The Life of Francis Howgill

From twelve years old I set my heart to know the God whom the world professed, and about whom I had read in the Scriptures, who Abraham, Noah, Moses, the Prophets, and the rest of the Fathers worshipped, and I fell into the strictest form of worship that was in the parts where I lived. I often desired to be alone, and gave much time to reading and meditation. And as I was sober and serious, spending time alone, I began to see that all the sports and pastimes, and such things as youth naturally delights in, were vanity, and that they lasted but for a moment. And while I was in folly and unrestraint, doing these things, that nature which had run into transgression took pleasure in them; but as soon as I had come away from them, I felt judged in myself for what I had done, and this often made me weep. Then I resolved in my will that I would never do so again, and for some time I restrained myself from the practice of those things that I had walked in. But as soon as I came among my companions again, I did those things which before I had seen clearly to be vanity, and for which I had been checked and reproved.

And thus I lived, often feeling condemned in myself when I was serious, and finding no peace. And not knowing what to do, I had a desire to be alone where I might not hear or see any folly acted, and where I would not run into the former practices, although something in me indeed greatly desired them. But when I did not yield to these desires, I felt glad and had peace, and then I began to oppose my friends with whom I had previously walked in unrestraint. These then began to revile me, and to hate and scorn me; yet none of this then mattered to me. I also read much and prayed often in words, three or four times a day, though I knew not where God was, but still walked in my imagination, imagining a God at a distance, and so I continued on for some time. I then began to grow in outward knowledge (which is sensual) and so became puffed up, for the world admired me. Yet I was often condemned for my vain words and actions, and I saw that the root of iniquity grew in me still. So I followed a more strict course of life, and often went five or six miles to hear the most excellent sermons (as they were considered), and so fell more deeply into a religion of words, but was still the same at heart; no, I was worse, for this outward knowledge puffed me up.

When I had come to about fifteen years of age, I often ran up and down in pursuit of the most excellent sermons, and thus became acquainted with all the eminent Christians (so called) in the region where I lived. I was despised by my parents and by the world, and great reproach came upon me, but I could see that they knew nothing of God, and so it mattered little to me. Great sorrow fell upon me for four or five years, and when I turned within, I was judged for all my former iniquity, and it was shown to me that my heart was still corrupt. Nevertheless, as I kept within to the light in my conscience, I was restrained from many actions which I had a desire to do. And in the very moment when I have been doing something unrighteous in actions or words, I was often stopped, and when I saw that I had been kept from evil, a great joy arose in me; and yet when I had done anything forwardly and rashly, I felt judged. But the teachers told me that this was only a “natural conscience” which kept me from sin and restrained it, calling it

"restraining grace" and not "saving grace," and insisting that he who had it was only a tame devil.

And so I hearkened to their imaginations and so disregarded the light as too low and small a thing, believing that it was but "common grace" that did preserve out of gross evils, but that the saints had another kind of faith and grace. And then they told me how the saints believed in Christ so that their sin was not imputed, but rather His righteousness was accounted unto them, and that therefore I must seek Him by the means provided, such as prayer and receiving the sacrament (as they called it). But I was in great fear that I should eat of Him unworthily, and no one could show me what the body of Christ truly was. They said I must only believe that He suffered for me; and indeed I did believe all that they called their "faith," but still I could not see how the death of Christ had taken away all my sin, for the witness in my conscience told me that I was a servant of sin while I continued to commit it. And they told me I must not omit the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, for thereby strength was conferred and faith was added; but I was much confused, for on the one hand they pressed this upon me as a duty, and on the other hand I saw that the Scripture said, "He that eats unworthily, eats judgment to himself."[1] So I continued in fear, though no one could accuse me of any outward evil.

And sometime after this a great fear came over me that I had sinned against the Holy Spirit, and great trouble fell upon me. Then the "physicians of no value"[2] said I had not come prepared to the Lord's table, though I had all the preparation that they had spoken of. So I fasted and prayed, and walked mournfully in sorrow, and thought none was like me, being so tempted on every side. I ran to this man and the other, and they applied the Scripture promises to me, but I saw it was only words, for the witness of Christ showed me that the root of iniquity still stood, and that the body of sin remained. Nevertheless, I was kept by His secret power from obvious evils, but still sorrow encompassed me, and I questioned all that I had supposedly received, which they said was grace, and repentance, and faith.

Then I told them that there was still guilt in me; and they said, "All sin was taken away by Christ, but guilt would remain as long as I lived;" and they showed me some of the saints' conditions in Scripture who were still in the warfare in order to confirm it. So I said to myself, "This is a miserable salvation if guilt and condemnation for sin must remain in me;" and so I was tossed from mountain to hill. But I saw that they preached confusion, so I cared less and less what they said, and I said to myself, "Surely this is not the true ministry of Christ." So for long seasons I ceased to listen to these teachers and paid them no mind, and instead kept still at home, and walked in deserted places weeping by myself. Everything that I had done was laid before me, and it felt as if every thought was judged, until I was made tender, and my heart was broken. And when I could sorrow the most, then I had the most peace, for something spoke within me from the Lord, but I then knew Him not.

1 1 Corinthians 11:29

2 Job 13:4

But the teachers in those days said it was heresy to look for the Word of the Lord to be spoken now, and that it was only to be found in the letter; thus I did not much regard that Word which is near in the heart and mouth.[3] Even so I was sometimes made to do righteous things by the immediate power and Word of God, and then peace and joy sprang up in me, and a promise was spoken that He would teach me Himself, and be my God. And I often obeyed His voice contrary to my own will, and so denied my will; but they told me this was legalism to obey out of fear, and that it was a yoke of slavery. So, listening to them, I got up above the fear, and performed the former things which they called "ordinances" and "evangelical obedience," saying Christ had already done all.

Then there appeared to me to be more beauty in those who were called Independents, and I loved them, and joined myself to them; and all the money I could get I used to purchase their books. So for a time I walked with them and believed them to be a people who were more separate from the world, for they spoke much of separation. But at last I found that this was but words, for I saw that they would act out from themselves, and choose their own members and officers, and thus made their own image and fell down to worship it. Yet there was some tenderness in them at the first, but their doctrine was the same with the worlds, namely, outward words that described other men's conditions.

Then those who were called Anabaptists appeared to have more glory, and to walk more according to the Scriptures, observing the things that had been outwardly written. So I went among them, and there was something I loved in them; but afterwards they denied all but those who walked in their way, saying all others were out of the fellowship of the saints and the doctrine of Christ. And at last I saw that their ground was the same as the others, and that their doctrine was held outside of the life, though they had separated themselves and made another likeness. But all agreed that the written letter was the Word and rule, and that Christ at a distance, outwardly, had done all; some of them holding freewill and others opposing, and all in their own will.

Still for a time I loved those who walked honestly among them. But though I had seen and acknowledged all that I had heard (except for their figure of baptism, which I saw to be outward, and that it was their greatest glory, which they would have all bow down to, or else there was no communion), still I found no peace or guide. Then some preached the doctrine of free grace (as they called it), that all sin was done away, past, present, and future, and that man must only believe that all was finished. Thus they preached salvation to the first nature, and to the serpent that bears rule in the flesh. To this I hearkened a little, and so lost my inward condition. But still, wherever I went, this word was spoken within me: "His servant you are to whom you obey."[4] And so, being overcome by sin, I experienced condemnation and not justification in me.

3 Romans 10:8; Deuteronomy 30:14

4 Romans 6:16

Then some preached Christ within, though they themselves remained without, having only true words. They said all must be within (unto which truth my heart did cleave), and spoke of redemption within, and justification within, and of God appearing within man to overcome the power of the devil. And the Light in my conscience bore witness that it must be so, and I was exceedingly compelled to wait to find it so. Indeed, something in me breathed after the living God, and I felt a true love towards all who walked honestly in whatever profession, and I hated that men would revile one another, and strike one another, and persecute one another, and I always took the side of the sufferer. But still I saw that though these spoke of all things within, and of a power to come, yet they enjoyed not what they spoke, for the same fruits of the flesh were brought forth by them.

At last I saw that none walked as true ministers of Christ; that none who assumed the ministry had any such gift, neither pastor, nor teacher, nor were any of them such ministers as were in the apostles' time. So having run up and down, and been hurried here and there, I saw that all the teachers of the world sought themselves, and fed the poor people with dead words and deceit, and that these were not the ministers of Christ. I saw that all were in deceit who did not abide in Christ's doctrine, and so I cut myself free from most of them, and then found that, so long as I dissented from their judgement, they hated me and persecuted me.

But at last, it was revealed in me that the Lord would teach His people Himself. So I waited, and many things opened in me concerning a time at hand. And sometimes when I heard a priest, I was moved by the Lord, and His Word in me spoke to oppose what I heard; and it often burned as a fire, and a trembling fell upon me; yet I feared reproach, and so denied the Lords motion. And it was revealed in me to wait upon Him, and I would come to know His counsel.

And the Word of the Lord was in me, that the time was at hand when the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God; and it burned in me as a fire that the day was near when it should no longer be, "Lo here," and "Lo there," but that all His people would be taught by the Lord. But still my mind would often run out, and come out of fear into carelessness, for I did not yet know the cross of Christ. Yet this I may say, I was wiser then the teachers whom I met with in that generation. I do not glory in it, for condemnation has passed over it all forever. Yet still, so long as my mind was turned to the light, I had pure openings and prophesies of things to come, and a belief that I would see the day, and would bear witness to His name. But sometimes when truths would open so fast, the wisdom of the flesh would catch at them, and so I would run up and down preaching against all ministry. I also ran out and preached up and down the countryside something that was revealed for myself, concerning the fulness that was in the old bottle, and so I was marveled at, and admired by many who had wandered from mountain to hill as I had. But we fed one another with words, and healed up one another's wounds in deceit, and so we all laid down in sorrow when the day of the Lord was made manifest. For then I was overthrown, and my foundation was swept away, and both my righteousness and unrighteousness was judged and weighed, and all was found too light.

But as soon as I heard one declare that the light of Christ in man is the way unto Christ, I believed the eternal Word of truth; and the Light from God in my conscience set its seal to this doctrine. So that not only I, but many hundreds more (who thirsted after the Lord but were betrayed by the wisdom of the serpent), all saw ourselves to be off the foundation, and all our mouths were stopped in the dust. Indeed, we all stood condemned in ourselves, and saw our nakedness and were ashamed; and though our glory had become great in the world's eye, we now saw that all was vanity, and that we knew not the first principle of true religion.

[*Editor's Note:* It appears that this great awakening in Francis Howgill's heart took place in the year 1652. He was at a fair at Sedburgh, in the west of Yorkshire, through which George Fox passed declaring the day of the Lord. After this, George Fox went into the church yard, and many of the people from the fair went to him, with a large number of priests and professors of religion. There he declared the everlasting truth of the Lord and the word of life for several hours; showing that the Lord had come to teach His people himself, and to bring them off from all the world's ways and teachers, and that these teachers were like those of old who were condemned by the prophets, by Christ, and by the apostles. He exhorted the people to come away from the temples made with hands, and to wait to receive the Spirit of the Lord, that they might experience themselves to be the temples of God. Not one of the priests opened his mouth against what Fox declared; but at last a captain said: "Why will you not go into the Church? This is not a fit place to preach in." George Fox told him he denied their church. Then Francis Howgill stood up, who had not seen George Fox before, and undertook to answer the captain. He soon put him to silence, and then said concerning Fox, "This man speaks with authority and not as the scribes."

The following account of this remarkable meeting, at which, Francis Howgill, John Audland, John Camm, Richard Hubberthorne, and many others were convinced of the everlasting truth, is extracted from George Fox's journal.

"The next First-day, I came to Firbank chapel, in Westmoreland, where Francis Howgill and John Audland had been preaching in the morning. The chapel was full of people, so that many could not get in. Francis said he thought I looked into the chapel, and his spirit was ready to fail, the Lord's power did so surprise him; but I did not look in. They made haste, and had quickly finished; and they and some of the people went to dinner, but an abundance of people stayed till they came again. John Blaikling and others came to me, and desired me not to reprove these men publicly; for they were not hireling teachers, but tender men. I could not tell them whether I would or no, though I had not at that time any drawings to declare publicly against them; but I said they must leave me to the Lord's movings.

While others had gone to dinner, I went to a brook, got a little water, and then came and sat down on the top of a rock, close by the chapel. In the afternoon the people gathered about me, with several of their preachers. It was judged there were above a thousand people, to whom I declared God's everlasting truth and word of life freely and largely, for the space of about three hours, directing all to the Spirit of God in

themselves; that they might be turned from darkness to light, and believe in it; that they might become children of it, and might be led into all truth, and experientially understand the words of the prophets, of Christ, and of the apostles. And that all might come to know Christ to be their teacher to instruct them, their counselor to direct them, their shepherd to feed them, their bishop to oversee them, and their prophet to open divine mysteries to them; and might know their vessels to be prepared, sanctified, and made fit temples for God and Christ to dwell in.

In the openings of heavenly life, I explained unto them the prophets, and the figures and shadows, directing them to Christ the substance. Then I opened the parables and sayings of Christ, and things that had long been hidden; showing the intent and scope of the writings of the apostles. I also opened the state of the apostasy that had continued since the apostles' days; showing that the priests had gotten the Scriptures, but were not in the Spirit which gave them forth, but rather made a trade of holy men's words, and were found in the steps of the false prophets, chief priests, scribes, and pharisees of old, and were like those who the true prophets, Christ, and His apostles cried out against. Many old people went into the chapel, and looked out through the windows, thinking it a strange thing to see a man preaching on a hill or mountain, and not in their church, as they called it. Whereupon I was moved to inform the people that the steeple-house, and the ground whereon it stood, were no more holy than this hill; and that those temples, which they called the 'dreadful houses of God,' were not set up by the command of God and Christ; nor were their priests called of God, as Aaron's priesthood was; nor were their tithes appointed by God, as those among the Jews were; but that Christ had come, who ended both the temple and that worship, and the priests, and their tithes; and all should now hearken to Him, for He said, "Learn of Me:" and God said of Him, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear Him." I declared that the Lord God had sent me to preach the everlasting gospel, and Word of life amongst them; and to bring them off from all these temples, tithes, priests, and rudiments of the world, which had risen up since the apostles' days; and had been set up by those who had erred from the Spirit and power that the apostles were in. Very largely was I opened at this meeting; the Lord's convincing power accompanied my ministry, and reached home to the hearts of the people, whereby all the teachers of that congregation, who were many, and also a number of the people, were convinced of God's everlasting truth.

Returning now to Francis Howgill's narrative:]

Then as I turned my mind within to the light of Jesus Christ with which I was enlightened, which formerly had reproved me for all of my vanity; and also as I did embrace and acknowledge its testimony against me, it led me into righteousness. For when I turned to it, I saw that it was the true and faithful witness of Christ Jesus, and my eyes were opened, and all things were brought to remembrance that I had ever done, and the ark of the testament was opened in me, and there was thunder and lightning and great hail. Then the trumpet of the Lord sounded in my heart, and nothing but war, rumors of war, and the dreadful day of the Lord fell upon me, with plagues and famine, fear and terror, sorrow and pain, because of the

things I saw with my eyes and heard with my ears. In the morning I wished it had been evening, and in the evening I wished it had been morning, and I had no rest, but rather trouble on every side, for all that I had ever done was judged and condemned, and all things done in the flesh were seen to be accursed. Then the lion suffered hunger, and the seals were opened, and seven thunders uttered their voices in me. My eyes were dim from crying, my bones were dried, and my sinews shrunk. I became a proverb to all, yes, those who had been my acquaintances stood far off from me; the pillars of my heavens were shaken, and my earth tottered like a shack, as one woe was poured out after another. I sought death in that day, and could not find it, for it fled from me. I sought to cover myself any way, or with anything, but nothing could do it, for the indignation of the Lord had come upon the beast and the false prophet; and Babylon came into my remembrance in that day, the mother of harlots, and the sea dried up, and all the merchants who had traded with her stood afar off, for the cup the Lord's fury was poured forth. Then I saw and understood Cain, and I found the nature of Judas who betrays the Lord of life. I would have run any way to have hidden myself, but I found nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth, sorrow and terror. So I roared because for the disquietness of my heart, and because my kingdom was full of darkness. I knew not the right hand from the left, and became a perfect fool, knowing nothing, as a man gone mad.

Oh, all was overturned, and I suffered the loss of all; for all that ever I did, I saw it to have been done in the accursed nature. Yet something in me cried out, "Just and true are Your judgments, O Lord!" My mouth was stopped, I dared not make mention of His name. But as I bore the indignation of the Lord, something in me rejoiced, and the serpent's head began to be bruised, and the two witnesses who had been slain, were raised in me. And so I saw the judgment seat of Christ, and how an account was to be given, and that then Esau would be cursed, and the nature of Cain, Judas, Ishmael, and all the Canaanites and Egyptians would be cast out with the goats on His left hand. And as judgement was pronounced, something in me continued to cry, "Just are You, oh Lord, in all Your judgments!" And as I gave up all to judgment, the captive seed came forth from the prison and rejoiced, and my heart was filled with joy, and I came to see the One whom I had pierced, and so my heart was broken. And then at last I saw and understood the cross of Christ, and I stood in it, and by it the enmity was more and more slain, and the new man was created, and so peace was made.

Thus eternal life was brought in through death and judgement, and I received that perfect gift which is given by God; for the holy law of God was revealed unto me, and was written in my heart, and His fear and His word which previously did kill now made alive. Yes, it pleased the Father to reveal His Son in me through death, so that I came to witness the cleansing by His blood which is eternal. And so I have rest and peace in doing the will of God, and have entered into the true rest, and lain down in the fold of God with the lambs of God, where the sons of God rejoice together, and the saints keep their holy days. Glory unto Him forever!

These few things I have written for your sakes who walk in darkness, that you may see where you are; and that you high cedars, who trust in the arm of flesh, may cease your boasting and come down off the

pinnacle where you are exalted; for the same day of judgment must come upon you, if ever you will know the Lord in truth and righteousness. You must pass through the death of all things, and see the curse upon all knowledge and wisdom which is from below; yes, even through the death of that death which rules in you, which must be slain upon the cross of Christ, if ever you will come to true peace and witness eternal salvation.

Therefore, all you who divine and are full of imaginations, who have devised a faith and a Christ and a salvation of your own imagination, while you still live in the lusts and filth of the world, and in the customs and fashions which perish; I say, your expectations shall fail you, and you will lie down in sorrow; for wherever salvation is witnessed, there the life of Christ is witnessed; but you would have salvation while you continue to bring forth and live in the life of the devil.

Therefore take warning, for it is not your good words without the life of godliness, nor your lofty speeches that are accepted of God; for He accepts nothing but what is of Himself, and what is wrought in the creature by His own will and power, and this will destroy the carnal will and power along with all self-righteousness. The work that He does in man—which He works of Himself, by His power, and in His Covenant—is perfect and is accepted by Him, and so it is no longer the creature but Christ who is all in all in His Saints. Thus He brings all who follow Him out of the works of condemnation, which are acted in the disobedient nature, and are accursed whether men be praying or plowing, or whatsoever he does while the nature of Cain still lives, which is banished from acceptance with God. And all who follow Him who is the light (who leads all that believe and follow into the living works of righteousness which are wrought by Christ through faith) are accepted and well-pleasing unto God; and here all boasting is excluded, for all is of Him and from Him, who works both the will and the deed, and so the Lord is admired in all His works, and His works do indeed praise Him.

Therefore I say unto all who seek for righteousness and are weary: Come now, I will show you where you may find true everlasting rest; for He has shed it abroad in my heart by His free grace and everlasting love made manifest, after such a long and dark night through which I passed without a guide, and so fell into the pit, and stumbled, and then sorrow and trouble encompassed me on every side. But now He has shed abroad His grace in my heart, which grace saves from sin, and leads out of the works of condemnation, into His habitation, where no unclean thing can enter. And it is this grace that has separated me from sin, and has constrained me to deny myself, and to follow Him through the death of the cross, and through the denial of all, both wife and children, house and lands, country and nation, to publish His name abroad contrary to my own will, and to make known unto all the riches of His grace, which those who wait in the light of Jesus Christ shall come to see.

So return home to your own heart, you who have been seeking the living among the dead, joining yourselves to strangers, finding nothing but a husk or shadow, and living in a dream! Truly, you are further off now then you were before, by running and seeking in your earthly wisdom and comprehension. You

have gained nothing but the report of what Christ said and did, and how they worshipped Him; but while your eyes have been outward, you have not found Him who all the Saints worshipped in spirit, and witnessed to be their salvation within. Therefore everyone that thirsts, come unto Christ Jesus who is near you. Wait to know His Word within you, which is in the heart and mouth, for by it faith comes,[5] as you diligently wait and keep your minds turned unto it. It is this that shows you sin and evil within you, and makes manifest all that you have acted contrary to it, yes, even all that you ever have done.[6] This Word will search your hearts, for it is the eye that sees deceit in all its disguises, and will let you see how it has often checked and called you, and how you have not answered its call, but have chosen your own way. Thus that part in you which desired after God has not been nourished and fed, but has been famished while another part has been fed and is now fat for the slaughter.

Now friends, there is something in man which must receive Christ, something of His own which He comes to (learn what it is!); and He cannot join or be joined to anything but that which is pure and undefiled; for it is the pure in heart who see God, and not the fleshly mind (which always despises His glory). He does not reveal Himself to that mind which hunts abroad, which is Esau's, for the blessing is nothing to him. This is the profane man, the Judas who betrays Him and sells Him for a thing of no value, for the Pearl means nothing to the swine. Oh read within! For the seed to which the promise is made is trodden upon and famished in the streets of your own Sodom and Egypt, where Christ was and is crucified.[7]

Therefore, you who see the darkness that you lie in, return home, and mind that Spirit which is low and meek. Be not forward or rash, but stand still in quietness and meekness, that you may hear the still, small voice, which you cannot hear until you come down very low within. For the voices of the Egyptians and enchanters, of Pharaoh and Herod are strong and loud, and you whose minds are wandering abroad think that these are the voice of God. But I say to you, be still, for He who you must hear (that your souls may live) "will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street."[8] So be low and still if you wish to hear Him, and wait to hear that Word which separates between the precious and the vile.

Now the light in which you must wait is near you, yes, it is in you. It is the eye that sees, and the ear that hears what is of the Lord. For that which is visible is natural and carnal, and the natural ear cannot hear the word of the spiritual God. That ear which hearkens outwardly is deaf, and the eye that looks out is blind. But that which reveals the pure and spiritual God must be in you as something pure and spiritual, for "no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."[9] Did not His Spirit once bear witness unto

5 Romans 10:17

6 John 4:29

7 Revelation 11:8, Hebrews 6:6

8 Isaiah 42:2

9 1 Corinthians 2:11

their spirits?[10] And does He not do so now in all that truly know Him? So then, as you love the light, and keep your minds inward, you will feel the motion of Jesus Christ in you; and as you love it, it will lead out of all sin, and sanctify you, and show you both the day of vengeance and the acceptable year of the Lord. This is Christ, whom the Father has given for a covenant[11] to bring man out of alienation and unto Himself again, and to reconcile man to Himself by the blood of the cross. He who is the light *is* the covenant; and He who is the covenant *is* the light, for they are one in Him; and this covenant of peace is offered unto you who are afar off. This gift is free, and is offered freely to all who will receive it; and yet you cannot receive the gift in your own wills, but only through the denial of your own wills; for the light is always contrary to the earthly will of man, and as you receive the will of God, so you must deny your own wills. Thus you come to do the will of Another, and Another guides you and leads you, and this is God's work alone, not of yourselves, but wrought by Christ in His own way and truth. So the covenant of God comes to be established with the Seed, and the foundation stands sure, and His promise is fulfilled in you, as you come to experience "the Seed which is one,"[12] in whom the promise is fulfilled.

Therefore friends, you must thus wait to have judgement set up within you, for this is He who is the judge and the light of the world. So wait to see His law set up within, which is added to cut down transgression, to destroy all unrighteousness in you, and to yoke down the rebellious nature which has had its liberty in the earthly part, and so it will come to decay. For the law works wrath upon the deceit in you which has had preeminence, and so you will find the thunder as the seals are opened, together with earthquakes, and lightning. But abiding here, both the transgressor and the transgression which are contrary to the law are cut down. And when there is a time of great sorrow, trouble, trial and temptation, wait in patience in the judgement, and let the Lord's work have its perfect operation in you. And so as you turn unto Him who has smitten and wounded you, He will bind up and heal. But give up all to the great slaughter of the Lord on the cross, all that is made manifest by the pure law of God. And as your earth comes to be plowed, the seed which has been sown will come up, the rocks will be broken, the water will gush forth, and so you will see the promises fulfilled which are to that seed which now comes up out of the grave. So the love of God will appear in you, and you will be stayed, and will find hope in the midst of calamity.

Then as sin comes to be crucified in you, and to loose its dominion over you, so you will see Him who was born under the law, who fulfilled the law, and who now fulfills it in all those who walk after Him in the Spirit, and no longer fulfill the desires of the flesh. And as you keep in your minds to the light, you will see John's ministry, the water which washes, and how it prepares the way, and turns the heart to God, "lest He come and smite the earth with a curse;"[13] for his ministry breaks down the mountains, removes them, and makes a smooth way. And as your minds continue turned to the Lord, and you obey the gift

10 Romans 8:16

11 Isaiah 42:49-6:8

12 Galatians 3:16

13 Malachi 4:6

of Christ that has been given to you, you will know true repentance unto life, and will find something arising and shining in you, and opening your heart, which breathes after the Lord and His righteousness. And standing in obedience under the cross, the veil will be rent, and you will see the One who has turned you from sin by His free gift made manifest within you.

Therefore, wait in patience, and keep in the living seed of life, and things will open in you, even the hidden sayings of old; and He who spoke parables to the serpent's seed, will open the parables to His own seed. And then you will see Him whom you have pierced, even the Lamb who has been slain since the foundation of the world, and your hearts will be broken. But to those who abide faithful in their measure, His love will increase in you, and His good and perfect gift will be made manifest to you, and you will witness that hope which is an anchor to the soul, and purifies the heart. And as you stand in the perfect law of liberty which is revealed in you by the Spirit, the oppressor will be cut down, and all will be chained under, and the unclean spirit will be bound and shut up in utter darkness forever. And thus you will be redeemed from under the bondage of sin, and rise above the bonds of death in the pure seed that lives in you, and your delight will be to do the will of the Father, who has redeemed you from sin and its law, unto righteousness and its law.

But all who hunger and thirst after righteousness must wait in that which feels the thirst, so that you may receive the gift that cleanses and purges you from all unrighteousness. And as this gift is revealed in you, and as you obey it, it leads to true peace, revealing in you the immortal seed which did not come by the will of man, but is contrary to it. This is the Son of God who is before all time, who leads out of time, and who the Father revealed in Paul. And this is He of whom I am made a witness, and in whom I have redemption by the blood of the cross, who came to do His Father's will, and still does it at this day wherever He is witnessed.

So be silent all you preachers who believe with a faith, and teach a faith, by which none can ever be cleansed from sin while they are here. You and your faith are denied, for it is not the same faith which was "once delivered to the saints,"[14] which gave victory over the world, and by which the believers of old overcame. Your preaching is vain, your hope and faith are vain, and all your hearing is vain so long as the perfect gift of God is not experienced within; for it is the Word of life which "perfects forever those who are sanctified,"[15] and "makes perfect those who draw near,"[16] and presents all that believe before Him "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."[17]

Why have you climbed up so high in words, when you are exactly as you were before, if not worse? Do not think this a hard saying, for you know it is so among many of you. You are weighed in the balance of

14 Jude 1:3

15 Hebrews 10:14

16 Hebrews 10:1

17 Ephesians 5:27

the light which is pure, and your own words betray you, that you are not what you profess; for when you are tried by the saints' practices, by the life that was in them, and by the enjoyment they had of God, you are found so far from being like them that you even oppose the faith they believed in. And so you have imagined a faith and a righteousness of your own, and a Christ to talk about, and a redemption that allows you to live in your lusts, and be men-pleasers in the customs and fashions of the world, contending for sin, and putting perfect righteousness off to another world. Thus the devil has deceived you, and taught you to make coverings, but these will not hide you in the day of His appearance; for God joins not to that which is imperfect, nor does the true faith lay hold of an imperfect righteousness. No, this faith was never professed by any of the saints. For they received faith as the gift of God, the least measure of which was perfect, and as they stood in it (though it was but a grain of mustard seed) they saw mountains removed. Yes, their faith laid hold of Christ's righteousness, which was and is perfect, having no spots, wrinkles, or stains; and His righteousness was made manifest in them by faith, and by it they were justified in the sight of God.

Oh, when will you be weary of feeding upon the wind, and upon husks among swine? When will you inquire after the living God who is power? How many years have you talked of His power to come? But you are still as far off, if not further than you were before. How long have you spoken of the glory to be revealed, of His law being written in the heart, of God teaching His people Himself, and of His Spirit being poured out upon sons and daughters, and can you not see that you have still obtained nothing? One comes in among you who is hungry, and you who are full feed him with the old dregs that you have settled upon, the old leaven of airy notions and concepts, the wine of sour grapes. And if any witness in life the things you have spoken of with words, then you will not acknowledge his testimony. And when one declares unto to you what the power of God is, and where it is to be waited for and experienced, you say that this is too low and little a thing, but the power will come one day in the way you prescribe. How long have you talked of the Spirit, and of worshipping in Spirit? Yet you deny its leading and teaching, live in the oldness of the letter, and set up a worship that is carnal and visible.

Now the Spirit of God is an operative power that works a change in the very ground, and translates all that follow and hearken unto it into its own nature; but all those things about which you so much contend are only the shadow. For the Word was in the beginning and gave life. It is spiritual, and when it is known and witnessed in the heart, it separates from death and gives life to all that believe in it. What Christ is this that you preach? What Gospel is this, which does not truly save you from sin and condemnation? For where the Word of the true Christ is experienced, it first condemns sin, then cleanses and takes it away, blots it out, destroys the root from which it flows, and makes a new creation in righteousness. Yet you say, "He has taken away our sin." How much of your sin has He taken away? If you say "all," then why does your conscience still trouble you with guilt? But if you say, "It is all done in Christ," then I ask, where is it done, if sin is not yet taken away from you? Do you have His witness within you? Truly I say unto you, that while the testimony of Jesus bears witness against you, He will not witness for you. But after you have believed in Christ (as you say) and have received all His ordinances, if anything then does judge you

and bring trouble upon you, you call it a temptation, and so put light for darkness, and darkness for light. But I say, there is no guilt where sin is taken away and crucified, but peace and rest in the holy God, who is unchangeable. But then you say, "If we must fulfill the law, then what use is Christ?" I answer, the One who abides forever did fulfill the law, and also fulfills it in all who know Him and His work; and herein man comes to be justified in God's sight, by Christ, who works all our works in us and for us, and so self becomes dead, and "because He lives, we live also."[18] Glory unto Him forever.

Oh when will you seek after wisdom and hearken that your souls may live? How long will you trust in the imaginations of your own hearts? Verily I say unto you, the time is coming when your building shall fall, and there shall not be one stone left upon another that shall not be thrown down. Sorrow is hastening upon you, for you will not take up the cross of Christ, nor receive the Word of life which would turn you from all unrighteousness, and out of the world and its nature, but rather harden your hearts, bend your bows, and shoot your arrows against the Lord and his anointed ones.

* * *

After receiving the truth through the ministry of George Fox, and experiencing a change wrought in his heart by the power of God, Francis Howgill went on to become an eminent minister in the Society of Friends, preaching Christ freely as he had freely received him. In 1652, he and his frequent companion Edward Burrough travelled to Bristol and several parts of the nation, suffering imprisonment that year in a nasty, stinking cell in Appleby Jail. Being set at liberty towards the latter end of the year, he grew even more valiant and bold for the name of the Lord, and travelled up and down the nation on foot preaching to multitudes and directing all to Christ Jesus their teacher and Savior. In the spring of 1654, he went in company with Edward Burrough to London, where it is said they were the first who publicly preached the doctrines of Friends in that great city. Much time and labor was devoted to the rapidly growing society in and around London for the next several years, though he made ministerial trips to various other places in England, and also spent six months in Ireland preaching the truth and turning many hearts to God. In 1661, he and many others were imprisoned in London on suspicion that Friends had a hand in the Fifth Monarchy insurrection that rose up in arms against the newly established government of King Charles II. But having nothing to do with that bloody act, he was set a liberty and continued laboring in the work of the Lord until the year 1663.

Sometime near the beginning of the year 1663, he was taken up at a market at Kendal, in Westmoreland, where he was occupied in his normal business. Being summoned by the high-constable to appear before the justices of the peace, he was there tendered the oath of allegiance and supremacy; and because, for conscience' sake, in obedience to the commands of Christ, he could not swear, they committed him again to Appleby jail, where they kept him in a smoky hole for five months until the time of the court session.

18 John 14:19

Like thousands of other early Friends, Howgill was indicted and prosecuted for refusing to swear, and for continuing to meet together with others to worship the Lord in gatherings that were not sanctioned by the Church of England. Upon entering the court, and asserting that he had nothing to accuse himself of, for his conscience bore him witness that he loved peace and sought it with all men, the following exchange took place:

Judge.—Why do you not go to church but meet in houses and private conventicles, which the law forbids?

Francis Howgill.—We meet only for the worship of the true God, in spirit and truth, having the primitive Christians for our example; and to no other end but that we may be edified, and God glorified; and when two or three are met together in the name of Christ, and He is in the midst of them, there is a church.

Judge.—That is true; but how long has it been since you have been to church, or will you go to the church that the law does allow? Give me some reasons why you do not go.

Francis Howgill.—I have many to give you if you have patience to hear me: *first,* God dwells not in temples made with men's hands: *second,* the parish house has been a temple for idols, that is, for ceremonies and images; and I dare have no fellowship with idols, nor worship in idol's temples; for what do have we to do with idols, their temples and worship?

Judge.—Were there not houses in Scripture called the houses of God, and temples?

Francis Howgill.—Yes, under the law; but the Christians who believed in Christ separated from these, and from the gentiles' temples too, and met together in houses, and broke bread from house to house; and the Church was not then confined to one particular place, neither is it now.

[The judge interrupted.]

Judge.—Will you answer to your indictment?

Francis Howgill.—I know not what it is. I never heard it, though I have often desired a copy.

Judge.—Clerk, read it.

[So he read it, stating that "Francis Howgill had willfully, obstinately, and contemptuously denied to swear when the oath was tendered.]

Francis Howgill.—I deny it.

Judge.—What do you deny?

Francis Howgill.—The indictment.

Judge.—Did not you deny to swear? And the indictment convicts you that you did not swear.

Francis Howgill.—First, I declared to the court, and offered in writing my agreement with the substance of the oath, as you all know. *Secondly,* I told you I did not deny it out of obstinacy or willfulness, neither in contempt of the king's law or government; for I would rather choose my liberty than bonds; and I am sensible it is likely to be a great damage to me. I have a wife and children, and some estate, which we might subsist upon, and do good to others; and I know all this lays at stake; but if it were my life also, I still dare not do otherwise, lest I should incur the displeasure of God. Do you believe I would lose my liberty willfully, and suffer the spoiling of my estate, and the ruining of my wife and children, because of obstinacy and willfulness? Surely no.

Judge.—Jury, you see that he denies the oath, and he will not plead to the indictment, but only excepts against it because of the form of words. But you see he will not swear, and yet he says he denies the indictment, and you see upon what ground.

[The jury then bringing forth a guilty verdict, the court broke up for the day. The next day, towards evening, when they had tried all the prisoners, Francis was brought to the bar to receive his sentence.]

Judge:—Come now, the indictment is proved against you, what have you to say why sentence shall not be given?

Francis Howgill.—I have many things to say, if you will hear them. *First,* as I have said, I denied not out of obstinacy or willfulness. *Second,* because swearing is directly against the command of Christ. *Third,* because it is against the doctrine of the apostles. *Fourth,* even some of your principal pillars of the church of England, as bishop Usher, for a time archbishop of Ireland, said in his works that the Waldenses denied all swearing in their age because of that command of Christ and the apostle James, and that this was a sufficient ground; and Dr. Gauden, late bishop of Exeter, in a book of his I lately read, cited very many ancient fathers to show that for the first three hundred years Christians did not swear, so that this is no new doctrine.

Judge:—Surely you mistake!

Francis Howgill.—I do not have the book here.

Judge.—Will you say upon your honest word that they denied all swearing?

Francis Howgill.—What I have said is true.

Judge.—But why do you not come to church and hear the service, and be subject to the law, and obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake?

Francis Howgill.—We are subject, and for that cause we pay taxes, tribute, and custom, and give unto Caesar the things that are his, and unto God the things that are his, namely, worship, honor, and obedience; and if you mean the parish assembly, I tell you faithfully, I am persuaded, and upon good ground, that their teachers are not the ministers of Christ, neither is their worship the worship of God.

Judge.—Because of some small things in the service do you reject it all?

Francis Howgill.—First, it is manifest they are time-servers,[19] for a time they preach up as divine service what another time they cry down as popish, superstitious and idolatrous. And that which they have preached twenty years together, they make shipwreck of all in a day; and then later will again call it divine, and compel all to believe what they themselves once made void.

Judge.—What, ever since the king came in?

Francis Howgill.—Yes, the same men that preached against it once, now commend it and compel all to believe. They are so unstable and wavering, that we cannot believe them to be the ministers of Christ. *Secondly,* they teach for hire, and live by forced maintenance, and would force a faith upon men, contrary to Christ and His apostle's rule, who said that everyone must be persuaded in their own minds, and, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." And though the priests say, "faith is the gift of God," yet they would force theirs upon us; and because we cannot receive it, they cry, "you are not subject to authority and the laws," and nothing but seizing of goods, imprisonment and banishment is threatened. I could mention more particulars.

[Then the judge interrupted.]

Judge.—Well, I see you will not swear, nor conform, nor be subject, and you think we deal severely with you; but if you would be subject to the laws we should have no need.

Francis Howgill.—I do indeed judge that you deal severely with us for our obedience to the commands of Christ. And though I envy no man's liberty, I ask you, can you show me how any of those people for whom this act was made, have been prosecuted by this statute?

Judge.—O yes! I can instance you many up and down the country that have been premunired. I have done it myself, and pronounced sentence against several.

Francis Howgill.—What, against papists?

Judge.—No.

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19 A time-server is one who adapts his opinions and manners to the times, or to the changing ruling powers.

Francis Howgill.—What, against Quakers? So I have heard indeed. So then, though the statute was made against papists, yet you let them alone and execute it against the Quakers.

Judge.—Well, you meet in great numbers, and do increase. But there is a new statute which will make you fewer.

Francis Howgill.—Well, if we must suffer, it is for Christ's sake, and for well-doing.

Francis then being silent, the judge pronounced the following sentence: "You are put out of the king's protection, and the benefit of the law; your lands are confiscated to the king during your life, and your goods and belongings forever; and you are to remain a prisoner during your life."

Francis Howgill.—A hard sentence for my obedience to the commands of Christ. The Lord forgive you all.

The judge then rose up and said:—Well, if you will yet be subject to the laws, the king will show you mercy.

Francis Howgill.—The Lord has showed mercy unto me; and I have done nothing against the king, nor government, nor any man, blessed be the Lord, and therein stands my peace; for it is for Christ's sake I suffer, and not for evil-doing.

Francis Howgill bore his imprisonment with great patience, and evinced so much meekness, resignation, and love, as greatly to gain the love and esteem of the jailer's whole family, and of many others in the town of Appleby. And such was the confidence the people placed in him, that while in prison, they frequently referred their differences to him in order to be justly settled.

We find he continued diligently engaged in promoting the cause of Truth and righteousness while a prisoner by writing epistles to those to whom he was joined in religious fellowship, and replying to the works of some who falsely represented the principles of Friends. He also wrote several epistles and doctrinal pieces, the most well-known of which is his treatise entitled *Some of the Mysteries of God's Kingdom Declared.*

The peace of mind with which he was blessed, in patiently submitting to the loss of his liberty for faithfully maintaining those testimonies which he firmly believed the Lord required him to espouse and defend, is strikingly set forth in the following words, subjoined to one of his epistles: "From Appleby jail, the place of my rest, where my days and hours are pleasant unto me."

When any one noticed the great length of time he had been a prisoner, he would say: "The will of the Lord be done." He was taken ill the 11th of the 11th month, 1668; some time before which, he disposed of his estate, and set his house in order, being conscious of the decay of his "outward man." His love to his brethren and fellow-laborers was very great; and in testimony of it, he left something to several of them by way of remembrance; he was also mindful of the Church, and left a legacy to be distributed amongst

all the poor of the household of faith in the parts where he lived. Two years previous to his death in Appleby Jail, he wrote the following letter to his young daughter Abigail.

Daughter Abigail,

This is for you to observe, and keep, and take heed unto all the days of your life, for the regulating of your life and conduct in this world; that your life may be happy, and your end blessed, and that God may be glorified by you in your generation. These things I bequeath unto you, and counsel you ever to observe, being the chief things alone I have to bestow upon you, which I prize more than outward riches. May you do so also, and observe and keep my sayings; and I charge you before God, and by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you observe what I say. I am moved of the Lord to leave this behind for you, in tender love and affection unto you, my daughter, that the Lord may give His blessing unto you, and make your ways prosperous, and your latter end peace.

First of all, know this: I was never born into great possessions, nor did I inherit great matters in this world; but the Lord has always endowed me with sufficiency and enough, and has been as a tender Father unto me, because my heart trusted in Him, and did love the way of righteousness from a child. I have no great portion to bestow upon you of the things of this world; yet of that little which I have, and God has blessed me with, there is something I shall give you, which I shall not mention here; but you will know of it at my decease. But I commend you to your dear mother, who, I trust, will provide sufficiently for you; unto whom my heart has been upright before the Lord. She had a sufficient portion and dowry when I married her, which I desire not much to lessen or impair; and whatever was hers (if it please the Lord I die before her) I freely leave unto her, as was ever my intention and purpose, which has not, nor ever shall change, through the strength of God—as God only knows, and bears me record. This shall be manifest unto all in due time, as it is already manifest unto the Lord, who has been with me in the midst of many troubles, trials, and sufferings, and has lifted up my head above my adversaries, because I trusted only in his Name; which at all times I found to be a refuge, and a present help in time of need; and so it will be unto you, if you fear his Name, and trust in Him forever.

And now, dear child, hearken unto the words of my mouth, and listen unto my counsel. Ponder these things I leave behind me for you to observe, that your days may be long upon the earth, and be blessed and comfortable unto you, and an honor to God in your generation.

The time when you were born and came into the world, was a time of deep exercise and trouble with me—not from the Lord, who always spoke peace unto me, and did sustain me—but by reason of the adversary of mankind, who always seeks to devour the good in all, and is the sower of discord and mischief in the hearts of those who fear not the Lord, neither abide in His counsel. Into these he enters, as any place is given unto his temptations, and there he corrupts the mind. But though there was then a great trial that came upon me, the Lord kept my heart in uprightness unto Him and gave me much patience. And though the earth had been removed into the sea, and all outward things had run into confusion, and nature had changed its course, yet the Lord gave me a resolution and strength not to be troubled or offended, because He did support me. At that time

you were born; and therefore I called your name Abigail, which means the father's joy or delight; for in you I was comforted, and my present trouble was mitigated.

Now, my counsel unto you is that you remember your Creator in the days of your youth, and fear the Lord in your youth, and learn to know Him and serve Him all your days. Seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof. His kingdom is not far from you; it is within you. It consists of life and power, and stands in righteousness, truth, equity, justice, mercy, long-suffering, patience, love, light, and holiness; this is the being and center thereof. Therefore, seek not the "lo here's" or "lo there's" outside of you, in this or that outward observation; for many seek there and never find it. But seek, and you shall find; wait, and you shall receive.

If you inquire, "in what must I seek," and "in what must I wait," and "how must I seek," I inform you: You must silence all your own thoughts, and you must turn your mind to that gift which is pure, holy, and good, within yourself. Seek and wait in that, in the Light of Jesus Christ, wherewith you are enlightened, and which shows you when you do evil, and checks and reproves. Take heed unto that, and it will show the evil motions and thoughts; and as you love it, it will also subdue them, and preserve you out of evil for the time to come.

For though you are born into the world a reasonable creature, yet you must be born again, and be made a *new* creature, or else you cannot enter into God's kingdom. You must know the Seed of the kingdom in yourself (of which you must be born) and be formed again into God's image. I have told you that God has sown it in you—a grain of it, a measure of it, a portion of it, a measure of Light and Truth, of righteousness and holiness. Keep turned in your mind to that; love it, and you will feel the Heavenly Father working in you, and creating you anew unto life, through Jesus Christ who has enlightened you. And you will feel the power of the Lord strengthening you in your little, and making you to grow in the immortal Seed of His kingdom, and to out-grow and over-grow all evil, so that you will daily die to evil, and have no pleasure in it, but rather in the Lord, and in His goodness and virtue shed abroad in your heart, which you will taste and feel within, and have joy and comfort therein.

Love the Lord with your heart and soul, even Him that made you and gave you (and all other things in heaven and earth) a being. Wait for the knowledge of Him in yourself; He is not far from you, but near unto you, and unto all who call upon Him with an upright heart. Inquire of your dear mother and she will inform you; she knows Him, and the way to life and peace; so hearken unto her instruction.

God is a Spirit, a pure Spirit of light, life, and power. It is He that searches the heart, and shows you when you do evil, or think evil, or speak evil; and He shows unto men and women their thoughts. That which shows the evil is good, and that which shows a lie is Truth. This is within; take heed unto it. This is called God's Spirit in the Scriptures; believe in it, love it, and it will quicken your heart to good, and also subject the evil. Here is your teacher near you; love it. If you act contrary to it, it will condemn you; therefore take heed unto this Spirit of Truth, and it will enlighten and enliven you. It will open your understanding, and give you to know what God is, and to do that which is good and acceptable in His sight. This Spirit never errs, but leads out of all error and into all truth.

O Abigail, believe my words! They are the words of God and Truth. Be not careless, but sober-minded in your youth. Wait on the Lord within, and hearken unto Him. God is Light immortal, Life immortal, Truth immortal; an everlasting and eternal Spirit. He speaks spiritually and invisibly within the hearts and consciences of men and women. Hear what He speaks and obey His voice, and your soul shall live. Fear to offend Him, or to sin against Him; for the wages of sin is death. Therefore prize His love in your young and tender years.

Read the Scriptures and Friends' books, and take heed unto what you read to obey it, as far as you understand. Pray often unto the Lord that He give you His knowledge, and open your understanding in the things of His kingdom. Search your heart often with the Light of Christ in you; manifest and bring your deeds to the Light, that they may be tried. Examine yourself how the case stands between the Lord and you; and if you see yourself to be wrong, humble yourself and be sorry. Turn unto Him, and He will show you mercy; then take heed for the time to come that you run not into the same evil again. Keep your heart clean; watch against the evil in yourself in that light which shows it; therein there is power, and thereby you have power to overcome all evil.

And dear child, mind not the pleasures of sin which are but for a moment, and their end is misery; but cross and keep under your own will and affections. Thus your mind will have no pleasure in evil, but only in good; and you will feel the immortal Seed springing up in you, to which is God's peace and love.

O Abigail! these are great and weighty things, not to be slighted! Keep company always with those who fear the Lord, who fear and worship Him in spirit and truth, and lead a holy and a blameless life. Deny them not, but love them and suffer with them. And take heed that you follow not the hireling teachers, who preach for gain and riches, and do not abide in Christ's doctrine. Believe them not, heed them not, for they do people no good; but you will see them for yourself. These have an outside show of godliness sometimes, but deny the power of God and true holiness. Remember I have told you, as one who has had a perfect knowledge of them.

Be sure that you let nothing separate your love from God and His people. Those are His people who keep His law, and obey Christ's voice, and lead a holy life. These were ever hated and opposed and persecuted, and always had evil spoken of them by bad and loose people. These are God's people, and His love and peace and blessing is with them. Therefore, grow up among them as a natural branch of the living Vine; and continue all your days in obedience unto God's will. So you will feel joy and love in your heart, which you should pursue above all things, and you shall attain to and obtain everlasting peace. May the Lord grant this unto you, according to the riches of His mercy and love, which endure forever and ever, amen.

And now Abigail, concerning your well-being in this life, this is my advice and counsel unto you: Love your dear mother, and always obey and honor her. See that you grieve her not, nor be stubborn or willful, but submit unto her, and be as an obedient child to her; for her love and care has been great over you and your sisters, which has brought much trouble upon her. Learn in your youth to read and write a little, and sew and knit, and all points of good labour that belong to a maid; and flee all idleness and sloth which nourish sin. And as you grow up in years, beware of pride, and extravagance, and curiosity; but be well content with such apparel as

your mother will permit you, in which you may also be a good example unto others. Be not reckless, nor wild, nor light; but rather temperate, moderate, and chaste, and not forward in words or speech, but swift to hear, slow to speak. Always live with your mother, and be a help to her and cherish her in her old age and latter years, that she may be comforted in you, and her soul may bless you. Love your sisters, and be always courteous to them, and to your brother Thomas; encourage one another in good.

And Abigail, if you live to be a woman of mature years, keep yourself unspotted, and let not your mind go out after sports and pastimes, for the end of all these is sorrow; nor seek after young men. If you have a desire to marry, do not seek a husband, but let a husband seek you; and if you live an honest and virtuous life in God's fear, then those who fear God will seek after you. Do not let your affections out after every one that offers love, but be considerate; and above all things (if you do marry) choose one that loves and fears the Lord, whose conduct, manner and course of life you know well, before you give consent. Be discreet and wise. Hide nothing from your mother, and she will no doubt advise you for your good; and if she is living, marry not without her consent. And if you join to a husband, be sure you love him in your heart, and be obedient unto him, and honor him in the presence of all; so will his heart be more to you, and his love increase. Do not grieve him, but be gentle and easily entreated, minding your own business. And if the Lord gives you children, bring them up in the fear of God, and in good discipline, keeping them in subjection to you. And be an example of virtue and holiness unto them, that you may feel the Lord's blessing in youth, and in old age, and all your life long.

