are renewed but still in darkness they want comfort but feel unworthy to receive it They are timorous and faint hearted almost constantly expecting to be overcome in the battle they tremble at the thought of difficulty and danger and are usually dejected and sorrowful in the spirit. They differ essentially in many respects from them who are strong in faith and hope. More particularly – 1<sup>st</sup> *Those are feeble minded who have exercised submission to God but have no evidence that they have exercised faith in Christ* Young converts are often in this condition. As far as they know their heart they have submitted themselves to God, have ceased their rebellion to him are willing he should rule and reign over them they have no enmity to God, to his laws or government. They do not contend with his requirement, they justify God and condemn themselves, they acknowledge themselves to be in his hand as lay in the hand of the potter and are willing he should dispose of them as shall be most for his glory. They lie submissive at the foot of divine sovereignty, have comparatively no fear or distress and in this peaceful calm they often conclude they are left to stupidity. They see that God may justly destroy them but see no way in which he can save them. They have submitted but have no evidence that they believe in Christ. They have no clear view of the atonement they are in darkness and must remain in a weak, feeble and comfortless situation till they experience faith in the only and allsufficient Mediator. And many remain in this state for weeks and months and even years. They are like smoking flax before it begins to flame. There is real fire, true grace at work in the heart but it affords no light no comfort

2<sup>nd</sup> *Those are feeble minded who have submitted to God and have faith in Christ but have no hope.* There may be submission and faith without the hope of salvation. Some have really submitted to the divine sovereignty exercised true faith in the blood of Christ and yet are so fearful that their faith and submission are not genuine that they will not take hold on the hope set before them, nor appropriate to themselves the promises of the gospel. They sincerely believe they love the righteousness of God and love the Saviour and are willing to obey him but suppose that they have not such feelings as they ought to have, or such as christians have, or such as they thought they should have when they submitted to God and believed in Christ. They are sensible their feelings are different from what they were once but dare not hope that they have passed from death to life, they think it cannot be that they are renewed in spirit of their minds are pardoned and justified. They truly hate sin and yet it seems to cling to them, they think their sins more numerous and more aggravated than ever before. They desire above every thing else to obtain pardoning mercy and are determined to seek for it as long as they live. Multitudes by

their christian walk and conversation give satisfactory evidence to their christian friends that they are the children of God yet indulge no hope that they are born of the spirit. And they are so timid and fearful and so fondly cherish bitter things against themselves and so exceedingly fear that they shall indulge a false hope that they resist the efforts of faithful christian friends who would by no means blind them in self deception but would gladly influence them to acknowledge what God has done for them and desire that they should not resist light to the detriment of their own enjoyment and their usefulness to others

3<sup>rd</sup> Some have submitted (and have) faith and hope yet have so much fear and so little confidence that they may be with propriety called feeble minded christians. They sometimes hope but always fear and doubt, they never express much confidence in the belief that they are christians, they faithfully perform religious duties and are constantly seeking more light and confidence but never expect to have clear light and strong faith they expect always to live upon a feeble slender hope that they shall barely get into heaven. They are generally under what they call the "hiding of God's face" and think it their destiny forever to remain there, at least as long as they are in the flesh. Surely such feeble minded christians need to be comforted

4<sup>th</sup> Those who are remiss in duty who try to make a compromise between God and the world, who though they may be real christians are either too unstable, are wanting in firmness and decision or are in a backslidden state are usually feeble minded though they may make bold pretension to being strong in faith and hope. Feeble mindedness is the natural result of such a course. Some true christians lose their ardor and genuine zeal, their first true love in religion, neglect important duties grow languid and dull in their christian course and their spiritual state becoming weak and sickly. One defect or neglect of duty prepares the way for another, one temptation succeeds another till the spirit would become worldly minded and feeble, serious christians become vain and trifling, the exemplary become a reproach to the christian name. None are free from their declension, but the young and the inexperienced, the careless and neglectful are most in danger. Whatever may be the particular characteristics of the feeble minded it is not only true that the number is not small, but they are a class which have long been known in the church. The feeble minded are often mentioned in the scriptures. Paul exhorts the Romans "to receive him that is weak in faith," "to bear the infirmity of the weak" And again "Lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees and make straight paths for their feet, lest that which is lame (or weak) be tossed out of the way" <Hebrews 12:12-13> He also speaks of his own example of tenderness and compassion. "To the weak I became as weak that I might gain the weak." And who that has had but little acquaintance in the state of the church can doubt but what there is more *weak* than strong christians? But however lamentable the fact it will not be difficult to point out several reasons why many pious persons are feeble minded or weak in faith and hope. I proceed;