O Abigail! Remember these things; keep them in mind! Read over this letter often; get it copied over. Lay up my words in your heart, and do them; so you will be happy in this life and in the life to come. These things I charge you to observe, as expressive of my unalterable mind, and will, and counsel, unto you; in witness whereof I have set my hand.

Your dear father,

—FRANCIS HOWGILL.

26th of the 5th month, 1666.

About two days before his departure, being attended by his dear wife and several friends, he said to them: "Friends, with regard to words, you must not expect much more from me, neither is there any great need of it; only that you remember my dear love to all friends who inquire of me, for I ever loved Friends well, or any in whom the Truth appeared. And truly God will acknowledge all those that are faithful. And as for me, I am well, and am content to die." Often in the course of his sickness, he repeated this statement, that he was content to die, or that he was ready, and praised God for the sweet enjoyments and refreshments he had received upon his prison-house bed, whereon he lay, freely forgiving all who had a hand in his confinement. He said: "This was the place of my first imprisonment for the Truth, here in this town, and if it be the place where I lay down the body, I am content." Several persons of note, inhabitants of Appleby, such as the mayor and others, went to visit him in his illness, and when some prayed God would

speak peace to his soul, he sweetly replied: “He has done it.”

A few hours before his departure, some friends who lived several miles from that place went to visit him. He inquired of all their welfare, and prayed fervently with many heavenly expressions that the Lord, by His mighty power, would preserve them out of all such things as would stain and defile. And a little after, recovering a little strength, he said: “I have sought the way of the Lord from a child, and lived innocently among men; and if any inquire concerning my latter end, let them know that I die in the faith in which I lived, and for which I suffered.” After these words, he spoke some others in prayer to God, and sweetly finished his course in much peace, on the 20th of 11th month, 1668, in the fiftieth year of his age, after being a prisoner for the testimony of Jesus from the later part of the 5th month, 1663.

The Journal and Writings of Ambrose Rigge

The following is a true relation of the first manifestation of the love of God in Christ Jesus unto me. To the best of my remembrance, when I was about ten or twelve years of age, the Lord touched my heart with a sense of my latter end, which subject I often deeply considered when I was at the free school among my school-fellows. I often thought of my Creator, and of His great work in the creation, and that to Him all must give an account of their deeds, whether good or evil. Yet being daily conversant with my playmates, I was led into wildness and play, and into many youthful pleasures, in the midst of which I was often smitten by the rod of God, though I then knew Him not. Yet one thing did somewhat comfort me at this time, and that was that I abhorred vain and reckless oaths and drunkenness, with which I saw many of my companions had been swallowed up. Indeed, there was a hatred in my heart of such things.

Being brought up to read the Scriptures from a child, I expected to find something of life therein; but being a stranger to Him in whom life was and is, I was still in darkness and the region of the shadow of death. Yet I found the Scriptures declaring the day of the Lord that would burn as an oven, wherein all the proud, and all who did wickedly, should be as stubble, and the day that is coming should leave them neither root nor branch (Malachi 4), and many similar words, which I believed were true, and would somehow come to pass. And though I was not overcome by the worst evils, yet I daily found sin reigning and ruling in me, and leading me captive into various lusts and vain pleasures, which became my great burden. Under a sense of this I often groaned and cried to the Lord for deliverance. But being still in the kingdom and power of darkness, I saw no way of deliverance, and so remained under the bondage of corruption.

When I learned to write, I took much delight in writing the priest’s sermons, and when I went home I would commit them to memory, so that I gathered much into my knowledge, but still remained a stranger

to the life of Christ which my soul breathed after, and so was "without God in the world."[1] I wandered from mountain to hill, yet found no rest for the sole of my foot. In this condition I remained till I was sixteen years of age, running from one high-priest to another, expecting to receive from them what my soul thirsted after, but I always came away unsatisfied.

These were to me "physicians of no value,"[2] though they bid me to apply the promises and get faith. Yet both they and I were ignorant of the "Word of faith," which the apostle preached, which is "near in the heart,"[3] through the hearing of which, faith comes to be received. Indeed, I knew not the seed unto which was the promise of life, and I found something ruling in me to which no promise of life had been given. And so I found that whatsoever plaster was applied to me while the corruption was not purged out, was of no value as to my cure; for, from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, I was full of bruises and putrefying sores,[4] so that I was often loathsome to myself.

Not knowing how to be healed, I continued to seek, and met with some books that did somewhat suit my condition. I took delight to read these, and from them gathered a form of prayer which I often used in private, with many earnest breathings unto the Lord that if He had any blessing to bestow upon me on earth, He would show me His way of Truth. For I plainly saw that many of the priests were as bad as myself, and some were worse, so that I could expect no good fruit from such evil trees. So I turned from them, and went after others who were a little more refined, thinking to find more satisfaction from them, but still found none. I was sensible that my wounds grew more and more putrefied, and that that which the best of these priests could administer for my help, proved no relief at all to me, nor was it at all fitting for my distemper.

So then my soul often mourned to the Lord in secret for the knowledge of His way, desiring neither riches nor honor in the world, but only that I might know the good Physician who could make me every way whole, which was of more value to me than all the treasures of Egypt. Though some youthful pleasures prevailed over me, which often lifted me above the witness of God in me, yet I also found secret reproofs which caused sadness in the midst of my joy. And though I was as a wild heifer, unaccustomed to the yoke, yet I was always preserved from the greatest evils, by Him whom I now know to be my strength. Glory, honor, and living praises unto the Lord God, and to the Lamb forevermore.

But after my long travail in the night of darkness and ignorance, wherein I had toiled and caught nothing, it pleased the Lord in His infinite goodness and tender mercy to me and many more, to send His true and faithful messenger, George Fox, into our parts, who declared to us the everlasting gospel. He said we had a light, unto which we did well to take heed, until the day dawned, and the day star arose in our hearts;[5]

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1 Ephesians 2:12

2 Job 13:4

3 Romans 10:8

4 Isaiah 1:6

which was glad tidings to us who had so long sat in darkness and blindness of mind. This testimony I then both believed and received, not because it was his testimony alone, but because it was indeed the testimony of the Word of God, which became living and powerful in me, and sharper than a two-edged sword, to the cutting down of the man of sin who had long ruled in my heart; and truly there was a great and long warfare before the strong man was overcome, so that a stronger than he might rule. Many and strange were his wiles, and strong were his temptations in order to overthrow that little measure of faith which the Lord had wrought in my heart by the hearing of the living Word. But through the strength of this Word I came to experience a measure of victory over him and his power (by which he had long led me captive at his will); and I found that as I took heed to the Word of faith, which was near in my heart, the day indeed began more and more to spring from on high, and the day star appeared in my heart. Then the foggy mists of the night began to vanish away, and the day star went before me, until it led me to see Him whom I had pierced. And then a day of bitterness came upon me, and I was in sorrow as a man for his only son, and "judgment began to be laid to the line" in me, "and righteousness to the plummet;"[6] so that in the morning, I said, "Would to God it were evening; and in the evening, would to God it were morning,"[7] because of the fear of the Lord, and the glory of His majesty, who had arisen to shake terribly the earth. But in the midst of it all, it was said unto me, "A bruised reed I shall not break, nor quench the smoking flax, till I have brought forth judgment unto victory."[8] In the belief of this, I waited long upon the Lord in the way of His judgments,[9] until I felt His mercy spring unto me, which indeed was made manifest in me.

So then I became as a stranger to my near relations; for my father and mother forsook me, my friends and acquaintances stood afar off wondering at me, and I was made a hissing to many. I was sorely beaten by those who formerly would have hugged me, because I now feared the Lord, and trembled at His Word. Yes, and at last I was cast out from all that administered comfort to my outward man, so that for some time I had nowhere to lay my head. Then I walked about in solitary places, being surrounded with many and sore temptations, both inwardly and outwardly; in the midst of which, the Lord spoke comfortably unto me, and said, "Fear not, I will be with you and care for you," which did refresh my soul and bear up my spirit. But sometimes, when I looked out at the prosperity of the wicked, my foot was close to slipping, considering the many troubles with which I was encompassed. But the good Shepherd drew me in again with His crook, and made me lie down among the sheep of His pasture, where I found fresh pastures and living streams which renewed my strength as the morning. And in time I became strong in spirit, and in the faith of the Son of God, by which I obtained victory and freedom in my own particular, over that

5 2 Peter 1:19

6 Isaiah 28:17

7 Deuteronomy 28:67

8 Matthew 12:20

9 Isaiah 26:8

which had long had victory over me. Yet, as I said before, my father and mother stood far off from me, and I became as a stranger to my mother's children; but the Lord regarded me and gave me more and more of His good Spirit to direct my steps, so that my feet did not slip.

Often, when I was alone, temptation was heavy upon me, and did strongly beset me. Yet I resolved in my breast to follow the Lamb wheresoever He went; saying that whatever sufferings overtook me, I would never deny the Truth which the Lord had so clearly made manifest to me. Then I concluded to go to London and take some employment there amongst Friends, and indeed something in me was very forward to do so. But the Lord would not permit me at that time, but counseled me to stay and wait until He called me forth. So I waited a season, and at length the word of the Lord came unto me, which said, "You shall go forth into the south to be a witness unto My name, for which you shall suffer many things, but I will be with you."

This seemed hard to me at first; and I would much more willingly have stayed at home. So I bore this word and weighed it a while before I related it to any, yet I never concluded to disobey the Lord's word, whatever I suffered, if I saw that He still required it of me. At length I was greatly pressed in spirit day and night, so that neither my sleep, nor any other enjoyment was pleasant to me, until I freely gave up to part with all in order to follow the leadings of the Lord. And when I did freely answer His requirings, I felt His arm stretched out over me, and the light of His countenance was upon me; so that parting with my father and mother, my friends and acquaintances, and with my native country, was little in comparison to the joy that was set before me.

Then a fellow traveller was prepared for me, namely, Thomas Robertson of Westmoreland, who was made willing to leave his dear wife and tender babes, to go with me into the Lord's harvest. We took our journey about the time called Easter, in the year 1655, and through much reproach and hard travel on foot, we came to London. After a little stay, it was upon us to pass further southward. So early in the morning we entered a boat and passed down the Thames, towards Gravesend. In the boat were many passengers with us, who, perceiving what we were, did exceedingly scoff and shamefully treat us, until suddenly a great ship came running with full sail before the wind, and was near to running over our boat. This did so terrify them, that their laughter was turned into fear and horror, which made them quake far more than us, whom before they had reproached under that name. The danger was so imminent, that the boatman had much ado to save himself. Yet the Lord delivered us, and brought us safely on shore at Gravesend.

From Gravesend we travelled to Rochester, where it was laid upon us to go to a Baptist meeting. There we were apprehended by soldiers and brought before the governor, who examined us, and finding we were north countrymen, said we could pass no further without a certificate, and so committed us prisoners. But there being one of our own countrymen there, a soldier in that place, who gave testimony of our honesty in our own country, we were freed. Even so, we were much tempted to go back into our own country again, for they told us many dangers were before us if we went forward. Yet we consulted not with flesh and

blood, but went forward in the name and power of God, until we came to Dover, where there was an open door to us, and the Lord also opened our mouths to declare the everlasting gospel, though in weakness, fear, and in much trembling. By this several were turned from darkness to the light, and from the power of Satan to God, in order to receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified.[10]

From there we came to Folkstone, where some received us and believed, and were gathered to God. We then passed on to Hyde and Rumney, where several received our testimony, unto whom the Arm of God was revealed, through which they were gathered from the barren mountains into the low valleys. At Lydd we found Samuel Fisher, a pastor of a congregation of the Baptists, with whom we had discourse. He was a great scholar, and had formerly been a parish priest, but was one who waited for the coming of the kingdom of God in power. He received our testimony, and was willing to become a fool that he might be made wise unto salvation; and from a teacher he became a student, and so received wisdom and spiritual understanding to become a preacher of righteousness, in which he lived and died.

After his convincement we came to Staplehurst, where we found a great congregation of "Seekers," so called, among whom we had good service. Many of these were convinced, along with their teacher, his wife and children, who all lived and died in the faith. The harvest grew so great, and the laborers being few, we were forced to separate one from the other; one of us taking that care and charge which both of us had done before. But after we had a little cleared ourselves of that county, it came upon us to pass through the western counties nearly two hundred miles to proclaim the acceptable day of the Lord in towns, cities and villages, which we gave up to do. Having parted from each other, Thomas Robertson was two or three days' journey ahead of me; but both of us being as strangers and pilgrims in the earth, and having none to direct us but the Lord alone, we were driven into many outward difficulties. Yet through all we were supplied with courage and strength to undergo whatever the Lord laid upon us.

Thomas Robertson passed before me through the county of Sussex, and I only heard of him accidentally when I was near Chichester, at a house by the wayside at which I stopped to get a little water to quench my thirst. The woman began to tell me of a man who had stopped there two or three days before, and by her description I understood that it was my companion. When I had drank, I passed into the city on the seventh-day at night, and on the first-day, I was moved to go to the Baptist meeting, where I declared the word of Truth (though with much opposition), which testimony some received, and some rejected.

But after a little time, the mayor of the city having heard of me, sent the constable to bring me before him. When I came near him without respecting his person by putting off my hat, he was in a great rage, and sent for one called a justice, who, when he came, took off my hat himself, and commanded men to search me, saying I was a Jesuit, or one come from Rome. They would have committed me to the jail house straightaway, but the Lord turned their hearts; so that after some discourse they freed me. After this I got

10 Acts 26:18

a meeting at the inn, and the next morning left the city and came into Hampshire, and from there into Wiltshire, and passed all through that country and came near to Bristol before I saw the face of a Friend. The strength of my body was well near spent with travel, but meeting with some Friends, I was revived and strengthened, and having stayed there a little time, I felt pressed in spirit to go forward. I then came into Bristol, and from there to Exeter, where I found two brethren of my country in prison. Going to visit them, I met together with my companion Thomas Robertson after a long journey, and in that city we stayed a short time declaring the Truth. But the people there stopped up their ears and hardened their hearts against truth and against us, so that we shook off the dust of their city as a witness against them, and came away again for Bristol, where we had some service.

From there we came to Reading, and stayed a little while before we were moved to go to Basingstoke in Hampshire, where, through some difficulty, we obtained a meeting. But before the people had all come together, the chief priest and rulers came and caused us to be haled out of the meeting, and then tendered us the oath of abjuration; and because, for conscience sake, we could not swear, they carried us directly to prison. But before they put us into the room, they separated us one from the other, searched us, and took away our money, linen, and ink-horns. They then tried to conceive of some way to keep us apart, but not having two rooms bad enough, they thrust us down together into a low, narrow room, and locked us up, appointing two rude men with halberds[11] to watch over us in the prison all night. In the morning the guards were dismissed and we were shut up close, and a command was given that if any of our friends even came upon the grounds before the prison door to visit us, they should be fined. There they kept us near three days before they brought us our money, in all which time we could not call for any food or necessaries, because we had no money, and we could not eat any man's bread for nothing. When the people of the town cried out against them, they brought us our money; but then the jailer demanded eight pence a night for a nasty bed which stood in the room, and when we could not satisfy his desire, he caused it to be taken away. So we got some straw, and laid upon it all the time we continued there. The jailer had boards nailed up before the window, that we might not see the light, and at night he would not allow us to have a candle or fire. All of this we bore with patience until they were weary of their cruelty; by which several people, both in town and country, were convinced of the Truth, and remained therein. There they kept us nearly a quarter of a year, and then at their court sessions freed us.

When we were clear of the town, we were moved to pass for Southampton, where the Lord opened a door for us, and His Word was effectual in us to the turning of a remnant from darkness to the light, who still walk in it to this day. Thomas Robertson then left me and went to Portsmouth, and there testified to the truth. I soon followed him there, stayed near ten days, and had good service. On the first-day I was moved to go to the steeple-house to bear testimony against their worship, at which the priests and rulers were offended; and on the second-day, as I was passing out of town, I was apprehended by soldiers

11 A weapon that consists of an ax blade with a sharp spike mounted on the end of a staff, usually about 5-6 ft long.

and brought before the governor, who desired to prosecute me as a vagrant, but could not find sufficient evidence to do so, and so sent me out of the town with a constable. But after a little time I returned again, and then they received the word of God with gladness, and a meeting was established in that city. With much difficulty I then went to the Isle of Wight, where some were added to the Lord's flock, and the Lord delivered me out of the hands of unreasonable men. From there I came over into Hampshire, and passed from town to town, and from village to village. The Lord was with me, and made His word effectual in my mouth, to the turning of many to righteousness, in which they came to be established.

After I had continued among these people for a season, I came into Sussex, where I had good service, and there was a great gathering to the Truth. Many received the word of God with joy, and met often together; and in these meetings God manifested His presence and power in a large measure, so that my soul was refreshed among them. But after a little time, I was moved to go back again into Hampshire, to water the tender plants there. When I had done this, I was pressed in spirit to go into Dorsetshire, to Weymouth and Melcomb-Regis; and there I was moved to go to a steeple-house to declare against a hireling priest. For doing so, I was apprehended and carried to a nasty prison underground, where I had neither bed, fire, nor anything to sit upon but a stone; and there was heap of excrement in one corner of the room, and some nasty straw where some sailors had lain. There I was kept two or three days; but from my cell I could look up and see the people in the street, and there I had good service, and preached the Truth to the tendering of many hearts.

From there I was sent to Dorchester, to the county jail, where there was a terrible sickness that some called the plague, which swept away most of the prisoners. But the Lord was with me there and kept me in the hollow of His hand, so that not a hair of my head was hurt. There I was kept eleven weeks, where I had very good service for the Lord, to the convincing and confirming of many in the Truth, in which they have now found rest for their souls.

When I came to that prison, I found my dear brother Humphrey Smith there, who had taken the sickness of the prison and was very near unto death. I was enabled to be greatly helpful to him, for he was not willing to take anything except from me, and the Lord raised him up again. Joseph Coale and William Bayly were also prisoners there, but we were all preserved and delivered by the mighty arm and power of God. For in time the Lord set me free from that imprisonment, and while I was there, He preserved me from that raging disease which swept away many in a short time, giving me an assurance that not a hair of my head should fall without Him, which promise was fulfilled to the utmost. For though I was in many dangers of sickness in that prison, besides the contagious disease, yet I was never better or more healthy than when I was there; blessed and praised be the name of the Lord forever.

When I was delivered, I went and labored again in the vineyard of the Lord, and came to Weymouth and Melcomb-Regis, from which I had been sent to prison, and there I had good service for the Lord amongst His flock. Feeling myself clear of that place, I departed in peace, and came to Corsetown in the

Isle of Purbeck, where I was resisted, and by the force of armed men was kept out of the town, for the inhabitants said they had a fear of me, as I came from amongst so many infected persons in the prison. I not being willing to bring any danger amongst them, departed and came to Poole, where I was gladly received, and there I continued a few days in the labor of the gospel, confirming those who had heard the word of God and believed. From there I passed to Ringwood, where I found a few who believed the truth. Amongst these I labored to the establishing of them in the faith, which faith was begotten in them by the Word of Truth. Then I came to Southampton, where I had formerly labored, and I was much refreshed among the tender plants of God, who rejoiced and praised God for my deliverance out of that dangerous prison before-mentioned. I preached the word of God with a ready mind, and had many large and precious meetings there and in the nearby country; and the Word of the Lord grew, and many came to believe the Truth.

In Southampton I was moved to go to a steeple-house, where one Nathaniel Robinson, an Independent priest, was speaking a divination of his own brain. After he had finished, I requested that he hear me speak a few words in the fear of God; but he fled and left me to the mercy of his rude hearers, who with violence haled me out of their synagogue. The said Nathaniel Robinson then caused the rulers of that place to send me to prison, where I was kept in a state of close confinement; and when some of my Friends came from the country to visit me, they abused them, and shamefully treated them at their inn, and in the streets also. One Edward Southwood, being a soldier in the army, and having leave from his officer to come visit me, they apprehended him in the inn, took his arms from him, and would not allow him to come into the prison to me. But the Lord kept him above all their cruelty, and gave him patience to bear what they were allowed to inflict upon him. They permitted very few to come to me, indeed, scarcely those who were to bring me my necessities; all of which I suffered till the Lord set me at liberty over all their cruelties.

Then I began again to labor in the Lord's harvest, and truly He was with me, and gave me power to undergo whatever He permitted to be laid upon me. I was moved to go into the Isle of Wight, and purposed to have gone on board a ship at Portsmouth, but was stopped by the governor. I then came back again to Southampton, and from there went to Hurstcastle, where I had a conference with some Baptists; and they, understanding where I intended to go, after I had gotten under sail, betrayed me to an officer, who caused the master of the vessel to put me on shore again.

There I was out of all hopes of finding any passage, and was forced to come back through the forest that night in much rain to Limington. But I there procured a passage in a small boat that went with torches. In the night season, about the tenth or eleventh hour, we landed on the Island, and I put up at an inn that night. In the morning I went to Newport, their chief town, where the professors of religion were rich and full, and rejected the counsel of God, and despised His messenger sent to them in tender love. I declared the word of Truth amongst them as it was laid upon me, but before I passed out of the Island, I was seized upon by the soldiers and carried to the castle at Cowes, where the governor sent me out of the

Island. But not feeling myself clear of that place, I returned again after a little time, and labored among a small remnant that had been gathered, amongst whom I suffered many hardships. On that Island I was imprisoned in a filthy, cold prison, which was on the principle street of their great town, where I had good service. And when they perceived this, they put me into another prison, in a back room, where I could neither see the street, nor could any people come to me; and there they kept me some time. Yet at length the Lord delivered me, and a meeting was settled on the Island.

About that time a law was made against vagrants which was perversely executed against Friends. Many were taken from their own homes or dwelling places, and by this law many innocent men suffered who had good estates, and some, it was said, were apprehended in the very parish where they were born. Coming into Southampton, and going to see some Friends who had been put in the house of correction, I was apprehended by the officers, and with great abuse was thrown headlong into a cage. Without any further examination, the mayor granted a warrant to whip me at the whipping post in the market-place, which was accordingly executed by the hangman in a cruel manner. After this they thrust me into a handbarrow and carried me along the streets between two men, and then threw me into a cart, and took me out at the gate in the cold snow and frosty weather, without the least refreshment. So they carried me to the next parish that night; their warrant requiring me to be carried from parish to parish, until I came to my own.

After I was gone, the mayor, whose name was Peter Seale, threatened that if ever I returned, I would be whipped a second time, and burned in the shoulder with the letter R[12] as broad as a shilling; but the other magistrates would not join with him in the work he had undertaken. In a little time I was moved of the Lord to go to Southampton again, which I did, and had several meetings, and no man laid hands upon me; and then in my freedom I went out again, and labored in the Lord's work. It then came upon me again to go to Southampton. I had only been there a little time when the constable took me and carried me before the aforesaid mayor, who was in a great rage, and threatened to execute the rigor of the law upon me. In order to accomplish his design, he sent for a justice of the town, but this man being more moderate, and having no hand in the mayor's former proceedings, discouraged him so that he was forced to let his work fall, and after much ado he let me go free. But in a little time after, this mayor was smitten with dysentery, which all his physicians could not cure, and so he shortly ended his days in misery. The hand of the Lord also fell upon the constable, who was the mayor's chief agent in these wicked proceedings, so that he was forced to flee out of the town and also died miserably.

I then had peace and freedom for a considerable time, until King Charles II was restored. But in the same year he was crowned, I was apprehended upon the road at Petersfield in Hampshire, and brought before Humphrey Bennet and John Norton, called justices, where I had the oath of allegiance tendered to me. And because for conscience sake I could not swear, they condemned me to the common jail at

12 For *rogue* (i.e. vagrant, vagabond).

Winchester, and took my horse from me. There I continued till the court sessions, when I was given the sentence of premunire[13] by judges Foster and Tyrrell, and committed close prisoner,[14] and in the jail suffered many abuses from the prisoners as well as by the connivance of the jailer. In a little time, however, the king freed me by proclamation, and they were required to deliver me my horse again, and then I travelled in Truth's service in several counties for a pretty long season, until the spring.

In the year 1662, I was at a meeting at Captain Thomas Luxford's house, at Hurst Pierpoint in Sussex; and by the instigation of Leonard Letchford, the priest of that place, I was apprehended and carried before Nisell Rivers, Walter Burrill, and Richard Bridger, called justices, who tendered me the oath of allegiance. And because for conscience sake I could not swear, they committed me to Horsham jail, the 28th day of the third month, 1662, where I continued until the court sessions, when I was premunired by judge Samuel Brown.

By the instigation of the aforesaid priest Leonard Letchford, I was kept a close prisoner, and continued so for above ten years, under many sore abuses in the prison from several cruel jailers; but the hand of the Lord overtook them, and cut several of them off while I was still prisoner there. I was freely resigned up to suffer there all the days of my life, if it were the will of the Lord to allow it, seeing no way of deliverance from man, in whom I put no trust; but with a godly confidence, I was resolved to wait in patience all the days of my appointed time.

On the 6th day of the seventh month, 1664, I took Mary Luxford as my wife, who was the second daughter of Thomas Luxford, and Elizabeth his wife, of Hurst-Pierpoint in the county of Sussex. We were married in the prison at Horsham, after I had been premunired two years and kept close prisoner, and where I continued eight years and four months after our marriage, all of which she bore with much patience. She was of honest and respectable parents, who brought her up strictly according to that religion which they believed to be true, and she lived in great subjection to her parents. Though they came to believe and receive the truth before her, yet she had such a reverent respect for them, that she would not willingly appear before them in any dress which she knew they did not approve, and was modest and courteous to Friends. But in a short time she and her younger sister Cordelia were willing to go to a meeting, where they were both convinced and received the Truth in the love of it; and by it they received power to cast off the unfruitful works of darkness and put on the armor of light, and were soon enabled to quench the fiery darts of the devil, which were not a few in that day. Through all, the Lord in mercy preserved them in faith and patience through many tribulations.

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13 *Premunire* was a legal judgment designed to disenfranchise those who refused to formally swear allegiance to the King of England. Those under a sentence of premunire were considered traitors to their country. They lost all rights to property and possessions, were removed from under the kings protection, and were often imprisoned for life.

14 Many prisoners in England were granted liberty to leave their place of confinement in order to buy necessities at nearby towns, to visit relations, or even to follow their trades. A "close prisoner" was one who was entirely confined to the prison house, and often kept from receiving visitors.

And as the Lord, by His immediate hand, brought us together, so He preserved us together for the space of twenty-four years in much love and unity, as helpmates one to another. She was a blessed woman, and loved the Lord and His Truth, and walked in it to the end of her days. She hated all evil in word and deed, and walked before the Lord in much innocency, loving peace and unity; for she was a woman of a meek and quiet spirit, and loved righteousness wherever it appeared. She was naturally attended with many weaknesses of body, yet was the mother of five healthy children.

She much delighted in reading night and day, so long as she had any strength of body; and towards her latter end she had a sense that her time would not be long, and spoke something of it to me, for she was much spent with a continual consumptive cough. Towards the end of the tenth month, 1688, she was taken sick, which increased upon her notwithstanding the many remedies which were sought for her. She bore her sickness with much quietness and patience, till the 6th day of the eleventh month following, and then departed this life like a lamb in my arms, and went to her eternal rest in the bosom of the Father's love, in which love she had delighted to abide in her life time. Her remembrance lives with all who truly knew her; for she was a good example to many, and left a testimony of her innocence and integrity behind her, whose reward is now with her. This short testimony lay upon me to write concerning her.

The first child she had died, but four are still alive and have grown up. We educated them in the Truth in their younger years, and watched over them in love, till they knew the power of God in themselves, unto which we commended them, and by which they have been preserved to this day, to my great comfort. Many days and years have I, with bended knees, in secret, prayed to God before the throne of His grace, to guard them with His power from the evil of this world, and to direct their steps in the way of righteousness, which in a great measure I have so far enjoyed. Blessed and praised be the name of the Lord forever. May the Lord preserve them to the end of their days, in faith and well-doing. Amen.

But returning to my imprisonment—at length, when I least expected my deliverance, the Lord brought it to pass, and opened the heart of the king to grant my liberty by a patent, under the great seal, together with many more who suffered at that time for the testimony of a good conscience. In the time of my imprisonment, the aforesaid priest, Leonard Letchford, sued my wife by her maiden name for tithes of land, for which he had kept her father prisoner several years, and so sent her to prison also. And at the court session he obtained a false verdict against her, got a warrant, and took the goods that I had bought and labored for with my own hands while in prison. He left us not a bed to lie upon, nor any other necessities to assist us in our confinement, even taking the pot that we had borrowed while prisoners to boil our meat. All of this I could have easily recovered by law when I was at last freed from prison, but I freely committed my cause to God, to whom all vengeance belongs.

In a short time, my father-in-law Thomas Luxford was also freed, whom the aforementioned Leonard Letchford had kept many years in prison. This priest boasted that he had locked us away so securely that not even the king could free us. And if we had but a little liberty granted us, once a year, to go to visit

our families, he sought out ways to have the sheriff fined for doing so, and thereby incensed the jailer to keep us always confined. He also sent many requests to the worst of the justices, who he thought were the most bitterly prejudiced against us, seeking to add affliction to our bonds; but he lived to see us both freed out of prison to his great torment, as he then expressed in many ways.

After I was freed out of prison at Horsham, I remained with my family in that town about a year, and then removed to Gatton in Surrey, where I continued about fourteen years. There Robert Pepys, the priest of that place, excommunicated me, along with my wife and servants, for not coming to the steeple-house, and afterwards sued me for tithes. And for the value of twenty shillings, he issued me a writ of rebellion, and so seized my goods to the value of sixty pounds. Many other sufferings and exercises I met with there, but the Lord was with me, and delivered me out of them all; and I had much good service in the country there about, and many were gathered to the Lord, and established in the faith of the gospel.

* * *

[The following are excerpts from two treatises written by Ambrose Rigge, and published along with various epistles not long after his death:]

A Few Words Concerning Man in His Fallen and Degenerate State

All men by nature are children of wrath, as it is written (Ephesians 2:3), fallen from God and His power, degenerate plants of a strange vine,[15] daily bringing forth evil fruit in which God has no delight. Man's heart is corrupt, his mind is corrupt, and every part and member of his body, from the crown of the head to the sole of his foot, is full of wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores;[16] every imagination of his heart is only evil continually.[17]

Therefore man in the fall is a vessel altogether unfit for the Lord's use or service, neither has the Lord any delight in him in that state, because he is a slave to Satan, led captive at his will to dishonor his Maker in all his words and works; so that all of man's undertakings and outgoings in this condition are to promote Satan's kingdom. He calls evil good, and good evil, puts light for darkness, and darkness for light, and is as void of true understanding as the beast that perishes. He is altogether insensible of his Creator, and of His way, truth, and life, because these are spiritually discerned. He is a stranger to the life of God, to the covenant of promise, and walks without God in the world, in its ways and works of darkness. Indeed he "draws iniquity with the cords of vanity,"[18] and drinks it in as the ox drinks water, till he fills himself,

15 Jeremiah 2:21

16 Isaiah 1:6

17 Genesis 6:5,8:21

and vomits it up again.

In this state he is compared to a dog, whose nature is to vomit up that which he greedily swallows down; and to a swine, whose nature is to wallow in the mire, as that which is most pleasing to his nature, till he has dirtied himself all over and become loathsome to behold. Even such is man by nature, who wallows in sin and corruption till he becomes loathsome in the sight of the Lord, and is fit for no service for Him, until he be washed again. Therefore the Lord cried unto the house of Israel, "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes," Isaiah 1:16, and then says "Come unto me," verse 18.

In this condition, man's wisdom is earthly, carnal, sensual, and devilish;[19] yet by this same fallen wisdom he seeks to grasp the heavenly mysteries of eternity, dive into the secrets of the Almighty, set up a way of worship in his own will, and establish a righteousness of his own. He will pray, read, sing and perform many duties in his own hot zeal, though without any understanding or true knowledge of God his Creator.

In this state were the Jews who killed and persecuted the Lord of life, in their darkness and unbelief, in a righteousness of their own which was as filthy rags, and could never cover them from the wrath of the Almighty. And unto these Christ gave forth many parables, saying "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;"[20] and, "Unless you are converted, and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of Heaven."[21] Though they were painted like whitewashed walls, yet they were foul and corrupt, blind and naked; and therefore the woe was often pronounced against them, despite all their zeal and profession of God and His words.

Therefore, oh natural man, whoever you are, whether professor or profane, your profession of religion and your profaneness are alike, so long as you remain unconverted, un-regenerated, and un-created again in that heavenly image and nature which can do the will and work that is well-pleasing to God. If you will be wise, you must first become a fool that you may become wise;[22] but this you will hardly bear, being so puffed up in the pride of your heart in what you think you perform for God. But God cannot receive an acceptable sacrifice from your hands; for were you "to give your firstborn for your transgression, or the fruit of you body for the sin of your soul,"[23] it would be but as "the breaking of a dog's neck, and the offering of swine's blood,"[24] while your heart remains corrupted through the deceitfulness of sin. It is

18 Isaiah 5:18

19 James 3:15

20 John 3:3

21 Matthew 18:3

22 1 Corinthians 3:18

23 Micah 6:7

24 Isaiah 66:3

with *this* that God has a controversy, and He will not make peace till the wall of partition is broken down; for sin is what made a separation between God and your father Adam, and is the nature which stands in all his seed after him.

Therefore this is my counsel and advice unto you, who are in the unconverted and unchanged state, alienated from God, and estranged in your mind from His covenant of life: If you find any desires in you to return unto the Lord who made you, that He may save you from the heat of His wrath forever, then *cease from your own words, works and ways, and be not hasty to run before your Maker leads you by the hand in the light of His Truth,* with which Christ has enlightened you,[25] which shines in your dark heart,[26] so that you may not continue in darkness, but may receive the light of life.[27]

Hearken unto His voice, who stands at your door and knocks, and desires you to receive Him into your heart, which is His throne, upon which He must sit as King. There He must work the Father's will in you, which is to "purify you throughout in body, soul and spirit,"[28] without which you can never be a vessel of honor unto Him, to set forth His praise and glory in the earth. Truly Christ must work His own righteousness in you by His own right hand, and this must cover you forever; and so you must be crucified upon His cross to your own righteousness and unrighteousness (which all springs from the seed of enmity, in which God had no delight) before you can experience the peace of God that passes understanding to guard your heart and mind. All this you will find true in the day of your visitation, regardless how the false prophets may now persuade you to the contrary.

This is a hard saying to you who are yet alive in the fulness of delight, and in the pleasures of the flesh, to talk of dying to your own righteousness and unrighteousness before you can live unto God. But though it be as a bitter cup to you, yet you must be willing to drink it before you will taste of the cup of blessing, which is the communion of the blood of Christ.[29] You must suffer with Him who died upon the cross, before you experience the virtue of His resurrection. You must put off the old man, together with his deeds, before you can put on the new man.[30] You must purge out the old leaven of uncleanness, and the old bottle must be broken, before you keep the feast of unleavened bread as a passover unto the Lord.[31]

These are the footsteps of the flock, in which you must walk before Christ's righteousness is yours. Indeed, *you must buy the Truth with the loss of all that is contrary to it, if ever you will truly purchase it*. This

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25 John 1:9

26 2 Corinthians 4:6

27 John 8:12

28 1 Thessalonians 5:23

29 1 Corinthians 10:16

30 Ephesians 4:22-24

31 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

is the word of the Lord God unto you, which must be fulfilled either in or upon you. Let no man deceive you through vain words so as to tell you that, "God does not see you as you really are in sin, but only as you are in Christ." Oh poor deluded wretch! This is the "deception of wickedness"[32] indeed, which would make God as unrighteous as men, to look upon a man as being in Christ when he yet lives in sin and transgression. Pay no regard to such lying vanities, lest you forsake your own mercies forever.[33] For because of these things the wrath of God has come upon the children of disobedience.[34]

"He that says to the wicked, you are righteous; him shall the people curse, and the nations abhor," Proverbs 24:24. I say unto you, God looks upon you as you are; and He will not justify you in sin, nor hold you guiltless in transgression, but "will wound the head of His enemies, and the hairy scalp of the one who still goes on in his trespasses," Ps. 68:21. Therefore return, return unto the Lord by speedy repentance, and "kiss the Son lest He be angry, and you perish from the way of life; when His wrath be kindled but a little. Blessed are all that trust in Him," Ps. 2:12. I must not plaster you with untempered mortar, as the false prophets have done many years, crying "peace, peace" while you remain in iniquity, to whom the Lord says, "There is no peace."[35]

And if you are still feeding with swine upon husks, wallowing in mire among them, and satisfying yourself with a profession of the saints' words as they are outwardly written in the letter of Scripture, while you remain a stranger to that life in which they lived who gave them forth—then oh, this is but the chaff compared to the wheat! For the wheat is the inward possession of the life and righteousness of the Son of God. Therefore return unto your Father's house, to that light in which God dwells, 1 Timothy 6:16. Then will He meet you, embrace you, rejoice over you, and satisfy you with bread enough,[36] yes with the fatted calf (His own crucified One) upon which you shall feed and never hunger more.

This I was warned by the Lord to lay before all who are yet in Babylon and Egypt, that they may flee out from her and escape from her sins, lest they partake of her plagues, as it is written, Revelation 18:4. Therefore let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness, "for God has clothed Himself with a garment of vengeance, and with zeal as with a cloak," Isaiah 59:17; and no unclean thing shall stand before Him. He will render to every man according to the fruit of his doings. Therefore while you have a little time, prize it, lest the day of your visitation pass away, and the day of wrath come upon you as a thief in the night.[37]

—AMBROSE RIGGE

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32 2 Thessalonians 2:10

33 Jonah 2:8

34 Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6

35 Jeremiah 6:14-8:11; Ezekiel 13:10,16; Isaiah 48:22; 57:21

36 Luke 15:17-20

37 1 Thessalonians 5:2

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The Inward and Spiritual Grace of God Exalted as Man's Only Teacher.

It is the universal concern of all mankind upon the face of the whole earth to seek those things which belong to their eternal peace, happiness, tranquillity and rest with God, when time in this world shall be no more. Yet such are the wiles and cunning devices of the serpent and adversary of man's felicity, (who prevailed with Adam and Eve in the beginning to break God's covenant of life made with them) that he prevails with the generality of their posterity at this day to slight, disesteem and undervalue that which should "bring their salvation,"[38] and bring them to the knowledge of the way thereto, which is God's inward and spiritual grace that came to be manifested and known by the second Adam, Christ Jesus.[39]

This is the root, substance, and life of all true religion in the world, and without it there is none in the earth; for God has given it to bring salvation to the ends thereof, and to be a perfect and sufficient teacher to all mankind.[40] This was the saints' teacher in the gospel administration which brought their salvation.[41] And until the nations and people come to hear and learn of this inward and spiritual teacher, they can never be taught to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, nor to live soberly and righteously in this present world. This is the Christ of God, spiritually manifested in mortal flesh, to destroy the works of the devil; and all who will not hear, receive, follow and obey Him, can never receive power to become servants or sons of God, but will remain all their days in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, heaping up wrath for the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgments of God.

Thus Christ being manifested, becomes the author of eternal salvation in all who believe, and is that great mystery which had been hidden from our forefathers for many generations. Where He is received, heard and obeyed, He manifests His strength and power in the soul, which is greater than the power and strength of the enemy. There He binds the strong man (who has long kept the hearts of many), casts him out, sets up His throne, and rules till He has put all His enemies under His feet; and in this way Christ becomes the hope of glory to all His people, Colossians 1:27. But whosoever does not thus receive, hear and obey Him, nor give up to be governed by Him, cannot be His disciple, nor receive power from Him to become sons and servants of the living God.

Though many may profess His name in words, and make a fair show of Christianity in the flesh, yet they are strangers to the true Christian life, and are without God in the world, dead in sins and trespasses, and

38 Titus 2:11

39 John 1:17

40 2 Corinthians 12:9

41 Titus 2:11

can never be raised out of the grave of corruption, except as they believe in, and wait for the manifestation of His power "to work all their works in them and for them,"[42] which power is only known by His inward light and grace. It is by this alone that man can be made the workmanship of God, created again in Christ Jesus unto good works.[43] This is the new creation, where man receives the image of God, that is, the image of righteousness which was lost in the first Adam.

For the apostle says, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also," James 2:26. For it is by the works of righteousness, brought forth in man by Jesus Christ (who *is* God's righteousness), that saving faith made manifest. And no man can have true faith in Christ, who does not manifest the works of Christ's righteousness in his life and conduct. For the fruit and effect of saving faith in man is an inward righteousness and holiness, whereby man's heart, soul and spirit are sanctified to God; and without such holiness no man will see the Lord.[44] Thus man must follow Christ in the work of His righteousness, and learn of Him, and bear His cross—not a cross of gold, silver, wood or stone, but that which crucifies their beloved lusts and pleasures, without which they can never wear His crown. For though man by his own power cannot work his own salvation, yet as he believes in and follows the One whom God has given for a Leader and a Commander to His people,[45] he shall receive power from Him to do whatsoever He commands, and will be saved by Him from sin and transgression; for His name is called Jesus, because He saves His people *from* their sins, Matthew 1:21. And whosoever is not saved by Him here from their sins, can never be saved hereafter from the wrath and displeasure of Almighty God, and from that death which is the wages of sin.[46]

Now, the means which God has appointed to bring His salvation to all mankind, is His inward and spiritual grace and truth which came by Christ Jesus, John 1:17. As all mankind come to hear and obey this inward teacher, they will be saved through Him;[47] for He has virtue and power to bring forth righteousness in man, and to work out all unrighteousness.

It is like the little leaven hidden in the meal, which Christ spoke of in Matthew 13:33, which will leaven the whole lump of man into sincerity and truth when it is received and obeyed. It is the precious pearl, hidden in the field (which field is the world, set in man's heart[48]); there the wise man digs deep, and having found it, sells and parts with all his lusts to purchase it.[49] *No man can buy it except with the denial and loss of all that is contrary to it;* gold will not purchase it, and silver is dross in comparison

42 Isaiah 26:12

43 Ephesians 2:10

44 Hebrews 12:14

45 Isaiah 55:4

46 Romans 6:28

47 Ephesians 2:8

48 Ecclesiastes 3:11 KJV

49 Matthew 13:44-46

with it; its price is above rubies, and therefore the wise man said, "Buy the truth, and sell it not."[50] And no man can truly say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His," except as he thus buys this treasure by parting with all that is contrary to it. This is a hard saying to the greatest part of mankind, who have many possessions, beloved lusts and vane pleasures to part with, which are as near and dear as their right hand or eye. Indeed, this made the young man, whom Christ spoke to in Matthew 19, go away sorrowful, for he had great possessions; upon which the Son of Man said, "It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," and "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."[51]

Here is the mystery of godliness revealed, which the natural man cannot see or perceive, for it is hidden from the wise and prudent of the world and revealed unto babes and little ones. The great and proud men of this world are too big to enter this gate or walk in this narrow way, and the preaching of the cross of our Lord Jesus is foolishness to them. But all true disciples and followers of Jesus Christ must take up the cross, and by it be crucified to the world, and the world be crucified to them.[52]

Therefore lay aside all your imaginary crosses of gold, silver, wood or stone; for they are of no value, neither is there any virtue in them to crucify a single lust that wars in your members. For though you may carry these false crosses in your bosom, yet your beloved lusts lie there also unmortified, which wage war against your soul, and so far prevail that they bring forth sin in word and deed, which being full-grown, brings forth death, James 1:15.

The true cross of Christ is the power of God that works in all who believe.[53] "For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, making peace through the blood of His cross," Colossians 1:19-20. That by which the ancient Christians were crucified to the world, and the world to them, was the cross of Christ spiritually borne.[54] But since the Christian life and Spirit have been laid aside and quenched, the knowledge of this cross has been lost. And though many have set up an image of it, they have become strangers and enemies to the true cross of Christ, as the Jews and Pharisees were in the gospel day.

The knowledge of the mystery of God's salvation must be opened and manifested by the gift of God, that is, by His grace and Spirit, as it is received and obeyed; "For as no man knows the things of a man except the spirit of a man within him; even so no one knows the things of God but the Spirit of God," 1 Corinthians 2:11. With this Spirit within, the prophet Isaiah did seek the Lord, Isaiah 26:9. And with the Spirit of Truth within, all mankind must seek the Lord, if ever they will find Him and know His work.

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50 Proverbs 23:23. See also Revelation 3:18.

51 Matthew 19:23-24

52 Galatians 6:14

53 Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18

54 Galatians 6:14

This was the Jews' blindness in their day, namely, their resisting the Spirit of God, Acts 7:51. Though they maintained their temple worship with its offerings and sacrifices, yet by resisting the Spirit of God in themselves, they became more blind than the man with an unclean spirit who said to Christ, "I know who you are, the Holy One of God!"[55]

The great cause of all error in the world, is the departing from the Spirit of Truth within, from the Comforter who was sent according to the promise of Christ.[56] This Comforter being heard, received, and obeyed, leads into all truth, and is a perfect guide appointed of God for all mankind, to bring them to the knowledge of God's salvation.

Christ within, the hope of glory, was a mystery hidden from ages and generations, but revealed to the saints in the gospel day.[57] And when the wise professing Jews had rejected His outward appearance in the flesh (to whom He first came and offered Himself), He was manifested as "a light to the Gentiles, for salvation to the ends of the earth."[58] And now, it is this inward and spiritual appearance of Christ that the chief priests and worldly-wise Christians do oppose and reject in our day, being unwilling to have Him thus rule in the hearts and consciences of His people. Instead, they call the true Light (which is His life and spiritual appearance, John 1:4) a dark lantern, or a natural conscience; and so make His living Word of no effect by their traditional religion, which is set up in the will and wit of man. Thus every day they do crucify to themselves afresh the Lord of glory, and put Him to open shame;[59] for truly, every wicked word and deed is as a spear to wound Him.

But no man can be a true Christian who is not baptized into the death of Christ,[60] that is, dead to sin. This is the true spiritual baptism, of which John's baptism with water was only a figure, type, and fore-runner. Neither is he now a gospel Christian who is one outwardly; nor is baptism that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a true Christian who is one inwardly, and the one baptism is that of the heart and of the spirit.[61] For neither baptism nor un-baptism, as outwardly experienced, avails anything, but rather a new creature,[62] created again in Christ Jesus unto good works to live in them.[63] This is Christianity in its ancient glory and purity, which is restored and witnessed by receiving, hearing, and obeying the inward and spiritual "grace of God which brings salvation."[64] And until outward Christians come to hear

55 Mark 1:23-24. Matthew 8:29

56 John 14:16-17, 26

57 Colossians 1:26-27

58 Acts 14:47; Isaiah 49:6

59 Hebrews 6:6

60 Romans 6:3

61 A reference to Romans 2:28-29, where Paul uses these same words with reference to inward and outward circumcision.

62 A reference to Galatians 6:15, where the same words are again used with reference to circumcision.

63 Ephesians 2:10

64 Titus 2:11-12

and obey this inward and spiritual grace, they cannot know or witness God's salvation; for all that is outward is but as a shell and shadow, and is as the chaff to the wheat. For as Christ's appearance and manifestation in the substance of the gospel ministration is inward and spiritual, so is His baptism, and so is His supper, and all His ordinances; so that all who truly "eat His flesh and drink His blood, dwell in Him, and He in them," John 6:56. For it is the Spirit that quickens all who are made alive by Him, and the flesh profits nothing, verse 63.

The words Christ spoke were spirit and life, and He spoke of spiritual things in a mystery. At this the Jews murmured, and many of the disciples were offended, looking outward, as too many do in our day, who do not discern His flesh or blood. And though the children of Israel ate manna in the wilderness that rained down from heaven every day, yet, because it was only an outward bread, they died, John 6:49. Therefore, in the gospel dispensation, it is not the outward bread that nourishes the soul to eternal life, but the spiritual manna, which is received by the indwelling of the Son of God in man, and man dwelling in Him, verses 56-57. They who thus eat His flesh and drink His blood have eternal life, and He will raise them up at the last day, verse 54. This is the anti-type or fulfillment of all outward types and representations; for the outward flesh, bread or cup profit nothing as to the soul's nourishment. But where Christ has come and is risen in the spirit, His spiritual bread and cup show forth His resurrection in the soul. Here those who are quickened and raised by Him, live by every word that proceeds from His mouth. And being thus made partakers of His resurrection, the second death has no power over them.

This was represented by Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness,[65] and so must the Son of Man be lifted up in the soul, that all who are bitten by the spiritual serpent may look to Him and be healed. For though He was made a sacrifice to God for the sins of the whole world, that through His resurrection and life the whole world might be saved, yet no man has part with Him, or with His resurrection, who is not washed in this world from their uncleanness by Him. For the purging, which all true Christian believers acknowledge, is by the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses men from their sins; and none experience the benefit of this, but those who walk in the light. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."[66] Here is the covenant where the benefit, virtue, and efficacy of the blood of Jesus is known and witnessed to this day, and it will be so throughout all generations. And for this reason the true light, or grace of God, has "enlightened every man that comes into the world,"[67] that all might receive it and walk in it, and so be made living witnesses of the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse them from their sins.

If the sons and daughters of men had experienced this cleansing, they need not have imagined an outward

65 John 3:14, Numbers 21:9

66 1 John 1:6-7

67 John 1:9

purgatory to cleanse them from their sins; for the blood of Jesus Christ (thus known and experienced) is sufficient to sanctify and to make all who walk in the light truly clean in body, soul and spirit. For as the lightning comes out of the east and shines to the west, so is the shining of the Sun of righteousness in the soul of man. But until the day dawns and the day-star arises in the heart, the glorious Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings can never be known to arise. And truly, until His arising is known and witnessed, all preaching is vain, man's faith is vain, and people remain in their sins. For without this inward work, none are made conformable to His death, nor become partakers of His resurrection, but rather live and die in their sins, and where He goes they cannot come.[68]

Therefore let all be warned, to give heed to the true light and inward spiritual grace of God, and give up to all its teachings, that you may receive an understanding from God to know the mysteries of the kingdom of righteousness. For these things are hidden from the wise and prudent of the world, who glory in their brain-study, in human arts and literature, and in natural acquirements that are in the will and wisdom of man. But divine wisdom was never conveyed to the sons of men through such things as these. True wisdom is the gift of God, communicated by the Spirit to those who love and fear Him. The secrets of the Lord are daily manifested to such as these, and they lack not the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of righteousness, but can declare to others what God has done for their souls, and what they have tasted and handled of the Word of eternal life.[69] These are "able ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit."[70]

And until the nations and all people turn to and receive this gift of God, which He has universally sown into tall types of ground,[71] they can never see or walk in the way of life. For man cannot know the life that comes from grace until he has willingly subjected himself to it, and been spiritually baptized by it into the death of Christ. Here is found the true inward Christian, whose praise is not of men, but of God.[72] For the true Christian baptism is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, and none are real Christians but those who are so baptized. Upon this account, the Son of God said unto Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John 3:3. And verse 5, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," that is, the spiritual water whereby the Holy Spirit does wash all true believers, and bring them into newness of life.

Now, all you who have sat down contented in outward visible signs, and are slighting and neglecting the substance—that is, the inward and spiritual grace which must bring your salvation—the enemy has deceived you in keeping you from hearing, receiving, and obeying your true teacher. Thus you are ever

68 John 8:21-24

69 1 John 1:1

70 2 Corinthians 3:6

71 Matthew 13:3-9

72 Romans 2:28-29

learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the Spirit of Truth in yourselves, which is given of God to lead you into all truth.[73] This is the Comforter who was promised by Christ to abide forever;[74] who Christ said had dwelt with His disciples, and would be in them.[75] This Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, is arisen in our day, and is manifested in all true believers for this purpose: "to destroy the works of the devil."[76]

But oh, let the outward Christians beware, lest they reject Him in His inward appearance, even as the outward Jews rejected Him in His outward appearance! For if they wound and crucify the Spirit of Christ in themselves, they will be just as guilty of His blood as were the Jews of old. What belittling, despising, yes even blaspheming of the inward and spiritual appearance of Christ have the nominal Christians been guilty of! And how have they buffeted, stoned and imprisoned Him in His servants for speaking through them! Indeed, they have crucified Him afresh, and put Him to open shame by their ungodly deeds and harsh words.

Oh Lord! I pray you open their eyes, that they may see Him whom they have thus pierced with their sharp spears, and let a day of mourning and lamentation come over them, as was prophesied by Zechariah.[77] For outward Christianity now, wherever the inward life, Spirit and power of Christ are not received and experienced, is of no more value in the sight of God than were the offerings and sacrifices of the Jews while they remained inwardly polluted. For it is the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit that the Lord regards.[78] The inward white linen is what is beautiful in His eyes, and His sons and daughters "are all glorious within."[79] They hunger and thirst after an inward righteousness, that is, after the righteousness that comes by faith.

"For the Word is very near you, in your heart and in your mouth, that you may hear it, and do it."[80] This was the Word of faith which the true gospel ministers believed, received, and then preached. And whoever does not receive this inward Word, cannot know the salvation of God, for it is the "implanted Word that is able to save the soul," James 1:21. And until the people come to hear and to do this Word, their buildings are upon the sand, and they will not stand in a stormy day. For true and saving faith, in all who live and stand in it, is obtained and received by the hearing of this Word, and without such faith it is impossible to please God, Hebrews 11:6. It was in this way that the ancients received faith, and walked in it, and did many valiant acts, both in the time of the first and second covenant, and experienced a victory over the world. Yes, they were made more than conquerors over death, hell and the grave, and obtained

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73 John 16:13

74 John 14:16-17

75 John 14:17

76 1 John 3:8

77 Zechariah 12:10-14

78 Ps. 51:17

79 Ps. 45:13

80 Romans 10:8, Deuteronomy 30:12-14

a good report, though they received not the promise, Hebrews 11:39.

And now this testimony I must leave to the world, not knowing how long my days may be therein: that God has sent His good Spirit into the hearts of the children of men to be their guide, leader and director in all things relating to His kingdom. And it is upon the receiving and obeying, or the resisting and disobeying of this Spirit, that man's eternal felicity or woe stands; for nothing short of the Spirit of Truth can give mankind the knowledge of the mysteries of God's salvation; and all knowledge without it is earthly and carnal, and can never give life to a soul.

—AMBROSE RIGGE.

Riegate, the 30th of the Third month, 1691.

* * *

Like many other faithful followers of Christ, the life of Ambrose Rigge was attended with much tribulation and persecution. In an epistle written to Friends in the north of England, he once wrote, "Dear Friends, though I have not outwardly seen your faces for many years, I would not have you therefore think that I am dead; for I bless the Lord, I still live by the faith of the Son of God, and my life is hid with Christ in God. But consider, I have been in eleven prisons in this county, one of which held me more than ten years and four months, besides being twice premunired, and once whipped, and many other sufferings too long to relate here; but blessed be the Lord, my labour, travels and sufferings have not been in vain, for many have been thereby gathered to the true Shepherd's fold, where they have laid down in rest and peace." Having thus passed a life of faithful labour in the service of God and man, whereby many were turned to righteousness; and having endured persecution and affliction with remarkable faithfulness and patience, whereby his peace was increased; in the time of his last sickness, he looked forward to his dissolution as the end of all his troubles, saying, "I am going where the weary are at rest." And having grown accustomed to patience in affliction, it did not desert him in this final trial. He bore his sickness with much patience and resignation to the divine will, and his love and esteem for the pure Truth abode with him to the last, declaring a little before his departure, "If Friends will keep to the Root of life in themselves, they will be the happiest people in the world." He departed this life the 30th of 11th month 1704, aged above seventy years.

A Short Account of Alice Hayes

It has been in my heart for many years to leave behind me a brief relation of the Lord's dealings with me, from my youth up to this day, for the encouragement of the young to faithfulness and continual trust and

confidence in the Lord, who never fails those that truly depend upon Him, either in temporal or spiritual mercies.

I was born at Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire, in the year 1657, of honest parents, who raised me in the profession of the public worship of the church of England. My mother died when I was very young; but while she lived, she was a tender, affectionate parent to me, almost to excess. One instance of her affection was very remarkable. I being at one time very weak, and thought to be near unto death, the exercise thereof was so hard to her that she fell down upon her knees and prayed the Lord to take her life and to spare mine; which He did, for reasons that are known only to Him.

I continued at home with my father till about the age of sixteen years, under the sharp government of a step-mother, whose austerity to me made me weary of living with her, insomuch that I left my father's house, and went to service,[1] that I might live more at peace than I had done. The Lord in mercy remembered me, and looked upon my affliction in that day, though I had not yet come to the knowledge of the truth. He followed me in those days with His reproofs in my conscience for the sins of my youth, which were dancing, singing, telling idle stories, and some other vain pastimes, into which youth are too liable to run. And not being reproved by my parents for these things, nor by the priest, I went on grieving the Holy Spirit of God in myself, not yet knowing what it was that reproved me in secret for these things; though, through the Lord's great mercy and goodness to me, I was addicted to no worse evils in all my life.

Nevertheless, when the Searcher of all hearts came by His light to open my understanding, and to set my sins in order before me, and to make known what it was that reproved me for my misspent time, then, (oh then!) the day of Jacob's trouble[2] was experienced. Oh it was dreadful to me to consider how I had overlooked the reproofs of the Almighty, and I was often ready to bewail myself after this manner:—"Oh! that I had had parents that could have informed me that those things for which I was reproved were indeed evil; or that they had told me that those secret reproofs I often felt were from the Spirit of the Lord! Surely I never would have done as I did!" But neither my parents, nor the priest, taught me any such doctrine; both of them considering all such things as but innocent and harmless diversions. And as for the light, grace, or Spirit of God that reproved me, I had never heard there was any such thing so near to me as I felt it and found it to be. Then I was grieved to think that the Lord of glory should have so long knocked at the door of my dark heart, and waited for entrance, and that I had so long kept Him out, though He still followed me with His judgments, and in great mercy to my poor soul often brought me into deep sorrow.

The consideration of my latter end was laid weightily before me, with thoughts of eternity, and the words

1 Young, unmarried women at this time would often bind themselves under contract for a number of years as a servant or governess in large private families, in order to assist the heads of the household with various domestic duties, and with the upbringing and education of their children.

2 Jeremiah 30:7

“ever and ever” took deep hold of me. Then, oh, the trouble and surprise I was in! Insomuch that I could not tell what course to take, nor to whom I could make known my distressed condition. Sometimes I have gone into the company of other people, attempting in this way to divert my sorrow; but that would not do. Then I would seek out some secret place, and there I would fall upon my knees and pour out my spirit before the Lord, begging for mercy and forgiveness at His hands.

Now I am about to relate how the wise hand of the Almighty guided me. After I left my father’s house, I went inquiring for a place of service, and soon heard of one, where I continued some time, and was well beloved in the family. I served them honestly, and in love. But it may not be amiss to state how I spent my time at my first place of service with respect to religion, which was after this manner: I kept close and constant, as opportunity permitted, in going to the public worship, and very often went alone into private places to pray, and greatly delighted to read the Scriptures, and to get passages by heart. And when my hand was in my labour, my heart was meditating on good things, and I was very glad that I was away from my father’s house because of the quietness I enjoyed. I was often comforted in my heart in those days, though I knew not from where it came.

As I thus continued in well-doing, according to the best of my knowledge, the Lord was pleased to appear to me in an extraordinary manner, and a sweet visitation I had. I was led into a deep silence before the Lord, where I was taught to wait, and I dared not utter my own words. And though I had gathered many good words and Scripture sentences into my brain, now I came to see this would not do. After this manner I spent my time, and a good time it was to me. It was the Lord’s doing, and He shall have the praise of it; blessed be His name forever!

After some time, I went to live at the house of a justice of the peace, where my first husband and I became acquainted. But I should first mention, that I went for a short time to my brother’s house before I entered into my second service, and while I was there, I heard a report in the neighborhood of a woman preacher who was greatly esteemed among the Quakers, and who was to be at one of their meetings not far from my brother’s house. Some of the neighbors, out of curiosity, had a mind to hear and see her, and so asked me to go with them; to which I consented. When I came to the meeting, it made a great impression upon my mind. The solidity of the people, and the weighty frame of spirit they were under, occasioned many deep thoughts to pass through my heart, by beholding so much difference between their way of worship and that of those where I usually attended. After some time of silence, a woman stood up and spoke, and her testimony so affected my heart and tendered my spirit that I could not refrain from weeping. But, alas, after the meeting was over, the enemy soon prevailed again and darkened the little spiritual sense I had, both by means of outward instruments and inward suggestions, so that I went no more to any such meeting for several years.

The time having come to begin my service at the house of the justice, my mistress, before I had been with her very long, would often be saying, “This Alice will become a Quaker;” though I still had no such

thoughts. Yet through the Lord's goodness to me, I spent all my spare time either in reading or in getting alone, or in some religious performance, and also continued diligent and faithful to the trust that my master and mistress committed to me, to their satisfaction, and to my own as well, feeling well pleased with my place.

It was in this family, as I said before, that I became acquainted with my first husband, Daniel Smith, who in love made suit to me, and we continued together in that family near two years. About the end of that time, it pleased the Lord to visit me with sore lameness occasioned by a sprain in my ankle; but for some time longer I continued in my service.

That winter my master and mistress removed to London, and did not have occasion for as many servants in town as they kept in the country. Some they dismissed, and my mistress provided a place for me until summer, when they were to return. At this place I received hurt, with regard to my spiritual condition. Here I had no help towards heaven, but rather the contrary, by the bad example and the vain and irreligious conduct in that family. I therefore caution young people to take special care what company they keep, and to flee from bad associates as from a serpent. For surely, such company proved like venom to me, as it helped to drive good things out of my mind, and so forgetfulness of God followed, which caused many a sorrowful hour when the Lord brought me to a sense of it. But blessed be His name, He did not permit me to go on long in this state; for now my lameness grew worse, and the time came that I was to leave this family and return to my former master, the justice, where I longed to be, because it was a more orderly family.

I gladly would have been healed of my lameness in my own time, that I might be able to perform all of my duties; but I found that the more I strove for a cure, the worse I grew, insomuch that I was obliged to go home to my father's house. This was no small exercise on account of my step-mother; but blessed be the Lord, the day of His love was still lengthened out, and though it came with judgment, yet it was mixed with mercy. Great was my pain in body, and much greater was my sorrow of mind. In this affliction, like Israel of old, I cried to the Lord for help; for now I saw plainly that if He did not help me, I would be undone forever. I despaired of man's help, for I had tried it many times to no purpose, so that great and many were my cries and prayers to God to restore me, resolving to serve Him in newness of life. This was the covenant I was ready to make with Him. Oh! the matchless mercies, and long forbearance of a good and gracious God, to a poor, distressed, disconsolate, and unworthy creature!

Very remarkable was the faithfulness and constancy of my dear friend, Daniel Smith (afterwards my husband), who, in all my distress and weakness, never shrunk in his love to me, but continued constant, though I was brought to be a poor cripple and went about with crutches. He was a comely and handsome man, and by this time had taken up a farm where he was likely to do very well, and seemingly might have found a far better match. But he, like an honest man, never regarded my lameness, but continued firm and constant, and waited two years to see how the Lord would deal with me. And at the end, seeing no

amendment in my health, he nevertheless proposed marriage to me, and accordingly we were married. A faithful, tender, loving husband I had in him; who provided for me all things that were needful and comfortable; a mercy and blessing I hope I shall never forget. His constancy and faithfulness are worthy to be recorded. The blessing of God was his reward in this life, and I have no doubt that he is at peace with his and my God.

In a few months my lameness grew better, so that I left my crutches, and could walk pretty well. But, oh, it is to be lamented, that I missed my way; for having recovered from my lameness, and grown strong, living in my heart's content with a loving husband, and outward things prospering, I forgot (like Israel of old) the tender dealings and mercies of so gracious a God, and the promises and covenants I had made with Him; and I gave myself whatever liberty my unstable mind desired.

Thus I went on for about one year and a half after my marriage; when the Lord, with an eye of pity, looked upon my wretched and miserable condition, and laid His hand upon me, in order to awaken me out of this false ease, by a sickness that brought me near to death. Then, my conscience being thoroughly awakened, I beheld my backslidings and disobedience with amazement. Horror and condemnation took fast hold upon me, and the Witness arose within, which caused sore distress of mind; and in this condition, I seemed just about to step out of time into eternity. I saw, that if I died in this state, my portion must be with the unbelievers and disobedient, in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone forevermore. And indeed, it would have been justice, had God then cut me off for my covenant-breaking and disobedience. Oh it was dreadful to me, to behold my time so short, and the work I had to do so great! I lay under horror and astonishment, wondering how I could endure the torment I deserved. Let the thoughts of this sink deep into the heart of everyone who reads these lines, that they may become prepared and truly fitted for the kingdom of rest and peace, when pale death looks them in the face. Then it will be easier with them than it was with me; for no mortal can tell the anxiety I lay in for several nights and days, looking for that dreadful sentence, "Depart now, for your time here shall be no more." Oh, the fervent cries and prayers I put up to the Lord at this time, that He would be pleased to spare me this one time more; and I begged all that came near me to pray for me. My cry was, "Spare me a little longer, and try me once more, and I will become a new creature."

Thus I ventured once again to enter into covenant with the Lord; who, in great mercy and pity, looked upon me, and spared, and pardoned, and raised me up from the brink of the grave. Oh, the boundless mercies of God; how shall they be sufficiently set forth by me! Everlasting glory be given unto Him; let all that is within me praise His name. And seeing that it pleased Him to hear my petition, and to raise me up again, and to give me a little strength, the remembrance of my former state seized upon me daily, and called for the performance of my vows and promises to become a new creature.

And now I began, according to the best of my knowledge, to live according to the following manner: Morning and evening I failed not to pray, and to read the Scriptures and other books which I believed to

be good ones, constantly going to the public worship when able. I also resolved to be very mindful of my words and actions, and to act justly before all men. And I saw I must walk very humbly before the Lord, in order to become a new creature; for He let me see that it was holiness He called for at my hands, and that it was my duty to persevere therein, not for a day, a week, a month, or a year; but if I would be saved, I must hold out to the end.[3]

Notwithstanding I set myself strictly to observe the aforementioned performances, many months had not passed over my head before I found a very strange alteration and operation in me, the like I had never felt before. The foundation of the earth within me began to be shaken, and it was strange and bewildering to me. I had hoped that now being found in the aforesaid practices, I would have witnessed peace and comfort; but behold, I found the contrary! Instead of peace, came trouble and sorrow, wars and commotions. I feared that my condition was such, that there had never been one like it, not then understanding that "the messenger of the covenant was coming to His temple," even He whom my soul had been seeking; and that He must sit there, that is, in my heart, "as a refiner with fire and as a fuller with soap,"[4] to clear His own place, which was defiled by the usurper, who had taken up his habitation there too long. Oh, it was a long time indeed that the Lord of life and glory was kept out of His habitation, for an entrance into which He had waited and knocked nearly twenty years; during which time I had accumulated much fuel for the fire, and much work for the refiner, whose skillful as well as merciful hand preserved me in the furnace. The bad part in me was so great, and the good so small, that I thought all would perish together; for the heat of that fire in my heart was great and terrible, so that, like David, I was ready to say, "My bones are all out of joint;"[5] and in the depth of my distress, the enemy was very strong with his temptations. But oh, the kindness of God to me in that day, "for then did help come in the time of need."[6] The old adversary was strong, and not willing to lose his habitation, nor have his goods spoiled; but Christ, the stronger Man, overcame him in due time, and cast him out; and blessed be God, in a good measure He also spoiled his goods. The strugglings that I felt in those times I hope will never be forgotten; and my desire is that these lines of experience may (and I do believe they will) be of service to some poor distressed traveller who may have to walk in the same steps.

I thought, that if I had met with a written account of any that had gone through such trials, it would have been some help to me. I searched the Scriptures from one end to the other, and read several books, but I thought none could fully speak to my state. The third chapter of Lamentations, many of the Psalms, and the seventh chapter of the Romans did somewhat affect me at times, whereby a little hope would arise in the thought that the writers of these books had passed through something like it. But oh, the bitter whisperings of Satan, and the thoughts that passed through my mind, were such as my very soul hated!

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3 Matthew 10:22,24:13; Mark 13:13

4 Malachi 3:1-3

5 Ps. 22:14

6 Hebrews 4:16

Yet such were the suggestions of the enemy, that he would charge these upon me, as if they were my own. But the Lord, in His own due time, gave me to see "that he was a liar from the beginning."[7]

Indeed, had not a secret hand of power supported me in this my bewildered state, I had surely fainted, and laid down in the depth of despair. Day and night were alike to me; there was no fleeing from the presence of the Lord, or from His righteous judgments which pursued me and were now poured upon the transgressing nature in me which had long continued in its place and taken deep root. Now the refiner's fire was made very hot, in order to burn up the dross and the tin. Oh, happy is the man or woman who abides the day of His coming; for sure I am that "His fan is in His hand," and if men will but submit when He appears, He will thoroughly do that for them which no other can do, namely, "purge the threshing floor,"[8] which is man's heart, where all the chaff is to be burnt.

This is the baptism that does people good. May the Lord bring thousands more through this inward experience in order to prepare an offering to God in righteousness; for nothing short of this will do, or stand in the great and notable day of the Lord.

After this manner did the Almighty (in great lovingkindness) deal with me, for His judgments were mixed with mercy to one so unworthy. And as I continued in patience, resolving to press forward towards the mark, various were the inward states I passed through. Yet by the assistance of the light of Christ (without which, I had surely fallen in the vast howling wilderness, where so many dangers did attend) I came to witness, under the Gospel dispensation, what Israel of old passed through while in the land of Egypt and by the Red Sea; for I experienced their travels in the depths, with their coming up on the banks of deliverance, and likewise their travels through the great and terrible wilderness, where there were fiery serpents and scorpions, and a drought wherein they could find no water, as in Deuteronomy 8:15.

Marvelous it is to think, that I could ever be preserved through the diversity of these states, and this without the assistance of any outward instrument, which, blessed be God, many now have. For at this time I was still under the hireling teachers, to whom I very frequently resorted, and I would happily have settled under them if I could have found peace. I was constant in my attendance at the steeple-house; but sorrowful I went in, and sorrowful I came out, week after week, and month after month, seeking the living Lord among the dead forms and shadows, but not finding Him there.

And of course it was so with me, for I lacked the true knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom my very soul desired more than any outward enjoyment. I was grieved at my very heart in that day to behold the barrenness of both priest and people. I looked for some fruits of sobriety, especially in the time of worship; but I saw some were light and airy, with an appearance of pride; others were rude and careless;

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7 John 8:44

8 Matthew 3:12

and some were sleeping. And there was so little solidity, that I was often ready to say to myself, “Is there no people that serve the Lord better than these?” For I observed with sorrow that they would be talking of their farms and trades until they came to the very door, and then again as soon as they came out; which I thought not right. But still I continued under my exercise, grievously weighed down and bowed in my spirit, wishing in the morning that it were evening, and longing in the evening for morning. Indeed, so great was the horror I lay under, that I often wished I had never been born.

But it was not long before I came to witness some tenderness spring up in my heart, which had been so long hard. I could weep in the sense of my lost and undone state; but I still knew not where to look or wait for the appearance of Christ, though I had felt all these inward workings and strivings. And when I felt a little ease or comfort, I felt it within; for indeed, *there* was my grief and my wound. But I knew not that God was so near me, nor understood who it was that conveyed comfort to my soul. I thought that God was only in the heavens above the skies; for the Scriptures were still a sealed book to me, and I did not know that He could be so near to me as, by His light, to let me see the outgoings of my mind, and the very thoughts and intents of my heart. Nevertheless, at times I felt a little warmth in my heart, accompanied by a breathing to God in these words: “Oh Lord, make me one of Your fold, a sheep of Your pasture!” These cries to God, with little else, passed through my heart for many months; for this was the first good desire that He begot in me after He led me through judgment for sin. Then the light, or good Spirit of Christ (which is one), let me see plainly that I was not in fellowship with His flock. Therefore the cry remained, “Lord, make me one of Your fold, a sheep of Your pasture;” for as yet I did not see who they were, nor where they were gathered.

But as I continued under these exercises, the Lord was pleased to make known to me His people, after many mournful nights and days. But indeed, this proved a great cross to me, and I went through great sufferings before I could submit to be counted a fool among the people of God, with whom I now have true unity, and I bless God for the privilege.

If any should question, and say, “How did you come to have these people shown to you by the Lord, as you say?” I will give you this true answer, in much simplicity and integrity of heart. As I continued under the aforesaid exercise, it frequently ran through my mind, “Go to the Quakers;” as intelligibly to my understanding as if I had heard an outward voice. But I was not hasty to give up to this motion, fearing and doubting lest it should be the enemy of my soul seeking to deceive and beguile me, and lead me into error; and so I continued attending the public worship of the church of England. At last I could find no peace or comfort there, but still the voice followed me, saying, “Go to the Quakers;” Nevertheless I continued to linger for the aforesaid reasons. Then that passage came into my mind from the tenth chapter of the Acts of the apostles, concerning Cornelius, who had continued a long time in prayers and alms, and an angel from God was sent to direct him to send for Simon Peter, who would tell him what to do. These Scriptures opened plainly in my mind; but notwithstanding this, I reasoned within myself, saying in my heart:—“As for Cornelius, I know an angel directed him; but as for me, what do I see? I only

hear, as it were, a voice within me saying, 'Go to the Quakers,' and I may be deceived if I heed it." So I strove against the motions of the Spirit of Truth, not knowing I was under that dispensation wherein God now "speaks to us by His Son,"[9] in the hearts of His people.

Yet such was the mercy and love of God to me, that in this time of my ignorance and infancy, He was pleased in great mercy to follow me; so that I can truly say that I witnessed the Scripture to be fulfilled where it says, "In the day of Your power, Your people shall be made willing."[10] It was no less than the power of God that constrained me to go and hear what sort of doctrine was preached by them, for I had never but once heard any of those people preach, and that was five or six years before. And after long struggling and reasoning, I inquired for a Quaker's meeting, and was informed of the place and day. I went to it, not acquainting anybody where I was going, nor had I opened my condition to anyone, nor could I. When I came to the meeting, there I saw a small number of people waiting upon the Lord, and after some time a servant of God stood up and declared such things as I had never before heard from anyone, whereby my present state was fully spoken to; and I could set my seal to it, that it was the truth. The power that attended the testimony reached to the witness of God in my heart; and a zeal for Him was raised within me, by the hopes that were begotten through the preaching of the Word of truth.

When the meeting was over, I went away with joy and gladness of heart, and my understanding was in some measure opened. A measure of faith was also raised in me that the Lord still had regard unto me, seeing that my condition had been so plainly opened by a handmaid of the Lord, whom I had never seen before. The Lord alone knew my condition at that time; and as I continued faithful to what He made manifest unto me, it pleased the Almighty One to make bare His powerful arm for my deliverance through the many and various exercises that I met with for the Gospel's sake.

Soon after I received the truth, I met with many sorts of enemies which the old adversary raised up; but forever blessed be the God of my life, He gave me power and dominion over my inward enemies, and delivered me also from the outward ones.

My attendance at meetings coming to be known, both in my family and neighborhood, the devil stirred up some wicked instruments in order to set my husband against me. My dear husband, who had been so tender and loving to me all our days till now, grew very unkind, and his love turned into hatred and contempt. This was very hard for me to bear from one whom I so dearly loved; but it seemed good to the Lord so to allow it, in order to try me, whether I loved anything more than Him. Sometimes when I went to dress myself to go to meeting, my husband would take away my clothes; but this mattered little to me, and I would go with whatever I had; so he soon left off this practice. Many other trials I met with from him, which I think not proper to mention. But one very close trial he put me to was this: he being pretty

9 Hebrews 1:2

10 Ps. 110:3

cool in his temper, spoke very seriously to me after this manner; “I have now come to a resolution in my own mind what to do if you do not leave off going to the Quakers. I will sell all that I have, pay everyone what I owe them, and go and leave you.” This struck close to my very life; but then the saying of Jesus came into my mind: “He that loves anything more than Me, is not worthy of me.”[11] Here I was brought to the very proof, whether I loved Christ Jesus best, or my husband; for one of the two must have the preeminence in my heart. Indeed the time had come for the full proof of my love to God, whether I could leave father and mother, brothers and sisters, yes, and a husband that I had loved more than all, for Christ and the Gospel’s sake. This is a trial which none can know, but those who experience the same; for these relations are very near to the heart, and without an invisible support, the soul cannot hold up under such trials. But those whose hearts are true to God, being sanctified and made clean by the washing of regeneration, are enabled to deny themselves, not only of unlawful things, but also of the dearest lawful things, for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s.

My husband waited for my answer to what he had proposed, and after some time of weighing the thing in my spirit, I said, with a true concern upon my heart: “Well, husband, if it must be so, I cannot help it;” explaining to him that I could not, in compliance to him, let go of what I had found in God through faith in His Son who had come to save me from my sins; nor could I refrain from going to worship God among the people whom He had so visibly and so fully satisfied me that He acknowledged to be His followers, and among whom I had felt and witnessed His presence. Everlasting praises be given to His name, because when hopes had been raised in me that through faith in the Son of God my sins would be pardoned for His name’s sake, I could not let go of my Savior for the love of a husband, though nothing else in this world was so dear to me. The Lord permitted him to inflict many a sore trial upon me, which were like wormwood and gall to me during the time they lasted. But I received them as from the Lord’s hand in kindness, in order to try how constant I would be in my dependence upon Him alone, when all in this world that were near and dear to me had turned against me; yes, father and mother, brothers and sisters; but nothing came so near to me as my husband.

When I truly came to take up the cross for Christ’s sake, I met with persecution of various sorts; but that of the tongue was the hardest for me to bear, and a large share of that I had, with many cruel mockings. But thanks forever be to that power who upheld me through grievous abuse, false reports, belittling, and slighting. The very remembrance thereof bows my heart and humbles my spirit in the sense of the kindness of God to me in that day, who enabled me with patience to go through all the clamor of their tongues, till it pleased the Lord to remove many of my persecutors and slanderers out of my way, some of whom I may have occasion to mention.

It being spread about that I had turned Quaker, the priest of the parish, whose name was John Berrow, having heard of it, came to give me a visit. Among the rest of his discourse and reasonings with me, he

11 Matthew 10:37

was so bold as to venture to tell me that the Quakers denied the Scriptures, and the resurrection, and the man Christ Jesus who died outside the gates of Jerusalem; and that they only believed in a Christ that was within them. To this I answered, “No, they do not say so; nor do they preach such doctrine.” To which he replied, “It may be that they do not yet, until they have got you. You do not discern their hook, or their gilded pill. It is a dangerous doctrine they hold, and damnable heresy they are in.” To this I only replied, “If they deny Christ, I will never be a Quaker;” and so he went his way. And after much labour both of body and mind, in searching the Scriptures, and comparing their doctrines and principles therewith, I found this priest to be a false accuser.

Some years after this, I found a weighty concern upon my spirit to go to his public place of worship, and to charge him with this falsehood in order to vindicate the professors of the truth, and to clear my own conscience. I shall afterwards have more occasion to mention this event; but shall now proceed to say something concerning those instruments before hinted at, who were the authors of much disturbance to my dear husband, and of great exercise to me.

A cook-maid that lived with the justice whose servant I formerly was, and a servant maid of my own, being both of a bad spirit, cared not what lies they made and reported of me. But the Lord made known their wickedness, and my innocency, in His own time. My maid, by her stories and deceitful conduct in the justice’s family, thought to have preferred herself there, knowing it pleased the justice’s wife to hear stories concerning me because of her dislike for the Quakers. But in less than six months after she went from me, she was found to be a thief, and ran out of the parish, and I never saw her more. As for the cook-maid, she in a very short time came to much poverty, and I afterwards often relieved her.

Two others were very sour to me, namely, the justice’s wife and my husband’s mother. The two maids before mentioned had so filled them with bitter unkindness towards me, that they very much troubled my husband, setting him against me. The justice’s wife especially caused me to go through great difficulties. However, this lasted not long, for in a few months after I was convinced of the truth, she went to London, where she stayed some time. And when the time of her intended return had come, and a coach was provided to fetch her home, death struck her, and she was brought home dead.

My husband’s mother being very full of wrath and bitterness towards me, I tried to pacify her by entreaty, and by acquainting her a little with some of my exercises explaining to her that I did not go to the Quakers in a stubborn mind, or in self-will, nor with any ill design of ruining my husband, as some reported. But when I began to speak these things to her, she flew into a bitter passion, grievously reproaching me, saying I would be the ruin of her child, meaning my husband. I could by no means bring her into any moderation, nor would she hear what I had to say, but departed from me expressing herself in much anger after this manner: “I will not endure you any more!” She went home, where she soon fell sick and died, and was buried in less than a week’s time.

But the enemy soon stirred up another, my husband’s step-father. He came one time to our house, full

of prejudice against me, and brought a great book with him, and then sat down. My husband soon came in, and they both set upon me, reproaching the Quakers. I attempted to go outdoors, but my husband prevented me, for he placed himself by the door to hinder my going out. In those days I could not talk or contend much for the truth; but blessed be the Lord, I was made willing to suffer for it many ways; but that which was hardest for me to bear, was from my husband, whom I loved as my own life. We had not then been married above two years, so that if God had not upheld me, I would certainly have fainted.

My husband not permitting me to go out as I intended, the great book was laid upon the table, and they said to me, "If you need a book to read, here is one for you to look into;" and they urged me to read it. I took their book, and read awhile to myself, but I soon shut it and would read no more, for I saw that it had been written by an adversary of the truth. I then took up the Bible in my hand, and the first place I cast my eye upon was that passage in the Psalms, where it is says, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man; yes, it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."[12] Oh, the comfort I felt in reading these words! It was more to me than any outward treasure, for I found my strength renewed, and patience was given me to bear all, and to suffer quietly.

My father-in-law used many bitter expressions, saying that if he were my husband, he would never endure it, insinuating that he would leave me; my husband being then present, and having himself before threatened me with the same thing. Then my husband's step-father began to curse and swear, for which I could not forbear reproving him (in the plain language). But this so enraged him that he was like a madman, cursing and saying; "Do not 'thee' and 'thou' me!" And in a bitter manner, he said, "A Quaker, away with you! If you had been anything else—had you been a Baptist, and gone to hear them every day of the week—it had not been so bad as this. But a Quaker!" And again: "If you will not turn from your religion, I will buy a chain, and chain you to that maple tree that stands in the pasture; and there you shall be glad to turn for hunger." More might be mentioned, which I omit for brevity's sake. My poor husband said not much at that time, but only kept me within doors to see and hear what his step-father could do with me. But blessed be the Lord, these things did not move me. So let all be encouraged to trust in that ancient arm of power that never failed in time of need, nor ever will fail those who have a single eye to His glory.

It was not long before the Lord brought them both to a sense of their error; for the next time they met, my father-in-law told my husband he was very sorry for what he had said and done to me, and that he would never do so again. And indeed, he never spoke to me in that way again, but ever after was very loving and moderate to me. In time, such an impression was made upon him, that he became very moderate and respectful to all Friends with whom he conversed. Afterwards my dear husband's love to me returned, and he continued to the end of his life a loving and tender husband, and an indulgent father to our children. And through the Lord's goodness to him, he was convinced that it was the truth for which I

12 Ps. 118:9

suffered; and I do believe he died in the faith, and is at rest with his God; for which, and all His mercies, let all that is within me give Him the praise.

Having been made an experiential witness of the dealings of the Lord, and passed through several states, it pleased the Lord to make me instrumental in His hand to speak a word in season to others, both in public and in private; and in my obedience to the motion of the Spirit of God, I found peace, strength, and encouragement to persevere.

But I may first make a little observation concerning the deceitful spirit by which John Berrow, the priest of the parish of Watford, was led, which I beheld to my grief and sorrow. I felt a concern come upon my spirit to go and reprove him publicly in his worship house, for his false accusations—as that the Quakers denied the Scriptures, and the resurrection, and the man Christ Jesus that died outside the gates of Jerusalem, and that they only believed in a Christ within them—as well as for his going from house to house in order to discourage well-inclined people from going to Quaker's meetings. For he found the interest of many people declining from him; as at that time a good thing was stirring among many in that place, and people were inquiring after the kingdom of heaven.

For these reasons, I found a great concern upon my spirit that the way of the Lord and His people might not be misrepresented, and that the honest inquirer might not be turned out of the way. As this had rested long and weightily upon my spirit, I often cried to the Lord to enable me to faithfully discharge what I saw He required at my hand. The concern was weighty, and I was not hasty, lest I should be found running before I was sent. I therefore waited patiently to be fully satisfied in the matter, not only a day or a week, but many months; and as my concern grew heavier upon me, I at last gave up to it, begging the Lord to be with me, and to give me a full commission for so weighty a service. It pleased the Lord to confirm me in this thing several ways; notwithstanding (like poor Gideon of old) I presumed to prove and try the Lord once more. So I said in my heart: "Oh Lord, if You will be pleased to send Your servant, Francis Stamper, to this town tomorrow, then I shall be confirmed."

I had not told anybody what I felt the Lord had laid upon me to do, and it pleased Him to grant me my request. On the next day, which was the 31st of the eighth month, 1696, when meeting time came, and Friends were going, Francis Stamper was not among them; but I had faith to believe he would come. As I was going to meeting with some Friends, I said to them that I would go back and wait for Francis Stamper; at which some of them smiled, knowing he had just returned home from a long journey. I had waited but a little time before he came, and I very well remember his words: "Oh, how has my spirit been dragged here! I was late last night at London, but must go to Southgate." I took good notice of his words, but said nothing to him of my concern until after the meeting; when coming to a Friend's house, I told him what I had to do, and I asked him if he would go with me. To this he answered, after weighing the thing in himself, "I will go with you."

In the afternoon we both went to the steeple-house, and sat down in the row opposite the priest, and

waited till he had finished his sermon and prayer. Then I stood up, and said to the priest, "Neighbor Berrow, I have a question to ask you, and I do desire you and this assembly to hear me." But he would not stay, and hastened out, without hearing what I had to say. Seeing him go out so hastily, I turned to the people and said: "John Berrow came to me and said that the Quakers would tell me that I must deny the man Christ Jesus, who died outside the gates of Jerusalem, and that I must believe only in a Christ that was within me." And I bore this testimony to all present at that assembly, saying, "We do acknowledge the Scriptures; and do say and believe that there is no other name given under heaven, whereby any can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ, who died outside the gates of Jerusalem, and was buried, and rose again the third day, and now sits at the right hand of God, glorified with the same glory which He had with the Father before the world began." Then I stopped, and Francis Stamper stood up, and would have said something to the people by way of advice; but one of the churchwardens with some others, came and compelled us both to go out. I stepped upon one of the seats, and acquainted the people, that we would have a meeting that evening at our meetinghouse, where all who were so inclined might come; and blessed be God, a large and good meeting it was, where the glorious presence of the Most High was with us. And that faithful servant, Francis Stamper, had good service for his God that evening, as also at many other times in these parts, where there was great openness among the people, and many were convinced. In a fresh and lively remembrance of this faithful servant of the Lord, the following testimony springs in my heart to leave behind me.

ALICE HAYES' TESTIMONY CONCERNING FRANCIS STAMPER

Francis Stamper was a man given up and faithful to God in his day; who ran to and fro on the earth for God's honor and the good of souls, rising early, and lying down late. He was industrious in God's vineyard and harvest-field, for the Lord had made him a skillful and laborious workman, and a valiant soldier who feared not the great and potent adversary. Eminent was the power which did attend this man of God, my friend and brother.

I esteem it a mercy from the Lord that I had the privilege of being well acquainted with him in the service of truth, as well as in meetings. I, with many thousands more, have been refreshed under his living testimonies, which have dropped upon the tender plants like dew, or the small rain that nourishes the tender blades. Oh, the remembrance of it often affects my heart, and the Lord greatly blessed his labour of love; for by the power that attended his ministry, many were turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."[13]

He was a man of a tender spirit, and though not advanced in years, he was as a nursing father. Many are witnesses how ready and willing he was, upon all occasions, to go at any season to visit those who were in distress, either in body or mind, having a word suitable to their various conditions. And often at these times, the

13 Acts 26:18

broken heart was bound up, and the sin-sick soul was encouraged.

Great was the sorrow and mourning at his decease, many feeling the loss of such an instrument; but not as without hope. My hope is firm in the living God, and I have faith to believe that He will raise up to himself more witnesses and faithful laborers in the place of those He has been pleased to remove and take to Himself out of this evil world, as He has done with this servant who has gone in peace, and has entered into that rest which God has prepared for the righteous.

In the close of this short testimony for my dear friend and fellow-laborer in the work of the ministry, I must say: it is of the Lord, and He is worthy to do whatever He pleases. All that He does is well done, whether He gives or takes away, blessed be His name forevermore.

—ALICE HAYES.

After the Lord had tried me with exercises of various sorts, He was pleased to prove me further by persecution for tithes, both in the spoil of my goods and by imprisonment. I was taken from my farm and family, having five fatherless children, and was committed to Alban's jail, where I was kept a prisoner about thirteen or fourteen weeks, and had many pounds' worth of goods taken from me in corn and cattle by the priest and impropriator, because for conscience-sake I could not (in this day of the Gospel) pay to support their worship, nor that anti-christian yoke of tithes. A testimony lives in my heart, to encourage all those who are convinced of God's truth to be faithful in this matter, and in all things which the Spirit of Jesus Christ shows them to be evil.

I mention my sufferings, not in a boasting way, but for the encouragement of the weak; for He that bore up my head under all my trials and exercises will bear up every sincere and honest soul that desires faithfully to do His will. I bless God in my very heart that He has counted me worthy to suffer for His name's sake; and truly I can say, He never permitted any exercise to attend me where He did not also assist me with power and patience to go through it. And His word I have witnessed to be fulfilled, that He has been a husband to me, and a father to my fatherless children.

It is my desire that all, both rich and poor, may be faithful to God in all His requirings. But oh, as it was of old, so it is now, that unfaithfulness makes the work go on slowly and the journey more tedious. But, blessed be God, there is a small remnant who are fully given up to follow their true Shepherd, Christ Jesus, who has come in the power of His Spirit, and is revealed in a remnant, who are thereby enabled to stand as witnesses for God against all hireling preachers and time-servers.[14] For the purpose of God is to set His Son on the top of all hills, mountains of show, and shadows of religion. It is my belief, that by the assistance of that grace which comes by Christ Jesus, many more will be raised to bear witness to the

14 A time-server is one who adapts or conforms his religious opinions and conduct to the prevailing custom of the times, or to comply with the present ruling powers.

free ministry of the Lamb of God. And happy, yes, thrice happy, will everyone be, who serves God with all his heart, and with all his outward substance too, if He calls for it. Oh, let no one withhold anything that the Lord requires, but remember, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; and the cattle on a thousand hills are His,"[15] and He knows what we need. If a time of stripping from these outward enjoyments is permitted, it is but for the trial of our faith. Oh, that not even one who is thus deeply tried will faint or distrust the Lord, for His "care and His eye is over the righteous, and His ear is open to their prayers."[16] And as all come to trust in His name, the God of Israel will care for them, and appear in a way and by a means they do not imagine. So He will be found to be "a God near at hand, and a present help in every needful time." Therefore, let all that fear His name trust in Him; "for life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing;"[17] and to everyone that trusts in Him, He will give life for the soul, and bread for the body; as He has done for me in a wonderful manner.

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The greatest part of the foregoing account was written some years ago; and having since that time seen much of "the wonders of the Lord in the deep,"[18] I find a concern upon my mind to add something as the Lord shall enable, for the encouragement of my offspring, for whom I travail in spirit, and also for all the babes and lambs of God, and for the mourners in Zion who travel on under heavy burdens. For the sake of these, I am made willing to say a little more of the kindness of God to the workmanship of His hand, and to call others to faithfulness from a deep sense of the need there is for it. And I may say, in great lowliness of spirit, that I have no might of my own, nor power, nor ability, but what He shall be pleased to give me. And let nothing be attributed to that monster, self, which too often appears both in preachers and writers, and proves like the "fly in the perfumer's ointment."[19] I do heartily pray that I may wash my hands in innocency, and be preserved clean from this fault; and that God alone, who is the Author of all good, may have the praise from me and from every creature that has breath. Wonderful have been His favors and mercies to me above many—one half of which I am not able to set forth.

What I have seen and felt this year, 1708, is unutterable, being a year wherein I was led into the depths and beheld much of the wonders of the Lord, more abundantly than I am able to express; nor indeed do I as yet see it required at my hand. Therefore I shall only give the Lord His praise, and admire His wonderful doings, for I can truly say, "it is marvelous in my eyes."[20]

When very weak in body, I have been led by the Spirit into the low valley of deep humility. Surely, as

15 Ps. 24:1, Ps. 50:10,

16 1 Peter 3:12

17 Luke 12:23

18 Ps. 107:24

19 Ecclesiastes 10:1

20 Ps. 118:23; Matthew 21:42

there is a coming into nearer communion with Christ the Lord, there will be a very great abasement in the creature, and all flesh will be brought to silence in His presence, that His voice may be heard, and His movements seen in His temple with that majesty wherein He appears. Oh, excellent it is, and very glorious to behold! That my soul may continually dwell before the Lord is what (with great humility and tears) I beg of His bountiful hand. In the living faith that crowns with victory, I have a hope in me that as I continue in well-doing to the end, for His Son's sake, I shall arrive at the desired port and haven of rest, where all the righteous sing hallelujah forevermore.

It pleased the Lord to make known His truth to me about the year 1680, by that servant and handmaid of the Lord, Elizabeth Stamper;[21] and without boasting, I can truly say that from that time to this, I have been very careful to obey His holy mind and will as it has been made manifest to me. And for the encouragement of others unto faithfulness, I can say that I have not, since I knew the Lord, been one day without His presence—whether more or less—so that, blessed be God, there has been no complaining in my streets. For I have said, and still say, that if there were no future reward, yet the present comfort of obedience is a sufficient encouragement to the children of men to fear God and keep His commandments. Those who do so, will live thereby; that is, they will live by the life of the Son of God; for He has indeed come that we may have life, and it is through obedience that the abundance of His life is known. And this great kindness of God to mankind is not by any merits of our own, but of His great mercy and for His Son's sake. Through His precious blood we have all these great benefits which do accrue to both soul and body in our submission to His yoke, and in learning of Him, who is the pattern in every age.

Moses, in the mount, did His work according to the pattern, by the wisdom of our God. David, His servant, gave orders unto his son Solomon and the elders, how to carry on and build that great house which was glorious in its time. But how much more glorious is this dispensation of light and grace which shines from the Son Himself, the express image of the Father, into our hearts; whereby we may now see our way, and follow the pattern, and not stumble where so many others have fallen! Some have stuck immovably in forms and in outward shows of good things, which were but shadows, because they will not come to the substance or pattern that is made known by the Spirit, who is sufficient to teach all things necessary for eternal salvation. Therefore, if men will stumble here, it must be because "they love darkness rather than light,"[22] and in their hearts they prefer to remain spiritually in Egypt, a slave under Pharaoh, rather than to come to where light and good are to be enjoyed.

Oh, what shall be said to stir up the sons of men, that they may be awakened and no longer sleep in the bed of ignorance? Arise, and come away to the school of Christ, who is this pattern of whom I have been speaking! He has given a measure of His own pure Spirit to everyone that they may profit thereby, and learn to read inwardly, and ask so as to receive. For whatever is asked in faith, and in the measure of His

21 The sister of Francis Stamper.

22 John 3:19

Spirit, will surely be answered in His own time. And as all times and seasons are in His hands, so He, in His wisdom, knows when it will be best to deliver the creature out of trouble, and bring honor to His own name, who is worthy of all praise; for He is an all-seeing God, and no affliction or trouble can be hidden from Him. Yet He must be sought unto and waited upon; and they that know Him will trust in Him. Truly, these know Him to be "a God at hand,"[23] and "a present help in the needful time,"[24] as my soul has witnessed. Glory to His worthy name forevermore.

Oh, you into whose hands these lines may come, be earnest for your soul's welfare, while health and strength of body are afforded. Seek God with all your hearts, that you may come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, and witness an acquaintance with Him by waiting on him frequently. Then, when the time of weakness takes hold upon you, and no worldly means will avail, you will know the angel of His presence to stand by you till death. This will be more joy than ten thousand worlds at that hour. Oh, the strength of His love! Surely the love of God is to the children of men, that they may prize their time while they have it, and make all things ready that appertain to eternal life. This is to fulfill the purpose of our having a being in this world, namely, to glorify God, and to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,"[25] which must be done, if ever, in the time afforded unto men in this world.

Therefore be wise, you children of men, and come and learn of Christ. Follow Him; for He has gained the victory, and has all power in heaven and earth committed to Him. Resolve, by the help of His grace, to follow on wherever He will lead you; for assuredly, He will give you power to tread upon scorpions, and to keep every foul spirit under your feet. And in your obedience you will learn to be watchful in the light, by which you may see every appearance of evil. Resist it by the assistance of the Spirit, and give it no entertainment. Remember that you are soldiers under the banner of the unconquered Captain, Christ Jesus, who has always stood by His own in every age, so that in faithfulness they went out of this world, though many have sealed with their blood their testimonies for our God and the Lamb, who was their Captain, and who brought them off the stage of this world in victory, bearing His mark.

Oh, why would any not follow the Lord, who can help both outwardly and inwardly, all who stand for Him and the honor of His name? For indeed, His name is a tower of safety, which has stood in power against all the instruments that the devil has raised up in every age to afflict the children of God! In every dispensation the evil have troubled the good; yes, the lion still seeks to tear the lamb, and the wolf hunts for his evening prey. But glory be to God, the true Shepherd is known, and His power is still felt, in which all the righteous have trusted to this day. And the living can now say, "His power is the same as it was in the beginning—a canopy over the righteous, and a safe hiding-place in times of trouble, when instruments of cruelty are let loose, and the greedy do mischief."