#1 To consider some of the reasons that many who have experienced a saving change should be thus feeble minded. We know there are a variety of circumstances which have a direct influence upon the minds of men. Worldly prosperity will sometimes lead christians to neglect of duty and spiritual sloth & consequent feebleness of faith and hope. Adversity, too, will sometimes involve the mind in anxious concern about the things of the world and produce languor & weakness in respect to spiritual things. Afflictions sickness and pain often so absorbs the attention that christian duties are neglected the performance of which is indispensable to growth in grace & consequent

strength of faith & hope. Age & infirmity as well as sickness & pain often distract the mind or so weaken its powers by reason of the close sympathy between the mental & corporeal system that all spiritual feelings and exercises are necessarily faint & feeble. There are also times when christians are specially tempted of the devil & if they yield in the least to his temptations their confidence in God and their strength of faith and hope must of necessity suffer a diminution. But I would call your attention to some other causes which have little if any connection with these and similar circumstances. In this connexion I would mention as a cause of feeble mindedness 1. A want of proper religious instruction or a heedless neglect of good instruction when given. This is owing sometimes to the neglect of parents, sometimes to neglect of ministers and other professional christians, sometimes to a criminal neglect of the preached gospel and other instituted means of grace, & it is sometimes owing to the attendance on the ministry of those who preach heresy and falsehood. Where either of these causes exist it is sufficient to account for a weak faith and trembling hope. Some in this christian land are almost wholly deprived of religious instruction are nearly destitute of bibles & of preaching whom God by his providence & by his spirit awakens convinces and converts. Some truth which have incidentally heard is applied to their conscience they are hit to see the plague of their hearts and with a sense of guilt and just condemnation they cast themselves on divine mercy yet still to a considerable extent remain in darkness and doubt. They are ignorant of the true evidences of regeneration and can not accurately judge of their spiritual state. Others hear preaching of the general and indiscriminating character in which little is said of experimental religion. The exercises of the mind connected with the awakening convicting, and converting influence of the holy spirit are seldom mentioned, never accurately described. How can christian but be feeble minded who never hear the great and particular doctrines of the gospel clearly and faithfully supported? If they hear these doctrines railed against as unscriptural, unprofitable, and dangerous the natural result will be a blighting influence upon their spiritual interests. If those who profess to preach the gospel deny the first principles of the oracles of God & with all their learning & ingenuity labor to [dis]prove them & bring them into contempt surely their influence must be baneful upon all who look to them for instruction. True they may not in every instance prevent their hearers from becoming christians and practically embrace doctrine which they hear denied yet they may essentially hinder the growth of grace in the heart & prevent their hearers from becoming strong in faith.

Their hearers may not embrace all the errors taught them, yet they generally embrace some which neutralize others or greatly hinder their progress in divine knowledge & prevent the precious truths which they pretend to embrace from exerting their due influence upon their hearts and lives. This is doubtless the reason why many real christians make but slow progress in their religious course. Though many who call themselves religious teachers have exceedingly vague notions of divine truth, overlook the first principals of religion, say little and appear to know less of christian experience whom multitudes boasting of their religious freedom will flock together to hear justify their cause by presenting the scripture direction “prove all things & vaingloriously assert that they will not be restricted or trammeled in their religious notions, while in reality they are trammeled and fettered and bound in the snares of the devil and pushed headlong into ruin. And if christians are entangled in these wiles there is good reason for their being in a feeble sickly state. If christians have not clear views of the great and

fundamental doctrines of the gospel, if they see these doctrines as one saw men as trees walking they will necessarily be weak in faith, feeble minded christians. Obscure and faint ideas of the doctrine of grace must be connected with darkness doubt and uncertainty in respect to our spiritual condition.