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23 Jeremiah 23:23

24 Ps. 46:1

25 Philippians 2:12

Such as swear, lie, cheat, commit adultery, or lead a life in any other evil, let me prevail upon you to repent and forsake the evil of your ways, and the sins that so easily ensnare you. Do the devil's drudgery no longer; for he is a bad master, and the wages that he gives are such as he will receive for his own doings. Therefore, all you who are at a distance from God by reason of evil, put it far away from you by a true and timely repentance, that you may know what it is to be washed with the water of regeneration,[26] and cleansed from sin by the blood of the Lamb. Thus you will witness the renewings of His favor, which will be as the balm of Gilead that will thoroughly heal your wound, and make you strong and fit for the service of Christ our Lord. He is the best Master that ever a man or woman served, and He gives eternal life. But all who come to Him "must believe that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him,"[27] and they cannot serve two masters. They must renounce the devil, their old master, and all his works, together with the pomps and vanities of this world. And, like good soldiers, they must follow the Captain of their salvation in all perseverance, through good report and bad report, and keep to the standard—the Spirit of Truth. If you do this, then you may pray to the Giver for whatever you stand in need of; let it be bread for the soul or the body, or for faith, hope, courage, the armor of light, or whatever else your need may be. Take courage and ask, and you shall receive double comfort for all the troubles you undergo for Christ and the Gospel's sake. And in exchange for the life which you have lost (which you had in vanity and evil), you shall find a life that exceeds it a hundred fold in peace and inward joy by the Holy Spirit. Submit to the will of God, who has called you with a high calling, that you should hear His Son and obey Him in all things unto the end. Then be good soldiers like that blessed apostle who "fought the good fight, and kept the faith."[28] Oh, faithful soldiers, carry on, and be not fearful or fainthearted, for a woe attends such as these; but be valiant and zealous for truth on the earth, according to that knowledge which God shall give you. Be found improving your talents, whether you were given five, two, or one; however small it may be. For if your hearts are seasoned with the grace of God, your delight will be in His treasury, and you will witness an increase in that which will do you good in the end of your warfare, whether it be long or short.

If you walk in faithfulness, all will end well. God's care over His children and people is the same in every age. I am a witness of it, though a poor worm and an unprofitable servant; for if I have obeyed His command, it is but what was, and is, my reasonable duty. The Scriptures are verified where it is said; "His eye is over the righteous, and His ear is open to their cry;"[29] for He is the God and Father of mercies, and He delights to meet with His own to do them good. He takes no pleasure in afflicting the children of men, any further than to bring them into subjection to His Son, that thereby they may come to know the state of sonship, and learn submission to His heavenly will. His will is that all men everywhere repent,

26 Titus 3:5

27 Hebrews 11:6

28 2 Timothy 4:7

29 Ps. 34:15

and come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved with an everlasting salvation—saved both from sin itself, and from the wrath due to the same. This is freedom indeed, to be made free by the Lord of all power, who said to the Jews, "If the Son makes you free, then you are free indeed."[30]

Oh, that men would strive for this freedom, and believe in the sufficiency of that grace that has come by Jesus Christ, and appears in the heart to convince of sin in its first budding! By the strength of this grace, sin may be crushed like a viper's egg, and be cast out by the assistance of the Spirit, which is one with the grace of God. The effect of the grace and the coming of Jesus is indeed to save people *from* their sins; and all who are willing to be His, and to believe that He has all power committed to Him in heaven and earth, and has the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil—to these, I say, He can and does give power. Stronger is He that is in us (that is, Christ by His Spirit) than he that is in the world;[31] and Jesus is more powerful to save, than the devil is to compel men to sin; for he can only tempt. Yielding to his temptation brought misery upon our first parents; and yielding is the cause of misery still.

The second Adam, the Lord from heaven, the Restorer of mankind, did not say that we would not be tempted, nor that we would be free from the enemy's assaults in the earth; for here the usurper "goes to and fro,"[32] and has his food—the earth and the dust thereof. He that was so bold as to approach and tempt the Lord of glory, will no doubt assail His followers. And the Lord, knowing well what we would meet with here, advised and counseled all "to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation;"[33] which is as if He had said, "If anything that is evil troubles you, touch it not; but pray to Me and I will assist you;" so that it is the Lord who works this deliverance. God must have the praise, who alone is worthy; for His own works praise Him, being wonderfully made manifest in this age of the world after so long and dark a night of apostasy. Blessed be God, who is the Spirit of light and of purity, and has now eminently broken forth by His Son to enlighten the children of men in the heart. His Spirit and great power has been stronger than the power of darkness, pulling down and spoiling the works of the old adversary, yes, and binding and casting him out. And He is fitting His creation together for a heavenly building, to be as a stone or a pillar in this His latter house, which God is building of living stones, rejected indeed by the worldly wise of this day, but approved of God, who is the Chief Corner Stone and Lord of all.

We read of some of old who said, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" And the answer (by One who well knew) was: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom God has sent." Oh, it is a matter of sorrow to think that men and women should be so slow of heart to believe in the Son of God in His spiritual appearance within! But blessed be God, a remnant has believed, and thereby these can cry "Abba, Father," because He has done that in them, and for them, by the operation of His mighty

30 John 8:36

31 1 John 4:4

32 Job 1:7; 1 Peter 5:8

33 Matthew 26:41

power, which no other could do. By this we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, even "Christ in us, the hope of glory."[34] This is as an anchor, sure and steadfast, that has never failed when the wind blew, or the rain descended, and floods of affliction swelled high. No, no, it has never failed, for the foundation is a tried one, a rock immoveable in every age. All that have built upon it, and so continued, have stood fast and sure; while those who have built upon sand have suffered great loss when time has come to an end, and their foundation has been tried. Oh, it will be dreadful to go out of time into eternity in the displeasure of a long-provoked, yet patient and just God, who will be just in all His ways, and render to all foolish virgins, sandy builders, and slothful servants, a reward according to their doings, even that sentence pronounced in the Scripture; "Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity, I know you not."[35]

It makes my heart melt within me to think how dismal a state it is to be banished from the presence of a glorious God who long strives with men by His good Spirit. But how is it to be lamented, that far too many have refused the offers of His love, and have chosen their own ways, and hated to be reformed! Therefore, great will be the condemnation of such, and dreadful will be the worm that gnaws when they consider how their time is over, and that all means of grace are gone. Then these shall see how they have missed the favor of a good God by choosing their own ways and doing their own works. Oh, the lost time! Oh, the loss of the field, and the treasure also! Therefore, far better is it to mind the work of God, that by faith in the Son you may witness Him "to work all your works in you, and for you, of His own good pleasure."[36] There is nothing for man to boast or glory in. He is only to be pliable as the clay in the hand of the potter, till he is made a vessel to His praise. "God has no delight in the death of him that dies, but rather that men should obey His commands and live;"[37] or surely, He would not set life and death, good and evil, before them, and say, "Choose life."[38] This seems to render it very plain, that there is a choice for mankind, and an offer of salvation while in this world; so that men and women may choose life by believing in Christ; or they may refuse it by unbelief, which leads from God and the Lord Jesus, into death and darkness.

But blessed be God, who has brought a remnant to the knowledge of His light, and to obedience as well. These are made living witnesses of the sufficiency of His grace, like the apostle of old who, in great buffetings and temptations, found grace to be effectual; though we find he had once been in a state where he cried out, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[39] And again, "I am carnal, sold under sin."[40] This was a mournful state with Paul for a season, when sorrow

34 Colossians 1:27

35 Luke 13:27

36 Isaiah 26:12; Philippians 2:12-13; Hebrews 13:21

37 Ezekiel 18:32

38 Deuteronomy 30:19

39 Romans 7:24

40 Romans 7:14

possessed his heart, and he cried out to God who was able to help him. And in due time he came to witness the sufficiency of His grace to bring him out of that state, and to know a better condition, so that he could say, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."[41] Oh, the blessed freedom that came to believers in that early day by Jesus Christ. And blessed be God, it is the same in this day as it was then. For this grace, which has come by Jesus Christ, does not only enlighten men and women to let them see their sinful condition, but also gives power to the soul to come out of captivity. And so long as their is faithfulness in the creature, the sufficiency of grace is still witnessed to lead from one degree of strength to another.

Therefore all have reason to thank God as the apostle did, and to say, "In Him there is no variation, or shadow of turning."[42] For indeed, He is the same as ever He was to all who believe and follow Christ Jesus. And every faithful follower of Jesus is enabled to say (and that not boastingly) that revelation has not ceased, nor is the Gospel hidden, except to those who are lost because of unbelief, and who will not turn or believe in the light of Christ and its sufficiency—these must lie down in sorrow. And to all who assert that there is no state of redemption from sin to be experienced on this side of the grave, crying out that they are "full of putrefied sores," and "have no soundness in them,"[43] these are sad complaints indeed! But how can it be otherwise while they contend for the devil's kingdom, which is sin, darkness, and confusion? Oh therefore, let me prevail with all to be reconciled to God by believing in His Son, whom He has appointed Heir of all things, and who is an Advocate indeed, by and through whom you may find acceptance. And blessed be the Lord, there is a remnant of living witnesses who have believed in the power of His inward appearance, in which there is victory obtained over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Oh happy are the souls that can thus believe in His name; for these shall be baptized with Christ's own baptism—even the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire; that is, His Spirit and Word entering into their hearts as a fire against every appearance of evil, to burn it up and destroy it in its first appearance.

Oh! that the children of men would be wise and fear God, and call upon His name while the door of mercy is open, that their souls may live. For this I heartily pray, because I have tasted of the good Word of God, and have known something of the power of the world to come. And having tasted both of His mercy and His judgment, I can do no less than invite and entreat all to be faithful to the Lord and all of His requirings; so that, in the winding up of all things, God may have the praise (who is everlastingly worthy), and our poor souls may find a joy and comfort that no one else can give or take away.

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Some time after being convinced of the truth in the year 1680, Alice Hayes was called forth into the

41 Romans 8:1-2

42 James 1:17

43 Quotations from the liturgy of the Church of England

work of the ministry, and concerned to visit the churches in several parts of England. She also travelled through Holland into Germany, as far as Frederickstadt, and there had excellent service for the Lord. Many were reached and convinced by her ministry, it being in the demonstration and power of the Spirit. About the year 1712, she moved from Hertfordshire and came to settle in Tottenham, and Friends felt true unity with her both with respect to her innocent and exemplary life and conduct, and also her gift in the ministry, in which she was made very serviceable for the encouragement of Friends to faithfulness in every branch of their testimony.

Being at the Yearly Meeting in London, in the year 1720, she was taken ill; but her love being strong to her Friends there, she stayed some days, and then returned to her house at Tottenham, where she grew weaker and weaker until she quietly departed this life like a lamb. During the time of her sickness she gave much good advice and counsel to her family, as also to others who came to visit her, dropping many sweet comments regarding her comfortable enjoyment of the Lord's presence; some of which follow.

At one time a Friend of Tottenham coming to visit her, and others coming in, she said, "Oh, love one another, and may the Lord make you a living people unto Himself, and preserve you in perfect love and unity. I am," said she, "in perfect love to all people." She then desired Friends to "give her up freely to her God;" saying, "I am willing to die, and I hope it will not be long. But, oh, I desire to go exactly in the Lord's time. And all that I desire is that the Lord's presence may be continued unto me, and then I fear not the awful hour of death. My God is my resurrection and my glory. He is my strength and my refuge, and I am thoroughly resigned to His will; and in but a little time my soul shall sing praises to the Lord on mount Zion with all the redeemed, out of the reach of trouble."

Some Friends having come to visit her at another time, she broke forth in a tender frame of spirit, and said, "I now wait upon my God; and He is a God of everlasting lovingkindness, and has been good to my soul all my life long." She then said, "Friends, do not put off making your peace with Him till you come to a dying bed. There is enough to do now to labour under the afflictions of the body; I would not be without the favor of God now for all the world. May the Lord, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, my God and your God, bless you, and be a God to you in all your trials, for He has been so to me; a sufficient helper in times of trouble."

Several young people being with her at another time, she tenderly advised them, saying, "Be good, and serve God faithfully, and do not put off the great work of your day to the end; but timely prepare for your dying hour, that you may have oil in your lamps, and be in readiness whenever that time shall come. It has been the joy of my heart to go to meetings, and to meet with the Lord there. But oh, much more joy will it be to my soul to meet with Him in heaven, and to have a place in His kingdom. Through mercy, I am under no terror of death, but am in true peace. Blessed be my God forever, His goodness is exceeding large. I would like to praise Him for His goodness, but I am very weak; and I desire, if it be His will, not to see the light of another day, for my affliction is great; but let all be in His own time." She then broke

forth in prayer, requesting that her passage might be made easy, and desiring to be supported under her affliction which at times was very sharp. Yet she bore all with great patience, looking to the Lord, her comforter, under the deepest provings, and often saying, “Oh, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, for I long to be with You my Savior; yet let me not offend You, but patiently wait Your time.”

A few days before her death, some Friends of Tottenham sat down to wait upon the Lord God with her. His love was largely manifested and sprung up as a fresh spring; and after a Friend had been led forth in supplication, she broke forth and said, “Oh the love! This is love that may be felt! My God, your goodness is wonderful, and my soul praises You for the overflowing of Your love at this time;” with many more sweet and heavenly expressions. She tenderly acknowledged the kindness of her friends in their visit, and took leave of them in brokenness of spirit, desiring that “the Lord be with you, and strengthen you to be valiant for His truth, and to keep your meetings in His name and His power;” saying, “Oh, what comfortable times we have often had in our weekday meetings! How have our cups overflowed with the love of our heavenly Father!” After this, she exhorted all “to abide in the unity of the Spirit of Christ, every member keeping in their proper place, being concerned for the honor of truth in maintaining good order in the church.”

At another time, near her end, she requested that those around her, when they should see her taking her final breaths, be very still and inward with the Lord in their spirits, praying that she would have an easy passage. She then added, “All will be well. I am going home. I am going home. I am done with the world, and all that is in it. But pray that the Lord may pour out His Spirit upon a young generation, that they may serve Him in cleanness of heart.” She then said, “I have fought the good fight, and shall obtain the crown immortal;” adding “My beloved is mine, and I am His. He is my all in all. Into your arms, Lord Jesus Christ, I offer up my soul and spirit.” The last words she was heard to say (her voice being soft) were, “The Lord my God will help me.”

She departed this life the 8th day of the seventh month, 1720, aged about sixty-three years, and was buried the 13th of the same, in Friends’ burying-ground, at Winchmore-hill.

The Life and Writings of William Bayly

In the eternal light and life of God, with which I and all mankind are enlightened in measure, do I now stand and rejoice over the world, and all its glory and enmity, over the beast and false prophet both within and without, having received power from the Father of life by walking in the way of His judgments, after which my soul had long breathed and thirsted, even from a child; though then I knew not what my soul panted for, but now I know that the mysteries of God’s everlasting kingdom are revealed to the babes

that fear Him, but to others they are hidden in parables.

When I was about ten years old, I remember that sometimes I desired to go and sit quietly alone in some deserted place where I might bewail myself and weep in secret, even until my heart was broken, though I did not know why. I began to pray in fear to God with tears, and though I knew not who or where He was, and had very little to say, yet something cried out in me, and breathed towards God, confidently believing that God heard me wherever He was, and would pity me and save me, for which thanks did arise unto Him. I did not then know that there was a seed in me which was and is beloved of God, which is contrary to the course of this world, to which the blessings and promises belong, and which did arise at times in the quiet of my mind to break down all that the serpent and my own will had wrought in my heart that was contrary to God, that thereby I might enjoy peace in the everlasting covenant of light. For at any time when I had done or spoken something which was contrary to God, I was soon checked for it, judged and condemned, and put in fear by His witness in my conscience, which beheld all my ways and words, though ever so secret. This is the same light which Job spoke of, which "made me inherit the iniquities of my youth, watched closely all my paths, and set a limit for the soles of my feet."[1] And in this light I can see all that ever I have done, and I do remember the first oath that ever I swore, being provoked by another lad, and how I was smitten with trembling and scarcely able to stand upon my feet because of the witness of God in my conscience, though I knew not then what it was, and would have liked to have fled away from it, being put in such horrible fear and condemned by it when I had done any evil. So it is, as David says, that there is no place where the worker of iniquity may hide himself from the dreadful presence of God.[2]

So, when about fifteen years old, I went among the soldiers (it being the time of war), not heeding the true guide—the light and Spirit of God—which often strived with me, to lead me in meekness and fear, and away from all strife and fighting, which comes from the lusts[3] that war against the soul. I then entered and became one among them, both in garrison and army, where for a time I was kept and preserved out of much wickedness by the fear of God in me, though I knew not then where He was, nor for a long time after. Yet by His secret hand of power, unexpected and undeserved, I was preserved when many were slain on my right hand and on my left. Glory and praises to His power forever and ever.

But when about seventeen years old, I was under the command of one major-general Edward Massey, where I found many wicked and ungodly men, and some among them who had turned from Colonel Goring's army. Through this company, the honest seed in me was betrayed and even murdered, and I began to be hardened from the fear of the Lord; for I was but a youth, and of a bashful countenance naturally, and was often checked in my conscience for any evil, and felt condemnation for it quickly.

1 Job 13:26-27.

2 Salmo 139:7-12, y Job 34:22

3 James 4:1-2

But now, among this crew, I could swear and boast and sometimes drink till I was drunk, and grew in wickedness until I even took delight in swearing and drunkenness. Yet oftentimes, when I had gone away from my company and was alone and quiet, fear and dread from the witness of God in me would seize upon me in great and horrible terror. And in the night in dreams I was often terrified and tormented with fearful sights and visions of hell and devils, death and damnation, which indeed, in that state, would have been my just portion. And so in the cool of the day I heard the voice of God and was afraid, like Adam in the transgression; and though I would have gladly hidden my sin, as Adam sought to do, yet the Lord did search it out. And now I know that, "God speaks unto man once, yes twice, yet man perceives it not, in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, in slumbering upon the bed, that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from him."[4]

In this company I continued near two years, until all was disbanded; about which time I was so smitten by God's witness, the light of Christ in my conscience, that I began to leave off my swearing and lewdness. My profane company became even loathsome and burdensome unto me, and I never swore an oath from that time to this day, which was about ten years ago. At length I became a little zealous to hear the priests, and began to look into the scriptures and talk much of them, as many profane ones do now in order to make a covering for themselves. At that time I thought I must be guided by the priests, who had learning and a knowledge of the languages, which they called "the original," not knowing then that their original began at Babel, where God confounded the languages, and that the people before this were of one language in the beginning. So their original is from Babel, which is confusion, and they remain there still, together with all their followers, who will also partake of their plagues if they do not come forth to the light of Christ, which is the true original. For His light was before Babel, and before the priests, or Latin, Greek and Hebrew, which Pilate set over Christ, the true Prophet, who all must hear; His name is called the Word of God, which Word was in the beginning.[5] But the poor, ignorant, and blind, who have gone out from the light which enlightens every man, these insist with the priests that the Greek and Hebrew are the original, and that the scriptures cannot be understood without them, not considering that they who had Latin, Greek, and Hebrew crucified the Son of God, who was in the beginning glorified with the Father before the world began, and who is the true original, by whom the world was made. And to the Greeks His cross was foolishness, and to the Jews it was a stumbling-block. And the Greeks had Greek, and the Jews had Hebrew, as well as the priests and Pilate, but they knew not the Son of God—the original—but set their Latin, Greek, and Hebrew on top of Him when they had crucified him.[6]

So for a season I traded with these merchants of Babylon, receiving and buying their wares, hoping it was good and durable riches that I had received from them, seeing it was so highly prized; for the people would cry out that only the priests had the original, and could give the meaning of the scriptures, and

4 Job 13:14-17.

5 John 1:1

6 John 19:19-20.

none else; and so the beast upheld or carried the great harlot, and all the world marveled at them, as I also did then. But at length something in me began to be more and more awakened, and hungered after true bread, yet I thought I should still be fed at their table, and I was, until I was nearly starved with the husks that the swine did eat. For there was a stirring word that I felt in me, saying, "give me food, or else I perish;" and I went to hear them even with tears many times because of the hunger I felt, until I perceived that they did not speak the Word of life from the mouth of the Lord, the true Bread that came down from heaven, but had studied and patched up something from the scriptures, mixing their own meanings and Babylonish wisdom with the old serpent's subtlety, and bidding us to sit and hear the word of God. And so we looked for light, but behold we were fed with darkness and dust; and that seed in me, to which the Lord God proclaimed joy and liberty, was made sad by them, as it was by the deceivers and false prophets in ages past.

And this I can truly say, and do testify in the Lord: that when a true hunger and thirst did arise in me after the living God, it was often hurt, darkened, and spoiled by the earthly wisdom, philosophy, and vain deceit which came out of the priests' mouths. Such fleshly knowledge beguiled me of my reward, drawing my mind out from the pure measure of God's gift within, insomuch that the simple, honest, and meek seed which stirred in me was weary to hear them any longer. And from no other ground did I at first deny these teachers, but only as I felt the gift of God within me uncovering and witnessing against them, as being those who could never profit the people at all, being outside of His counsel and not able to turn any from their evil ways, but rather strengthening the hands of the wicked, and making the righteous sad. This is their work, as by their fruits it is made manifest, whose reward shall be accordingly.

In those days my soul was awakened by the witness of God in the heart, whereby I felt the burden of sin, and I was often afraid of death and misery without end, but knew not how to get out from under the power of sin and death, nor to escape the wrath to come, being ignorant of Him that saves from it, which is Christ, the power of God, who "enlightens every man that comes into the world,"[7] and "condemns sin in the flesh."[8] But now I see, that people perish for lack of knowledge, and that "the leaders of the people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed."[9] For nothing will help or satisfy the longing immortal soul, but the eternal true bread of life, the power of God, which He gives to as many as receive Him, which power condemns for sin and destroys the works of the devil, who has the power of death; "for the sting of death is sin."[10] So Christ delivers men from that which is the ground of their bondage and the fear of death—all who believe in Him who is the resurrection and the life, over whom the second death has no power. Glory to the Lord forever and ever!

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7 John 1:9

8 Romans 8:3

9 Isaiah 9:16.

10 1 Corinthians 15:56

So then, having in measure begun to leave the priests, I kept at home, not desiring for a season to go and hear any, but rather to keep to myself and remain quiet alone. This was a great cross to my parents, wife, and relations, and also to something in me, and to my companions and acquaintances, who loved me with that love which quickly turned to hatred. So I found it hard to break the customs that I had lived in, and to live in a way contrary to all my neighbors and acquaintances, and to lose the love of them all, as I saw I would if I followed that light which let me see the priests, and the vanity of the world. I found that the Scriptures speak not in vain, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil."[11] Hear this you careless ones, who live in the vanity of your minds, contending for your customs, vanities, traditions, and fashions of a world that lies in wickedness, and for the fleshly lusts which war against your own souls. All this will become your plague in the day of your visitation, and that in which you have most delighted will become the greatest torment to you. Then you shall know that you were warned in your lifetime.

But in the midst of these my trials and temptations within and without, a Word was very near me, even in my heart, though I then knew not what it was that said, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and mind eternal life;" and I knew not where to seek or find it. But the deep consideration of this did much strengthen me towards God, and sometimes even breathings and cries would ascend up from the prisoner of hope in me, and my heart was at times broken and melted by the power of the Word of life, which I felt there hammering against my hardness, and rending the veil that separated me from peace with God. But still I did not yet know "Christ within, the hope of glory,"[12] who "enlightens every man that comes into the world,"[13] "whose name is called the Word of God,"[14] "the male in the flock which opens the womb, holy to the Lord,"[15] "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"[16] (which lies in wickedness), "the First and the Last,"[17] "the Holy One in the midst;"[18] whom my soul did love, but who had been pierced, wounded, and as it were, slain in me, like the seed that suffered in Sodom and Egypt, though He is Lord of lords, and King of kings.

So I began to heed and to love that light in me which discovered sin and vanity, and made manifest the course of the whole world, and I took it to be my companion, (or "kinswoman,"[19] as Solomon speaks of wisdom), not knowing it to be the light of Christ (the wisdom and power of God) in my conscience, in those days of ignorance. But by it I often saw my own folly, and that the whole world was out of its proper

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11 Jeremiah 13:23.

12 Colossians 1:27

13 John 1:9

14 Revelation 19:13

15 Luke 2:23

16 Revelation 13:8

17 Isaiah 48:12; Revelation 1:17-2:8, 22:13

18 Isaiah 12:6; Hosea 11:9

19 Proverbs 7:4 KJV

course (or the way of peace), in confusion and abomination, without the fear of God before their eyes, in pride, envying one another, in covetousness and unrestraint, dissimulation and falsehood, everyone seeking his own ends and gain, from the judge to the priest, and likewise their followers, not a wise man found among them that feared the Lord and departed from evil. This I saw, and was sometimes even grieved at the consideration of it, wishing in my heart that I had power to have helped it, feeling much desire for unity and peace, meekness and quietness, love and justice amongst men, that they might live as children of one father; saying in my mind, "Did not we all come from Adam? And did we not all have one father and mother in the beginning? Why then should one envy another, and be high, proud, and stubborn against another, and murder each other about a little piece of earth, or a pursuit of vain glory that will wither? And why should man hate, and strive, and be angry about religion, and their judgments, and opinions, and even fight one another about these things?"

When I considered these things in my mind, I desired in my heart that God would remedy all this, and at last put an end to it; for I even felt the whole creation groaning in bondage under these oppressions at that time. Yet I did not yet know that it was the light of Christ in me which sometimes checked me for sin and evil, that made known unto me these things, and opened my understanding that I might know and understand those things that belonged to my everlasting peace. So that now I can boldly say, "people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;"[20] and that "straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to the life, and few there are that find it;"[21] and that the mysteries of the kingdom are "hid from the wise and prudent of the world, but revealed to babes,"[22] and to such as can become fools for Christ's sake, who is the light of the world, and the wisdom and power of God. Glory to Him forever in the highest, who has brought me out of darkness into His marvelous light, where I behold His likeness.

Now, in these days, when I had even resolved never again to hear the priests, or be a follower of them any more, yet being out of my outward employment, and for fear of losing all, through the persuasions of the serpent within and of others without, I went to hear them again, lest I should have angered those who had an intention to employ me and prefer me. But for this I was terribly judged and condemned by God's witness within me, which before had let me see the deceit of the priests, and the vanity and error of their worship and ways, contrary to Christ and His apostles and their doctrine. So in the process of time I took two small voyages into France, where, having time on my hands, the serpent led my mind out wholly to delight in the art of arithmetic, and in the study and practice of navigation, which I saw I might in short time attain, being well-acquainted with numbers, which is the ground of many arts. These pursuits took me up into an exceedingly high mountain, showing glorious promises of the preferment, riches, the love of the world, and respect among men, which tickled the nature in me which went out from God's witness—even the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but the world. This indeed is the glory of the

20 Hosea 4:6

21 Matthew 7:14

22 Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21

rich men, great men, and chief captains, whose flesh is to be given to the fowls of the air in the supper of the great God.

So, through the strong temptations and allurements of this flattering harlot, (that spirit which goes out from the light, of whose cup all nations and kings of the earth have drunk), the honest, tender seed of equity, love, and meekness was even covered, lost, and was as dead in me. And the spirit of the world I let in again like a flood (whose foundation had in some measure previously been shaken, and the earth that lay upon the precious seed partially removed by the power of God), and gross darkness again covered my soul, and veiled its life and peace from it, which it formerly had felt and breathed after. So I can set my seal to the scripture, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."[23] Yet in the time I was in France I was kept enough in the fear of God by His pure witness (the light of Christ in my conscience), which showed me sin and evil, that I dared not be lewd or drunk, or act in such wickedness as the tempter would have led me to, still not knowing that it was the light of Christ which I then obeyed, which saved me from what the devil would have drawn me into. So now I can say with Jacob, "The Lord was in this place, and I knew it not."[24] Therefore, all people, come to Him that tells you all that ever you did;[25] for if you knew the gift of God, and loved Him, you would ask Him for the water of life; but "the rebellious will dwell in a dry land."[26]

But though I was preserved out of many outward evils, yet the love of this world and the things of the world had a stronghold in my heart, whereby the true love to equity, righteousness and mercy had vanished away, and I knew not where to find the place of wisdom, though I sought for it carefully when I felt the loss of it. But in the cross to the will of man and of flesh, is born that which inherits God's kingdom of peace. For after awhile, when I was in the midst of my vain thoughts and imaginations, considering how to build great things in the earth, to become rich, knowledgable and honourable therein, and to obtain the friendship of the world and the praise of men, a sudden stop came upon me, like a cloud that covered all. I was struck with a still silence in my mind (like when Adam heard the voice of the Lord in the cool of the day), wherein I saw that I had been striving and wearying myself for mere vanity, for things that perish with the using, and that I, like a fool, might depart and leave them all in the midst of my days. So, as I gave heed to that which let me see these things to be but a shadow, and that it was folly to so eagerly pursue that which made itself wings to fly away, and thereby cheat myself of an eternal crown of rest to my immortal soul, then it was that my former condition came fresh into my remembrance, and I began to feel something stir in me for life which had long lain in death and bondage under Pharaoh in spiritual Egypt, and a cry (as it were) ascended from the prisoner, groaning afar off

23 1 Timothy 6:9

24 Genesis 28:16

25 John 4:29

26 Ps. 68:6

for deliverance. And then I began to be troubled and condemned in myself, and my peace in the earth was broken, and the flaming sword turned every way upon it. Then, being afraid of shame, I strived with God's Spirit in me, (not knowing what it was all this while, nor for some time after), and would cast off my trouble as much as I could. But sometimes I wished I could be meek like others, for I often witnessed the truth of Solomon's words, "In the midst of laughter the heart is made sad,"[27] and I found I was many times nearer to weeping than mirth in such company. So I had no rest for my soul in those days, being ignorant of my Teacher, the true Shepherd of Israel, who gives His sheep (that follow him) eternal life, which life is gentle and lowly in heart.

But at that time my soul, being like one awakened from sleep, and hungry after that which satisfies, began again to seek for true food and rest, and to enjoy that life and peace which changes not. Then I thought in my mind, "What shall I do?"—remembering that the priests (who had been made manifest by the same witness of God in my heart) were miserable comforters, physicians of no value, and such as "plaster with untempered mortar,"[28] and murdered the innocent and just seed in the hearts of poor ignorant people.

Then not knowing what to do to find life (having gone forth hunting for food abroad, like Esau and all his stock), I went among the people called Baptists, to see if I could obtain rest and peace there among them, thinking that if they were the people of God, I had a right to have fellowship with them, and to partake of their promises and privileges. For I often felt something in me which was beloved of God, and so concluded that I was one of the elect, not then knowing and discerning things that differ, and that it was *a seed in man* (which may be by him oppressed and trod under foot) to which the promises and the blessing are, and that the election is before the foundation of the world, but the whole world lies in wickedness. Read this if you can, you who cry out that the election is of a particular people, and the rest are left to themselves; and beware of the doctrine of devils. And remember that "God is no respecter of persons,"[29] and Christ, the true light, "enlightens *every man* that comes into the world,"[30] in whom is the election and the redemption; and that it is he that knows not Christ within him who is a reprobate, as the Scripture says.[31]

So then I became a constant follower of the Baptists, and at length was in that fellowship and brotherhood with them which natural, carnal, visible water was the ground of; for before I was dipped in water they would not call me brother, but suddenly afterwards they did. Yet after I was dipped I was the same every way as previously, in no way made better or more satisfied by the water than before. And when I came

27 Proverbs 14:13

28 Ezekiel 13:10-16

29 Acts 10:34

30 John 1:9

31 2 Corinthians 13:5

again unto God's witness in me, in the cool of the day, it let me see how my soul still lay in death, though my comprehending mind had found a kind of life and food in a profession of religion, in which I had no true peace when all was performed and done by which I had hoped to obtain it. Indeed, peace still fled from me whenever I turned to the gift of God in my heart which let me see my state and condition, even the light of Christ, though I knew not then what it was. But now I know that "there is no peace to the wicked,"[32] and that the woe is unto those who are "covered with a covering and not with the pure Spirit of God,"[33] which reproves the world for sin; nor should I ever have attained it in that way, if I had walked therein for a hundred years. For we came not truly unto Christ (but rather denied Him), whose flesh is the true bread that gives life to the world. Neither were we joined together in the unity of the faith of the Son of God, which faith is a "mystery held in a pure conscience,"[34] "giving victory over the world,"[35] which springs up from that light with which Christ has enlightened us all, to give people the knowledge of God, wherein is experienced the saints' true inheritance and fellowship.

But we were building a tower in our own imaginations, hoping the top would reach to heaven, like the confounded builders of old, like Nimrod's stock who hunted before the Lord, the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel, which is that spirit that confuses all who build without Christ's light, the cornerstone and sure foundation. For though you may say "Lord, Lord," yet this avails nothing while you remain workers of iniquity. And so we were professing and talking of the truth which makes free—Christ, the light, the way to the Father—but we remained in bondage, darkness, and falsehood, in the broad way wherein many hypocrites, deceitful workers, envious, proud, and covetous may walk. For these may keep on their covering of religious profession, and talk of Him who leads to life, out of death, but yet they "suppress the truth in unrighteousness,"[36] keeping down His witness (the light that enlightens every man), which lets you see when you have not the true bread of life, which gives peace, rest, and satisfaction to the soul, but rather feed upon the husk. And notwithstanding the great noise you make concerning Him who is the substance of all, who ends the shadows, yet you expect His kingdom, glory, and reign outwardly. O foolish and blind! Is not the kingdom of God within you?[37] And is not the "king's daughter all glorious *within*"?[38] And did not the King say, "Go not forth;"[39] and when they shall say, "Lo here, and lo there, believe them not?"[40]

But in this state I was once with you, until the Son of God opened the eyes of him who was born blind,

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32 Isaiah 48:22; 57:21

33 Isaiah 30:1 KJV

34 1 Timothy 3:9

35 1 John 5:4

36 Rom. 1:18

37 Luke 17:21

38 Ps. 45:13 KJV

39 Matthew 24:26

40 Matthew 24:23

whom the Pharisees had cast out (as they have done to many in this age, who tremble at the Word of the Lord). And in His eternal light I then saw that a profession of religion without life, would never bring peace to that part which had awakened in me, breathing after the pure, righteous power of the living God. For it is from this life and power that all men have erred and become estranged by transgression, which is the "the middle wall of separation"[41] that must be broken down as salvation is wrought out with fear and trembling. But this the professors of religion deny, casting out those who tremble at the living and powerful Word, which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; and so the time has indeed come "when they will not endure sound doctrine."[42] This is to all of you, priests, baptists, and people, who have gone out from that light which enlightens every man, that lets you see your ungodly deeds and evil words. What more shall I say of you? Why, you skip over judgment, and so do not know the love of God. This is from the Lord God to you, as you shall witness on your deathbed.

So after a season in this my desperate and longing condition, in which I desired that God would make a change or alteration among us (feeling that in all that we performed we were dead to the pure, simple life of God, for which my soul thirsted), it happened that I heard a book read concerning the sufferings of some of the people of God who were called Quakers, in a dungeon at Suesham. This name and these sufferings were strange to me at that time; yet, at the hearing of it, something in me did arise with much tenderness and pity towards this innocent suffering people, which drew tears from my eyes, believing that they suffered for conscience sake. And the same thing in me even said at that time, that God would one day avenge them on their bloody persecutors—which has now been performed by His mighty hand of power on some of them, even to the cutting them off from the earth as briars and thorns for the fire. But still all this time I did not know what it was that let me see these things, and I knew not light from darkness, as is the state of thousands now who profess Christ in words, as I did, but know Him not as a Leader of His sheep out of darkness into the fold of eternal life and peace.

Then I heard of Jacob Behmen's books, and began to read much in them, and to gather something of them into my own comprehension and the imaginations of my brain; but this and all else gave no peace and rest to my immortal soul, which still lay in death and bondage by reason of transgression and sin.

But not long after this, a minister of the word of life (whose name few know), came and preached to my spirit in prison, which rejoiced much at the sound of his words, to which I gave diligent heed, and was eternally convinced that it was the very truth that he declared, and that there is no other way to know God, or to be saved, except as I walked in that light with which He has enlightened every man, which let me see all the evil words and ungodly deeds that ever I had committed. This light comes from Christ, the Savior, and leads all that follow it out of the evil that is in the world, unto Him who was before the world was, and by whom it was made, in glory with the Father. He is the substance of all the types, figures,

41 Ephesians 2:14

42 2 Timothy 4:3

shadows and ordinances, of which many things might be spoken, but Christ is the sum, who redeems man by His blood (that is, His life) out of the earth (into which man was driven in transgression) up unto God again, who was before transgression and who is the beginning and the end.

So as my heart and my mind were turned to the true light, many scriptures came fresh unto me, confirming the truth of which he spoke. And the power of the Word in my heart, which is of God, from whom the light comes, began to stir and work, and condemnation was administered upon all my former religious professions. A sword then came upon my earth, which had sat still in peace; and an open war was proclaimed against the beast, the harlot, and false prophet, by the Lamb that was slain, whose sword came out of His mouth. And the prisoner of hope rejoiced at the beginning of this day of vengeance, believing the year of redemption had come. Indeed, a great change had begun, which seemed strange to me, and was also quickly perceived by the Baptists, who were then my companions in profession, but not in tribulation. For I was made to weep and lament, seeing that all the religion in the world was but as a fading leaf when it lacked the pure life and power of God which saves from sin, and brings into unity with Him; so that I could no longer be satisfied, nor live in a talk of God and Christ, when I did not enjoy the true rest, even the pure milk of the immortal Word of life which my soul had breathed after, even from a child, though I knew not what it was, nor where to find it.

But in this my troubled condition many Baptists followed me day and night to persuade me out of it, looking upon me to be deluded. Some with prayers, some with flattery, and others with envious words strived to bring me back to them, telling me that I had fallen from grace, had come under the law, and so was making the blood of Christ of no effect. But I did not know then that the blood is the life, and that the life is the light of men; and though I was convinced in my conscience of the eternal truth, yet my understanding was confused, and the day of the Lord was like darkness and not light to that part in me which had held the truth in unrighteousness (as all shall one day witness, when their covering is torn off, and their insides are made manifest). Thus these, by their many words, drew my mind out from God's witness in me, and away from the law written in the heart, to which I should have kept and been faithful—even that sure Word of prophecy, which let me see all that ever I had done. And so to get ease, I turned my mind out from the truth (which is required in the inward parts), and gave heed to seducing spirits, and words which darkened counsel, insomuch that I joined with them again in more zeal than before, and encouraged others to follow their strong imaginations from the letter of scripture, looking for an outward Savior, though the scriptures say, "Christ within, the hope of Glory;"[43] and "Know you not that Christ is in you, except you are reprobates?"[44] etc. Indeed we looked for His coming outside of us, though He said "When they shall say, 'lo here,' and 'lo there,' do not believe them," and "Go not forth;"[45] and we looked for an outward kingdom and glory, though the king's daughter is said to be all glorious within,[46] and the

43 Colossians 1:27

44 2 Corinthians 13:5

45 Matthew 24:23-26

king said, “The kingdom of God is within you.”[47] And we looked for His resurrection and life as only an outward event, whereas He said, “I am the resurrection and the life,” and “I have come as a light into the world,” (who enlightens every man that comes into the world.) These things we imagined, and we built each other up in such ideas, though they were contrary to the scriptures, and contrary to the saints who built up in that faith which is a mystery held in a pure conscience.[48] And so we skipped over judgment (like the Pharisees and hypocrites of old, who “spoke but did not do”[49]) climbing up an easier way than by the door (which is Christ, who “condemns sin in the flesh”[50]), like a thief who tries to steal another man’s covering.

But after a season, these things weighed heavily upon me, and I found that these lies were harder to be judged out and destroyed than all the other wickedness and iniquity that I ever committed. For when, being unsatisfied, I came away from the Baptists again, I resolved with purpose of heart to wait upon the Lord, whatever became of all the world, its glory, profession, or enmity. For I found a word stirring powerfully in me, saying, “Seek first the kingdom of God,” and to it I gave heed, turning my mind again to that light which had reproved me for sin since my childhood. And then the power of God was manifested, and His dreadful judgments fell upon the harlot who had gone out from the life into a barren religious profession; and then plagues, famine, earthquakes, thunders, war and tremblings, sighing, mourning, weeping, fasting, and great astonishment came upon that ground in me which before had professed the scriptures. And all that ever I had acted or spoken outside of the light, was judged, cursed, and condemned—whether eating or forbearing, or drinking or forbearing, lying down or rising up, sleeping or waking, going out or coming in—all was judged and condemned, until the meek One came to ride as king upon the colt of a donkey, and Zion was redeemed with judgment. This came to pass as obedience was yielded to the Lord’s power, who, with His mighty and piercing sword, wounded leviathan, and slew the dragon that was in the sea, and the great harlot was plagued (the beast and false prophet together), of whose cup of fornication all nations and kings of the earth have drunk, and who must drink freely, as I have done, of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of the Lord God Almighty, or else they shall never know rest and peace in the land of the living.

For I saw and felt how Cain, the first birth, the envious one, the murderer, is a vagabond from God; and Ishmael, the wild man, the mocker, is cast out; and Esau, the cunning hunter, is rejected; and the profane person, and all who are of proud Haman’s stock, and Nabal’s race, these must have their portion in the lake of torment. For when the mind of man went out from the subjection to the life that formed him, he went into the property and place of the beasts, fowls, and creeping things, and then the true life

46 Ps. 45:13

47 Luke 17:21

48 1 Timothy 3:9

49 Matthew 23:3

50 Romans 8:3

and Former of all things began to work in man as a troubler, reprover, and condemner, showing how he had gone out from his right place and habitation in which he was created and placed. And thus being troubled in himself, he strove against the light of life that troubled and secretly judged him (which life is God), and so grew into wrath, anger, and rebellion, even ready to lift up his hand against everything that crossed him, having no resting place in the upright life that formed him, but yielding his heart to go outward into the bestial properties. Here Ishmael is born, the fleshly birth, whose "hand is against every man,"[51] and here man in the transgression is afraid of God his Creator, and is driven outward into the earth like Adam.

But I saw that it is not that God the Creator does willingly or purposely drive men out from Himself into the outward, earthly, or bestial properties; but man, departing from Him by doing that which is contrary to His pure motion and life, finds himself troubled for it, and feels the anger or enmity of his creator for it, who is grieved and vexed with the disobedience of His creatures. And so, to get ease from this trouble, man runs more into the various thoughts and things which occasion more anger, more torment, and more trouble to his own soul; like Saul, who sought music to quiet him when he had departed from the true Spirit and life of his Creator. But man in the beginning (before all inventions) was brought forth in Adam in the upright life, where all was quiet and in subjection to God, who is rest, peace and quietness to all that live in Him. But going out from this into the bestial properties, man is defiled and polluted, and finds (as the Scriptures say) that there is no rest for the wicked.

Here also Cain went out from the true life, and sacrificed from the outward property of beasts, in which he was not accepted, and so he was troubled and judged by the inward life that formed him (in which life Abel presented his offering). Thus Cain fretted and was enraged with his brother, and slew him, because Abel offered to God from the most inward principle or property in which he was formed (which was his proper habitation) and so was accepted, and in this inward life he was well-pleasing to God his Creator. But Cain having gone from the inward into the outward, offered what was outward in the earthly and bestial properties, which reached not to the inward, neither could it be accepted of God. And having a sense of non-acceptance, it reproached him, judged and troubled him, so that his countenance fell and he was angry with his brother. This is Cain's mark in all ages, namely: the outward birth in the fleshly and outward properties, persecuting the inward spiritual birth in God's property. Indeed, this began in Cain and Abel, as it is written, "He that was born after the flesh," or the outward birth, "persecuted him that was born after the Spirit," or the inward life, which is of God. And even so it is now, as all who are born of Abel's property can see.

Therefore, all you sons of Adam, consider in what nature you are born, and live, and offer your sacrifice; for God is not mocked, you shall reap what you sow, and not otherwise. If you are in the outward birth, which is of the flesh, then you are not accepted by the most pure invisible God, but rather are judged,

51 Genesis 16:12

troubled, and condemned by Him, because of which you are fretful, contrary, and angry against those who, in the inward, spiritual birth, are more righteous than you. For you and your knowledge stand in the proud, stubborn, and willful properties of brute beasts, in which you speak evil of the most inward things, which you know not; nor shall you ever know them in that state, until you come to the most inward life that formed you, which is deeper, higher, and more excellent than the bestial or outward life in which you offer your sacrifice to an unknown God, who does not accept it at your hands.

For those who are of the fleshly birth draw near with their mouth and lips, but their hearts are far off. They draw near in the outward, but the most inward remains at a distance, and they remain separated from that wherein acceptance is found. So, be not deceived; for Cain and Abel are rightly understood in the most inward ground, and nothing is hidden from the Former of all things to whom we must give an account. And here also Jacob and Esau are clearly known and made manifest, the one being the plain man dwelling in a tent, and the other a cunning hunter, a man of the field, as the Scriptures bear witness. And God says, "Jacob I have loved, and Esau I have hated." But how can this be, that He loves one and hates the other while they are but children? It is for the same reason He had respect to Abel and his offering, but not to Cain and his offering. It lies in the births or inward properties in which they are generated, ruled, and acted, and not in their outward persons or names. For God is no respecter of persons or outward names. But Jacob speaks of the plain man who dwells in the tent[52] (that is, in the most inward life), which is his proper habitation, in which the love and acceptance are found and manifested to the spiritual birth in all ages.

But Esau, who was hated, was a cunning hunter, a man of the field. Notice, it was this nature or property which was hated, and not the person, which by itself is but earth. And here we find the man of the field, the mind wholly captivated in the wild, hunting and straying nature, even in the outward properties where the blessing is not obtained. For truly, the blessing is the right of Jacob in the tent, who indeed was before the cunning hunting came forth; yes, and truly Jacob shall be blessed. He that reads, let him understand; for these two births are in existence at this day.

Here also is the life of Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Moses, the prophets, Christ, and the apostles known, in the most inward motion, seed, or life that formed them; which life is not known to the children of the flesh, or out-birth, any more than he that is upon the surface of the waters knows what is in the depth or bottom of the ocean. For the natural man, as it is written, knows nothing but what he knows naturally, as brute beasts, in which property he also corrupts himself. But the spiritual, inward, or plain man knows all things, abiding in the tent, and in the counsel of the Former of all things.

And it is written, that "Enoch walked with God, and was not; for God took him."[53] But "Nimrod, the

52 Genesis 25:27

53 Genesis 5:24

mighty hunter before the Lord"[54] (the beginning of whose kingdom is Babel, or confusion) yet remains to this day among the mighty and cunning hunters, who have always hunted after the most inward, precious, substantial life, which to them is still unknown. And this was manifested in Cain, Ishmael, Esau, Haman, Judas, Herod, and many more which might be named, in many high priests, rulers, and people, who were of the flesh, in the kingdom of pride, subtlety, envy, wrath, and persecution, which is of Babel—always hunting after the prey, that is, after the inward birth which walks with God in the invisible life of acceptance.

And in this life Christ came, manifesting His origin or Father to the world; but the outward or fleshly birth neither knew Him nor received Him, though the world, and all things in it, were made and formed by Him and for Him. Instead, they sought to persecute His precious life to death as soon as He was born, as we see in Herod the king, who knew not the life of the Son of God when it was made manifest, being in the outward properties of this world to which the inward is a mystery; as it is written, "Great is the mystery of God…which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."[55] For the knowledge and understanding, the kingdom and glory of these outward ones are only in the visible, earthly, sensual properties, in which lies the enmity against the invisible, inward, righteous life of the innocent Lamb—who fights not for His kingdom, worship, or sacrifice like Cain and his generation, but rather prays to His Father that they might see what spirit, property, or birth they are in, that so they might turn inward in their minds towards His kingdom, which Christ tells them is within them and not outward, bidding them seek it in righteousness, and then all that is outward will be in subjection, and all good things will be added.

Consider this now, all you children of the outward or fleshly birth, who live and act in the enmity and corrupt life of the bestial properties, estranged from the most inward, pure, eternal life of the Former and Creator of heaven and earth. With speed, turn your minds inward and be still, earnestly desiring that you may know God, and be drawn back into that which can translate into His kingdom, which lies hidden in you, invisible, and not outward. Yes, turn your minds to that which you are inwardly estranged from. For the ground of the false birth and false prophet is this: that man goes out from the inward life of uprightness and truth, and minds only outward visible things, in which he cunningly hunts for the satisfaction of the motions, lusts, and desires of the bestial life. But this life of Esau is judged and reproved in you by the most inward life, which life is of God, and is the foundation of Enoch, Abel, Abraham, and the rest of that generation. And if you come not to be built upon this foundation, by repentance from the works and nature of unrighteousness, then you will fall with Cain and Judas, Esau and Haman, and the rest of that generation, without hope of recovery, into the ever-sinking, bottomless pit of darkness and misery without end. *For it is a fearful and dreadful thing to live and die in that nature, birth, and property, which God is never reconciled to,* but rather abhors as an abomination forever. And your breath, times, and

54 Genesis 10:9

55 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Corinthians 2:8

seasons are in His hand, and you cannot repent whenever you will, or in your own appointed time; but only when the inward life of God stirs with its discoveries and reproofs of the evil ways, words, and actions which are brought forth by you. This is the only time—that is, when He calls—to turn at His reproofs.

For thus says God the Creator, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, because he is flesh,"[56] or, because a fleshly birth of this world has entered the soul of man. Therefore, consider Esau, who was of this fleshly birth, and who could not find a place of repentance, or a way of returning (being hardened in profaneness, Heb. 12:17).

For I tell you from a certain knowledge of the mysterious life of creation, that if you spend your time without the true knowledge of the only wise, invisible God—which comes only through experiencing His judgments come upon all veiling out-births, and all the degenerating properties of unrighteousness—and if you do not come *through judgment* to have unity with Him in the most inward hidden life of righteousness, you will be driven into the most utter darkness and blackness of woes and miseries forever. For, it is not everyone that can say with their mouth, "Lord, Lord," who will enter the kingdom of God, but he that is born again, translated like Enoch, born of that birth of the Spirit which was in Abel, by which he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain unto his Maker. This birth alone, and not another, is accepted of God, and walks with Him from the time of Abel unto this day.

Therefore, think not that the kingdom or mystery of godliness consists in outward things, or visible observations. For I tell you, no; it is a deeper thing than the face of the earth, which even the hypocrites can discern. Dig now, you who can, and find this pearl of great price, which is able to translate or recreate the soul. For the day has dawned in which all things, visible and invisible, shall be clearly known and manifested unto that birth which God accepts. Nor does the kingdom of righteousness consist in satisfying the flesh, the lusts of the eye or ear, or the pride of life; for these are not of the Father, but of the world or fleshly birth, and of the kingdom of the bestial powers of darkness, in which the righteous holy God and His kingdom are neither seen, known, understood, or in any measure enjoyed.

So then, be still, and learn to know the everlasting gospel which is now "preached in every creature under heaven,"[57] saying, "Fear God and give glory to him that made heaven and earth, for the hour of his judgments is come."[58] For by this gospel, Cain (the vagabond) and his sacrifice are manifested, and the hidden things of Esau (the cunning hunter, who loses the blessing) are brought to light. And by it Jacob obtains the inheritance, and Abel's sacrifice is accepted, but the first birth of the flesh is rejected forevermore.

Therefore, all people upon the face of the earth, consider what I now say unto you. A measure of the

56 Genesis 6:3

57 Colossians 1:23, Literal Translation "εν παση τη κτισει"

58 Revelation 14:6

true light of life has been given to you by the Lord God of infinite mercy, that you should not perish, but that by it you should be led out of the fleshly birth and the world, into eternal life and peace. Yes, "a manifestation of the Spirit of God is given to every one of you, with which to profit."[59] Therefore, as you must give an account in the great and dreadful day of God, take heed you turn not from His grace to live in unrestraint, vanity, and wickedness; for there you will always be complaining for lack of grace, and for lack of power to change, and so you will charge God foolishly. For none are murmurers or complainers but such as walk after their own ungodly lusts. But "the grace of God, that brings salvation has appeared unto all men, and it teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;"[60] This is the light that comes from the only begotten Son of God, who said, "I am the light of the world;" and all who follow Him know that "all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light."[61]

Yes, the true light of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who "enlightens every man that comes into the world," is that which manifests or shows secretly unto you your evil deeds, your unholy conduct, your lightness and vanity of mind, and also lets you see the hidden stirrings of pride and envy in your hearts, and checks and reproves you many times secretly for your unsavory words, and harsh speeches, and vain and wicked thoughts, whereby a secret fire in you is kindled that causes you sometimes to blush. For there is an eye that sees in secret, which one day you will know, by whose light every man shall be rewarded openly, when God judges the secrets of all mankind by Christ Jesus, the light of the world. Therefore, let none think within themselves that they shall be covered or hidden by a mere talking of His words or professing His name, or that they will be saved by forgiveness of sins without departing from iniquity. For I say, woe from the Lord God unto all who make anything their hope, covering, or hiding place, but the light, life, and the pure Spirit of the living God, whose glory enlightens the world, and His brightness makes hidden things manifest. Thus the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, and the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and all unrighteous coverings will be too narrow in His dreadful presence, who comes to judge the world in righteousness and the people with truth. But His light He does shine in the conscience and hearts of men, bearing witness against all unrighteousness that is by them committed, reproving and condemning the unrighteous grounds from which it arises, and striving with them to lead and guide them in the way of holiness, unto Christ, the Savior, from which it comes, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Therefore, all people upon earth, turn your minds to the light, wherewith you are enlightened by Christ Jesus, the Savior, which light lets you see sin and evil. Repent and prize your time, and stop not your ear, nor close your eye against that seed in you which arises for your deliverance, and is sad in the midst of your vain merriment, and which cannot be satisfied with anything of this world. Rather heed that which

59 1 Corinthians 12:7

60 Titus 2:11-12

61 Ephesians 5:13

shows you the evil of the world, for it will lead you out of it, and out of all of its ways, worships, fashions, and traditions, which are vain and fading, up to Christ, who is not of the world, who is the salvation of all that obey Him. And this is He who has led me out of the world, through great tribulations, unto the good land of rest. Glory to Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever, whose power once killed, but now makes alive, and having slain the enmity by the blood of His cross, His own arm has brought salvation.

This is given forth in true love to the yet scattered of the flock, whom my soul desires may come to know the rest at noon in the life of the Son of righteousness, by

—WILLIAM BAYLY.

* * *

After being convinced of the everlasting gospel as is above related, and sitting for some time under heavy judgment and deep instruction in the school of Christ, William Bayly went on to become an eminent minister in the early Society of Friends. He is said by those who knew him best to have been a man of an innocent and blameless life, whose conduct adorned the gospel in every sense, and whose words administered grace to the hearers. Like Apollos, "he was an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures," being well acquainted with both the history and mystery of the oracles of God, through the assistance of that Spirit which gave him a true understanding of both. John Crook once wrote of him, "If it was lawful for Paul, that great apostle, without boasting, to give an account of his own sufferings and perils by sea and by land, from both open enemies and professed friends, etc., surely without offense I may relate something of the great sufferings of this good man, that it may be seen how it was not only given to him to believe, and to preach the word of faith, but also to suffer for the same. By cruel persecutors he has been thrown down and dragged upon the ground by the hair of his head, and his mouth and jaws being endeavored to be rent and broke apart, so that the ground whereon he lay was covered with blood. And as if this butchering of him had not been enough to make him a fit sacrifice for their cruelty, a heavy bodied persecutor then stamped upon his breast with his feet, endeavoring to beat the breath out of his body. And when this persecutor had done his pleasure, he commanded the jailer to take him away, and put him in a nasty hole for his entertainment and cure." But William Bayly suffered both abuse and imprisonment with great patience and constancy. And having at last laid down his body in the service of His Lord, his wife wrote of him as follows: "I am fully assured, he departed this life a clean, innocent man, and one who desired the good of all mankind, and sought not himself, but the honor of God. He coveted no man's gold or silver, but did spend and was spent for the honor of God. His memorial shall live, though his body is removed."

The Life of Patrick Livingston

It is upon my heart to declare something of what my soul has passed through, for the sake of those who are breathing after the Lord, and who, though they may have experienced some discernible change, have not yet come to the true place of satisfaction. For the sake of such as these, I will declare something of the goodness, kindness, mercy and love of God to my soul, so that, by reading, others may look into themselves and consider their own condition.

I can now look back and call to mind, and remember how the Lord was very near to me, even when I was very far from Him in my mind. Indeed, because of the evil that lodged in my heart I was at a great distance from Him, and yet He was near me, and watched over me night and day, though I was silly, dark and blind, and could not discern His care over me. He was near me in His judgments to bring me down and to lay me low, that I might learn to know myself and to know Him. Oh my soul, praise Him forevermore, to all eternity, for His mercies are over all His works!

The Lord kept me at this time from open and manifest uncleanness that I saw others run into, yet I was wild and fierce and hot, and light and vain in my mind, having not come to know my bit and bridle. And I was not without an evil will and strong inclinations to all vices, but the Lord was near me, even when I knew not His nearness and presence, and kept me back from doing or acting the greatest evils that my heart inclined to. So at that time, I found that the seed of all evil worked in me, and it sprang up with manifold desires and inclinations to evil; but the Lord was present, and kept me back and prevented me. And when I was still young in years, at times trouble would arise in me, and great fear, but I did not know of what. But being of a wild spirit, I would quickly drive the fearfulness away by following my evil and airy inclinations from one vain thing to another. Nevertheless, as I grew in years, fear at times grew upon me, along with trouble.

One remarkable occurrence is fresh in my remembrance. Upon a certain time I turned in the Scriptures and cast my eye upon that place in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 where it is written: "...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed." And because of the fear that arose upon my reading of this Scripture, I laid the book aside, and began to busy myself again, so that for a time it went away, and I went on following my vain and airy mind in my play or pastime (as it is called). But at night when I went to bed, I was many times awoken by fear out of my sleep, and in the morning that same Scripture came up again in my mind. I very well remember what then arose in my heart—a conviction of my ignorance of God, that I did not truly know Him. And having read in that Scripture that the Lord Jesus shall be

revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction away from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power—I say, having read this, it sprung up in my heart, and was carried home to my conscience by the light or seed of life (which I then knew not) *that I was one of those who do not know God;* and that if I lived and died in such ignorance of God, I would then be one who He would punish with everlasting destruction. And so a desire arose in me to know God, from a conviction in myself that I knew Him not. And I arose at that time and kneeled down by my bed and prayed, according to my then poor and weak capacity, that I might somehow come to the knowledge of God.

Now this was the presence of the Lord with me—a tender springing up of the seed of life and the appearance of its light in me, convincing me of my ignorance of God, and for a time stirring up a desire in me to know God. Yet how quickly was this quenched and veiled, and put out of my sight, by my busy and stirring spirit that was always restless in my lightness, fleshly liberty, and folly. At times this same sense would rise up again into my remembrance, but it continued a very short time (like a very quick glance that would fade away again), for my vessel was not prepared to retain such a serious thing concerning God and my own condition. Yet I must say that the Lord was then really stirring and moving upon my mind; not only that time, which indeed was the first and most remarkable touch of His Spirit I had known, but also at other times, both before and especially after; but alas, all were too little noticed by me.

After this, trouble grew by degrees upon me; and I being prone to sickness at times, this was also a means to bring me down. And when my natural restless spirit was brought low by sickness or afflictions, then I noticed that the light was near to appear in me, not only to let me see what was amiss in my life (according to my capacity to perceive it, which then was very low and meager), but also to draw or incline my mind to that which was good. This also was the great love of God, and I must confess that at this time there were no defects in the light, but the defects were many and great in me. And though I was then mostly given up to the vanity and lightness of my mind, yet notwithstanding this, the Lord had regard to me as His creature, and what's more, He had regard to that seed which lay in prison within me, groaning for deliverance at times, stirring and moving against evil, and drawing towards the Lord in tender desires, even though the greater course and current that ran forth in me, and in which I was hurried along, was that which was in opposition to His light or seed. And so, when I was among all my companions, if any did look upon me, little or nothing of religious seriousness could be seen in me according to outward view or observation; for indeed there was a shame in me to confess, or to openly acknowledge that which was stirring in me, though many times in secret it tendered and broke my heart, and a cry went up to God.

But oh, I was ashamed to let any know of this, and covered it with lightness, vanity and unrestraint. How can I not marvel at the love, mercy and long-suffering patience of God when I remember these things, how the Lord bore with me and did not take me away in that evil condition! Though I was long of a disobedient heart and would not respond to the love of God, yet that light or seed that sprung up in me

was good, holy, saving and sufficient in its nature. My heart was as an evil ground, unprepared to receive Him, and through the abundance of evil things which sprung up in me from the evil seed, the good seed was long choked, grieved, and hindered from springing up to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. But even so, a measure of His light remained in the ground of my heart as a holy seed, stirring again and again. So that I must again say, in the sincerity and uprightness of my heart, that the light or seed was always good in all its springings and movings, and I never found any lack or weakness or defect therein; but all the lack, weakness and defects were in the ground in me that was not prepared to receive the seed, but often choked and resisted it.

And then it came to pass, when I had come to years of greater understanding, that I remained for a time in Leith and Edinburgh, and began to frequent the meetings of the Presbyterians, and more especially those who were called Remonstrants. But I found that there remained a sense of discontent, both with myself and with them also, though I then knew of none that had equaled or gone beyond them. My desire and cry increased towards the Lord, and I found a continual dissatisfaction with myself, and a doubting of my being right; though I may truly say that then my tenderness was not less but more than it was before, and there was a measure of seriousness that was also beginning to appear outwardly, though I was ashamed to let it appear much, and often strove to conceal it.

I now see how the Lord was all along present with me in His light and holy seed, and how at this time the contrariety and enmity between the two seeds grew more and more apparent, though I was then very weak of understanding, and could not discern or make a true separation between the precious and the vile in me. But the light remained in me as a holy seed that had no peace with evil, and in it and by it my peace was daily broken. I found something in me that would willingly have shut out the light, for it was a trouble to me, and a torment to a part in me that lived and was unwilling to die. And it was this light that made me always discontent and displeased with myself, for it showed me what was not right in me and in others, and all that was not at peace with the Lord. And I now know by large and good experience, that it is the nature of this light or seed to be displeased with all evil, and with those that join their will to the evil; but it is pleased with that which is good, holy and true, and with all who are joined to the good.

And I found that, to whatever extent I came out of the evil into the good, the light was thus far pleased, for I had a sense of ease and peace in that measure. But there were other things lodging in my heart that were not outwardly seen, with which the light was displeased, and by reason of this my soul was often under many weights and burdens. I was then weak and had little discernment, and I therefore took things to be for my hurt which were actually for my good. For the light which brought trouble and weight upon me was good, but the cause of the trouble was not good but evil. And I could feel that the evil power or seed wrought numerous evil lusts and desires in me. I was sensible of them, and they were a heavy burden to me, so that I grew weary of them, but knew not how to overcome them. And now, when I look back upon my condition, I clearly see what it was that made my evil thoughts and my wandering unstable mind a burden and a weight to me; it was the light that had arisen in me in some small measure, and

was daily arising, opening my condition and showing me the evil. Indeed, this was the cause of all my trouble, and the reason why I often felt judgment and condemnation; for evil and disobedience lodged in me, and brought the wrath of God to rest upon me, and His anger burned in me as a fire, so that the cause thereof might be taken away. And then there arose strong desires and cries to the Lord for ease and help, and I made many promises and secret vows to the Lord to be His, if He would but free me and deliver me. I often resolved to watch over my heart and thoughts, for I was aware that my thoughts were exceedingly evil; and the more brightly the light appeared in me, the more clearly I saw the evil and unfaithfulness of my heart, and my wandering thoughts, which became still more and more exceedingly sinful and loathsome in my view. And yet, at that time I did not know that the light by which I could see and understand these things was the saving and sufficient grace and light of Jesus Christ, though I did know and acknowledge that there was something in me which let me see my heart and my thoughts.

I then fell into some trouble of mind, because those called ministers said there were two lights; the one they called gospel light, which was saving and sufficient, and only in believers; the other they called common and insufficient. So I was puzzled in my mind, not knowing which of these two lights it was that let me see my heart and my thoughts, sometimes concluding it was the one, and sometimes the other. And they told us that those who had only the common or natural light might go very far in all Christian duties (as they called them), and yet still have nothing of this saving and sufficient grace in them; and this even more disturbed my mind, and caused me much trouble. Great indeed was my desire at that time to have the true saving light and grace of the Gospel which I had heard them speak of; but alas, they (my teachers) were ignorant of it, and how was I to clearly know it so long as I listened to their blind distinctions? For they would give out marks or signs how people could know the saving grace or light, and whether we had it or not; and yet at other times they would say that hypocrites might have most or all of these marks, and yet have nothing of the saving light and grace.

And so I was driven here and there, together with many other poor tender souls, by their windy, unstable, uncertain and contradictory doctrines, many times contradicting both themselves and one another. And when we asked how we might know the true gospel light and grace, they then put us upon more hearing, reading and praying, telling us to continue in these and other duties, waiting for the knowledge of the special light and grace. And this I can honestly say, that with whatever little strength I had, I ran from one to another of these teachers, earnestly desiring to know that power which would save me, because I was still sensible of the continuance of the evil in my heart and the wandering of my thoughts. But because of these false distinctions I was made (through the suggestions of Satan and my own evil heart) to ignore and have little esteem for that light which I already knew, considering it to be weak and insufficient. And because I apprehended my mind to be worse than it formerly was, and my thoughts even more prone to wander than before I had made a profession of religion, this many times made me conclude that their doctrine was true about the light in me, and that I had not yet found the light which was saving and sufficient.

Thus I disregarded the light which daily showed to me my condition and made my heart tender, more and more opening to my view the evil of my heart and my thoughts. And yet, together with the men who were called ministers, I laid the blame for this upon the light; though in truth there was no defect or weakness in it, but the defect and weakness was in me and in these teachers, who with their false distinctions puzzled our minds, turned us from the light, and set us to work in our own wills, to follow our own spirits in wrestling and striving from one outward observation to another, running from one man to another, seeking the living among the dead. And so I, with many more poor, simple souls, were led astray by these teachers, who instead of turning me and others to the light of Christ in us, they turned us from it, calling it dark and dim, weak and natural, and insufficient to lead us to God.

And so we wandered up and down, being inwardly and outwardly tossed, and having a slight esteem for this light, just as Israel of old despised their manna, saying, "Our soul loathes this worthless bread."[1] But though it was called manna (which means, "What is it?"), something that they did not know, yet it was the food which God had provided for them. And so, like them, by forsaking God's provision, we had nothing left to follow but our own wills, or the wills of our teachers, though we continued to cry out to God, and made many prayers for His Holy Spirit to assist us.

And though I and many others wrestled and strove much in outward observations, and many have striven in them much longer than I, yet I am now fully persuaded by the Lord that, while man lives in these tabernacles, he shall never find another light that is able to show him the truth, and lead him out of evil, into the good things that are seen in the light. For I have never found peace and rest for my soul apart from that which springs up in me by believing and following this light. And all the time I followed those teachers, my soul was restless and under trouble, judgment and condemnation. Wrath from the Lord burned in me, and I had no victory, though I often carefully sought it with many tears, yet could not obtain it, because I turned away from that wherein my peace stood, and looked for another. Thus I wearied and tired my natural spirit and body, and brought great trouble upon my soul.

About this time it pleased the Lord that I heard two of the people called Quakers, and my soul was much affected in hearing them. They testified concerning the light, saying that it was the light of Christ in me, and "in every man coming into the world,"[2] which I had been disregarding as common and insufficient, according as my teachers had taught me. Indeed, the words of one of these two men did very much reach my understanding while I listened to him concerning the light; and both of them were made serviceable to me, and something in me said "Amen" to what they preached. So my mind came to be more directed unto this light, and to believe in it.

Now this was not a new thing to me, for I was very aware that this light was in me even before I saw them,

1 Numbers 21:5

2 John 1:9

or had heard any of the people called Quakers. But one thing in their testimony was new to me, that they directed me to this light, and insisted that everyone should come and bring all their deeds to it, believe in it and walk in it, and that it was able to lead unto God all who believed and followed it. This indeed was new to me, and contrary to what I had heard from the men called ministers, who taught quite another doctrine concerning that light with which all men are enlightened. For these had told me it was neither saving nor sufficient to lead unto God; nor did they direct me to bring my thoughts, words and deeds to it, to be led and guided thereby.

But alas, after I had heard these two men called Quakers, my trouble grew even greater than it ever was before, because I did not obey the light of Christ in me, and because I did not forsake the teachers who denied this light, and who had led me so long away from it, causing me to err and wander in darkness. Yet their spirit and doctrine against the light had so far entered me, that though I had been much affected by the testimony of the Lord's servants, yet the contrary spirit and doctrine was not easily cast out, and the serpent employed it for some years after, holding me back from giving up altogether in obedience. And I can say that, though my trouble was great before, yet it was much greater (for a time) after I had heard that good and faithful testimony concerning the light of Christ; until I came to forsake those teachers. I cannot declare the great trouble of my soul, or the perplexity of my mind, which all justly came upon me from the Lord for my disobedience.

For I went sometimes to hear the Quakers (so called), and sometimes to hear the ministers (as they were called), and sometimes I went to the Baptists and the Independents, there being then of all these at Leith and Edinburgh when the English were in Scotland. For a time I joined to none of them at all, but I most inclined to the people called Quakers, though I was in much fear and doubting whether to join with them, for the old leaven stood much in my way to hinder me, and great was my perplexity. When I heard the Quakers, they exhorted me to believe in the light, and to forsake whatever evil it discovered, and to love and follow the good that it showed. But when I heard the ministers, they told me the light was not able to lead me out of all the evil that it showed me, nor to bring me into the good.

And I heard them all crying out against one another, the Baptists against the Presbyterians, and the Presbyterians against the Baptists and Independents, and the Independents against the Baptists and Presbyterians; and the Presbyterians were divided into two parts, one called the Public Resolutioners, and the other called Remonstrators. And one sort of Presbyterian would cry out against the other sort, and against all other groups whom they called "sectaries." But I observed all of them to be against the Quakers; for though they were divided among themselves, and crying out against each other, yet they all bent their strength against the Quakers, and against the light which they used to call the "Quakers' light," bringing Scriptures and trying to bend them against this light.

Now beholding all these things wrought no small trouble in my mind, not knowing who to join with; for darkness had so come over me through my disobedience, that I was puzzled in my mind with all that I

heard against the light from these teachers of all sorts. Yet still there remained in my heart a secret love to that people and to their testimony concerning the light; but I being weak and feeble, and not seeing through the subtle and crafty things which the ministers alleged, I was puzzled and unable to answer them. For those who preached against the Quakers and the light, cried out what a dreadful thing it is to follow darkness instead of light; for to follow a false light, they said, was no different than to follow darkness. And indeed, this is true, and even then I believed it, but it was evilly applied to the Quakers and to the light they preached. And indeed, after I heard what the Quakers testify concerning the light, I dared never accept in my heart what the ministers said against it, though their words puzzled and troubled me. For though there was a fear in me to conclude absolutely that the Quakers' testimonies were true, yet I dared not deny them, nor say they were untrue.

But the thought would sometimes come upon me, that the Lord Jesus and all His followers were hated and persecuted; and that these preachers of the light did look much more like Christ and His apostles than any of those who preached against it. Many times this brought a fear and dread upon me, lest I should stand with those who denied the appearance of Christ in the Spirit, just as the Jews had denied His appearance in the flesh. And the innocency, patience and sufferings of these preachers of the light much overcame me, so that, even though I did not then join with them (being held by the subtlety of the serpent and his evil instruments), yet all along my heart mostly inclined to be with them, and dared never let any settled conclusion enter my heart against them. And even in the things I could not yet see through, there was a fear in me to judge against them, lest because of my ignorance or weakness I might condemn the Truth in them.

But a desire to be fully clear and satisfied concerning the light weighed heavily upon me, and my cry to the Lord was that He would fully resolve the thing, and grant me full certainty concerning it, for upon this issue depended the very foundation and ground of difference between the preachers of Christ's light and the opposers of it. And indeed this I found to be true, even as I travelled through this time of much trouble and exercise; *that whenever I followed this light in anything, then was the time I had peace.* But when I acted contrary to it, I could find no other light, nor any man that was then able to comfort me.

And now I can look back and see plainly the great love of God to me, who pursued me with His judgments and His mercies. And likewise I can look back and see how the light, which first appeared in me and let me see my ignorance of God, was the same light that did more and more appear in me, to show me all the evil both within me and without me. And the more I came up in obedience to it, the more my light grew in me to shine more clearly, and the evil appeared yet more offensive and abominable, and exceedingly sinful to me. And this I found always to be certain: that as my mind turned away from anything that was manifested and reproved by the light, then the light reproved me no more for that thing, unless I turned back to it again. So that now I can truly witness and bear testimony to the purity of the nature of this light, how it does not at all condemn the righteous, nor justify the wicked, but its very nature ever was and is, and will be to the end, to justify the righteous and to condemn the wicked.

And now all you opposers of this light, show me where there can be found another light besides this that universally does its office, namely, to justify the righteous and to condemn the wicked; for all the followers of Christ's light can truly bear witness with me, and I with them, that the light is one and always the same in its nature, being pure and holy. And we can look back now, and see within ourselves, how the light was once in us as a little seed under the ground, while we were darkness and ran after darkness. The light then shined in our darkness, that is, it shined in us when we were in a state of darkness, and had not yet come to this light or seed; yet still it stirred and shined in us as a lowly witness, always testifying against us while we were in our natural condition. And truly, though it was then the only light we had in that night state; yet if in anything we did well, and shunned the evil in anything ever so small, the nature of this light was always to justify the good, and to condemn the evil.

But as we grew up to a fuller breaking forth of the same light, then the pearl and the treasure came to be found much more than before. So that, even in the very worst condition that a man can be in (who has not sinned out his day of grace), this light is of the same nature and kind as it is in the man of the highest condition. For there is no condition that a man can be in which can alter the nature of the light, though it indeed differs as to the measure and degree of its manifestation, and also according to its operation on different states. Therefore, for the man who has not sinned out his day, there is no state or place but where he has some light, and the light that he has is holy, and its nature is always to justify the one who walks in it, and to condemn the one who resists it.

And this we do witness truly, faithfully and experientially: that even before we came to know Christ's light, yet it was within us. Even when we walked in darkness, and were in a dark state, it was there, and shined in us while we were in that state, manifesting in us whatever we were capable of seeing at the time, and reproving and condemning us for evil. And though it did not condemn us for the evils of which we were not guilty (as for the outward act of them), yet the nature of all evil in us it indeed condemned. And afterwards, when we had come to a greater knowledge of this blessed seed or light, that which at first shined in our darkness (while we were darkness), began to shine out of darkness, and to give us "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus."[3] Then the treasure that lay hidden in us came to be found and known in the earthen vessel. And so we have found that the nature of the treasure or pearl is the same when it is hidden and shining in darkness, as it is when it shines out of darkness. So that, again, the defect is not in the pearl or treasure (or light or seed), but in the man or woman in whom it appears. And now I can look back, and in my very heart and soul justify the light and clear it from all accusations; seeing clearly that all the blame and defect was in me, and not at all in this light or seed of Christ.

But if it be asked how I came into this certainty and satisfaction? I answer, *only by giving up in obedience*

3 2 Corinthians 4:6

to the light, to walk in it. For here I found a firm ground or warrant to believe in this light, and to unite with the followers of it, and also a good ground to reject all the opposers of it. And now I can say by long experience, that I have found it true and infallible in all that it has taught me. But until I laid down a firm and settled resolution in my heart to adhere to the things I learned in the light, and to follow where it would lead me, I was never at peace or rest in my mind, but was tossed from one opinion to another. And also, on the other hand, I firmly resolved to leave alone those things that were not plainly opened to me (in some measure) to be true; but if they were doubtful I let them alone, and clung to those things I was infallibly certain of.

But if it be queried, what were these things? I answer that, by long experience, I became entirely certain and fully persuaded and satisfied in my heart, that the nature of this light was good and holy, by the goodness and purity of the things it taught me to follow, and by the witness it bore in me *against* all evil. For I knew neither good nor evil, except as this light taught me to see and discern between that which is truly good and that which is truly evil. It is true I had heard much talk of God and Christ, and had read much in the Scriptures, and had many good testimonies to many good things, and also many testimonies against evil things; but I could never have believed or experientially known the truth of these testimonies had it not been for this light. So that any real knowledge of the Scripture's testimony (both for the good and against the evil) was received and obtained by the shining of this light in me, whereby I found it to be true and holy in its nature, impressing in my mind a real awareness or instinct by which I infallibly knew some things that were good; as for example, that there is one holy and true God, who is goodness and love, and holiness and purity itself.

And by this light I was also enabled to feel the evil and ungodly spirit opposing the good and holy thing in me; and I could not find anything else in me, nor anywhere else, that let me see and perceive both the evil and the good. And I also saw that there was nothing that the evil, cursed nature and seed opposed in me as much as the continual turning of my mind to this light; nor could I ever find another light in me that stirred me up to love and to follow purity and holiness, and to forsake evil and unrighteousness. And when I acted contrary to this light, in doing what it showed me was evil, then it smote me and reproved me, and spoke trouble to my heart, and I could never find anything that could give me peace, until I returned again to this light, and forsook the evil. Truly I never found anything that I could say was holy in its nature, and that taught me holiness and let me see evil, and that judged me when I did wrong, and spoke peace to me when I did well, besides this light. And I have found this to be infallibly true.

And indeed, I could in no way discern anything to be heavenly or divine, were it not for this light that let me see both what is heavenly and divine and what is not. Nor could I rightly tell what is sin, and what is not sin, without this light. For I could imitate others, and repeat what others have said, but I could find no real certainty without this light. This was my peace and satisfaction, and I testify that my peace and satisfaction does still increase, *by living according to this light in all things which, for the present time, are certainly known; that is, by cleaving to the good revealed and avoiding the evil.* And until I came to

this resolution in my heart, I never had any settled peace. I never found peace by reasoning or disputing in my mind, but only by living and walking in that measure of good I certainly knew, and turning from the evil. In this way my peace grew up within me. But while I stood jangling and reasoning, and disputing in my mind, or arguing with others about the light, I could never find peace, but rather found only hurt and trouble. But when it strongly and powerfully came into my mind to follow and obey that wherein my peace stood, this became my ground and warrant to trust in God, and to look unto Him, and to expect His help. And being firmly settled in this, my peace then sprang abundantly.

And one thing that mightily confirmed me in my resolution, was that I found this light coincided with and fulfilled the testimonies borne in the Scriptures concerning the true light, the true Spirit or true seed of God. So that whatever the Scriptures declared of the powerful workings of that holy power and Spirit inwardly in the hearts of any of the holy people that lived formerly, I found that this light did the same thing, working the same substantial work in all that followed it. And indeed, as I grew up in its power and virtue, I experienced the same work wrought in me by this light which the holy men of God had experienced by the Spirit of Christ. And as it brought me to witness the same works of holiness and purity of mind, leading me out of the world, and giving victory over it and the evils thereof, this more and more confirmed to me that the light (which the opposers called "natural and insufficient"), was indeed sufficient to lead into the same holy experience of salvation, both inwardly and outwardly. Great love then sprang up in my heart towards those who bore witness of this light; for by its working in me what they said of it, I now knew their testimony to be true. Truly nothing that they said of its power and sufficiency failed. On the contrary, I found the virtue and power of this light to be even more than all they had said of it.

Therefore all people, cleave unto that which is certain and sure; for it is certain and sure that this light is in you, of which we testify, and that it teaches you those things which are good and evil. And as you bring your thoughts, words and deeds to His light, you will grow into greater clearness of understanding, and will come to see that both our testimony to the light, and our testimony against your teachers, are true; and that their testimony against us and against the light are false.

Objection: But it is a dangerous thing, and a great evil, to take for the true and saving light that which is not; for this would be to deceive our own souls.

Answer: As it is very dangerous and destructive to take for the true light that which is not, so it is no less dangerous and destructive to reject and deny that to be the true light which really is; for those who believe not in the true light, must inevitably place something that is false in its place, putting darkness for light, and light for darkness. Now this light which you find in you, to which we bear witness, can you say that it is not the true light? Are you sure, or do you have any certain knowledge that it is not the true light of Christ shining in you? Or can you say you have found another light that shows you what is in your heart? For this light that we speak of does show you many things, both in your thoughts, words and deeds. Have you found a light besides this light, that shows you more than this does, or that always

leads you into good and away from evil? Now consider, without light you could not see these things; but you *do* see them, and find that they are discovered or made manifest by a light in you, just as the apostle says, "All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever does make manifest is light."[4] Is there not something in you that manifests and discovers many thoughts, words and deeds, and also reproves them? This is light, and to this light you must take heed, and in it you must believe, otherwise you cannot come to Christ or truly follow Him.

Objection: If this is the true and saving light in which all are to believe, why do we not experience it leading us out of the evils, and into the good things that it shows us?

Answer: "Christ came unto His own, and His own received Him not, but to as many as received Him, He gave them power to become the sons of God."[5] Now why did He not give power to the others whom He calls "His own"? Was it not because they "received Him not"? He came to them, but they received Him not. So we see that He who came to those that received Him not, was indeed saving and sufficient, but not receiving Him, they did not receive His power. And yet this same Christ, "whom the wise builders rejected,"[6] *was* received by others, and in Him they received power to become the sons of God, who believed in His name.

In the same way, Christ is the Light of the world, and "enlightens every man coming into the world."[7] He comes into all with His light, and those who believe in Him, and follow Him, do not abide in darkness; but following Him in the light, they come out of darkness to experience the light and knowledge of His life within them. But those who do not believe in the light which comes into them, they do not come out of, but rather abide in darkness; because they do not believe in the light, nor follow Christ in that light which appears in them to lead them out of darkness. Nevertheless, the light that is in them has power to save, and it shows them many evils that they love better than the light which exposes and reproves them. And the light also shows them many good things which they do not come to possess, because they do not follow after the light to walk in it, and so do not truly follow Christ.

Objection: May we follow the light by our own strength? How can that be, seeing we have no power of ourselves?

Answer: You cannot of yourselves do anything that is good without Christ. But there are times and seasons of life wherein the Lord Jesus Christ, the Light, comes and visits the hearts of people, and shows in them what (for the time present) may be known of God.[8] These are the times of life[9] when men and

4 Ephesians 5:13

5 John 1:11-12

6 Matthew 21:42; Luke 20:17

7 John 1:9

8 Romans 1:19

women are to give up to the Lord, in the light, to follow Him and come after Him, when He strives in them, and with them, and by His light draws them. For then there is power present, and then it is possible to give up to Him and follow Him, with the power that they then have from Him in the light. For even as a natural man I cannot speak or hear, or see or do anything of myself without God; and yet I have power to do all these, both to speak, see and hear, etc. or to forbear at times. I have these powers from God, and I may use them well, or I may abuse them all. But if I abuse this power, I have myself to blame, and not the Lord, who has given me eyes to see danger; for if I will run into the danger, I have myself to blame, and not the Lord, for I might have done otherwise.

Now even as the Lord has provided all things well for the natural man, so He has also provided well for the soul, the greater part, which is more rightly called "the man" than that which is mortal and corruptible. Thus He has given a light to the soul, and power to use the light; and yet I may also abuse my measure of light and understanding. Indeed, it is very possible to abuse it; but if I do, I have myself to blame and not the Lord, who has enlightened me with a light that is both true, saving and sufficient. But I may also make use of this light towards the salvation of my soul in Christ, and may look unto Him who is the fountain of light and life. And when I have made use of His light, this is not of my own ability without Christ, but it is rather by Him, and with the power I have received from Him, that I do what is pleasing in His sight. And if I do what is evil, then I have myself to blame for the abuse of power which was given to me to do what was pleasing in His sight.

Therefore let no man say "I lack power to do what pleases God." You may indeed abuse the power given to you by God, and so may lack the right use of the power or ability given to you; but you do not lack power so long as you have not sinned out your day of visitation. For man cannot be condemned for what he really lacks and never had. But if you have failed to exercise that power which God has given you, and your day is not yet over, but you feel the Spirit of the Lord still striving in and with you, then you do have some power. I say, it is not that you lack power, but that, through your disobedience to the power, and not giving up in obedience to the light and Spirit of God, you keep yourself back from the exercise of that power which God has planted in you in the light; and for this you have yourself to blame, and not the Lord. For the Spirit of the Lord would not daily reprove, judge and condemn you for your disobedience if you truly lacked power to obey; for that which you ought to obey is within you, offering you its power. And if this were not within you, and you truly did not have it, you could not be said to disobey it, nor would the just Judge of all the earth condemn and reprove you for not obeying something that you do not have. But the reason you feel reproof and condemnation, is because you *do* have light, and power to use the light for the end for which it was given to you; and yet you abuse this power, rebel against the light, and will not bring your deeds to it. This you indeed might have done, and still may do, so long as the Spirit of the Lord strives in you and with you. Therefore, while the Spirit of the Lord is found striving with you, say no more that you lack power; for you lack neither light nor power, but through your disobedience to

9 See Luke 19:44, John 6:44,65; Song of Solomon 1:4; Ps. 10:3; also Genesis 18:10-14

the light, and your abuse of the power, you lack the exercise of the power to the glory of God, and to the comfort of your own soul.

Objection: But I do not have power over the evil of my heart. It is my grief and burden, and I would gladly be rid of the evil, idle and vain thoughts that arise in my mind, and yet I am sensible of my inability to overcome them. May I not then say I lack power over my thoughts, and over the evil of my heart?

Answer: You have a power which you do not use, and so only lack the exercise of that power which you have. And until you come to stay your mind upon that light which God has planted in you, and learn to obey and be exercised by it, you cannot have victory over, nor deliverance from, your thoughts and the evil of your heart.

The times, conditions and states of people are to be considered—for all have times of visitation, wherein they have power according to their capacities to see, to judge, to will, to understand, and to act that which is good, and also to avoid that which is evil. But through disobedience to, and rebellion against, and stubbornness, carelessness, and neglect of the power that God has given, both natural and spiritual, they may (and many do) lose all power; yes, and even all will to do good! But yet, during the day or time of life while the Spirit of the Lord strives with people, they do not lack power to overcome all their evil thoughts, if they believe in the light and use the power that is given to them by God.

Objection: It is true that I find a willingness to overcome the evil of my thoughts and my heart, and yet I find not the power.

Answer: Many profess to belief in God and in Christ, but you must know and believe in the light of His life and salvation which is planted in your heart, and which manifests the true state of your heart and thoughts. "All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever does make manifest is light. Wherefore he says, awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."[10] This light is appointed of God to lead you up to God in Christ Jesus, out of all death and darkness. But if you do not believe that this light has shone in your heart for this end, and if you do not give up to obey it and walk in it, but rather disregard it as a common and insufficient thing, unable to lead you to God, then, though all the real sight you have comes from this light, yet you will not find power over the evil of your heart and thoughts. And you will never find another that is able to give you power and victory over the evil of your heart, besides the one light that has given you the ability to see and know the evil.

But though you find this light in you, which is powerful in your heart, visiting and showing you your heart and thoughts, yet you disregard it as common and insufficient, and look for some other way of deliverance, by some other means than this. And when the enemy of your soul finds you still disobeying and disregarding the measure of Christ's light that you already have, and looking for another way or thing, he has his stronghold in your heart which cannot be taken or overcome, except as you come to

10 Ephesians 5:13

believe and walk in the light of Christ in you. And truly, you may run from one thing to another, but all will be in vain, and in the end you will lie down in sorrow.

Objection: There seems to be a great hazard on both sides. On the one hand there is the danger of agreeing with and joining to that which *is not* the true and saving light; and on the other there is a danger of denying and rejecting what *is* the true and saving light. And being in such a great predicament, and lacking discernment concerning what to join with, what can be done in this sad case?

Answer: There is not such a predicament as you apprehend, for the way is both easy and pleasant to a willing mind, one that is really and truly disposed to yield to that which is certain and sure. For God has not hidden from you that which is absolutely necessity for your present good; but He has, and does, and will, make it plain and easy to be understood; and as you give up thereto, it will be made abundantly easy for you to obey, and so the way becomes pleasant to the willing mind.
Now consider this saying, Genesis 3:15, "God said to the serpent, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between her Seed and your seed," etc. Now the enmity and contrariety is between the two seeds, and these are the two seeds that are at enmity in you, the one against the other. It is not said that there would be enmity between any other seeds, but only between the serpent's seed and the woman's Seed.

Now the good seed is the woman's Seed, and the evil seed is the serpent's seed, and the variance and strife is between these two seeds in all mankind. Do you not find two seeds or natures at strife within you, and no more than two? There is not a third or a fourth, but only two; and you must unite with the one or the other. Surely, you are not altogether ignorant, but have knowledge and discerning that it is so, namely, that there are two natures or seeds in you, the one drawing and inviting you to that which is good, and the other drawing you to that which is evil. To one of these two you must give up to obey, and to whichever you obey, to that you sow, and with it you must reap. You do not read in the Scriptures, nor find in yourself, two lights or two good seeds that oppose the one evil seed of darkness; but rather one light or seed, which is the light of Christ, who is the Seed of the woman made mention of in Scripture. This opposes the one nature or seed of darkness in you, and you will not find another. But that which draws you out to look for another light or power is the serpent and his seed, joined with your fleshly mind, which seeks to cut you loose from the true light and Seed—which is Christ—that the serpent might manifest his will in you, by his nature and seed of darkness.

Therefore, you need not be in any doubt or difficulty in this matter, unless you willfully bring it upon yourself by abusing that which is already certain in you, not using the light of Christ for the end for which it was given to your heart. For you have never found this light or seed in you consenting to any evil, nor justifying you in the practice of any evil. So it is safe and good for you to cleave unto that which is certain and sure, and to let that which is uncertain alone. Indeed, God requires your obedience to that which is certain, and not to that which is uncertain; to that which has its ground in your own conscience, and

in the Scriptures, and not to that which has neither ground from Scripture nor in your conscience. You have ground enough already to believe in, and to give up to this light in you, because of the certainty of its being in your heart, and the purity of its nature in you; and because it gives a self-evident proof of itself, and of its tendency to draw you up towards the Fountain of light and life from which it comes. And it also stands as a faithful witness against all evil, never consenting to evil in thought, word, or deed, but witnessing against these, and against you in them, calling you to turn from the evil of your way, and often times setting before you the danger of continuing in it. Moreover it convinces you of the mercy, care, tenderness, long-suffering, and forbearance of God towards you, letting you see the many perils and dangers from which you have been delivered, and the many secret thoughts and intentions that you have hidden from men.

Yes, the light is privy to all these things, and yet, despite the evil you have done, you are conscious in yourself that this light remains in you, striving to reclaim you during the day of your visitation, and to bring you out of all these evils into a new life. And notwithstanding all the provocations you have given, and your many rebellions against this light, yet the love of God in Christ has gone forth into your heart in it; for when you have been sick, or in any trouble or affliction, then this light has stirred up your mind to look to God, and to consider your former ways. Yes, it has stirred you up to amend your life, and has set the mercy, love and forgiveness of God before your eyes, upon the condition of your repentance. And thus you have good ground to believe in the light, having found power and strength in it to convince you of good and of evil.

And notwithstanding the subtle workings of the serpent, and your own carnal mind that works to the contrary, yet this light is stronger than all opposition, and breaks into your heart over all, showing you many things that are pleasing to God, and also convincing you of many things that are displeasing to Him. So the serpent and your own evil heart cannot keep out this light, nor can they stop it from convincing you that God exists, and that He is to be loved, feared and obeyed—nor from showing you many evils. And so it is true that "life and death have been set before you," and in the light you may "choose life and live."[11] But if after life and death have been set before you, you refuse life by rejecting the light, then death will grow up over your heart, and the light shall become your condemnation. And out of your own mouth you shall be condemned and made to acknowledge that you had no lack of a true and saving light, nor did you lack power to have obeyed it, or to have obtained life by walking in it, in the times and seasons of life which were offered you in the day of your visitation.

Therefore, all prize your time. Fear and stand in awe before the Lord, and make good use of every time, season and opportunity of life. For behold the Judge—Jesus Christ—stands at the door; "I stand at the door and knock, if any man hears My voice and opens, I will come in and dine with him, and he with Me."[12] Every time that you are smitten for any evil and are called to forsake it, and so to turn to the

11 Deuteronomy 30:15-19

Lord; I say, every such time is a knock given by Christ at the door of your heart. It is His voice that calls you to come out of the evil and forsake it, in order that you may embrace the good, and cleave to it with your heart. And with the light you will also see how you have disregarded many good times, seasons and opportunities of life, wherein Christ, your Judge, has come to your door, even to your heart, and has stood knocking, but you have not believed it to be Him. So now, prize the time that remains, and beware that you do so no more, lest He depart from your heart and leave it without conviction or reproof, without call or knock. But while He stands at the door of your heart, convincing and reproving and calling you out of the evil and into the good, make use of these times and seasons, and beware that you no longer slight them.

Therefore, open to Him by true and sincere obedience—that obedience which is of faith in Him, as He appears in your heart. For if you believe that this is His light, and so obey Him in this belief, then through this obedience of faith you shall feel joy and peace spring up to the joy of your soul.

No more at present, but I remain a friend and well-wisher of health to your soul and body.

—PATRICK LIVINGSTON

From the Iron House Prison

* * *

Patrick Livingston was born in the year 1634, near Montrose, in Scotland, and was convinced of the Truth as held by the people called Quakers about the year 1659, after which he and seven other persons kept a meeting together for a long time at a little village called Emeldown. Continuing in humble submission to the heart-changing power of grace, he became one of the principal instruments made use of in the northern parts of Scotland for the gathering of many from the barren mountains of empty religious profession, to feed in the green pastures of life under the leadings of the Shepherd of Israel.

In the year 1664, when going to visit his brethren in Aberdeen in the love of the gospel, he was cast into jail, and detained seven months. After his release, he continued a diligent laborer for the gospel in the northern part of Scotland, traveling several times throughout those parts, and suffering much as a prisoner for his testimony in Aberdeen during the time of the severe persecution of Friends in that city. In the year 1669, to the great disadvantage of his temporal concerns, and the grievous trial of his young wife, he was apprehended for meeting together with his friends to worship the Lord, and locked up in a filthy prison for a full three years; during all which time he was never called to appear before any judge or court to have his crime laid to his charge or proved against him.

As a specimen of the nobility and undaunted courage of this faithful man in his prolonged confinement,

12 Revelation 3:20

the following extract is subjoined. It is taken from an appeal he wrote to his persecutors from jail, entitled, *"Concerning the True Worship of God."*

> But whatever we suffer, we may not give to any man or men that which alone belongs to Christ, and is His right alone, who puts His Spirit in us that He may set up His own worship in us, and guide us therein. And in our sufferings for this testimony we have great joy and satisfaction, though men may rage against us, and shut us up in nasty holes; for we know the testimony we bear is true and faithful, and therefore we are cheerful in our sufferings for the same.
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> Now according to your own proceedings with thieves and murderers, you call them to appear in court and judge them by the law, and bring in witnesses to prove facts against them, which if they cannot prove, the parties are to be set at liberty, though they be accused of felonies. But as for me, though I have been about twenty months a prisoner, yet to this very time I have never been legally called, nor has anything been laid to my charge, nor have any witnesses ever been brought in against me to prove the breach of any law. And in truth I can say it: I am not conscious of the breach of any law, and must still remain of this mind until I am convinced of the contrary. Is there a law in this kingdom that forbids us to meet in our own houses to worship God? If there is any such law, I shall not refuse to suffer the penalty of it, but rather patiently bear it without resistance with any carnal weapon; but I profess to be ignorant of any such law.
>
> Now I declare, in the truth of my heart, before the Lord, that rather than bow or come under such a spirit of usurpation, that encroaches not only upon our rights and privileges as men and as Christians, but also upon the privilege and prerogative of Christ Jesus in us, and would set up man's will in the place of Christ Jesus, forcing us to worship contrary to our conscience in the will of man—I say and declare, I had rather offer up my body, and lay it down in this prison, and never in my life see my dear wife again, who I believe would rather see me die in prison a faithful man for Christ's sake, than live with her as an unfaithful man. For seeing we have come together in the love of the Truth, through belief therein and faithfulness thereto, it would be better both for me and my dear wife that I died in prison a faithful man for Christ, than that I should come under that evil oppressive spirit, and give away my natural right as a man and a Christian. For this would be to deny my Lord and Master before men, if in order to get my natural liberty and go home to my wife, I should give away my spiritual liberty in Christ, and His right to reign in me. Would this not be to deny Him, and to love my natural life better than Him, and my natural liberty and my wife better than Him? And if I should do so, what comfort would my dear wife have from me?
>
> Whereas I can now truly say that my soul rejoices in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that I am often refreshed and comforted by the letters I receive from my dear wife, who is no discouragement but an encouragement to me in my sufferings. It is for Christ's sake, and for His testimony, that we are for a time separated, and not for any earthly end or advantage, the Lord knows; and we shall meet again in the Lord's time to our mutual joy and comfort. For though it is said, that "He that cares not for his family is worse than an infidel," yet, it is also said by the Lord Jesus, "He that loves father or mother, wife or children, or his own life more than Me, is not

worthy of Me." And I can truly say, that I have not stayed in this place of my own will, but rather in the cross to my will; and all may easily judge that it is not very pleasing to the natural man to be detained so long in such a nasty place.

During the close imprisonment of Friends in the Tolbooth of Aberdeen, Patrick Livingston was one of those most frequently moved, in the abounding of Christian love, to preach to the people out of their prison windows, especially on market days, exhorting them to fear the Lord and to obey the gospel of His grace. This practice was highly displeasing to the magistrates. They therefore sought to prevent it, by causing such preachers to be separated from the rest of their companions, violently thrusting them up into a closed vaulted cell situated on the top of the jail, called the Iron-house, where the worst of felons and murderers were usually confined. There they had neither light nor air, except through a long hole in the thick wall, which had a double grating of iron on the outside, and another within. Here Patrick Livingston was kept night and day, in the heat of the summer of 1678, during which time the filthiness of the place, and the corruption of the pent up air, produced a multitude of white maggots and other vermin, which swarmed about, even upon their beds and food, and manifestly tended to the extreme danger of their health and lives. It is with reference to this cruelty, that Patrick Livingston alludes in the following extract:

And upon the ninth day of this month, 1678, I being moved to speak out of the prison window some words of truth and soberness, the officers came into the room where I was, and told me they had orders from bailiff Burnett to lock me up in the Iron-house, night and day. I requested to go and speak with the bailiff, or at least to see a line under his hand showing that this was his order, but they not being willing to go and request this from him, I refused to go into the Iron-house at their command, to be locked up night and day. And so I was carried by the officers, by my head and feet, with my head downwards and my feet upwards, until I came to the top of the stairs. And George Gray, for speaking to the people, was also thrust into the same room with me, and a little time afterwards, Andrew Jaffray, having spoken to the people, was also carried into the Iron-house with us, wherein we were shut up together, and the door locked on us night and day, and we were not allowed to go into the other room to eat with our Friends.

Now this cruel and hard treatment of me is not so surprising, for I am not one of their town, but am, in some respects, a stranger to them. But they have also put these two men in prison with me [George Gray, and Andrew Jaffray] who both have borne office among them, one as a magistrate, the other as dean of guild, men of good esteem in every way among them. And to add yet more to all of this, Andrew Jaffray's father[13] was a man of good account among them, both as the chief magistrate in the city, and held by all to be a very religious man, of good fame in their church in its strictest time, being commended as one who had done good for their city beyond many before him or since. And yet so forgetful are some of these ancient services for the public good,

13 Alexander Jaffray (1614-1673). See the Diary of Alexander Jaffray.

that in requital thereof, his eldest son has been locked up night and day in their Iron-house, which is a nasty stinking hole, where none for the most part have been put besides murderers and gross malefactors whom they desire to secure.

And now, if it be, that all or any of us should through this harsh treatment, lay our bodies down, (which I believe we shall not at this time), yet that would not overcome our faith. For Abel lived and died in the faith; and though Cain slew him, yet he was not able to overcome or kill his faith. And though as men you may judge that our being shut up in these nasty holes does not add to our natural man, but rather wastes it, and is a kind of lingering martyrdom, yet as to our inward man, we grow daily in power, dominion and strength; so that the killing of the natural man does not overcome the spiritual, but still we live and grow strong in that life which your enmity is against. And so you shall not accomplish your end, whatever may become of our natural man; for the outward man is all that you can reach, and even that you can reach no further than our heavenly Father permits for our good, and for the glory of His name. But our spiritual man you cannot touch, do what you can. And when we have finished our course, and run to the end of the race set before us by the Lord Jesus, and have laid down our heads in peace, even so, the Life of Jesus that is daily manifested in our mortal bodies (which has been in us and with us, as the strength of our hearts in all our sufferings, trials and temptations, inward and outward, and as we are faithful will be in and with us unto the end of our days)—I say, after we are gone, this same Life of Jesus shall rise up others who shall come after us, and no power of persecution shall be able to stop it. For the path of the just, as a shining light, shall shine more and more until the perfect day. And the testimony we presently bear shall be found true, and many in after ages shall set their seal to it, and the children that are now playing upon your streets shall come set their seal to our testimony, that it is true, and is of God, and not of ourselves. And the name and fame of all persecutors shall live on as an evil savor to many that come after, but the memorial of the righteous shall be a sweet savor to many people.

But take note of this one thing: that in every age, wherever a good people live, they are hated and persecuted by those who live in that age but are not right with God in their own hearts. And the persecutors of the good people in the present age will always cry out against the persecutors in former ages, and will commend the holy men that suffered in former times; but they will not believe that those whom they persecute in their own age and time are the people of God. And as it is with the persecutors of our age, so it was with the persecutors of every age; they extol and commend the faithful sufferers of the past, and cry out against their persecutors. But these will by no means believe that the ones they persecute now are an innocent people, but rather call them evil-doers; nor do they call themselves persecutors. Indeed, there was never a persecutor in the time of his persecution who acknowledged himself to be such, nor those he persecuted to be innocent sufferers. But of this I shall say no more, having pretty fully spoken of it elsewhere. And so I commend you all to the grace of God in your own hearts, to teach you to deny and forsake all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously in this present world.

From a friend to all your souls,

—PATRICK LIVINGSTON.

Besides several long detentions in prisons of Scotland, Patrick Livingston was also imprisoned for a considerable time in Newgate, London, about the year 1684. In his latter years, he left Nottingham, where he had resided for some time, and moved with his family to London. There he continued a diligent laborer in the Lord's vineyard, traveling in the service of the gospel in many parts of England and Ireland, and several times visiting Scotland. Of his final visit to his native land in the year 1693, the year before his death, it was said that, of all the times he had been among them, his ministry was then accompanied with the largest and most plentiful measure of the Lord's blessed Power that they had ever witnessed. Indeed, he was wonderfully borne up over all obstacles, though very weak in body; so that some came to speak of this final act of service as "his endeared farewell to his spiritual kindred."

Soon after his return home from this journey, he grew weaker and weaker, until he departed this life on the 15th of 4th month, 1694, at the house of John Kirton, in Kensington, near London. Several Friends were present with him in his last hours, during which time the following heavenly expressions flowed from him. The day before his departure, he said, "I am in unity with all faithful Friends, and in love to all men." And about an hour before his close, he cried out, "O Father! O Father! Let Life reach unto all here!" Then pulling off his nightcap with his own hand, about thirty minutes before he ceased to breathe, he said, "Blessed, praised, magnified and exalted, be the mighty, powerful, great, and everlasting name of the Lord God, forevermore. Oh! that Your Life may arise in full dominion over all, and that Friends may feel it so in all their assemblies; that they may be kept in love, concord, and unity together, and show it forth in word, work, testimony, life and conduct unto all!"—and then added, "Oh let Your life be over all, for then we have all we need, and then there is a lying down in true submission to the will of the Lord; and laying down our heads in peace and rest with Him forevermore. Here is true victory over death, hell and the grave, and a resting in peace with the Lord forevermore!"

The Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge

As my life has been attended with many uncommon occurrences, I have thought it proper to make some remarks on the dealings of Divine Goodness with me. I have often had cause with David to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted;"[1] and I most earnestly desire that they who read the following lines may take warning, and shun the evils into which I have been drawn.

1 Ps. 119:71

I was born at Middlewich, in Cheshire, in the year 1713, of honest parents, named Thomas and Mary Sampson. My father bore a good character, but he was not so strictly religious as my mother, who was a pattern of virtue to me. I was my father's only child, but my mother had a son and a daughter by a former husband. Soon after I was born, my father went to sea, and following his profession (which was that of a surgeon) made many long voyages. He continued in his sea-faring course of life until I was twelve years old, so that the care of the early part of my education devolved upon my mother; and she discharged her duty in endeavoring to imbue my mind with the principles of virtue.

I have had reason to be thankful that I was blessed with such a parent; her good advice and counsel to me have been as "bread cast upon the waters" which returned after many days.[2] She was an instructive example to all who knew her, and was generally beloved by all. But alas, as soon as the time came when she might reasonably expect some benefit from her labors and find comfort in me, I deserted her.

In my childhood I had a deep regard for religion and religious people, particularly for ministers, all of whom I believed to be good men and beloved of God, which I earnestly wished to be my own case. I also had a great tenderness for the poor, remembering reading that they were "beloved of the Lord." This I supposed to mean such as were poor in temporal things, and so I often visited them in their cottages, and used to think they were better off than myself. And if I had money, or anything suitable for a gift, I bestowed it on them, recollecting that they who gave to the poor lent unto the Lord. I admonished those who made shallow pretenses to religion; and when I heard people swear, I was troubled; for my mother told me that if I used any naughty words, God would not love me.

I observed that there were several different religious societies. I often thought of this and wept, with desires that I might be directed to the one which would be best for me to join. In this frame of mind I passed my younger years. I was sometimes guilty of the faults common among children, but was always sorry for whatever I had done amiss; and, until I was fourteen years of age, I was as innocent as most children. But about this time, my sorrows (which have continued for the greatest part of my life) began, by my giving way to a foolish passion in setting my affections on a young man, who, without the permission of my parents, courted me till I consented to marry him; after which—with sorrow of heart I relate it—I allowed myself to be carried off in the night. We were married. My parents made all possible search for me as soon as I was missing, but it was in vain.

This hasty act plunged me into much sorrow. I was quickly smitten with remorse for thus leaving my parents, whose right it was to be consulted on such an occasion. But I was soon chastised for my disobedience, and convinced of my error; for in only five months time, I was stripped of the darling of my heart, and left a young and disconsolate widow. I was now without a home. My husband had derived his livelihood from his trade, which was that of a stocking weaver; and my father was so displeased at my

2 Ecclesiastes 11:1

conduct, that he would do nothing to help me. My dear mother had some compassion for me, and placed me among her neighbors. Afterwards, by her advice, I went to live with a relation of hers at Dublin. We hoped that my absence would soften my father's rigor; but he continued inflexible. He would not send for me to return, and I dared not go back unless he did.

The relation I went to reside with was one of the people called Quakers. His habits were so very different from what I had been accustomed to, that the visit proved disagreeable to me. I had been brought up in the way of the Church of England, and though, as I have said, I had a religious upbringing, I was yet allowed to sing and dance, which my cousin would not permit. The great vivacity of my natural disposition would not then allow me to give way to the gloomy sense of sorrow and conviction, and therefore my present restraints had a wrong effect, for I became more wild and airy than ever. My cousin often reproved me, but I then thought his conduct stemmed from a desire to appear peculiar, and I would not be controlled. Having a distant relation in the West of Ireland, I went to live with him.

Here I enjoyed all the liberty I could desire; for that which rendered me disagreeable to my other kinsman, was quite pleasing to this one. Between these two relations I spent the next three years and three months.

While I was in Ireland, I contracted an intimate acquaintance with a widow and her daughter, who were Roman Catholics. We conversed very frequently about religion, each of us defending our peculiar tenets; and, though I was much given to levity, our discussions often made me thoughtful. The old woman told me of such mighty miracles done by their priests, that I began to be shaken in my own beliefs; and thought, if these things were so, they must truly be the apostles' successors. She perceived the state of my mind, and one day exclaimed with rapture, "Oh, if I can be the happy instrument of converting you to the holy Catholic faith, all the sins I ever committed will be forgiven!" Sometimes I attended her place of worship, but none of my relations knew my motive. The matter went so far, that a priest came to converse with me. Being young, and my judgment weak, I was ready to believe what he said; and yet I resolved not to blindly adopt their creed. I thought that if their articles of faith were sound, they would not be against my knowing what they were; and, therefore, the next time I saw the priest, I told him that I had some intention of becoming one of his flock, but wished first to know what I must agree to. He answered that I must first confess my sins to him; and gave me until the next day to consider them. I was not averse to this, conscious of having done nothing for which anyone could harm me; and thinking that if what he had said was true, the confession would be for my good. When he came again, I told him all that I could remember; which, for my part, I thought was bad enough; but he said he considered me the most innocent creature that had ever made confession to him. When I had finished, he took a book and read from it, and told me that if I were to join them, I must swear to believe these things. I shall not trouble the reader with the recital of its ridiculous contents. What principally made me hesitate in my new intention was that I was to swear that the Pretender,[3] King James's son, was the true heir of the crown of England; and that all who died outside the Romish church would be damned. These doctrines

startled me. I hesitated, and requested time to take them into consideration; but, before I saw the priest again, a change of circumstances freed me from the necessity of giving him an answer.

My father still keeping me at such a distance, I thought myself entirely excluded from his affections, and therefore resolved not to return home. I became acquainted with a gentlewoman, lately arrived from Pennsylvania who was intending to return; and as I had an uncle (my mother's brother) in that province, I soon agreed with her for my passage. I was ignorant of the nature of an indenture,[4] and allowed myself to be bound. This was done privately, that it might not be found out. As soon as I signed the contract, she invited me to see the vessel in which I was to sail. I readily consented and we went on board, where there was another young woman, who, as I afterwards found, was of a respectable family and had been brought there in the same way as myself. I was pleased with the thought that I should have such an agreeable companion in my voyage. While we were busy conversing, my conductor went on shore, and when I wished to go, I was not permitted. I then realized I had been kidnapped. I was kept a prisoner in the ship for three weeks, at the end of which time my companion was found by some of her friends, who fetched her away; and by her information, my friends sent the water bailiff,[5] who took me on shore. I was kept in custody for two weeks, but at length found means to get away.

Nevertheless, I was so filled with the thoughts of going to America that I would not give up the design; and finding the captain, I inquired when he sailed; he told me, and I went on board. There were in the ship, sixty Irish servants and several English passengers. The English were unacquainted with the Irish language, which I had taken much pains to learn, and understood pretty well. Twenty of the Irish servants belonged to the gentlewoman above-mentioned, who, together with a young man, her husband's brother, went along with us. While we were on the coast of Ireland, where the wind detained us some weeks, I overheard the Irish contriving how they should free themselves when they got to America. To accomplish their design, they concluded to rise and kill the ship's crew, and all the English, and to appoint the above-mentioned young man to navigate the vessel. But, overhearing their conversation, I divulged their barbarous intention to the captain, who acquainted the English with it. The next day we headed for the shore, but when we were at a short distance from the cove of Cork, we lowered sail and dropped anchor, under pretense that the wind would not permit us to continue our course. The small boat was hoisted out, and the passengers were invited to go and divert themselves on shore. Along with a few others, the ringleader of the Irish servants went on shore. This was all that was desired. The others left him on shore and returned to the ship. The captain then immediately ordered his men to weigh anchor, and hoist sail. There were great outcries among the Irish for the young man left on shore, but the captain said that the

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3 James Francis Edward Stuart, nicknamed the Old Pretender, was the Catholic son of the deposed King James 2., who claimed to be the rightful heir of the English and Scottish thrones, and made several attempts to take the crown from William and Mary, and later from Queen Anne.

4 Indentured servitude is a form of labor in which a person signs a binding contract to work without salary for a specific number of years in exchange for the payment of a debt, or the cost of transportation over seas.

5 A law-enforcement officer responsible for policing bodies of water.

wind had changed direction, and that he would not stay for his own son. Thus the evil designs of the Irish servants were aborted, in a way they did not suspect. And it was thought advisable to keep all a secret, lest they should realize my involvement and injure me. At length, however, they discovered that I understood their speech, by my smiling at a story they were telling. From this time on, they devised many ways to do me mischief, for which several of them were punished.

On the 15th of the seventh month, which was nine weeks after we left Dublin, we arrived at New York. Here I was betrayed by the very men whose lives I had preserved. The captain caused an indenture to be made, and threatened me with a jail if I refused to sign it. I told him that I could find means to satisfy him for my passage without becoming bound. But he replied, that I might take my choice, either to sign the indenture he showed me, or the previous one I had signed in Ireland should be in force. In a fright, I signed the former; for I had by this time learned the character of the woman who first induced me to think of going to America. She was a vile creature, and I feared that if I fell into her hands, I should be treated very poorly.

In two weeks time I was sold as a servant. At first I had not much reason to complain of the treatment I received; but in a short time a problem arose, in which I was innocent, which set my master against me and rendered his behavior inhuman. It would be impossible for me to convey an adequate idea of the sufferings of my servitude. Though my father was not rich, yet, in his house I lived well, and I had been accustomed to do little besides my schoolwork; but I now found it would have been better for me if I had been brought up with less indulgence. I was not allowed decent clothes; I was obliged to perform the lowest forms drudgery, and even to walk barefoot in the snow. I suffered the utmost hardship that my body was able to bear, and the effect produced on my mind was nearly my ruin forever.

My master seemed to be a very religious man, taking the sacrament (so called) regularly, and praying every night in his family; unless his prayer book could not be found, for, to my knowledge, he never prayed without it. His example, however, made me sick of his religion; for though I had but little religion myself, I had some idea of what religious people ought to be. Respecting religion, my opinions began to waver; I even doubted whether there was any such thing, and began to think that the convictions I had felt from my infancy were only the prejudices of my education. These convictions seemed now to be lost; and for some months I do not remember to have felt them. My heart became hardened, and I was ready to conclude that there was no God. The veneration I had felt for religious men in my infancy was entirely gone; I now looked upon them in a very different manner. My master's house was a common place of resort for the clergy; and sometimes those who came from a distance lodged with him. The observations I made on the conduct of these men confirmed me in my atheistical opinions. They amused themselves in the evening with cards and songs, and then a few moments afterwards, introduced prayers and singing psalms to Almighty God. Often did I say to myself, "If there is a God, he is a pure Being, and will not hear the prayers of such polluted lips."

But He who has, in an abundant manner, shown mercy to me—as will be seen in what follows—did not long allow my mind to be perplexed with such doubts; for in a moment, when my feet were on the brink of the bottomless pit, He plucked me back.

To one woman, and to no other, I told the nature of the problem which had happened two years before, between my master and me. By her means he heard of it, and though he knew that what I said was true, he sent for the town's whipper to correct me. I was called in. My master never asked me whether I had said any such thing, but simply ordered me to strip. My heart was ready to burst. I would as freely have given up my life than to have suffered such a disgrace. "If," said I, "there is a God, be graciously pleased to look down on one of Your most unhappy creatures, and plead my cause; for You know that what I have related is the truth;" and had it not been for a principle more noble than my master was capable of, I would have told it to his wife. Then fixing my eyes on the barbarous man, I said, "Sir, if you have no pity on me, yet for my father's sake spare me from this shame;" (for he had heard of my parents from several others), "and if you think I deserve such a punishment, then do it yourself." He paced back and forth for a short time in the room, and then told the whipper to leave and go about his business. Thus I escaped without a blow; but my character nevertheless seemed to be lost. Many reports of me were spread, which I bless God were not true. But I suffered so much cruelty that I could not bear it; and was tempted to put an end to my miserable life. I listened to this temptation, and for that purpose went into the attic to hang myself. Now it was that I became convinced there was a God, for as I entered the place, horror and trembling seized me; and while I stood in terrible perplexity, I seemed to hear a voice saying, "There is a hell beyond the grave." I was greatly astonished, and cried out, "Oh God be merciful, and enable me to bear whatsoever You in Your providence shall bring or allow to come upon me." I then went downstairs, but let no one know what I had been doing.

Soon after this I had a dream; and though some ridicule dreams, this one seemed very significant to me, and I shall therefore mention it. I thought I heard a knocking at the door, and when I had opened it, there stood a grave woman, holding in her right hand a burning lamp. And with a solid countenance, she fixed her eye upon me and said, "I am sent to tell you, that if you will return to the Lord your God, who created you, He will have mercy on you, and your lamp shall not be put out in obscurity." Her lamp then flamed up in an extraordinary manner, and she left me. Then I awoke.

But alas, I did not give up to the "heavenly vision," as I think I may call it; and I was nearly caught in another snare of the most dangerous nature. I was esteemed skillful at singing and dancing, in which I took great delight. Once, falling in with a company of stage players who were then in New York, they took a great fancy to me, as they said, and invited me to become an actress among them. They also added that they would find a means to release me from my cruel servitude, and that I should live like a lady. The proposal pleased me, and I took no small pains to qualify myself for them, learning their playbooks even when I should have slept. But, upon more serious reflection, I decided against taking this step when I came to consider what my father would think of it; for he had finally forgiven my disobedience

in marrying, and had sent for me to return home, earnestly desiring to see me again. Nevertheless, my proud heart would not allow me to return in so low a condition, and I preferred bondage.

When I had served about three years, I bought out the remainder of my time, and then worked at my needle, by which I could maintain myself handsomely. But alas, it seems I was not sufficiently punished, for after releasing myself from one cruel servitude, in the course of just a few months, I entered into another one, for life—by marrying a young man who fell in love with me for my dancing; a poor motive for a man to choose a wife, or a woman a husband. For my part, I was in love with nothing that I saw in him; and it seems unexplainable to me that, after refusing several offers, both in this country and Ireland, I would at last marry a man that I did not esteem.

My husband was a school-master. A few days after we were married, we went from New York to a place called Westerly, in Rhode Island, where he had engaged to keep a school. With respect to religion he was much like myself, without any; and when he was intoxicated, he would use the worst of oaths. I do not mention this to expose him, but only to show the effect it had on myself; for I saw myself ruined, being joined to a man I did not love, and who was an example of no good to me.

We both seemed to be hastening towards destruction when I concluded, that if I was not forsaken of heaven, I must alter my course of life. To fix my affection on the Divine Being, and not to love my husband, seemed inconsistent. So I daily desired, with tears, that my affections might be directed in a right manner to him; and I can say, that in a little time, my love was sincere. I resolved to do my duty to God, and expecting that I must come to the knowledge of His will by the Scriptures, I read these sacred writings with a determination to follow their directions. The more I read, the more uneasy I grew, especially about baptism. I had reason to believe I had been sprinkled in my infancy, because, at the age of thirteen, I was "confirmed" by the bishop; yet I could not discover any precedent for this practice in Scripture. In the course of my reading, I came to the passage where it is said, "He that *believes* and is baptized,"[6] etc. Here I observed that belief (of which I was not capable when sprinkled as an infant) must go before baptism. I conversed frequently with the Seventh-day Baptists that lived in my neighborhood, and at length, thinking it to be my real duty, was in the winter baptized by one of their teachers. I did not strictly join with them, though I began to think that the seventh-day was the true sabbath, and for a time kept it. My husband did not oppose me, for he saw I grew more affectionate to him; and as yet I did not refuse to sing and dance when he asked me, though this way of amusing myself did not yield me so much satisfaction as formerly.

My husband and I now formed the plan of going to England, and for this purpose we went to Boston, where we found a vessel bound to Liverpool. We agreed for our passage, and expected to sail in about two weeks time; but in the meantime, another gentleman hired the vessel to carry himself and his attendants

6 Mark 16:16

to Fayal, and take no other passengers. There being no other ship near sailing, we gave up our design, though we remained in Boston for several weeks. My mind was still not satisfied with regard to religion. I had reformed my conduct, and was accounted by those who knew me a sober woman; yet I was not content, for I expected to find the fruits of such a change. And though several thought me to be religious, I dared not think so of myself. I conversed with people of all societies, as opportunity offered, several of whom thought I was of their persuasion; however, I joined strictly with none, but resolved never to leave off searching until I found the truth. This was in the twenty-second year of my age.

While we were in Boston, I went one day to the Quakers' meeting, where I heard a woman Friend speak, at which I was a little surprised. I had been told of women's preaching, but had never heard it before; and I looked upon her with pity for her ignorance, and with contempt for her practice, saying to myself, "I'm sure you're a fool, and if ever I turn Quaker, which will never be, I will not be a preacher." Thus was my mind occupied while she was speaking. When she had finished, a man stood up, who I could better bear. He spoke sound doctrine on Joshua's good resolution, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." After sitting down and remaining silent awhile, he began to pray, which was accompanied with something so extraordinary and affecting, that it drew tears from my eyes.

My husband was much given to wandering from one place to another, which was very disagreeable to me, and so after leaving Boston, we went to Rhode Island, and from there to the east end of Long Island, where he was hired to keep a school. This place was principally settled by Presbyterians, and I soon became acquainted with the most serious among them. My poverty was no hindrance to my reception with people of the best credit, with whom I frequently conversed; but the more I became acquainted with them, the less I liked their opinions. Many temptations in the meantime assaulted my unsettled mind. Having been abroad one day, I returned home and perceived that the people in whose house we rented a room had left some flax in their apartment, through which I needed to pass. At the sight of it, I was tempted to steal some in order to make thread. I went to it, and took a small bunch in my hand, but was then so smitten with such remorse that I laid it down again, saying, "Lord keep me from so vile an action!" But the temptation to steal became stronger than before, and I took the bunch of flax into my room. When I came there, horror seized me, and with tears I cried out, "Oh, God of mercy, enable me to abstain from this vile action!" I then took the flax back, and felt that pleasure which is only known to those who have resisted temptation.

My husband taking a different job further up the island, we changed our residence again. The nearest place of worship there belonged to a congregation of the Church of England, which, on the whole, I liked best, and so attended it.

A fresh exercise, of a very peculiar kind, now came upon me. It was in the second month. I was sitting by a fire, in company with several others, among whom was my husband; when suddenly there was a loud clap of thunder, and a noise, loud as from a mighty trumpet, pierced my ears with these words: "Oh

eternity! eternity, the endless term of long eternity!" I was exceedingly astonished, and while I was sitting as in a trance, I beheld something like a long roll, written in black characters, and heard at the same time, a voice saying, "These are your sins, and the blood of Christ is not sufficient to wash them out. This is shown you that you may confess your damnation to be just, and not in order that you may be forgiven." I sat speechless for a time, and at last got up trembling and threw myself on the bed. The company thought my indisposition proceeded from a fright occasioned by the thunder; but it was of another kind.

For several months after this I was almost in a state of despair, and if at any time I endeavored to hope or lay hold of any gracious promise, the tempter would insinuate that it was now too late; that the day of mercy was over, and that I would only add to my sins by praying for pardon, and provoke Divine vengeance to make of me a monument of wrath. I was, as it were, already in torment. I could not sleep, and ate but little. I became extremely melancholy, and took no delight in anything. Had all the world been mine, I would have given it gladly for one glimpse of hope.

My husband was shocked to see me so changed. I, who once used to entertain him with singing and dancing, in which he greatly delighted, could do it no longer. My singing was turned into mourning, and my dancing into lamentation.

My nights and days were one continued scene of sorrow; but I let no one know the state of my mind. My husband used all the means in his power to divert my melancholy, but all was in vain. The wound was too deep to be healed with anything less than the "balm of Gilead."[7] For fear of evil spirits I dared not, nor would my husband permit me to spend much time alone; and if I picked up the Bible, he would take it from me, exclaiming, "How you have altered; you used to be agreeable company, but now I have no comfort in you." I endeavored to bear all of this with patience, expecting that I should soon have to bear more than man could inflict.

I went to the priest, to see if he could relieve me; but he was a stranger to my case. He advised me to take the sacrament and to amuse myself with innocent diversions. He also lent me a book of prayers, which he said were suited to my condition; but all of this was to no purpose. As for diversions, they now felt burdensome; as for the sacrament, I thought myself in a very unfit state to receive it; and as for prayers, it appeared to me that if ever I could pray acceptably, I would be enabled to do it without a book. With a view to alleviate my grief, my husband persuaded me to go to the razing of a building, where much company had collected, but it had a contrary effect. While there, an officer came to summon a jury for the case of a man who had hanged himself; and upon receiving this information, I seemed to hear a voice within address me in this manner:—"You shall be the next to come to a similar end; for you are not worthy to die a natural death."

For two months I was daily tempted to destroy myself, often so strongly that I could scarcely resist.

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7 Jeremiah 8:22; 46:11

Before I dared to walk alone, I left behind me every article which, in an unguarded moment, I might use for this purpose; fervently desiring at the same time, that God would preserve me from taking the life He had given, and which He would have made happy, if I had accepted His offers of grace, by regarding the convictions He had favored me with from my youth. During all this agony of mind, I could not shed one tear. My heart was hardened, and my life miserable; but God in his infinite mercy, delivered my soul from this bondage. One night, as I lay in bed, bemoaning my condition, I cried out, "Oh my God, I beseech You, in Your mercy, look down upon me for Christ's sake, who has promised that all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven. Lord, if You will be graciously pleased to extend this promise to me, an unworthy creature, trembling before You, I will obey You in all that You shall command." In an instant my heart was softened, and I was dissolved in a flood of tears. I abhorred my past offenses, and admired the mercies of my God. I could now hope in Christ my Redeemer, and look upon Him with an eye of faith. I experienced what I had believed when the priest lent me his book, namely, that when my prayers were acceptable, I would not need a book. I now took the sacrament, and can say I did it with reverence and fear.

Being thus released from my deep distress, I seemed like another creature, and now walked often alone without fear. Once, as I was abhorring myself in great humility of mind, I seemed to hear a gracious voice, full of love, say to me, "I will never forsake you; only obey Me in whatever I shall make known unto you." I answered, "My soul does magnify the God of mercy. If You will dispense Your grace, the rest of my days shall be devoted to serve You. And if it be Your will that I should beg my bread, I will submit with contentment to Your providence."

I now began to think of my relations in Pennsylvania, whom I had not yet seen. My husband gave me liberty to visit them, and I obtained a certificate from the priest in order that, if I made any stay, I might be received as a member of the church wherever I came. My husband accompanied me to the Blazing-star ferry, saw me safely over the water, and then returned home. On my way, I fell from my horse, and for several days was unable to travel. I abode at the house of an honest Dutchman, who, with his wife, paid me the utmost attention, and would receive no recompense for their trouble. I left them with sentiments of deep gratitude for their extraordinary kindness, and they told me, if ever I came that way again, I must lodge with them. I mention this, because I shall have occasion to allude to it hereafter.

When I came to Trenton ferry, I felt no small disappointment upon hearing that my relations were all Quakers; and what was worst of all, that my aunt was a preacher among them. I was exceedingly prejudiced against this people, and often wondered how they could call themselves Christians. I regretted my coming, and was almost inclined to turn back; yet as I was so far on my journey, I proceeded, though I expected but little comfort from my visit. How little did I suspect that it would bring me to the knowledge of the Truth!

I went from Trenton to Philadelphia by water, and from there to my uncle's on horseback. My uncle

was dead, and my aunt had married again; yet, both she and her husband received me in the kindest manner. I had scarcely been three hours in the house before my opinion of these people began to alter. I perceived a book lying upon the table, and being fond of reading, I picked it up. My aunt observed me and said, “Cousin, that is a Quaker book.” She saw I was not a Quaker, and supposed I would not like it. I made her no answer, but queried to myself, “What can these people write about? I have heard that they deny the Scriptures, and have no other Bible than George Fox’s Journal, and that they also deny the holy ordinances.” But, before I had read two pages, my heart burned within me, and for fear I should be seen, I went out into the garden. I sat down, and as the book was short, I read it through before I returned, though I was often obliged to stop in order to give vent to my tears. The fulness of my heart produced this involuntary exclamation, “Oh my God, must I, if I come to the knowledge of your Truth, be of this author’s opinion, who has sought You as I have done? And must I join this people, to whom a few hours ago I preferred the Papists? Oh God of my salvation, and of my life, who has abundantly manifested Your long-suffering and tender mercy in redeeming me from the lowest hell; I beseech You to direct me in the right way, and to keep me from error. Then I will perform my covenant, and think nothing too near to part with for Your name’s sake!”

After having collected myself, I washed my face, that it might not be perceived I had been weeping. In the night I got but little sleep; for the enemy of mankind haunted me with his insinuations, suggesting that I was one who wavered and was not steadfast in faith; advancing several texts of Scripture against me, as that, “in the latter days there should be those who would deceive the very elect;” and that this was the sort of people that I was amongst, and that I was in danger of being deluded, etc. Believing that I had been warned in this manner, I resolved to be aware of these deceivers, and for some weeks did not touch one of their books. The next, day, being the first day of the week, I was desirous of going to church, which was about four miles distant; but being a stranger, and having no one to go with me, I gave up the idea; and seeing that most of the family were going to their meeting, I went there with them.

As we sat in silence, I looked over the meeting and said to myself, “These people sit in silence like fools! How much better would it be to stay at home and read the Bible, or some other good book, than to come here and go to sleep.” As for me, I was very drowsy; and while asleep, I nearly fell off the bench. This was the last time I ever fell asleep in a meeting. I then began to be lifted up with spiritual pride, and to think myself better than they; but this disposition of mind did not last long. It may seem strange, that after living so long with one of this society in Dublin, I would yet be such a stranger to them. In answer, let it be considered that while I was there, I never read any of their books, nor went to a single meeting. Besides, I had heard such accounts of them as made me think that, of all religious societies, they were the worst. But He who knew the sincerity of the heart, looked upon my weakness with pity. I was soon permitted to see my error, and shown that these were the people to whom I must to join.

A few weeks afterwards, there was an afternoon meeting at my uncle’s, at which a minister named William Hammans was present. I was highly prejudiced against him when he stood up, but I was soon

humbled; for he preached the Gospel with such power that I was obliged to confess it was the truth. But, though he was the instrument of assisting me out of many doubts, my mind was not yet wholly freed from them. For the morning before this meeting, I had been disputing with my uncle about baptism, which also happened to be the subject handled by this minister. And though his sermon removed all my scruples on this point beyond objection, yet I seemed reluctant to believe that what I had heard proceeded from divine revelation, and I accused my aunt and uncle of having spoken of me to the Friend. Nevertheless, they cleared themselves, telling me that they had not seen him since my coming to their house, until he came into the meeting. I then viewed him as a messenger of God to me, and laying aside my prejudices, I opened my heart to receive the truth.

Oh, the beauty of the truth then began to be shown to me, together with the glory of all who continued faithful to it. I also saw into the emptiness of all shadows and types, which, though proper in their day, were now, by the coming of the Son of God, at an end, and everlasting righteousness (which is a work in the heart) was to be established in their place. I was permitted to see that all I had previously gone through was to prepare me for this day, and that the time was near when it would be required of me to go and declare to others what the God of mercy had done for my soul. I was much surprised at this, and desired to be excused, lest I should bring dishonor to the Truth and cause His holy name to be evilly spoken of. But I let no one know of these things. Indeed, I feared being discovered, and did not even have the appearance of a Friend.

I then was hired to keep school, and hearing of a position for my husband, I wrote, and requested him to come, though I did not let him know how it was with me.

I loved to be at meetings, but did not love to be seen going to them on week-days, and therefore walked to the meetinghouse from my school through the woods. Notwithstanding all my care, the neighbors, who were not Friends, soon began to revile me with the name of Quaker, adding, that they supposed I intended to be a fool and become a preacher. Thus I received the same censure which, about a year previous, I had passed on one of the handmaids of the Lord in Boston. I was so weak in the faith that I could not bear the reproach, and in order to change their opinion, I went into greater excess of apparel than I felt freedom to do even before I was acquainted with Friends. In this condition I continued until my husband came, and then began the trial of my faith.

Before he reached me, he heard I had turned Quaker; at which he stamped his foot and said, “I would rather have heard she was dead! For, though I love her, if it be so, then all my comfort is gone.” After an absence of four months, he came to me, and I arose and said to him, “My dear, I am glad to see thee.” Hearing the word *thee,* he flew into a great rage, exclaiming, “The devil thee, thee, thee! Don’t thee me!” I endeavored by every mild means to pacify him, and at length got him in conditions to speak to my relations. As soon as we were alone, he said to me, “I see your Quaker relations have made you one.” I replied that they had not, which was true. He said he would not stay among them; and having found a

place that suited him, he took a job, and came directly back to fetch me, walking, in one afternoon, thirty miles in order to keep me from attending the meeting the next day, which was a first-day. After resting the next day, he took me to the place of his employment, and to the lodgings he had rented at the house of a churchwarden. This man was a bitter enemy of Friends, and did all that he could to irritate my husband against them.

Though I did not dress like a Friend, they all believed me to be one. When this churchwarden and my husband would mock and revile, I sat in silence, though every now and then an involuntary sigh broke from me, at which he would say, “There! Did not I tell you your wife was a Quaker, and she will become a preacher.” On one such occasion, my husband came up to me in a great rage, and shaking his hand over me, said, “It would be better for you to be hanged.” I was seized with horror, and again was plunged into a despair which continued nearly three months. I was afraid that, by denying the Lord, the heavens would be shut against me. I walked much alone in the woods, and there—where no eye could see, nor any ear hear me—I lamented my miserable condition. Often have I wandered about from morning till night without food. I was brought so low that my life became a burden to me, and the devil seemed to vaunt that, though the sins of my youth were forgiven me, yet now I had committed an unpardonable sin, and hell would inevitably be my portion, and my torments would be greater than if I had hanged myself at first.

In the night, under this painful distress of mind, I could not sleep; and if my husband perceived me weeping, he would revile me for it. At length, when he and his friend thought themselves unable to persuade me, he went to the priest at Chester to inquire what he could do with me. This man knew I was a member of the church of England, for I had shown him my certificate. His advice was to take me out of Pennsylvania, and settle in some place where there were no Quakers. My husband replied that he did not care where we went, if he could only restore me to my natural liveliness of temper. As for me, I had no resolution to oppose their proposal, nor did I much care where I went. Indeed, I seemed to have nothing to hope for, and daily expected to be made a victim of Divine wrath, being possessed with the idea that this would be by lightning.

When the time of our removal came, I was not permitted to bid farewell my relations; and as my husband was poor, and kept no horse, I was obliged to travel on foot. We came to Wilmington, fifteen miles, and from there to Philadelphia by water. Here we stopped at a tavern, where I became the spectacle and discourse of the company. My husband told them his wife had become a Quaker, and he designed, if possible, to find out a place where there were none. I thought to myself, “I was once in a condition to deserve that name, but now it is over with me. Oh that I might, from a true hope, once more have an opportunity to confess the truth! Even if I was sure to receive of all manner of cruelties, I would not regard them.” Such were my thoughts, while he was entertaining the company with my story, in which he told them that I had been a good dancer, but now he could neither get me to dance or to sing. One of the company then jumped up and said, “I’ll fetch a fiddle, and we’ll have a good dance;” a proposal with which my husband was pleased. When the fiddle was brought, my husband came and said to me, “My

dear, shake off that gloom, and let us have a civil dance. You would dance now and then when you were a good churchwoman, and that's better than being a stiff Quaker." I had taken up the resolution not to comply with his request, whatever might be the consequences. I let him know this, though I dared say but little, for fear of his fierce temper.

He then pulled me round the room, till the tears fell from my eyes, at the sight of which the musician stopped and said "I'll play no more; leave your wife alone." A person in the company, who came from Freehold, in East Jersey, said, "I see your wife's a Quaker, but if you'll take my advice, you need not go so far as you intend. Come and live with us; we'll soon cure her of her Quakerism, and we need a school-master and a school-mistress too." My husband consented, and a happy change it was for me, as will shortly be seen.

The reward of peace was granted me for refusing to dance; and I then rejoiced more than if I had been made mistress of great riches. So with tears, I prayed, "Lord, I dread to ask, and yet without Your gracious pardon, I am miserable. I therefore fall down before Your throne, and implore mercy at Your hand. O Lord, once more, I beseech You, try my obedience, and then I will obey you in whatever you command, and will not fear to confess you before men." My cries were heard, and it was shown to me that "the Lord delights not in the death of a sinner." My soul was again set at liberty, and I was enabled to praise him.

On our way to Freehold, we visited the kind Dutchman whom I mentioned in a former part of this narrative. He made us welcome, and invited us to spend a day or two with him. During our stay, we went to a large meeting of Presbyterians, where there was also the trial of one of their priests who had been charged with drunkenness. I perceived such great divisions among the people respecting who should be their shepherd, that I pitied them. Some insisted on having the old offender restored; others wished to appoint a young man whom they had had on trial for some weeks; still others were for sending to New England to request a new minister. In reply to this suggestion, a man addressed himself to the chief speaker and observed, "Sir, when we have paid at the expense (which will not be small) of fetching this gentleman from New England, perhaps he will not stay with us." "Don't you know how to make him stay?" said another. "I'll tell you; simply give him a large salary, and he'll certainly stay." I listened attentively to the debate, and it plainly appeared to me that these mercenary preachers were actuated by one motive, which was not the regard for souls, but the love of money. I had known one of these men, called a "reverend divine," whom these people almost adored, who left his flock in Long Island and removed to Philadelphia in order to get more money. I myself have heard some on the island say that they had almost impoverished themselves in their attempts to keep him; but, being unable to equal what he was offered at Philadelphia, he left them. Surely these are shepherds who regard the fleece more than the flock. And though they say that they are the ambassadors of Christ, yet there are lies found in there mouths; for His command it is, "Freely you have received, freely give."

On our way to Freehold, as we came to Stony Brook, my husband turned towards me and tauntingly said,

“Here’s one of Satan’s synagogues; don’t you dare run to it. I hope to see you cured of your new religion.” A little further on we came to a large stream of water, over which there was no bridge, and being strangers to the area we knew of no way to avoid passing through it. He carried over our clothes, which we had in bundles; and I took off my shoes and walked through the water in my stockings. It was in the twelfth month; the weather was very cold and snow lay on the ground, but it was the concern of my heart that the Lord would sanctify all my afflictions to me and give me patience to bear them.

After walking nearly a mile we came to a house, which proved to be a sort of tavern. My husband ordered some spirituous liquors, and I got some weakened mulled cider, which made me extremely sick; so that after we had walked a little past the house, I was too faint to proceed, and fell down. “What’s the matter now?” said my husband, “What, are you drunk? Where’s your religion now?” He knew I was not drunk, and at that time I believe he pitied me, even though he spoke in this manner. After I had recovered a little, we continued on and came to another tavern where we lodged.

The next day as we journeyed, a young man driving an empty cart overtook us. We asked him to let us ride, and he readily granted the request. There was a time when I would not have been seen riding in a cart, but my proud heart was now humbled, and I did not regard how it looked. This cart belonged to a man in Shrewsbury, and was to continue on through the place of our destination. Because of a failure on the part of the driver, we soon had the care of the cart and horses to ourselves, and arrived with it at Freehold. My husband would have had me stay there while he went to see the horses safely home; but I told him, no, since he had led me through the country like a vagabond, I would not stay behind him. We therefore went together, and lodged that night at the house of the owner of the cart.

The next day on our return to Freehold, we met a man who said to my husband, “Sir, are you a school-master?” He answered, “Yes.” The stranger replied, “I have come to tell you of two new schoolhouses, two miles apart, both of which are in need of a schoolmaster.” How this person came to hear of us, who had arrived just the night before, I never understood. And I was glad he was not a Quaker, lest it should have been thought a plot by my husband, to whom I turned and said,—“My dear, look upon me with pity, if you have any affection left for me, which I hope you have, for I am not conscious of having done anything to alienate it. Here is an opportunity to settle us both, and I am willing to do all in my power towards getting an honest livelihood.” After a short pause, he consented to go with the young man. Along our way, we came to the house of a worthy Friend who was a preacher, though we did not then know it. I was surprised to see the people behave so kindly to us. We had not been long in the house before we were invited to lodge there for the night, being the last day of the week.

My husband accepted the invitation, saying, “My wife has had a tedious travel, and I pity her.” These kind expressions affected me, for I heard them very seldom. The Friend’s kindness could not have proceeded from my appearing like a Quaker, because I had not yet altered my form of dress. The woman of the house, after we had concluded to stay, fixed her eyes upon me, and said, “I believe you have met with a

great deal of trouble," to which I made but little answer. My husband then observing they were of that sort of people whom he had so much endeavored to shun, gave us no opportunity for discourse that night. But the next morning, I let this kind woman know a little of my situation.

When their meeting time came I longed to go, but dared not ask my husband's permission. As the Friends were getting ready themselves, they asked him if he would accompany them, mentioning that they knew those who were to be his employers, and if they were at the meeting, they would speak to them. He consented to go. The woman Friend then said, "And will you allow your wife to go too?" This request he denied; but she answered his objections so prudently that he could not be angry, and at last consented. I went with joy, and a heavenly meeting it was. My spirit did rejoice in the God of my salvation. May I ever, in humility, preserve the remembrance of His tender mercies to me.

By the end of the week, we got settled in our new situation. We took a room in a Friend's house, one mile from each school, and eight miles from the meetinghouse. I now deemed it proper to let my husband see that I was determined to join with Friends. When first-day came, I directed myself to him in this manner; "My dear, are you willing to let me go to the meeting?" He flew into a rage, and replied, "No, you shall not!" Speaking firmly, I told him, "As a dutiful wife, I am ready to obey all your lawful commands; but when your commands impose upon my conscience, I cannot obey them. I have already wronged myself in having done it too long. Though you are near to me, and as a wife ought, I love you; yet God, who is nearer than all the world to me, has made me sensible that this is the way I should go." I then added, "This is no small cross to my own will; but I have given up my heart, and I trust that He who has called for this act of obedience will enable me, for the remainder of my life, to keep steadily devoted to His service; and I hope I shall not on this account make the worse wife." My words, however, were to no purpose; for he continued inflexible. But as I had now put my hand to the plough and resolved not to draw back, I therefore went without his permission. I expected he would immediately follow me and force me back, but he did not. I stopped at the house of one of the neighbors, and after requesting a girl to show me the way, I walked on rejoicing and praising God in my heart.

Thus for some time, I had to go eight miles on foot to meeting, which I never thought hard. My husband at this time had a horse, but he would not allow me to ride it; nor when my shoes were worn out, did he let me have a new pair. But though he hoped in this way to keep me from meeting, it did not hinder me. I have tied my shoes around with strings in order to keep them on my feet.

Finding that all the means he had yet used could not alter my resolution, he several times struck me severe blows. I endeavored to bear all with patience, believing that the time would come when he would see that I was in the right. Once he came up to me, took out his penknife and said, "If you go to meeting tomorrow, I will cripple you with this knife, for you shall not be a Quaker." I made him no answer. In the morning I set out as usual, and he did not attempt to harm me.

Having despaired of recovering me himself, he fled to a priest for help, whom he told that I had been

a very religious woman in the way of the Church of England, of which I was a member and had a good certificate from Long Island, but that now I was bewitched and had turned Quaker, which almost broke his heart. He therefore requested that this priest, as one who had the care of souls, would come and pay me a visit and use his endeavors to reclaim me, which he hoped by the blessing of God, would be done. The priest consented and fixed a time for his coming, which was two weeks from that day, as he said he could not come sooner. My husband came home extremely pleased, and told me of it. I replied with a smile, that I trusted I would be enabled to give a reason for the hope that was within me; yet I believed at the same time, that the priest would never trouble himself about me, which proved to be the case.

Before the day appointed came, it was required of me to confess to the world what I was in a more public manner. I felt it required of me to give up to pray publicly in our meeting. I trembled at the prospect, and would willingly have surrendered my life in order to be excused. And what made this seem even harder to me, was that I had not yet been taken in as a member of the Society, having been kept from requesting membership for fear that I might bring a scandal upon Friends. I begged the Lord to be excused until I had joined, and then I would give up freely. But His answer to me was, "I am a covenant-keeping God, and the word that I spoke to you when I found you in distress—even that I would never forsake you if you would be obedient to what I would make known unto you—I will assuredly fulfill. If you refuse, my Spirit shall not always strive with you. Fear not, I will make a way for you through all your difficulties, which shall be many for My name's sake. Be faithful, and I will give you a crown of life." In response to this language, I answered, "Your will, O God, be done. I am in Your hand, do with me according to Your word." I then kneeled and prayed in the meeting.

This day, as usual, I had gone to meeting on foot. While my husband (as he afterwards told me) was lying on the bed, these words crossed his mind: "Lord, where shall I flee to escape You?" Upon which he arose, and seeing that it was raining, got the horse and set off to fetch me, arriving just as the meeting broke up. I got on horseback as quickly as possible, lest he should hear I had spoken in the meeting. He heard of it nonetheless, and as soon as we were in the woods, began by saying, "Why do you seek to make my life unhappy? Could you not be a Quaker, without also turning a fool in this manner?" I answered in tears, "My dear, look upon me with pity if you have any. Can you possibly think that I, in the bloom of my days, would bear all that you know of, and much that you know not of, if I did not feel it to be my duty?" These words touched him, and he said, "Well then, I will give you up. I see it won't avail to strive. If this is of God, I cannot overthrow it; and if it is of yourself, it will soon fall." I saw the tears in his eyes, at which I was overcome with joy, and felt I had begun to reap the fruits of my obedience. But my trials were not yet over.

The time appointed for the priest to visit me arrived, but no priest appeared. My husband went to fetch him, but he refused to come, saying he was busy, which so displeased my husband that he never went to hear him again, and for some time went to no place of worship.

My faith was now assaulted so strongly in another way, that all my former trials seemed but trifling in comparison to it. This trial came upon me unexpectedly, by hearing a woman speak of a book she had read, in which it was asserted that Christ was not the Son of God. As she spoke, a voice within me seemed to answer, “He is not. It is all a fancy, and the contrivance of men.”

Thus, once again, I was filled with inexpressible trouble, which continued about three weeks; and again I sought desolate places, where I might cry out to the Lord. During this time I laid whole nights without sleep. I thought myself deserted of God, but did not let go of my trust in Him. I kept alive a hope, that He who had delivered me (as it were) out of the paw of the bear, and the jaws of the lion, would in His own good time, deliver me from this temptation also. Indeed, this was at length my blessed experience; and I found the truth of His words, that all things shall work together for the good of those who love and fear Him. For these trying exercises were to prepare me for further services in His cause; and I have learned it is necessary for His ministers to experience many baptisms into death, that they may thereby be more able to speak to the conditions of others.

This happened just after my first appearance in the ministry, and Friends had not yet come to talk with me about joining the Society. They did not well know what to do until I felt it required of me again to speak in a meeting, which was not for some time, and then the Monthly Meeting appointed four Friends to pay me a visit. They left me well-satisfied with the conference, and I joined the Society. My husband still attended no place of worship. One day he said to me, “I would go to meeting with you, only I’m afraid I shall hear your preach, which I cannot bear.” I used no persuasions. When meeting-time came he got the horse, took me behind him and we went. For several months, if he saw me preparing to arise he went out; till one day I rose before he was aware, and then as he afterwards acknowledged, he was ashamed to go out.

From this time forward he left off the practice, and never hindered me from going to meeting. Though he did not take up the cross, yet his judgment was convinced; and sometimes melting into tears, he would say to me, “My dear, I have seen the beauty there is in the Truth, and that you have followed the right way, in which I pray God preserve you.” I told him that I hoped He who had given me strength would also do the same for him. “Oh,” said he, “I cannot bear the reproach that you do, to be called a turn-coat, and become a laughing-stock to the world. But I will no longer hinder you.” This I considered a favor, and a little hope remained that my prayers on his account would be heard.

We lived in a small house by ourselves, which, though mean, and though we had little to spend on it (our bed being no better than straw), I was truly content. The only desires I had were for my own preservation, and to be blessed with the reformation of my husband. He was connected with a group of men that he feared would make sport of him, which indeed they did. They asked him when he planned to commence preaching, for they saw he intended to turn Quaker, and that he seemed to love his wife more since she became one than before. They used to come to our house, and provoked him to sit up and drink with

them, sometimes till near the break of day, while I have been sorrowing in a stable. Once, as I sat in this condition, I heard him say to his company, “I cannot bear any longer to afflict my poor wife in this manner; for whatever you may think of her, I believe she is a good woman.” He then came to me and said, “Come in my dear, God has given you a great deal of patience. I’ll put an end to this practice.” That was the last time they sat up at night.

My husband then suggested that if he lived in any place, where it was not known that he had been so bitter against Friends, he could do better. I objected to this, fearing it would not be for his benefit. Frequently in a broken and affectionate manner, he condemned his ill-treatment of me. I answered that I hoped it had been for my good, and therefore desired he would not be afflicted on that account. According to the measure of grace received, I did what I could, both by example and precept, for his good. My advice was to stay where he was, as I was afraid he would grow weaker in his good resolutions if he moved to another town.

All I could say would not avail. Hearing of a place at Bordentown he went there, but he was not suited for the job. He next removed to Mount Holly, where we settled. Before long, we each had a good school, got our house pretty well furnished, and we might have done very well. Nothing seemed lacking to complete my happiness, except for the reformation of my husband, which I soon had reason to doubt I would see. And alas, it turned out according to my fears, for he addicted himself much to drinking, and grew worse than he was before.

Sorrow was again my lot. I prayed for patience to bear my afflictions, and to submit to the dispensations of Providence. I did not murmur; nor do I remember that I ever uttered any harsh expressions except on the following occasion. My husband coming home a little intoxicated, a state in which he was very irritable, and finding me at work by a candle, he put it out, giving me at the same time a box on the ear, saying, “You don’t earn your light.” At this unkind treatment, which I had not been used to for the last two years, I was somewhat angry, and said, “You are a vile man.” He then struck me again; but by then my anger had cooled, and I received the blow without so much as a word in return. This also displeased him, and he went on in a wild manner, uttering such expressions of despair as, he believed he was “predestined to damnation,” and “did not care how soon God struck him dead.” I said very little, until at length in the bitterness of my soul, I prayed in these words: “Lord, look down on my afflictions, and deliver me by some means or other.” My prayer was granted, but in such a manner that I thought would perhaps end my life. My husband went to Burlington, where he got drunk, and then enlisted as a common soldier to go to Cuba, in the year 1740. I had drunk many bitter cups, but this seemed the bitterest of them all. I blamed myself for making such a request, which I was afraid had displeased the Lord, who had, in displeasure, granted it for my punishment.

But I have since had cause to believe that he received some benefit by this rash act; for in the army, he did what he could not do at home—he suffered for the testimony of Truth. When his troop had prepared

to engage in battle, he then refused to fight. He was therefore whipped and brought before the general, who asked him why he enlisted in the army if he would not fight. “I did it,” he said, “in a drunken frolic, when the devil had the better of me. But now my judgment is convinced that I ought not to fight; and I will not do it, whatever I suffer. I have but one life, and you may take it if you please, for I’ll never take up arms.” He adhered to this resolution, but by their cruel treatment of him in consequence, he was so much disabled that the general sent him to Chelsea Hospital, near London. Within nine months afterwards he died at this place, and I hope made a good end.

I never thought him to be the worst of men. If he had permitted grace to have its perfect work, I would have been happy in the lowest situation of life. I have had cause to bless God, for enabling me in the station of a wife, to do my duty; and now that I am a widow, I submit to His will. May I still be preserved by the arm of Divine Power; and never forget the tender mercies of my God, the remembrance of which often bows my soul in humility before His throne. “Lord, what was I, that you should reveal to my soul the knowledge of Your truth, and do so much for one who deserved your displeasure? May you, O God, be glorified and may I be abased. It is Your own works that praise You; and truly, to the humble soul you make every bitter thing sweet.”

* * *

Elizabeth’s husband had been gone two or three years before she heard of his death. He left her nearly eighty pounds in debt, which, by law, she was not obliged to pay. Nevertheless, as several creditors complained and said they would not have trusted her husband if it had not been for her sake, she engaged to satisfy them all as fast as she could. She settled steadily into the business of school-keeping, and by this means, together with her needlework, she maintained herself handsomely. She gradually paid off the above-mentioned debts, and had nearly discharged them all during her widowhood, though she also travelled much in the meantime as a minister.

In the ninth month, 1746, she married again to Aaron Ashbridge, in Burlington, West Jersey. In the year 1753, apprehending it required of her to visit the meetings of Friends throughout England and Ireland, she left her habitation with the consent of her husband, and the unity and approbation of Friends, and performed a religious visit to these nations, but at last fell dangerously ill in the city of Cork. The 7th of the fifth month, 1755, being sorely afflicted with pain of body, she expressed her desire for patience under her sufferings, saying, “Oh dearest Goodness, grant me patience till my change comes, and then do not forsake me, oh Lord of my life!” At another time, when in extreme pain, she cried out, “Lord, look down upon me. May patience, my old companion, not leave me now.” At one time she said, “I have endeavored to live without a will of my own; and hope I have borne my afflictions with a degree of Christian fortitude.” Having grown weaker for several days, she departed this life in a quiet frame, the 16th of the fifth month, 1755, at the age of forty-two years, and was buried in Friends’ burying-ground at Ballybrumhill.

The Life of Thomas Ellwood

Although my station—being not so eminent either in the church of Christ or in the world, as others who have moved in higher spheres—may not afford such noteworthy remarks as theirs; yet, inasmuch as in the course of my travels through this valley of tears, I have passed through various, and some uncommon exercises, which the Lord has been graciously pleased to support me under and conduct me through; I hold it a matter excusable at least, if not commendable, to give the world some little account of my life. In recounting the many deliverances and preservations which the Lord has graciously worked for me, my desire on the one hand is to return grateful acknowledgment and thanksgiving unto Him for His abundant goodness to me. And on the other hand, if there be any who happen to tread the same path, and fall into the same or similar exercises, my hope is that these may be encouraged to persevere in the way of holiness, and with full assurance of mind to trust in the Lord, whatever trials may befall them.

I begin, therefore, with my own beginning. I was born in the year of our Lord 1639, about the beginning of the eighth month, so far as I have been able to inform myself; for the parish register, which relates to the time, not of birth, but rather of baptism (as they call it) is not to be relied on.

The place of my birth was a little country town called Crowell, situated in the upper side of Oxfordshire, three miles eastward from Thame, the nearest market-town. My father's name was Walter Ellwood; and my mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Potman; both well-descended, but of declining families. What my father possessed, which was a sizable estate in lands, and more (as I have heard) in money, he received, as he had done his name Walter, from his grandfather Walter Gray, whose daughter and only child was his mother.

In my very infancy, when I was but about two years old, I was carried to London. For as the civil war between king and parliament was breaking forth at that time, my father, who favored the parliament side (though he took up no arms), not believing himself safe at his country habitation which lay near some of the king's garrisons, removed to London, that city then holding for the parliament.

There I was raised, though not without much difficulty, for the city air did not agree with my tender constitution. And there I continued until Oxford was surrendered, and the war in appearance had ended.

During this time, my parents contracted an acquaintance and intimate friendship with the lady Springett, then the widow of Sir William Springett, who died in the parliament service, and who afterwards was the wife of Isaac Penington, eldest son of alderman Penington of London. This friendship devolving from the parents to the children, I became an early and particular playfellow to her daughter Gulielma; being permitted to ride with her in her little coach, drawn by her footman around Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. I mention this in this place, because the continuation of this friendship was the means of my afterwards being brought to the knowledge of the blessed Truth, and I shall have frequent cause in the following

pages to make honorable mention of that family, to which I am under many and great obligations.

Soon after the surrender of Oxford, my father returned to his estate at Crowell; which by that time he had need enough to attend to, having spent, I suppose, the greatest part of the money which had been left to him by his grandfather in maintaining himself and his family at a high rate in London. My elder brother—for I had one brother and two sisters all older than myself—while we lived in London, was boarded at a private school, in the house of one Francis Atkinson, at a place called Hadley, near Barnet in Hertfordshire, where he made some good proficiency in the Latin and French tongues. But after we left the city, and were resettled in the country, he was taken from that private school, and sent to the free school at Thame in Oxfordshire. There also I was sent, as soon as my tender age would permit; for I was indeed but young when I went, and seemed even younger than I was by reason of my low and little stature. It was considered for some years a point of question whether I would prove to be a dwarf. But after I arrived to the fifteenth year of my age, or thereabouts, I began to shoot up, and did not stop growing till I had attained about the average size and stature of men.

At this school, which at that time was in good reputation, I profited quickly, having then a natural propensity to learning; so that after the first reading over of my lesson, I commonly felt myself to have mastered it. And yet, which is strange to think of, few boys in the school wore out the teacher's switch more than I. For though I was never, that I remember, whipped upon the account of not having my lesson ready, or of not saying it well; yet being a little busy-body, full of spirit, with a working head and an active hand, I could not easily conform myself to the grave and sober rules of the school, which I then thought were severe. I was often playing one humorous prank or other on my fellow-students, which subjected me to correction, so that I have come under the discipline of the rod twice in a morning, though I never broke any bones.

Had I continued at this school, and in due time continued to a higher, I might in likelihood have become a scholar; for I was said to have had a genius aptitude to learn. But as soon as the republican government began to settle, my father accepted the office of a justice of the peace, which was in no way beneficial. This new position was merely honorary and in every way expensive, and so put him into a course of living that was agreeable thereto. And as he had also removed my brother from Thame school to Merton college in Oxford, and entered him there in the highest and most expensive position, he found it needful to reduce his expenses elsewhere; the hurt of which fell upon me. For he thereupon took me out of school to save the charge of maintaining me there; which was somewhat like plucking green fruit from the tree, and laying it aside before it had come to its due ripeness, which will then shrink and wither, and lose that little juice and relish which it began to have.

This is how it fared with me. For being taken home when I was but young, and before I was well settled in my studies—though I had made a good progress in the Latin tongue, and had entered into the Greek—and being left too much to myself to do as I pleased, I soon shook hands with my books, by shaking

my books out of my hands and laying them quite aside, and addicted myself to such youthful sports and pleasures as the place afforded, and my condition could reach for.

By this means I soon began to lose the little learning I had acquired at school; and by a continued disuse of my books, I became at length so utterly a stranger to learning, that I could not have read, far less have understood, a sentence in Latin. Indeed, I was so sensible of this, that I carefully avoided reading to others, even in an English book, lest if I should meet with a Latin word, I would embarrass myself by mispronouncing it.

Thus I went on, taking my swing in such vanities as were accounted harmless recreations; entertaining my companions and familiar acquaintances with pleasant discourses in our conversations. This I did by the mere force of wit and natural abilities, without the help of school cultivation; and I was accounted good company too.

But I always surrounded myself with persons of ingenuity, temperance and sobriety; for I loathed obscenity in conversation, and had a natural aversion to immoderate drinking. So that in the time of my greatest vanity, I was preserved from profaneness and the grosser evils of the world; which rendered me acceptable to persons of the highest regard in that country. I often visited Lord Thomas Wenman[1] at his house at Thame-park, about two miles from Crowell where I lived; to whose favor I was entitled in a two-fold respect, both because my mother was nearly related to his wife, and because he had been pleased to bestow his name upon me when he made large promises for me at my baptism. He was a person of great honor and virtue, and always gave me a kind reception at his table, however often I came. And I have reason to believe I would have received from this lord some advantageous preferments in this world, as soon as he had found me capable of it, had I not been, in a little time after this, called into the service of the best and highest Lord; and thereby lost the favor of all my friends, relations and acquaintance of this world. I hasten to the relation of this most happy change, and therefore willingly pass over many particularities of my youthful life. Yet one occurrence I am willing to mention, because of the effect it had upon me afterwards, which was as follows.

My father, being then in commission as a justice of the peace, and going to a court session at Watlington, I accompanied him there. And when we came near the town, the coachman seeing a nearer and easier way than the common road, through a corn-field, and that it was wide enough for the wheels of the coach to run upon without damaging the corn, turned that way. This being observed by a husbandman who was plowing not far off, he ran to us and, stopping the coach, poured forth a mouthful of complaints in rather unhandsome language for driving over the corn. My father mildly answered him, that if there was an offense committed, he must rather impute it to his servant than himself; since he neither directed him to drive that way, nor knew which way he drove. Yet he added that, as he was going to such and such an inn

1 Lord Thomas Wenman, was an English landowner and politician who sat in the House of Commons at various times between 1621 and 1660.

at the town, if the man would come there, he would make him full satisfaction for whatsoever damage he had sustained. And so we went on, as the man continued to vent his discontent in angry tones. At the town, upon inquiry, we understood that it was indeed a way often used by travelers, and without any damage, being broad enough; but that it was not the common road, which yet lay not far from it, and was also good enough. My father therefore bid his servant to drive home on the common road.

It was late in the evening when we returned, and very dark; and this quarrelsome man, who had troubled himself and us in the morning, having gotten another stout fellow like himself to assist him, waylaid us in the night, expecting that we would return the same way we had come. But when they found that we did not, but took the common way, being angry that they were disappointed, and unwilling to lose their purpose, which was to abuse us, they hurried over to us in the dark, and laying hold upon our horses' bridles, stopped them from going on. My father asked his servant the reason why he did not continue on, and was answered that there were two men at the head of the horses who held them back, and would not permit them to go forward. My father therefore opened the coach and stepped out, and I followed close at his heels. Going up to where the men stood, he demanded of them the reason for this assault. They said we were driving upon their corn. But we knew that we were not on the corn, but in the common road, and so told them so. But they told us they were resolved not to let us go on any farther, but would make us go back again. My father endeavored, by gentle reasoning, to persuade them to forbear, and not to run themselves farther into the danger of the law, which they had run too far into already; but they only derided him for it. Seeing therefore that fair means would not work upon them, he spoke more roughly to them, demanding them to deliver over their clubs, for each of them had a great club in his hand. Laughing, they told him they did not bring them there for that purpose. Thereupon my father, turning his head to me, said, "Tom, disarm them."

I stood ready at his elbow, waiting only for the word of command. For being naturally of a bold spirit, and full of youthful passion, and that now heightened by the sense I had, not only of the abuse, but the insolent behavior of those rude fellows—my blood began to boil and my fingers itched, as the saying goes, to deal with them. I therefore stepped boldly forward to lay hold of the staff of the one that was nearest to me, and said, "Sirrah, deliver your weapon." He thereupon raised his club, which was big enough to have knocked down an ox, intending no doubt to have knocked me down with it, as probably he would have done, had I not, in the twinkling of an eye, whipped out my sword and made a pass upon him. I could not have missed running him through to the hilt had he stood his ground; but the sudden and unexpected sight of my bright blade glittering in the dark night, did so amaze and terrify the man, that slipping aside, he avoided my thrust. Then letting his staff fall to the ground, he took to his heels for safety, which his companion seeing, fled also. I followed the former as fast as I could, but fear gave him wings, and made him fly swiftly. And though I was accounted very nimble, yet the farther we ran the more ground he gained on me, and I could not overtake him; which made me think he took shelter under some bush which he knew where to find, though I did not. Meanwhile the coachman excused himself from intermeddling, under pretense that he dared not leave his horses, and so left me to fend for myself.

I had run so far, that I knew not which way to go to return, until by hollering, and being hollered to in return, I was directed where to find my company.

We had an easy means of finding out who these men were, for the principal of them had been at the inn in the daytime and quarreled with the coachman, threatening to get even with him when he went back. But since they had gained nothing by their attempt, my father thought it better not to know who they were, than to oblige himself to a prosecution.

At that time, and for a good while after, I had no regret upon my mind for what I had done, or for what I would have done in this case; but went on, in a sort of bravery, resolving to kill any man that would make a similar attempt, or put any affront upon us. And for this reason, I seldom went afterwards upon any such excursions without a loaded pistol in my pocket. But when it pleased the Lord, in His infinite goodness, to call me out of the spirit and ways of the world, and give me the knowledge of His saving Truth, whereby the actions of my past life were set in order before me—then, a sort of horror seized upon me, when I considered how near I had been to staining my hands with human blood. And whensoever afterwards I passed that way, and indeed as often as the matter has come into my remembrance, my soul has blessed the Lord for my deliverance, and thanksgivings and praises have arisen in my heart (as now they do at the relating of it) to Him who preserved and withheld me from shedding man's blood. This is the reason I have given this account of that action, that others may be warned by it.

About this time, in the year 1658, my dear and honored mother, who was indeed a woman of remarkable worth and virtue, departed this life, having a little before heard of the death of her eldest son.

I mentioned before, that during my father's abode in London, in the time of the civil wars, he contracted a friendship with the lady Springett, then a widow, who afterwards was married to Isaac Penington; and in order to continue this relationship, he sometimes visited them at their country lodgings near Reading. Having heard that they had come to live upon their own estate at Chalfont in Buckinghamshire, about fifteen miles from Crowell, he went one day to visit them there, and to return at night, taking me along with him. But we were very much surprised when, having come there, we first heard, and then found, that they had become Quakers—a people we had no knowledge of, and a name we had till then scarcely heard of. Finding so great a change from the free, debonair and cultured sort of behavior which we formerly found them in, to so strict a gravity with which they now received us, we were both amused and disappointed of our expectation of having such a pleasant visit with them as we used to have. And as there were some other strangers with them, relatives of Isaac Penington who had come that morning from London to visit them, my father had no opportunity, by a private conference with them, of understanding the ground or occasion of this change.

For my part, I sought and eventually found means to cast myself into the company of their daughter, Gulielma,[2] whom I found gathering some flowers in the garden, attended by her maid, who was also a Quaker. But when I addressed myself to her after my accustomed manner, with intention to engage her in

some discourse based upon our former acquaintance, though she treated me with a courteous demeanor, yet, as young as she was, the gravity of her look and behavior struck such an awe upon me, that I found myself not so much master of myself as to pursue any further conversation with her. Therefore, asking pardon for my boldness in having intruded myself into her private walks, I withdrew, but not without some disorder of mind.

We stayed for dinner, which was very pleasant and lacked nothing to recommend it to me, besides the lack of mirth and pleasant discourse which we could neither have with them, nor, by reason of them, have amongst ourselves. For the weightiness that was upon their spirits and countenances kept down the lightness that would have risen up in us.

We nevertheless stayed until the rest of the company had taken leave of them, and then we also returned home, not greatly satisfied with our journey, but not knowing what in particular to find fault with. Yet this visit had one good effect upon my father, who was then a justice of the peace, for it disposed him to a more favorable opinion of, and behavior towards this people when they came in his way; as one of them did not long after this. For a young man who lived in Buckinghamshire, came on a first-day to the church (so called) at a town called Chinner, a mile from Crowell, having, it seems, a burden on his mind to say something to the minister of that parish. This minister, being an acquaintance of mine, invited me sometimes to hear him, as it happened that day. The young man stood in the isle before the pulpit, all the time of the sermon, not speaking a word until the sermon, and the prayer after it, had ended. He then spoke a few words to the priest, of which, all that I could hear was, that “the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord;” and “that God hears not sinners.”

I believe there was something else said which I could not distinctly hear because of the noise of the people. And more he probably would have said, had he not been interrupted by the officers who took him into custody, and led him out of the building in order to carry him before my father.

When I understood this, I hastened home, that I might give my father a fair account of the matter before the officers came. I told him that the young man behaved himself quietly and peaceably, that he spoke not a word until the minister had quite finished his service, and that what he then spoke was but short, and was delivered without passion or ill language. This I knew would furnish my father with a fair ground whereupon to discharge the man if he was willing. And accordingly, when the officers came and made their high complaint against the man (who said little for himself), my father, examined those who brought him concerning the words that he spoke, about which they did not well agree. And when they were asked concerning the time he had spoken them, they all agreed that it was after the minister had finished; and as for whether he had given the minister any reviling language, or endeavored to raise a tumult among the people, they admitted they could not charge him with any such thing. Therefore, not

2 Some years after this, Gulielma became the wife of William Penn.

finding that he had broken the law, my father counseled the young man to be careful that he did not occasion any further public disturbances—and so dismissed him; which I was glad of.

Some time after this, my father having heard a further account of the people called Quakers, and being desirous to be informed concerning their principles, made another visit to Isaac Penington and his wife at their house called the Grange in Peter's Chalfont, and he took both my sisters and myself along with him.

It was in the tenth month, in the year 1659, that we went there, where we found a very kind reception, and tarried some days. While we were there, a meeting was appointed at a place about a mile from their home, to which we were invited to go, and willingly went. It was held in a farm-house called The Grove, which having formerly been a nobleman's residence, had a very large hall, which the people well filled.

To this meeting came Edward Burrough, along with other preachers, such as Thomas Curtis and James Nayler; but none spoke at that time but Edward Burrough. It was my lot to sit on a stool next to him, by the side of a long table on which he sat, and I drank in his words with eager desire; for they not only reached my understanding, but also warmed my heart with a certain heat which I had not till then felt from the ministry of any man.

When the meeting had ended, our friends took us home with them again; and after supper, the evenings being long, the servants of the family (who were Quakers) were called in, and we all sat down in silence. But we had not sat long before Edward Burrough began to speak among us. And although he spoke not long, yet what he said did touch, as I suppose, my father's religious nerve, as the saying goes. And he, having been from his youth a professor of religion, though not joined in close communion with any one persuasion, and valuing himself upon the knowledge he esteemed himself to have of the various notions of each profession, thought he had now a fair opportunity to display his knowledge, and thereupon began to make objections against what had been delivered. The subject of the discourse was the universal free grace of God to all mankind. This he opposed with the Calvinistic tenet of particular and personal predestination. But in his attempted defense of this indefensible notion, he soon found himself more at a loss than he expected. Edward Burrough said not much to him upon it, though what he said was to the point and compelling. But then James Nayler interposed, and handled the subject with so much perspicuity and clear demonstration, that his reasoning seemed irresistible; and so I suppose my father found it, which made him quickly willing to drop the discourse.

As for Edward Burrough, he was a lively young man, of a ready tongue, and might have been, for all I then knew, a scholar, which made me less admire his way of reasoning. But what dropped from the mouth of James Nayler had the greater force upon me, because he looked but like a plain simple country-man, having the appearance of a husbandman or a shepherd.

Seeing that my father was not able to maintain the argument on his side, so neither did they seem willing

to drive it on to an extremity on their side. But treating him in a soft and gentle manner, after a while, they let fall the discourse, and then we withdrew to our respective chambers.

The next morning we prepared to return home, that is, my father, my youngest sister, and myself; for my eldest sister had gone before this time in a stage coach to London. And when, having taken leave of our friends, we began to depart, they accompanied us to the gate, where Edward Burrough directed his speech in a few words to each of us individually, according to the sense he had of our different conditions. And when we had gone off, and they had returned to the house, the Peningtons asked him what he thought of us. He answered them (as they afterwards told me) to this effect: "As for the old man, he is settled in his ways, and the young woman is light and airy; but the young man is reached, and may do well if he does not lose it." And surely, the words which he had spoken to me, or rather the Spirit by which he spoke them, took such fast hold on me, that I felt sadness and trouble come over me, though I did not distinctly understand why I was troubled. I knew not what ailed me, but I knew that it was something more than ordinary, and my heart was very heavy.

I found that this was not the case with my father and sister; for, as I rode behind the coach, I could hear them talking pleasantly one to the other. But they could not discern how it was with me, because, riding on horseback, I kept much out of their sight.

By the time we got home it was night, and the next day, being the first-day of the week, I went in the afternoon to hear the minister of Chinner. This was the last time I ever went to hear any in that office. After the sermon I went with with the minister to his house, and in a freedom of discourse that I commonly used with him because of a certain intimacy that was between us, I told him where I had been, what company I had met with there, and what observations I had made to myself upon the occasion. He seemed to understand as little of them as I had understood before, but civilly abstained from casting any unhandsome reflections on them.

I had a desire to go to another meeting of the Quakers, and so I bid my father's servant to inquire if there was any in the country thereabouts. He thereupon told me that he had heard at Isaac Penington's that there was to be a meeting at High Wycombe on Thursday next. So there I went, though it was seven miles from me. And in order that others might suppose I had gone hunting, I let my greyhound run by my horse's side.

When I had come there, and had put up my horse at an inn, I was at a loss how to find the house where the meeting was to be held. I knew not where it was, and was ashamed to ask about it. Wherefore, having requested the hostler[3] to take care of my dog, I went into the street and stood at the gate, wondering what course to take. But I had not stood long, before I saw a man riding along in the street who I remembered to have seen before at Isaac Penington's, and he put up his horse at the same inn. I therefore resolved to

3 A person who has the care of horses at an inn.

follow him, supposing he was going to the meeting, as indeed he was.

Having come to the house (which proved to be John Raunce's) I saw the people sitting together in an outer room. I therefore stepped in and sat down on the first empty seat, at the end of a bench just within the door, having my sword at my side and black clothes on, which drew some eyes upon me. It was not long before one stood up and spoke, whom I was afterwards well acquainted with. His name was Samuel Thornton; and what he spoke was very suitable and of good service to me, for it reached home as if it had been directed to me.

As soon as the meeting had ended, and the people began to rise, I being next to the door, stepped out quickly, hastened to the inn, and immediately returned home on my horse; and so far as I remember, my having been gone was not taken notice of by my father.

This second meeting was like the clinching of a nail; confirming and fastening in my mind those good principles which had sunk into me at the former. My understanding began to open, and I felt some stirrings in my breast, tending to the work of a new creation in me. The general trouble and confusion of mind which had for some days lain heavy upon me and pressed me down, without a distinct understanding of the particular cause for which it came, began now to wear off, and some glimmerings of light began to break forth in me, which let me see my inward state and condition towards God. The light, which before had shone in my darkness (when the darkness could not comprehend it), now began to shine out of darkness, and in some measure made known to me what it was that had before clouded me and brought that sadness and trouble upon me. I saw, that although I had been in a great degree preserved from the common immoralities and worst pollutions of the world, yet the spirit of the world had hitherto ruled in me, and led me into pride, flattery, vanity and superfluity; all of which were worthless. I found that there were many plants growing in me which were not of the heavenly Father's planting; and that all these, of whatever sort or kind they were, or however pleasing they might appear, must be plucked up.

Now all my former life began to be ripped up, and my sins, by degrees, were set in order before me. And though they looked not to be so black a color as those of the lewdest sort of people, yet I found that all sin—that which has the fairest and finest appearance, as well as that which is more coarse and foul—brought guilt, and with and for guilt, it brought condemnation on the soul that sinned. This I felt, and was greatly bowed down under the sense thereof.

I also then began to receive a new law, an inward law, superadded to the outward law, namely, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," which wrought in me against all evil, not only in deed and in word, but even in thought also; so that everything was brought to judgment, and judgment passed upon all. Thus I could no longer go on in my former ways and course of life, for when I did, judgment took hold upon me for it. Thus the Lord was graciously pleased to deal with me in a manner somewhat like He had dealt with His people Israel of old; for when they had transgressed His righteous law, and were called back by His prophet, he bid them first to "cease to do evil;", and then to "learn to do well,"[4] before He

would allow them to reason with Him, and before He would impart to them the effects of His free mercy (See Isaiah ch. 1).

I was now required by this inward and spiritual law—"the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"—to "put away the evil of my doings," and to "cease to do evil." And as for the particular evils which I was required to put away and cease from, the measure of divine light (which was now made manifest in me) began to show these unto me; and whatever the light made manifest as evil, judgment then passed upon it.

So here a way began to be cast up before me to walk in[5]—a direct and plain way; so plain, that a wayfaring man, however weak and simple, though a fool in the wisdom and judgment of the world, could not err, while he continued to walk in it;[6] the error coming in only by man's going out of it. And I saw that this *way* was the measure of divine light that was manifested in me, by which the evil of my doings was made known to me.

And by this divine light I then saw that, though I needed not put away the evils of uncleanness, debauchery, profaneness and the common pollutions of the world, because through the great goodness of God and a civil education I had been preserved out of these manifest evils; yet I had many other evils to put away and to cease from. Some of these were indeed not accounted evils by "the world which lies in wickedness;"[7] but by the light of Christ they were made manifest to me as evils, and so were condemned in me; as for instance, those fruits and effects of pride that manifest themselves in the vanity and superfluity of my apparel. This, alas, I had taken much delight in, even as far as my ability would extend to. Thus I was required to put away and cease from all such things; and judgment lay heavy upon me until I did so. Therefore, in obedience to the inward law, which agreed with the outward (See 1 Tim. 2:9. Pet. 3:3. 1 Tim. 6:8. James 1:21), I removed from my apparel all unnecessary trimmings of lace, ribbons and useless buttons which had no real service, but were only used as "ornaments," and I also ceased to wear rings.

I was also required to put away and cease from the custom of giving flattering titles to men. This was an evil I had been much addicted to, and was considered quite an artist in it. So from that time forward, I dared not say "sir," "master," "my lord," or "madam," to any, nor say "your humble servant" to any one to whom I did not stand in the real relation of a servant; which I had never done to any man.

Showing respect to particular persons by uncovering the head and bowing the knee or body in salutations was a practice I had been much in the use of. This is one of the vain customs of the world, introduced by the spirit of the world in the place of true honor. I saw it to be a false representation, used in deceit as a token of respect by persons who bear no real respect one to the other. And besides, this gesture is

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4 Isaiah 1:16-17

5 Isiah 57:14; 62:10

6 Isaiah 35:8

7 1 John 5:19

a type and proper emblem of that divine honor which all ought to pay to Almighty God, and which all Christians, of every persuasion, use when they offer their prayers to Him, and therefore should not be given to men. This I found to be another evil I had long been committing, and was therefore now required to put it away and cease from it.

I had also been very accustomed to the corrupt and unsound form of speaking in the plural number to a single person, "you" to one, instead of "thou," contrary to the pure, plain, and single language of Truth, "thou" to one, and "you" to more than one, which had always been used by God to men, and men to God, as well as one to another, from the oldest record of time, until corrupt men, for corrupt ends, in later and corrupt times, in order to flatter and fawn, brought in that false and senseless way of speaking "you" to one; which has since corrupted the modern language, and has greatly debased the spirits, and depraved the manners of men.[8] These, and many more evil customs, which had sprung up in the night of darkness and general apostasy from the Truth and true religion, were now by the in-shining of this pure ray of divine light in my conscience, gradually revealed to be what I ought to cease from, shun, and stand as a witness against.

But so subtly and powerfully did the enemy work upon the weak part in me, that he persuaded me that I ought to make a difference between my father and all other men in these things, disusing these tokens of respect to others, yet still using them towards him, as he was my father. And so far did this ploy of his prevail upon me (through a fear lest I would do wrong in withdrawing any sort of respect or honor from my father which was due unto him), that being thereby beguiled, I continued for a while to behave in the same manner towards him with regard to both language and gesture, as I had always done before. And as long as I did so, standing bare-headed before him, and giving him the accustomed language, he did not express any dislike of me.

But as to myself, and the work that had begun in me, I soon found it was not enough for me to "cease to do evil;" though this was a good step. I had another lesson before me, which was, to "learn to do well;" which I could by no means do, until I had truly given up, with full purpose of mind, to cease from doing all evil. And when I had done this, the enemy then took advantage of my weakness to mislead me another way.

For I ought to have waited in the light for direction and guidance in the way of well-doing, and not to have moved without the divine Spirit (a manifestation of which the Lord had been pleased to give me to

8 At this time in history, the correct and plain use of "thee" and "thou" to a single person was beginning to give way to "you" and "your." Most modern English speakers are unaware that the words "you" and "your" were originally *plural* pronouns used only to address two or more people, whereas "thee" and "thou" were used to address one person. In the 1600's, it became fashionable (as a means of showing honor or flattery) to use the plural "you" or "your" in addressing people of higher social status, while "thee" and "thou" were reserved for servants, children, or people of lower social or economic position. Early Friends stuck to what was then considered "plain language" (using *thee* and *thou* to every single person, and you and your to two or more), rather than showing partiality by addressing certain individuals in the plural. However, throughout most of this journal, thee and thou have been changed to you for the ease of the modern reader.

profit with[9]), but the enemy, transforming himself into the appearance of an angel of light, now offered himself to be my guide and leader into the performance of religious exercises. And I, not then knowing the wiles of Satan, and being eager to do some acceptable service to God, too readily yielded myself to the guidance of my enemy, instead of my friend.

He thereupon humoring the fervor and zeal of my spirit, put me upon religious performances in my own will, in my own time, and in my own strength—things which in themselves were good, and would have been profitable to me and acceptable to the Lord if they had been performed in His will, His time, and in the ability which He gives. But these things being wrought in the will of man, and at the prompting of the evil one, it is no wonder that it did me hurt instead of good.

I read abundantly in the Bible, and would assign myself tasks in reading; requiring myself to read so many chapters, sometimes a whole book or long epistle at a time. I thought this time well-spent, though I was not much the wiser for all that I read; for I read it too hastily, and without the true Guide, the Holy Spirit, who alone could open my understanding and give a true sense of what was read. I prayed often, and extended my prayers to a great length, appointing certain set times to pray, and a certain number of prayers to say in a day; yet meanwhile, I knew not what true prayer was. For true prayer stands not in words, even when words are uttered in the movings of the Holy Spirit; but rather in the breathing of the soul to the heavenly Father through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who makes intercession—sometimes in words, and sometimes with only sighs and groans—which the Lord mercifully hears and answers.

This will-worship[10]—which all worship is that is performed in the will of man and not in the movings of the Holy Spirit—was a great hurt to me, and a hindrance to my spiritual growth in the way of Truth. But my heavenly Father, who knew the sincerity of my soul before Him, and the heartfelt desire I had to serve Him, had compassion on me; and in due time was graciously pleased to illuminate my understanding further, and to open in me an eye to discern the false spirit, and its way of working from the true; and to reject the former and cleave to the latter.

But though the enemy had by his subtlety gained some advantages over me, yet I nevertheless went on, and firmly persisted in my godly resolution of ceasing from, and denying those things which I was now convinced in my conscience were evil. And on this account a great trial came quickly on me. For as the general Quarter Sessions for the peace was coming on, and my father desired to excuse himself from the dirty journey, he commanded me to arise early and go to Oxford, and deliver the recognizances he had taken; and also to bring him an account as to what justices were on the bench, and what principal pleas were before them; all of which he knew I knew how to do, having often attended him on such services previously.

9 1 Corinthians 12:7

10 Colossians 2:23 KJV

But I, who knew how things stood with me far better than he did, felt a weight come over me just as soon as he had spoken the words. For I immediately saw that this would bring a very great exercise upon me. Nevertheless, having never resisted his will in anything that was lawful (as this was), I attempted not to make any excuse. And ordering a horse to be ready for me early in the morning, I went to bed, feeling great conflict in my breast. For the enemy came in upon me like a flood, and presented many difficulties before me, swelling them up to the highest pitch, by representing them as mountains which I should never be able to get over. And, alas, that faith which could remove such mountains and cast them into the sea, was still but very small and weak in me.

He cast into my mind, not only how I must behave myself in court, and dispatch the business for which I was sent; but also how I must demean myself towards my acquaintances, of whom I had many in the city, and with whom I had formerly been jolly, whereas now I could not put off my hat, nor bow to any of them, nor give them their honorary titles (as they are called), nor use the corrupt language of "you" to any one of them, but must keep to the plain language of "thou" and "thee." Much of this nature revolved in my mind, being thrown in by the enemy to discourage and cast me down. And I had none to turn to for counsel or help, but the Lord alone, to whom I therefore poured forth my supplications with earnest cries and breathings of soul, that He, in whom was all power, would enable me to go through this great trial, and keep me faithful to Himself therein. And after some time, He was pleased to compose my mind to stillness, and I was able to rest.

Early the next morning I got up, and found my spirit pretty calm and quiet, yet not without a fear upon me lest I should slip and let fall the testimony which I had to bear. And as I rode, a frequent cry ran through me to the Lord, "O my God, preserve me faithful, whatever befalls me! Permit me not to be drawn into evil, no matter how much scorn and contempt may be cast upon me!"

Thus was my spirit exercised on the way almost continually. And when I came within a mile or two of the city, whom should I meet upon the way, coming from there, but Edward Burrough! I rode in a mountier-cap,[11] a dress more common then than now, and so did he; and because the weather was exceedingly frigid, we had both had pulled our caps down to shelter our faces from the cold, and by that means neither of us recognized the other, but passed by without taking notice until a few days after, when meeting again, and observing each others' dress, we recollected where we had so lately met. Then I thought to myself, "O, how glad I would have been to have received a word of encouragement and counsel from him, when under that weighty exercise of mind!" But the Lord saw that it was not good for me, that my reliance might be wholly upon Him, and not upon man.

When I had put up my horse, I went directly to the hall where the court sessions were held, and had been there a very short time before a group of my old acquaintances saw me and drew near. One of

11 A winter hat, with flaps that protect the face from cold.

these was a scholar in his gown; another a surgeon of that city, both my classmates and fellow-boarders at Thame school. The third was a country gentleman, with whom I had long been very familiar. When they had come up to me, they all saluted me after the usual manner, putting off their hats, bowing, and saying, “your humble servant, sir;” no doubt expecting the same from me. But when they saw me stand still, not moving my cap, nor bowing my knee in the way of compliment to them, they were amazed, and looked first upon one another, and then upon me, and then upon one another again for a while, without speaking a word. At length the surgeon, a brisk young man, who stood nearest to me, clapping his hand in a familiar way upon my shoulder, and smiling at me, said, “What! Tom, a Quaker?” To which I readily and cheerfully answered, “Yes, a Quaker.” And as the words passed out of my mouth, I felt joy spring up in my heart; for I rejoiced that I had not been drawn out into a compliance with them, and that strength and boldness had been given me to confess myself to be one of that despised people.

They stayed not long with me, nor said any more that I remember; but looking somewhat confusedly upon one another, after a while they took their leave, going off in the same ceremonious manner as they had come.

After they were gone, I walked a while around the hall, and went up nearer to the court in order to observe both what justices were on the bench, and what business they had before them. This I did in fear, not of what they could or would have done to me, but lest I should be surprised by any and drawn unwarily into that which I was to keep out of.

It was not long before the court adjourned to go to dinner, and I used that time to go to the clerk of the peace at his house, with whom I was well acquainted. As soon as I came into the room where he was, he came and met me, and saluted me after his manner; for he had a great respect for my father, and a kind regard for me. And though he was at first somewhat startled at my conduct and language, yet he treated me very civilly, without any reproach or jesting. I delivered him the recognizances which my father had sent, and having finished the business I had come upon, I withdrew, and went to my inn to refresh myself, and then to return home. But when I was ready to take horse, looking out into the street, I saw two or three justices standing just in the way where I was to ride. This brought a fresh concern upon me; for I knew if they saw me, they would recognize me. And I concluded if they recognized me, they would stop me to inquire after my father; and I doubted whether I would remain faithful to my convictions.

This doubting brought weakness over me, and that weakness led me to contrive how I might avoid this trial. I knew the city pretty well, and remembered there was a back road, which, though somewhat out of my way, would bring me out of town without passing by those justices; yet I was unwilling to go that way. I therefore stayed a little time, in hopes that they would have parted company, or removed to some other place out of my way. But when I had waited till I was uneasy for losing so much time, and having entered into reasonings with flesh and blood, the weakness prevailed over me and I took the back road; which brought trouble and grief upon my spirit for having shunned the cross.

But the Lord looked on me with a tender eye, and seeing that my heart was right towards Him, and that what I had done was merely through weakness and fear of falling, and also that I was sensible of my failure and sorry for it, He was graciously pleased to pass it by, and to speak peace to me again. When I went in the morning, my heart was full of breathing prayer to the Lord that He would mercifully be with me, and uphold and carry me through that day's exercise. So now at my return in the evening, before I got home, my heart was full of thankful acknowledgments and praises unto Him for His great goodness and favor to me in having thus far preserved and kept me from falling into anything that might have brought dishonor to His holy name, the name I had now taken upon myself.

But notwithstanding it was thus with me, and that I found peace and acceptance with the Lord in some good degree according to my obedience to the convictions I had received by His Holy Spirit in me; yet the veil was not fully rent, for there still remained a cloud upon my understanding with respect to my conduct towards my father. And the notion which the enemy had brought into my mind—that I ought to put such a difference between him and all others on the account of paternal relation—did yet prevail with me. Therefore, when I came home, I went to my father and stood bare-headed before him as I was accustomed to do, and gave him a particular account of the business in such a manner that he, observing no alteration in my conduct towards him, found no cause to take offense at me.

I had felt for some time before this an earnest desire to go again to Isaac Penington's. And I began to question whether, when my father would come to understand that I inclined to settle among the people called Quakers (as I was sure he would before long), he would continue to allow me the use of his horses. For this reason, the morning I had gone to Oxford, I gave directions to a servant of his to go that day to a gentleman of my acquaintance who I knew had a riding horse that he was willing to lend, and to request, in my name, to send him to me. This he did, and I found him in the stable when I came home.

On this horse I designed to ride the next day to Isaac Penington's; and in order thereto, I arose early, and got myself ready for the journey. But because I desired to pay all due respect to my father, and not go without his consent, or at least without his knowledge, I sent a servant up to him (for he was not yet stirring) to acquaint him that I had a purpose to go to Isaac Penington's, and I desired to know if he had any service for me to do. He sent me word that he desired to speak with me before I went, and would have me come up to him; which I did, and stood by his bedside.

Then in a mild and gentle tone he said, "I understand you have a mind to go to Mr. Penington's." I answered, "I do." "Why," said he, "I wonder why? You were there, you know, but a few days ago, and unless you have business with them, don't you think it will look odd?" I said, "I do not think so." "Perhaps," said he, "you will tire them with your company, and make yourself a burden to them." "If," I replied, "I find anything of that, I will make a shorter stay." "But," said he, "can you propose any sort of business with them, more than a mere visit?" "Yes," said I, "I propose not only to see them, but to have some discourse with them." "Why," said he, in a little harsher tone, "I hope you do not incline to be of

their way." "Truly," I answered, "I like them and their way very much, so far as I yet understand it; and I am willing to go to them that I may understand it better."

Thereupon my father began to list a catalog of faults against the Quakers; telling me they were a rude and unmannerly people who would not give civil respect or honor to their superiors, nor to magistrates; that they held many dangerous principles; that they were an immodest and shameless people; and that one of them stripped himself stark naked, and went in that unseemly manner about the streets, at fairs, and on market-days in great towns.

To all the other charges, I answered only that perhaps they might be either misreported or misunderstood, as even the best of people had sometimes been. But to the last charge, of going naked, a particular answer by way of example was just then brought into my mind and put into my mouth, which I had not thought of before; the example of Isaiah, who went naked among the people for a long time (Isaiah 20:4). "Ah," said my father, "but you must consider that he was a prophet of the Lord, and had an express command from God to do so." "Yes, sir," I replied, "I do consider that; but I also consider that the Jews among whom he lived did not acknowledge him to be a prophet, nor believe that he had such a command from God. And," I added, "how do we know that this Quaker is not a prophet too, with a command to do as he did, for some reason which we understand not?"

This put my father to a stand; so that letting fall his charges against the Quakers, he only said, "I wish you would not go so soon, but take a little time to consider it. You may visit Mr. Penington another time." "No, sir," I replied, "please don't hinder my going now, for I have so strong a desire to go that I do not well know how to forbear." And as I spoke those words, I withdrew gently to the chamber-door, and then hastening downstairs, went immediately to the stable, and finding my horse already bridled, I quickly mounted and went off, lest I should receive a countermand.

This discourse with my father had somewhat delayed my journey, and it being fifteen long miles there, the roads bad, and my horse but small, it wasn't till the afternoon that I arrived. And hearing from the servant who took my horse that there was then a meeting in the house, as there was weekly on that day, which was the fourth-day of the week, I hastened in. Being familiar with the rooms, I went directly to the little parlor, where I found a few Friends sitting together in silence, and I sat down among them well-satisfied, though no words were spoken.

When the meeting had ended, and those of the company who were strangers had withdrawn, I addressed myself to Isaac Penington and his wife, who received me courteously; but not knowing what inward exercises I had been in, and was still under, nor having heard anything of me since I had been there before in different apparel, they were not hasty to "lay hands upon me suddenly,"[12] which I observed

12 1 Timothy 5:22. A warning of Paul not to endorse or recommend one into fellowship or ministry without due caution.

and did not dislike. But as they came to see a change in me, not only in my dress, but in my conduct and speech, and what's more, in my countenance also (for the exercises I had passed through and yet was under had imprinted a visible character of gravity upon my face), they were exceedingly kind and tender towards me.

There was then in the family a Friend whose name was Anne Curtis, the wife of Thomas Curtis of Reading, who had come to visit them, and particularly to see Mary Penington's daughter Gulielma, who had been ill with the small-pox since I had been there before. Between Mary Penington and this Friend, I observed some private discourse and whisperings, and I had an apprehension that it was about something that concerned me. I therefore took the freedom to ask Mary Penington if my coming there had occasioned any inconvenience in the family? She asked me if I had had the small-pox? I told her no. She then told me that her daughter had recently had them, and though she was well-recovered, she had not as yet been downstairs amongst them, but intended to come down and sit with them in the parlor that evening; yet she would rather wait till another time than endanger me. This was the matter they had been discussing. I assured her that I had always been, and was then more especially, free from any apprehension of danger in that respect; and I therefore entreated that her daughter might come down. Although they seemed somewhat unwilling to yield to it out of concern for me, yet my importunity prevailed, and after supper she did come down and sit with us. And though the marks of the distemper were fresh upon her, yet they made no impression upon me, faith keeping out all fear.

We spent much of the evening in retiredness, our spirits being weightily gathered inward unto the Lord; so that not much discourse passed among us, neither they to me, nor I to them. Yet I had good satisfaction in this stillness, feeling my spirit drawn near to the Lord, and to them in Him. Before I went to bed, they let me know that there was to be a meeting at Wycombe the next day, and that some of the family would attend. I was very glad of it, for I greatly desired to go to meetings, and this one would be very convenient, being directly on my way home. The next morning Isaac Penington went, having Anne Curtis with him, and I accompanied them.

At Wycombe we met with Edward Burrough who came there from Oxford, where I had seen him some days before when, both having our mountier-caps on, we had passed by each other on the road unknown. But now we recollected that we had recently met.

This was a monthly meeting, consisting chiefly of Friends who gathered to it from several parts of the country thereabouts; so that it was pretty large. It was held in a room in Jeremiah Stevens' house, as the room where we had met before in John Raunce's house was too small to receive us. And a very good meeting this was to me. Edward Burrough's ministry came forth among us in life and power, and the assembly was covered therewith. I also, according to my small capacity, experienced a share in it. For I felt some of that divine power working my spirit into a great tenderness, and not only confirming me in the course I had already entered, and strengthening me to go on therein, but also rending the veil

somewhat further and clearing my understanding in some other things which I had not seen before. For the Lord was pleased to make His discoveries to me by degrees, that the sight of too great a work, and too many enemies to encounter at once, might not discourage and make me faint.

When the meeting had ended, the Friends of the town taking notice that I was the man who had been at their meeting the week before, whom they then did not know, some of them came and spoke lovingly to me, and requested me to stay with them; but Edward Burrough going home with Isaac Penington, invited me to go back with him, which I willingly consented to. For the love I had more particularly to Edward Burrough, through whose ministry I had received the first awakening stroke, drew me to desire his company, and so away we rode together.

But I was somewhat disappointed of my expectation; for I hoped he would have given me both opportunity and encouragement to open myself to him, and to pour forth my complaints, fears, doubts and questions into his bosom. But he, being sensible that I was truly reached, and that the witness of God was raised in me, and the work of God rightly begun—chose to leave me to the guidance of the good Spirit in myself, the Counsellor that could resolve all doubts, that I might not have any dependence on man. Therefore, although he was naturally of an open and free disposition and conduct, and was afterwards always very familiar and affectionately kind to me, yet at this time he kept himself somewhat reserved and showed only common kindness to me.

The next day we parted, he for London, and I for home, under a very great weight and exercise upon my spirit. For I now saw, in and by the further openings of the divine light in me, that the enemy, by his false reasonings, had beguiled and misled me with respect to my conduct towards my father; and that the honor due to parents did not consist in uncovering the head and bowing before them, but in a ready obedience to their lawful commands, and in performing all needful services to them. Therefore, as I was greatly troubled for what I already had done in that case (though it was through ignorance), so I plainly felt I could no longer continue therein without drawing on myself the guilt of willful disobedience, which I well knew would draw after it divine displeasure and judgment.

Hereupon the enemy assaulted me afresh, setting before me the danger I would run myself into by provoking my father to use severity towards me, and perhaps to cast me utterly off. But the Lord, unto whom I cried, supported me over this temptation, and gave me faith to believe that He would bear me up through whatever might befall me on that account. I therefore resolved, in the strength which He would give me, to be faithful to His requirings, whatever might come of it.

Thus, laboring under various exercises on the way, I at length arrived home, expecting I would meet with a rough reception from my father. But when I came home, I found that my father was away from home. I therefore sat down by the fire in the kitchen, keeping my mind retired to the Lord, with breathings of spirit unto Him that I might be preserved from falling.

After some time I heard the coach drive in, which put me into a little fear, and a sort of shivering came over me. But by the time he had alighted from the coach and come in, I had pretty well recovered myself. As soon as I saw him, I rose up, advanced a step or two towards him, and with my hat still on, said, “Isaac Penington and his wife remember their love to thee.”

He made a stop to hear what I said, and observing that I did not stand before him uncovered, and that I used the word “thee” to him; he, with a stern countenance, and a tone that spoke great displeasure, only said, “I shall talk with you, sir, another time!” So, hastening from me, he went into the parlor, and I saw him no more that night.

Though I foresaw that there was a storm arising, the apprehension of which was unsettling to me, yet the peace which I felt in my own breast raised in me a return of thanksgivings to the Lord for His gracious supporting hand which had thus far carried me through this difficulty. And humble cries were raised in spirit to Him that He would mercifully stand by me to the end and uphold me, that I might not fall.

My spirit longed to be among Friends, and to be at some meeting with them on first-day, which was approaching, this being the sixth-day night. I therefore proposed to go to Oxford the next day, which was the seventh-day of the week, having heard there would be a meeting there. Accordingly, having ordered my horse to be made ready early, I got up in the morning and made myself ready also. Yet before I left, in order that I might be as observant to my father as I possibly could, I requested my sister to go up to him in his chamber and acquaint him that I had a mind to go to Oxford, and I desired to know if he had any service for me to do there. He bid her tell me not to go until he had spoken with me. And getting up immediately, he hastened down to me before he was quite dressed.

As soon as he saw me standing with my hat on, his passion transported him, and he fell upon me with both his fists. And having by that means somewhat vented his anger, he plucked off my hat and threw it away. Then, stepping hastily out to the stable and seeing my borrowed horse stand ready saddled and bridled, he asked his servant where the horse came from? The servant telling him he had fetched it from Mr. Barton, my father replied, “Then ride him back immediately, and tell Mr. Barton that I desire him never to lend my son a horse again, unless he bring a note from me.” The poor fellow, who loved me well, would eagerly have made excuses for me, but my father was positive in his command, and was so urgent that he would not let him stay so long as to eat his breakfast, though he had five miles to ride; nor would my father leave the stable, until he had seen the man mounted and gone.

Then, coming in, he went up into his chamber to make himself more ready, thinking he had confined me me to the house now that my horse was gone; for I took so much delight in riding, that I seldom went anywhere on foot. But while he was dressing himself in his chamber, I changed my riding boots for shoes, took another hat, and then acquainting my sister (who loved me very much, and in whom I could confide) where I intended to go, I went out alone and walked away to Wycombe, having seven miles to go, which yet seemed little and easy to me from the desire I had to be among Friends.

But as I travelled alone—under a load of grief from the sense I had of the opposition and hardship I was to expect from my father—the enemy took the opportunity to assault me again, casting a doubt into my mind whether I had done well in thus coming away from my father without his permission or knowledge. I was quiet and peaceable in my spirit before this question darted into my mind; but afterwards, disturbance and trouble seized upon me, so that I was at a stand what to do, whether to go forward or backward. Fear of offending inclined me to go back; but a desire to be in the meeting with Friends pressed me to go forward; so I stood still a while to consider and weigh the matter as well as I could. I was satisfied that I had not left my father with any intention of undutifulness or disrespect to him; but merely in obedience to that drawing of Spirit (which I was persuaded was of the Lord) to join with His people in worshipping Him, and this made me feel easy.

But then the enemy, to make me uneasy again, objected: How could a drawing be of the Lord which drew me to disobey my father? I thereupon began to consider the extent of paternal power; which I found was not wholly arbitrary and unlimited, but had bounds set to it; namely, that in civil matters, it was confined to things lawful; and that in spiritual and religious matters it had no compulsory power over our conscience, which always ought to be subject to our heavenly Father. And therefore, though obedience to parents is required of children, yet it is given with this limitation, "in the Lord:" "Children, obey your parents *in the Lord;* for this is right."[13]

This tipped the scale for going forward, and so on I went. And yet I was not wholly free from some fluctuations of mind from the besetments of the enemy. Therefore, although I knew that outward signs did not properly belong to the gospel dispensation, yet for my better assurance, in fear and great humility I beseeched the Lord that He would be pleased to condescend to the weakness of His servant and grant me a sign by which I might certainly know whether my way was right before Him or not?

The sign which I asked for was, that if I had done wrong in coming as I did, I might be rejected or coldly received at the place where I was going. But if my undertaking was right in His sight, He would give me favor with those I went to, so that they would receive me with hearty kindness and demonstrations of love. Accordingly, when I came to John Raunce's house, where I chose to go because the meeting was commonly held there, they received me with more than ordinary kindness, especially Frances Raunce, John Raunce's wife, who was both a grave and motherly woman, and had a hearty love to Truth, and tenderness towards all that in sincerity sought after it. This kind reception, confirming me in the belief that my undertaking was approved of by the Lord, gave great satisfaction and ease to my mind, and I was thankful for it to the Lord.

Thus it fared with me there; but at home it fared otherwise with my father. He supposing I had gone up to my chamber when he took my hat from me, made no inquiry about me until evening came. Then sitting

13 Ephesians 6:1

by the fire, and considering that the weather was very cold, he said to my sister who sat by him, “Go up to your brother’s chamber, and call him down. Otherwise he may sit there in a sullen fit until he has caught cold.” “Alas sir,” said she, “he is not in his chamber, nor in the house either.” At that my father was surprised and said, “Where is he then?” “I know not, sir, where he is;” she said, “but I know that when he saw that you had sent away his horse, he put on shoes and went out on foot, and I have not seen him since. And indeed, sir,” she added, “I don’t wonder at his going away, considering how you treated him.” This put my father into a great fright, believing I had left home for good. Indeed, a great passion of grief seized upon him and he could not keep himself from weeping and crying out aloud, so that all the family heard him, “Oh, my son! I shall never see him again! For he is of so bold and resolute a spirit, that he will run himself into danger, and so may be thrown into some jail or other, where he may lie and die before I can hear of him.” Then bidding her to take him to his chamber, he went immediately to bed, where he lay restless and groaning, and often bemoaning himself and me for the greatest part of the night.

The next morning my sister sent a servant, whom because of his love to me, she knew she could trust, to give me this account. And though she also sent with him fresh linen for my use, in case I should go further or stay out longer, yet she requested me to come home as soon as I could.

This account left me very uneasy, for I was much grieved that I had occasioned so much grief to my father. I would have returned that evening after the meeting, but the Friends would not permit it; for the meeting ended late, the days were then short, and the way was long and dirty. And besides this, John Raunce told me that he had something on his mind to speak to my father, and that if I would stay till the next day, he would go there with me; perhaps hoping that, while my father was under this sorrow for me, his heart might be the more open. Hereupon, concluding to stay till the morning, I dismissed the man with the things he brought, bidding him tell my sister that I intended, God willing, to return home tomorrow; and charging him not to let anybody else know that he had seen me, or where he had been.

Next morning John Raunce and I set out, and when we had come to the outskirts of the town, we agreed that he would go before me and knock at the great gate, and I would come a little after him and go in by the back way. He did so; and when a servant came to open the gate, John asked if the justice was at home. She told him, “yes;” and requested him to come in and sit down in the hall, and then went and acquainted her master that a man had come who desired to speak with him. My father, supposing it was one that had come on business, went readily into the hall to him. But he was not a little surprised when he found that it was a Quaker; yet not knowing for what purpose he came, he stayed to hear his business. But when he found that it was about me, he spoke to him somewhat sharply.

By this time I had come by the back way into the kitchen, and hearing my father’s voice so loud, I began to doubt that things were going well; and I was soon assured of this. For my father quickly having enough of a Quaker’s company, left John Raunce in the hall and came into the kitchen, where he was even more surprised to find me. The sight of my hat upon my head, made him presently forget that I was that son

of his whom he had so lately lamented as lost. And feeling his passion of grief quickly turn to into anger, he was unable to contain himself, and ran upon me with both his hands. He first violently snatched off my hat and threw it away, and then, giving me some blows on my head, said, "Sirrah,[14] get up to your chamber!" I immediately went, he following close at my heels, and now and then giving me a blow on the ear. And as the way to my chamber passed through the hall where John Raunce was, he (poor man) had to witness the scene, and was no doubt was sorry, but could do nothing to help me.

This was truly an unexplainable thing, that my father would, one day before, express so great a sorrow for me as fearing he should never see me any more; and yet now, as soon as he did see me, fly upon me with such violence, and only because I did not put off my hat, which he well knew I did not keep on in disrespect to him, but only upon a religious principle. But as this hat honor had grown to be a great idol, in those times more especially, so the Lord was pleased to engage his servants in a steady testimony against it, whatever suffering was brought upon them for it. And though some, who perhaps have been called into the Lord's vineyard at later hours, after the heat of that day has largely passed, may be apt to account this testimony a small thing to suffer so much upon, as some have done—not only beatings, but fines, and long and hard imprisonments—yet in those times, those who were faithfully exercised under it dared not "despise the day of small things;"[15] knowing that he who would do so, would not be thought worthy to hold forth greater testimonies.

I had now lost one of my hats, and I had but one more. I therefore put my second hat on, but did not keep it long; for the next time my father saw it on my head, he tore it violently from me, and put it with the other, I knew not where. I therefore put on my mountier-cap, which was all I had left to wear on my head. But it was very little while that I kept it, for as soon as my father came where I was, I lost that one too. I was now forced to go bare-headed wherever I had occasion to go, both within doors and without. This was in the eleventh month, called January,[16] and the weather was piercing; so that I, who had been bred up more tenderly, took so great a cold in my head that my face and head were much swollen, and my gums had such great sores on them, that I could neither chew meat, nor swallow liquids without difficulty. This sickness held a long time, and I underwent much pain without much pity, except from my poor sister, who did what she could to give me ease.

I was held as a sort of prisoner for the rest of the winter, having no means to go out among Friends, nor did they have liberty to come to me. I therefore spent the time mostly in my chamber, in waiting on the Lord, and in reading, mostly in the Bible. But whenever I had occasion to speak to my father, though I now had no hat to offend him, yet my language did as much. For I dared not say "you" to him, but only "thou," or "thee," as the occasion required, and then he would be sure to strike me with his fists.

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14 *Sirrah* was a word of reproach or contempt, used in addressing vile characters.

15 Zechariah 4:10

16 Until 1752, March was considered the first month of the year in all of England and its colonies.

I remember at one of these times, after he had beaten me in this manner, he commanded me (as he commonly did at such times) to go to my chamber. This I did, as he followed me to the bottom of the stairs and gave me a parting blow. Then, in a very angry tone, he said, "Sirrah, if I ever hear you say *thou* or *thee* to me again, I'll strike your teeth down your throat!" I was greatly grieved to hear him speak in this way; and feeling a word rise up in my heart, I turned again and calmly said to him, "Would it not be just, if God should treat thee so when thou say *thou* or *thee* to Him?"[17] Though his hand was then up, I saw it sink down and his countenance fall, and he turned away and left me standing there. I nevertheless went up into my chamber and cried unto the Lord, earnestly beseeching Him that He would be pleased to open my father's eyes, that he might see who he fought against, and for what purpose; and that he would turn his heart.

After this I had a short time of rest and quiet from these disturbances wherein my father said nothing to me, nor gave me occasion to say anything to him. I was still under a kind of confinement, but I found that, though to be abroad and at liberty among my friends would have been more pleasant to me, yet home was at present my proper place, and was like a school in which I was to learn with patience to bear the cross, so that I willingly submitted to it.

But after a little time, a fresh storm—more fierce and sharp than any before—arose and fell upon me; the occasion whereof was this: My father, having been in his younger years, more especially while he lived in London, a constant hearer of those who are called puritan preachers, had stored up a pretty significant stock of Scripture knowledge, and sometimes, though not constantly nor very often, caused his family to come together on first-days in the evening to expound a chapter to them and to pray. His family now, as well as his estate, was smaller; for my mother was dead, my brother gone, and my eldest sister in London. And having put off his husbandry, he had put off along with it most of his servants, so that he now had but one man and one maid servant. It so happened, that on a first-day night, he bid my sister, who sat with him in the parlor, to call in the servants for prayer.

Whether this was done intentionally as a trial upon me, I do not know; but a trial it certainly proved to me. For the servants, loving me very well, and disliking my father's conduct towards me, made no haste to go in, but stayed for a second summons. This so offended my father, that when at length they did go in, instead of praying, he questioned them as to why they did not come when they were first called? The answer they gave him being such as heightened, rather than abated, his displeasure, he, with an angry tone said, "Call in that fellow," meaning me, who was left alone in the kitchen, "for he is the cause of all this!" As they had been slow to go in themselves, so they were also reluctant to call me in, fearing that the effect of my father's displeasure would fall upon me, as it soon did; for hearing what was said, and not staying for the call, I went in of my own accord. As soon as I had come in, my father discharged his

17 Ironically, though many at this time considered it belittling to be referred to with the single pronouns *thou* and *thee,* yet every Christian, of every denomination and persuasion, uniformly used these pronouns to address their Creator in prayer.

displeasure on me in very sharp and bitter expressions; which, seeing him so transported with passion, drew from me (in the grief of my heart) the following words: “Those who can pray in such a spirit, let them; as for my part, I cannot.” Hearing these words, my father flew upon me with both of his fists; and then, thinking that not sufficient, stepped hastily to the place where his cane stood, and picking it up, began to lay it on me, I thought, with all of his strength. Being bare-headed, I thought his blows must certainly have broken my skull, had I not laid my arm over my head to defend it.

My father’s servant seeing this, and not able to contain himself, stepped between us and laid hold of the cane. Though he did not attempt to take it away, yet by the strength of his hand he held it so tightly that he kept my father from striking, which only enraged him the more. I disliked this interposition on his part, and told him to let go of the cane and be gone; which he immediately did, and turning to leave, he received a blow on the shoulders for his efforts, which yet did not much hurt him.

But now my sister, fearing that my father would take up striking me again, entreated him to desist; adding, “Truly sir, if you strike him any more, I will throw open the window and cry murder; for I am afraid you will kill my brother.” This stopped his hand; and after some threatening speeches, he commanded me to get to my chamber, which I did—as I always did whenever he bid me. My sister soon followed me to see my arm and to dress the wounds, for my arm was indeed very much bruised and swollen between the wrist and elbow, and in some places the skin was broken and beaten off. But though it was very sore, and for some time I felt much pain in it, yet I had peace and quietness in my mind, being more grieved for my father than for myself, who I knew had hurt himself more than me.

This was, as far as I remember, the last time that my father ever called his family to prayer. And this was also the last time that he ever thus abused me, at least so severely. Soon after this, my eldest sister, who in all this time had been in London, returned home. She was much troubled to find me a Quaker, a name of reproach and great contempt at that time; and she, having been in London, no doubt heard the worst representation of them. Yet, though she disliked the people, her affectionate regard to me made her rather pity than despise me; and the more, when she understood what hard treatment I had met with from my father.

The rest of this winter I spent in a lonesome solitary life, having none to converse with, none to open myself to, none to ask counsel of, none to seek relief from, but the Lord alone; who yet was more than all. And yet the company and society of faithful and judicious friends, would, I thought, have been very welcome to me, as well as helpful in my spiritual travel. Indeed, I thought I made but slow progress, and my soul continually breathed after further growth; the sense of which drew from me the following lines:

The winter tree

Resembles me,

Whose sap lies in its root:

The spring draws nigh;

As it, so I

Shall bud, I hope, and shoot.

At length it pleased the Lord to move Isaac Penington and his wife to make a visit to my father, to see how it fared with me. They tarried with us all night, and had much discourse with my father both about the principles of Truth in general, and about me in particular, which I was not privy to. But one thing that I remember afterwards hearing of was this: When my father and I were at their house some months before, Mary Penington, in some discourse between them, had told him how roughly her husband's father, alderman Penington,[18] had treated him because of his hat. My father—little then thinking that it would so soon be his own case—did very much censure the alderman for such behavior, wondering why so wise a man as he would take notice of such a trivial thing as the putting off, or keeping on of a hat; and he did not refrain from blaming him liberally for it.

This gave her a handle, so to speak, by which to take hold of him. And having had a long acquaintance with him, and he having always had a high opinion and respect for her; she, who was a woman of great wisdom, of ready speech, and of a well-resolved spirit, did press him so closely with this argument, that he was utterly at a loss how to defend himself.

After dinner the next day, when they were ready to take coach and return home, she requested my father, that since my company was so little acceptable to him, he would give me permission to go and spend some time with them, where I would be sure to be welcome. At first he was very unwilling to let me go, and made many objections against it. But all of these she answered and removed so clearly, that, not finding any further excuse to allege, he at length left it up to me; and I quickly tipped the scale for going.

We had come to the side of the coach before this was concluded, and I was ready to step in when one of my sisters privately informed my father that I did not have a hat on. This somewhat startled him, for he did not think it fitting that I should leave home and stay abroad without a hat. He therefore whispered to her to fetch me a hat, and he entertained the Peningtons with some discourse in the meantime. But as soon as he saw the hat coming, he would not stay till it came, lest I should put it on in his presence. And so, breaking off his discourse abruptly, he took his leave of them, and hastened inside before the hat was brought to me.

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18 Isaac Penington's Father (Sir Isaac Pennington Sr. 1584-1661) was a well-known English politician and Puritan Congregationalist who sat on the House of Commons from 1640 to 1653 and was Lord Mayor of London in 1642 and 1643. He was a member of the tribunal that convicted Charles I of treason and executed him, and afterwards became a prominent member of Oliver Cromwell's government. With the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, Pennington Sr. was tried for high treason and imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he died awaiting execution on December 16, 1661. (Isaac Penington Jr. dropped an "n" from his name, perhaps so as not to be confused with his father.)

Oh, great was the love and manifold the kindnesses which I received from these my worthy friends, Isaac and Mary Penington, while I abode in their family. They were indeed as affectionate parents and tender nurses to me, in this time of my spiritual childhood. For in addition to their weighty and seasonable counsel, and their exemplary conduct, they furnished me with the means to go to other meetings of Friends in that county, whenever the meeting was not in their own house. And, indeed, the time I stayed with them was so well spent, that it not only yielded great satisfaction to my mind, but turned, in good measure, to my spiritual advantage in the Truth. The Lord was graciously pleased to visit me by his quickening Spirit and life, so that I came to feel the operation of His power in my heart, working out that which was contrary to His will, and giving me, in measure, dominion over it.

* * *

Thomas Ellwood continued in heartfelt submission to the Spirit of Truth and so grew to become an esteemed elder and a very useful member of the early Society of Friends. Joseph Wyeth, in describing his character, says: “He was a man of a comely aspect, of a free and generous disposition, of a courteous and affable temper, and pleasant conversation; a gentleman, a scholar, a true Christian, an eminent author, a good neighbour, and kind friend.” For many years, Thomas Ellwood was very busy with his pen in defending the Truth, publishing several books and treatises in response to the various slanders and misrepresentations that were printed by opponents of the Society. He also published a lengthy historical work on both the Old and New Testaments, called “Sacred History,” and a poetic piece called “Davideis” on the life of David, king of Israel. However he is probably best known for being the original editor and publisher of the Journal of George Fox, which was first printed in 1694. In the year 1713, after apparently suffering from a stroke and becoming paralyzed on the right side of his body, his health quickly gave way and he departed this life in the seventy-fourth year of his age. When very close to his end, in the presence of some friends, he announced in much brokenness of heart, “I am full of joy and peace. My spirit is filled with joy.”

The Life of William Lewis

A Letter of William Lewis

My Dear Friend,

When I consider the depth and strength of self-love in the fallen soul of man, broken off from union with the perfect will of its glorious Creator; and the almost perpetual springing forth of proud desires, branching and spreading in some direction or other from this bitter root; writing or even speaking of

ourselves appears to my view to be an engagement requiring great watchfulness and self-abasement. Under this persuasion I have cautiously avoided written correspondence regarding my own spiritual concerns, and have long believed it would be better for all spiritually minded persons (particularly those who are young) to be less employed in this way than is commonly the case; for I apprehend that many are not sufficiently aware of the subtle workings of him, who, in a disguised appearance, can secretly awaken desires after personal significance, and a strong interest for ourselves in the minds of our friends, desiring them to consider us as people of great religious experience, though we may (with words) profess feelings of weakness and class ourselves with the lowest rank in the school of Christ.

Such being my sentiments, it will not appear strange to you that I have been slow in complying with your request to give you some account of my spiritual experiences and movements. At last, however, I take up my pen for that purpose, and as the engagement will necessarily involve recollections of a very humiliating kind, I hope it will serve as a defense against the dangers already alluded to.

I was born the 17th of the 9th Month, 1753. There was nothing very remarkable attached to my early days that I can now recollect. I say nothing very remarkable because, unhappily, an early desire for, and a pursuit after all that is in the world is (in a greater or lesser degree) the course of every natural man's heart, according to his own particular temperament or bias. My own, I remember, was strongly drawn out after lying vanities, the participation in which was limited only by my meager resources and by parental authority that imposed upon me a close confinement to business, into which I was introduced in my fourteenth year. I possessed little from my previous education besides a knowledge of writing and arithmetic, which was all that my father judged necessary for a plain mechanic (his designation respecting me).

Previous to this period, the only effect of the in-shining of divine Light in my dark heart (that I now remember) was the solemn and impressive authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the beauty that appeared to my view in a true holiness of life, and an entire dedication of heart unto Almighty God. This led me greatly to admire, and even to take some comfort in considering His ancient servants, whose lives were fully devoted to Him; and also to regret the falling short of some others who appeared to have a degree of zeal for His glory. But at the age of fourteen, the convicting power of the precious light was sensibly felt, and condemnation was awfully witnessed in my pursuit of sinful pleasures—none of which were ever indulged in without feeling a dread of that eye, from which I both knew and felt that nothing could be hidden. To lessen this terror, I formed some weak resolutions to resist when next I was tempted, but these determinations being chiefly the effect of fear, and resorted to only to cool the fiery indignation I felt burning in my conscience, were generally broken in the hour of trial. Such feelings continued for a considerable time, and a faint hope was sometimes cherished of one day emerging from the miry clay into which I had plunged my poor soul; but no real effort was made to break off from my evil ways.

My free time was mostly spent in reading plays and novels, and hereby a lazy and weak frame of mind was excited and nourished. I grew exceedingly fond of dress, and indulged more and more in anything

that gratified such a spirit. Useful and instructive books appeared dry and tasteless; business, and almost anything that required mental energy and steady attention, became heavy and irksome. Thus, even the desire to struggle for deliverance, seemed in great measure to disappear. And though a dread of the consequences of continuing in such a course would at times awaken in me, yet I thought it next to an impossibility for anything to loosen my affections from the world. For my poor mind was so tenacious after present enjoyment, and so fearful of any interruption thereof, that I well remember the alarm I felt, lest the doctrine preached by the clergyman of the parish in which I resided, at the time called Christmas, should at all convict or hinder our merriment. For we heard it preached that this holiday time was set apart by the Church for the purpose of piously commemorating the mercy and love of our heavenly Father in sending His dear Son into the world, in order that, by delivering us from its corruptions, our spirits might be fitted and prepared for an abode with Him in the realms of light and purity. Now, I knew that if this doctrine were truly believed and acted upon by the elderly part of the auditors, our merry meetings (which were my chief joy at this season) would necessarily be discontinued; for, even in this dark state (without recurring to any doctrine or precept) I felt an inward conviction of the incompatibility of a desire after worldly delights, with true spiritual hunger; and indeed, supposing that both can subsist together in the same heart involves an incongruity of the greatest magnitude. A refuge, however, from these fears was near at hand. For I then recollected that the same doctrine had been preached, heard, and admired many times before; but this had always ended in both preacher and hearers going away and continuing to throw in their mite for the promotion of feasting, dancing, singing, and mirth. Thus my alarm was quieted, in the hope that things would continue in their usual course, and that we should continue to "chant to the sound of stringed instruments, drink wine out of bowls, and anoint ourselves with the best ointments,"[1] undisturbed by any apprehensions of future woe for our present ease; or at least enabled, by the comfort derived from joining hand in hand, to silence these concerns to a tolerable degree.

Such was my condition at this early period of my life. It continued, without any significant alteration until the year 1775 (the 22nd of my life), when I was powerfully wrought upon by the Spirit of Truth, and suddenly formed an earnest purpose of heart to break off from my sins, and to seek peace with my God in a truly religious course of life. Immediately upon making this resolution, I acted upon it. I threw off my gaudy apparel, and restricted myself to careful moderation in satisfying the real needs of nature—cutting off everything that seemed like unnecessary indulgence in eating, drinking, sleeping, etc., in a word, all that was done for mere recreation. I then strictly endeavored to redeem whatever precious time I could spare when released from outward business, by retiring into my bedroom, or attending a public place of worship. In private, I prayed frequently, earnestly, and at as much length as I could, knowing at this time very little of such christian practices. Being quite uninformed respecting doctrines, I had no predisposition towards any particular sect on account of their distinguishing tenets or forms of public worship; but having long entertained a high opinion of the Wesleyan Methodists from their daily meeting

1 Amos 6:5

together, I frequented their assemblies for a time. After this, at the persuasion of a friend professing among another other sect (i.e. the followers of George Whitfield), I became a hearer at the Tabernacle, and hastily joined in membership there. I call it hastily, because there was no previous examination of their opinions, nor any earnest seeking to the Fountain of wisdom for direction. As much as I remember of my feelings at that time, they were so strongly excited by the main object of my new course—namely, peace with God, and a well grounded hope of being admitted to His heavenly kingdom at last—that very little room was left in my mind to be concerned about points of doctrine. Such a sweetness, for a time, accompanied my religious exercises, that it seemed enough for me to hear of God's mercy in Christ Jesus, and that an experiential participation therein was attainable in this present world. And these things being set forth in a lively manner by those preachers, were so much like marrow and fatness to my soul, that other points of doctrine which were occasionally introduced, made but little impression upon me, and consequently obtained very slight consideration. But this state of mind, little by little, was disturbed on my being questioned as to the ground of my selecting this body of believers from among the rest, and upon what foundation.

I then began to build my religious doctrinal opinions, which naturally coincided with those of my brethren at the Tabernacle, and so became tenacious in that respect. A sectarian spirit soon found entrance, and under its influence I began to search the Scriptures with a view to collect all they contained that would bear an interpretation favorable to the Calvinist system; laboring hard against the force of many scriptural passages which I found impossible to reconcile with that system, and struggling with an inward conviction (regardless how hard I tried to dismiss it) which opposed a belief in the partiality of God, and in a covenant of grace in Christ Jesus which extended to only a few of His fallen creatures, leaving the rest to perish eternally.

Being thus exercised, the good providence of my heavenly Father directed the attention of a piously disposed neighbor to my state; who (much concerned at the danger I appeared to be in of imbibing the doctrines alluded to) put into my hand some deeply spiritual writings, by which my mind was clearly and fully convinced of my error. I soon desisted from my adherence to a doctrine which nothing but sectarian determination had introduced me into; and I saw clearly that in order to maintain it, I had resisted my own convictions, rejected the plain doctrines and declarations of prophets, apostles, and Christ Jesus Himself, and almost totally abandoned every thought of Almighty God that was reconcilable with a belief in His goodness and justice. Oh, what a shocking idea that a good and gracious God would permit myriads upon myriads of intelligent spirits to come into existence, with nothing before them but a wearisome painful passage through a valley of tears, abounding with trouble and sorrow, only to terminate by their entrance into a state still more replete with suffering, where inconceivable woe, horror, and anguish must be their portion to all eternity! How monstrous to believe that *any* of God's creatures should have, by His irrevocable appointment, such a destination! How unworthy a thought of God to suppose that, with the secret purpose of condemning the majority of mankind, He would yet commission prophets and apostles to call them to a participation in His glorious nature, to seek an inheritance in His blessed kingdom, and

at length even send His dear Son among them to invite souls more fervently to unspeakable joy; declaring in the plainest terms that any incapacity for receiving His offer is due entirely to a willful indisposition of heart, saying: "You will not come unto Me that you might have life."[2]

But to return to my particular state. Released from these shackles, my mind found sweet liberty in acknowledging the universal offer of God's love in Christ to His creature man; in receiving the apostolic testimony of His being "no respecter of persons;"[3] and rejecting every opinion and doctrine that was not built on this foundation. The Holy Scriptures were now perused with openness of heart, and laying aside all preconceived opinions, I was soon convinced of the following truths:

1. That the work of religion is wholly inward, and wrought by the operation of God's Holy Spirit.

2. That true worship is also inward, consisting principally in a humble prostration of spirit before the omnipresent Creator, who is the "God of the spirits of all flesh;"[4] "a God near at hand, and not afar off,"[5] "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."[6]

3. That the Almighty God, in the riches of His mercy, has sown into the heart of every man a gift or measure of His living Word; a real seed of His heavenly divine nature.[7]

4. That the arising of this "incorruptible seed" into a predominant power of life in the soul of man is as necessary for the true perception of spiritual things, as a participation in the human nature is necessary for the knowledge of the things of a man. The quickening operation of the Holy Spirit in and upon this unspeakable gift is what gives the soul a renewed sensibility of God's holy presence, and is essential for acts of true worship. This ought therefore to be reverently sought after and waited for, "in the hope that they might find Him, though He is not far from each one of us."[8]

5. That consequently, the faith to which all things are possible, is something of a much deeper nature than a mere assent of the judgment to truths or doctrines, or an agreement with what is called by many, the "Gospel Plan of Salvation," or even with what is contained in the whole creed of systematic divinity.

The spiritual writings before alluded to were undoubtedly used of the Lord to bring greater clarity in these new convictions; but the seal that fully stamped them in my heart was the apostle's testimony at Athens,

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2 John

3 Acts 10:34

4 Numbers 16:22,27:16

5 Jeremiah 23:23

6 Acts 17:28

7 Which can be resisted and rejected, or "received with meekness" unto the saving of the soul. See James 1:21; Matthew 13:3-9; John 1:9; Romans 1:19.

8 Acts 17:27

where he sets forth the creature's true relation to his glorious Creator, the high origin and destination of man, and his consequent proper exercise and glorious privilege, namely: "that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being." Oh, that expression, "That they might grope for him!" How forcibly does it impress the necessity of a deep introversion of spirit, in seeking access to the Fountain of purity and love.

With this view of things, and under these impressions, the manner of worship, as well as the verbal communications at the Tabernacle soon became unsatisfactory to me. I then began to think of, and finally resorted to, the meetings of the Society of Friends, chiefly on the ground of their gatherings being conducted in a way that was more compatible with my convictions than those of any other religious society that I had knowledge of; though I did also have some expectations from the ministry among them, believing that those who were really called to the work could directly receive what was suitable to the states of those to whom they ministered. The vocal communications I heard among Friends were direct, convincing, and very clear upon many points about which I had been troubled. At times they were deeply spiritual, enforced with power, and accompanied with something which conveyed to my feelings that they were the result of living experience. All of this tended to deepen my recent impressions, and I began to act in correspondence with them. In my hours of retirement, instead of singing, uttering long lists of petitions, and reading, I began to wait in silence, with earnest desires after inward solemnity and prostration of spirit before the Holy One, longing after that quickening power which contrites and prepares the heart to receive divine communications, and upon receiving them, returns all to the great Giver of every perfect gift.

Ceasing, in this manner, from so much creaturely activity, and my attention being confined more to what passed within my own breast, a painful conviction quickly ensued of my being in reality (with regard to spiritual things) "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked."[9] That precious light which had previously visited me with sweet drawings, now allured me into the wilderness and showed me the "desert land" of my own heart; and it was at this time that the dark workings of unbelief and impatience began to suggest to me that the Lord had surely abandoned me. I then began to call into question the little spiritual experience that I had known prior to this, and at length considered it mostly the effect of a heated imagination. Distress and anguish of soul quickly took ground, and I found myself writing bitter things against myself almost continually. Then, refusing every hope of comfort, a door was opened for depression; oh, it entered my very veins, and I soon let go all of my confidence in God. The bitter cup of despair was tasted; and considering myself forsaken of my God, I cried and sobbed aloud from disquietude of soul.

As you must assume, I could not continue long in such a condition as this; relief would naturally be sought for in some way. The cruel and subtle one was near, and thoughts like these were presented to my

9 Revelation 3:17

mind: “I have deceived my soul in imagining myself to be an object of divine mercy, and in attributing my first feelings and hopes to the operations of grace. My heart and affections are still earthly and sensual, though my imagination for a time fondly pictured a more heavenly interior. I have also deceived my brethren and the world in making a religious profession. And now, seeing myself in the true light, I must from now on show myself as I really am, and no longer continue as a wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

To a mind weary and comfortless, in which the seed of life was not sufficiently rooted so as to enable me to patiently endure tribulation, this bait of the enemy was unhappily swallowed. And after some months of deep wading, or rather plunging in dark waters, in an evil hour I yielded to the suggestion that “rest was good”[10] no matter how it was obtained. The land of my heart which I had before viewed as a howling wilderness and a valley of tears, now seemed more pleasant and easy, and so I again bowed my neck to the yoke of sin and became a slave of forced labor. Religious restraint was then in great measure thrown aside, although for a time I kept within the bounds of morality, and maintained such order as was common in my father’s house, going with my family on the first day of the week to their place of worship, called the church, and hearing some of them read the Scriptures. But alas, these bounds soon became painfully narrow to my selfish will and the workings of my natural propensities. And when I departed from the one restraining power, they awoke with strength in my enslaved heart and gradually took the reins, so that I was indeed led captive at the will of the cruel tempter of mankind. In time, no desire to resist temptation remained in me, but every new path that opened anything pleasant to my view was eagerly pursued. I resorted to taverns, and gaming (the chief pleasure there) became peculiarly attractive, so that whole nights were devoted to this destructive vice. In short, sad as it is to relate, I became a complete libertine, and my last state was now much worse than my first.

Before I proceed further in reciting the consequences of my vile apostasy, it may be best, in order to give a clear view of what really took place, to go back a little to the gloomy state and exercises which preceded it. As I have already said, my first resolution to devote myself to Almighty God was sincere. I really intended, from that day forward, to look singly unto Him for my portion. But my vows were made hastily, without counting (and indeed without knowing) the cost of discipleship. I was also in a state of considerable ignorance concerning myself, particularly with regard to my instability of spirit, my fearfulness of mind which shrunk away from suffering, and my tenacity in the pursuit of present enjoyments, whatever object was in view. Humility, the main requisite for laying a sure foundation for stability and real spiritual advancement, was but little regarded. Great things were desired and expected from the outset, and human emotion was cherished as a mark of true zeal, and mistakenly thought to be a feature of the renewed and pure image.

When, therefore, I was led to look inward, and became more intimately acquainted with myself; when I came to some discernment with regard to the difference between creaturely heat and divine light;

10 Genesis 49:15

and when I was made to feel the convicting power of the latter, and see therein my condition to be so far below what I had thought it to be; then there was great distress that arose from the fleshly part, which gradually gaining ground, gave the enemy an advantage, and at length a triumph over me. Self-love having nothing to feed upon, soon became weary of privation, and was burdened under such a humiliating fast. Retirement for private devotions, having been divested of all that had at first given it a sweet relish, became irksome to me, and excuses for omitting it were easily allowed, if not sought for. One, I very well remember; namely, I began to converse upon religious subjects during the times which I had formerly allotted to private devotion. But conviction soon followed, and I saw that I resorted to this as a relief from the weight of my own proper exercise and burden. This brought condemnation and an increase of discouragement, and my confidence naturally diminished. Acts of rebellion against clear conviction in other things soon followed, until, at length, I entirely let go of my hope. The heavens were as brass over my head, and having no expectation of any prayer of mine being able to pass through, it ultimately produced the effects already alluded to. Thus you see, my friend, there was a "drawing back"[11] in the hour of tribulation, instead of "keeping the word of patience."[12] Divine love had indeed allured me, and brought me into the wilderness, into the valley of Achor (i. e. trouble), which in His wisdom was the allotted place for me to dwell for a time. If I had continued there until all that hindered my progress towards victory over my soul's enemies had died their appointed death—hoping and quietly waiting for the Lord's salvation—I doubtless would have been given vineyards from there[13] and sung of the Lord's salvation, which He can surely give to the truly humble and poor in spirit, even in the night season.

But, sorrowful to relate! I now became a slave to my own natural propensities. Unable to bear personal reflection, company was eagerly and continually sought after, and every means was used to silence the voice of conscience, which was still awfully loud at times. For although I thus sought to flee from the presence of the Lord of heaven and earth, yet such was His pity and mercy to my poor soul, that He forsook me not utterly. In the secret of my heart, I was still pierced with the arrows of His convicting light, and pressed sore with a horrible dread of death and judgment to come. Nevertheless, for the space of twelve years, relief was sought only by immersing myself deeper and deeper into libertine pursuits; so that I courted even those vices to which I had no particular leaning; and (if there is such a thing) I tempted the tempter, and indeed became his "lawful captive."[14] Oh, is there any condition more replete with internal horror and gloom than that of such a backslider?

In the course of this long night of apostasy, some significant events took place. I married, and had several children. I also formed a promising connection in trade, in which there was a fair prospect of providing for my family. But, not being sufficiently alive to the weight of the solemn obligations that I was now

11 Hebrews 10:38-39

12 Revelation 3:10 KJV

13 Hosea 2:14-15

14 Isaiah 49:24

under, pleasure was generally pursued with eagerness, particularly gaming; and business and family duties becoming increasingly insipid, were greatly neglected.

Thus I went on, apparently carefree and happy, but in reality miserable, until the year 1789, the thirty-sixth year of my age, when it pleased my long-suffering and merciful God to visit me with severe illness. Wholly confined by this, I was now left to my own thoughts and reflections on my past course, and made to awfully feel the state it had brought me to; that is, to be "without hope and without God in the world."[15] "Destruction and misery (I knew) were in my paths,"[16] and I was soon convinced that there was no hope of finding the path of peace except by turning with full purpose of heart unto Him from whom I had so deeply revolted. A partial reformation I knew was odious in the sight of my omniscient Creator, especially for such a one as myself. My former views concerning a truly religious condition, and the deep inward work that was necessary to pass through in order to attain it, all returned. I saw the cost of real discipleship with a crucified Master, and the sight was terrifying to my long-corrupted and debased spirit. The "world's dreaded laugh" was also no small thing to take into account; for by this time, I was known to many of various classes in civil society, and through marriage connections I was intimate with some who lived in much grandeur in manners and estates. To all of this was added a strong apprehension that my natural instability would ever be prevalent, and that I would never attain to a faithfulness of spirit. The struggle was deep and painful, but at length, strength was granted to renew my covenant with a good and gracious God who had long waited for my return, and who now loudly called me to exalt Him in such a way as would make me capable of a participation in His living mercies and tender forgiveness of my manifold sins.

Accordingly, on the 26th day of the 9th month, 1789, in the sight of a heart-searching God, I took up a resolution, from that time, to earnestly seek for peace with Him; to break off from all my evil habits, and enter upon a truly religious course, earnestly praying for strength to perform my vows, and dreading nothing as much as unfaithfulness, or an abatement of the fervent desires which I then felt to return to my heavenly Father's house. The Lord graciously regarded my petitions. He delivered me from that horror at the thought of death which had long been deeply felt in my soul. Thus I gathered a little strength, and my head was lifted up, at times, in hope. And in the beginning of the year 1790, I was also favored with a return of bodily strength, so that matters both inward and outward, appeared more cheerful than for many years past. But oh, I little imagined what a cloud was gathering, and was about to overwhelm me in the deepest gloom!

* * *

[Our dear friend here enters into particular details which cannot, with propriety, be thrown before the public. Suffice to say, that the gathering cloud burst heavily upon him. His domestic comforts were

15 Ephesians 2:12

16 Romans 3:16

broken up by several very afflictive circumstances; added to which, (by the sudden decease of his father about the same time, and some very unexpected consequences ensuing) his concerns in trade were so seriously affected, that although he continued for several years, he ultimately found it necessary to relinquish his business entirely, with the loss of nearly all of his property, and to resort to the employment of an accountant for his subsistence. But, those who knew him at this period can bear testimony to his christian demeanor under these deeply trying events. And there is good ground to believe that, by his patience and resignation under them, they became a blessing to him.]

* * *

In what thus outwardly befell me, I think it was verified, that sooner or later the backslider in heart is made to eat the fruit of his own ways, and that many stripes are prepared for those who, knowing their Master's will, rebel against it.[17] I now come to the relation of the exercises and convictions which led to my joining the people with whom I am now in religious fellowship.

My convictions concerning religion and the worship of Almighty God continued the same as they were in my earlier days, and consequently the principles and practices of every society of christians were quite different from my sentiments, except for those of Friends. Yet believing the division of the church into sects to be the consequence of a departure from the pure Spirit of Christ, I strongly questioned for a time the propriety of my joining any one of them exclusively; and so I determined to seek God in secret for His guidance in this matter, occasionally attending the different assemblies, but mostly those of the Friends and Methodists. To many, this conduct likely appeared to be the effect of an unsettled judgment; but that was not exactly the case. For I stood upon the ground before-mentioned, still believing in the necessity of the holy quickening power of God to revive in man the lost holy image in which he was first created, and that Jesus Christ was this power, inwardly revealed in man. Consequently, looking to anything short of this for help seemed to me to be clinging to something founded on that covenant which "made nothing perfect,"[18] because it stood in exterior observations which could do nothing effectual as pertaining to the conscience. The baptism, therefore, that truly saves, was (in my view) such a union with the world-renouncing Spirit of Jesus Christ as gives the victory over sin and the world in the present time; thus the apostle says, "As many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."[19] "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, etc."[20] This I took to be the true spiritual baptism.

The supper of the Lord (so called) which Christ Himself enjoined, was certainly an eating of "His body" and a "drinking of His blood,"[21] (for as Paul says elsewhere, "there is a spiritual body"[22]). But here again,

17 Luke 12:47

18 Hebrews 9:9

19 Galatians 3:27

20 Galatians 5:24

21 John 6:53

all exterior acts appear very insignificant, seeing that Christ declared this participation of His flesh and blood to be a union with Him of the same nature as His union with His heavenly Father: "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."[23] Now, if this living union is the thing signified, can we then suppose that, when partaking of the Passover with His apostles, Christ intended to appoint the observance of some new outward and visible sign, instead of this? Would He, as a High Priest made "according to the power of an endless life,"[24] minister to His church in the same way that priests did under the law, whose gifts and sacrifices, we read, "could not make those who performed the service perfect, because they stood only in foods and drinks and various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed upon them until the time of reformation?"[25] According to Luke, Christ's words indeed were, "This do, in remembrance of Me;" but neither Matthew nor John, who were present, take any notice of this injunction. Could they possibly have omitted the mention of it if they had considered it a binding law upon the church according to its literal meaning, or a new institution established by the Lord himself to be observed as solemnly as the Passover had been? I cannot think this to be at all likely. It seems rather that the injunction, as well as the declaration, "This is my body, etc." was intended to convey something more spiritual in its nature than a mere outward act, which any unregenerate man might perform; even that to which the apostle Paul alluded when he said, "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."[26]

Now, that the first converts held their "love feasts"[27] in commemoration of our Lord's breaking outward bread (in which they had the sanction of the Apostles themselves) is undoubtedly true. But may we not reasonably conclude that in this, as well as in many other outward observances, they conceded to the weak state of their brethren, and their strong attachment to Mosaic rites? That they did so in some particulars (like circumcision), is very evident. And as to the remarks of the apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth, concerning the abuses that had prevailed in the manner of keeping those feasts of charity, nothing in this passage seems to indicate a permanently abiding institution, nor do the apostle's words seem to be directed to a very mature state in the spiritual life—for he says he "could not speak unto them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."[28]

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22 1 Corinthians 15:44

23 John 6:56-57

24 Hebrews 7:16

25 Hebrews 9:10

26 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

27 Jude 1:12

28 1 Corinthians 3:1

Concerning some of the other cardinal points in which the Society of Friends differs from most other bodies of christians—namely, those of war, swearing, and the nature of true gospel ministry—I had occasion of publicly manifesting my unity with these things long before I became a member, or ever knew that I would be. Plainness and simplicity in apparel, manners, and speech appeared to me, from my earliest convictions, to be quite in line with the precepts and example of our Holy Redeemer; and I well knew that the vanity of my own heart was what induced conformity to the world in these respects. The practice of self-denial in these things, therefore, appeared appropriate and necessary. And here it comes to mind to say something about the wide departure from the simplicity which is in Christ, and from the guidance of His meek, loving, Holy Spirit, which is at present so glaring in the outward and visible church; so that in general, a total disregard both of the letter and spirit of the Gospel of Christ is, with respect to these points, both allowed and even defended.

Attention to our manner of dress, as being in any way relevant to our conduct before Almighty God, or to our walking before Him in humility, righteousness, and holiness, is ridiculed by many. Nevertheless, it is a subject which one of the holy prophets tied to Israel's deep revolt against their Creator, declaring the impending judgments of God on this account, (see Isaiah 3:18-24). Another, among wisdom's children in the days of old, declares that "a man's attire, gait, and excessive laughter show what he is."[29] And if we add to this, the plain and positive injunctions of the apostles Paul and Peter,[30] which as expressly forbid attention to the adorning of the person in what is worn, as the eighth commandment prohibits increasing wealth by fraud in anything that is done, must we not plainly see that a follower of Christ is called upon to bear, by their example, a full testimony against conformity to the spirit of the world? And is it not apparent that the spirit of this world pursues, through fashionable dress, a significance and honor in appearance that goes far beyond what our bodily necessities require?

Respecting plainness of speech, I have told you that, to a certain extent, the propriety of this was in agreement with my previous judgment. So it was, but some time elapsed before I felt it necessary to adopt it so fully as Friends do.[31] What led me to a close and deep consideration concerning the ground on which they believe it right to differ from others in this respect was, to the best of my recollection, nearly as follows. After two years of seclusion from all public places of worship (except when I was particularly invited to any), in my hours of private retirement, which were then many and daily, it forcibly came to my view that a course so solitary or reclusive was not in accordance with either the spirit of the gospel, the plain injunctions of the apostles, or the practice of believers in any age of the church. I saw that brotherly union and fellowship were the very essence of the gospel spirit, which breathes goodwill to all,

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29 Ecclesiasticus 19:30

30 1 Peter 3:3; 1 Timothy 2:9

31 Here William Lewis speaks specifically of the manner in which the English language was being corrupted at that time by addressing individual persons with plural pronouns in order to show partiality or flattery. The principle, however, of honoring the Lord with "every word that proceeds out of our mouth" (Ephesians 4:29; James 3:2-12) is a timeless one, and the Spirit of Truth will make application in the hearts of every true disciple regardless of language and culture.

loves without dissimulation, naturally cares for the spiritual welfare of others, and bears their burdens. Opening my mind more to these considerations, they soon pressed weightily upon me, and my thoughts turned with desires after religious fellowship. At my first glance that way, the Society of Friends appeared to be the only one to whom I could possibly join myself; but it seemed appropriate that my judgment and practice should first be altogether in agreement with theirs; and with the exception of language, they were already nearly so. But the very idea of a change in this particular caused such a shrinking back, and such a sense of dread, as induced an attempt on my part to sift their arguments and prove them groundless. How far I tried to evade the force of what they advanced on this subject I do not now recall; only that ultimately, a diligent search in the Scriptures concerning this matter was exclusively resorted to.

From about this period (1793), I began to have a fixed apprehension that I would fall short of divine requiring if the cross were not submitted to in respect to my language. Nevertheless, I continued shrinking back and struggling for nearly two years, during which time many prayers (with tears) were offered up to a gracious God for guidance in the matter, and for strength to bear all He might see fit to lay upon me for the reduction of my natural will, and the humiliation of my soul before Him. At length, in much trepidation of spirit, I submitted to adopt what Friends call “the plain language,” whereby, another stumbling-block was removed out of my path.

From this time onwards (the year 1795) I attended their meetings regularly, and about three years afterwards, on applying to be admitted as a member of the Society, I was received as such by the monthly meeting of my native city.

—WILLIAM LEWIS

* * *

The foregoing narrative of the life and religious experience of William Lewis was written by himself in the year 1797 in compliance with the earnest request of a close friend. It was given to this individual with the strict injunction that it should not be published or even copied for private use during the life of the author. No doubt, having experienced firsthand how the heart is “deceitful above all things, desperately wicked,” and prone to backsliding, he was unwilling to bring reproach upon the Truth by publishing his testimony before knowing for certain that he had held out to the end. He nevertheless lived nineteen years after the time of this writing, and continued a faithful follower of Christ and a very useful member and eventually minister of the Society of Friends until his decease in 1816. A collection of his letters were gathered and published in the year 1819, from which the following two samples are extracted.

* * *

TO A RELIGIOUSLY DISPOSED YOUNG MAN.

Dear Friend,

The interest excited in my mind during the personal interactions we have previously had relating to your eternal welfare, now kindles with more than usual strength on my being made acquainted with your present circumstances; and under the feeling thereof, I in brotherly love take up my pen.

My heart is glad in the hope it feels of your standing open to the manifestations of divine light, and yielding full obedience to all its requirings in the gradual unfoldings of your heavenly Father's good, acceptable and perfect will concerning you. This hope, I say, springs in me, seeing you have already beheld the necessity of no longer conforming to the present evil world, both in its pomps and vanities, and its superstitious forms in spiritual things, in order to experience that renewal of mind which must be witnessed before we can clearly distinguish the voice of the good Shepherd from that of the stranger. This much you have already seen, and have formed the blessed resolution to desist from further conference with flesh and blood, by yielding obedience to the heavenly vision, and daring for Christ's sake to become a fool in the estimation of the wise of this world. Now it remains for you to "acknowledge Him in *all your ways,*"[32] as He draws you to Himself; and be not discouraged if the way which is opened before you appears rough, and you see but few traveling therein. Confide in the promise that "your sandals shall be iron and brass, and as your day is, so shall your strength be."[33]

The present appears to me to be a time of most gracious visitation to you—a day which the Lord has made, in which He has passed by and looked upon you, and sweetly revealed Himself unto you. Oh may you return love for love, while this day of power continues, seeing it is only therein that a willingness is wrought in our souls to make covenant with the Lord by such sacrifices as He may require. To a heart fully yielded to this divine attraction, nothing will appear too dear to part with, nor will anything seem too painful to endure for the sake of Him who has purchased us at the price of His own precious blood. It is written, "Love is as strong as death; many waters cannot quench it, neither can floods drown it;"[34] but that death which has passed on all men will ever be found a power that nothing but love can dethrone; and from this power of death flow such waters as can and do quench all man-made fires and creaturely zeal in every form.

Now then, dear friend, is your time to "arise and shake yourself from the dust of the earth," and to "loose yourself from the bands of your neck,"[35] and follow on to know the deliverer of Zion. Now is your time to "bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar,"[36] and to aspire after a part and inheritance with those who have both heard and obeyed the call, "Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have

32 Proverbs 3:5

33 Deuteronomy 33:25

34 Song of Solomon 8:6-7

35 Isaiah 52:2

36 Ps. 118:27

made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."[37] Oh I do believe that if the called of the Lord in this day did but unreservedly give up their hearts to Him, and in simplicity rely upon *His living power within them,* they would soon become wiser than their teachers, and the light of His living and active Word would shine forth with a luster that would eclipse much of what is now (by many) called gospel brightness. But alas, the cry of "lo here," or "lo there," is more listened to than that inward voice which first called them. And when their "first love"[38] (which was felt in its precious influences) begins to abate, too often the mind settles into a systematic theology with various observances and ordinances of man's invention—a rest far short of that which is prepared for the children of God.

In view of these things, it is a great comfort to me that you are disposed to make way in your heart for the reception of gospel truth unmixed with creaturely conceptions, and having seen that "it is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing," you have formed the wise resolution to wait for, and listen to "Him that speaks from heaven,"[39] whose Word is with power, and is (as He Himself declared) "Spirit and Life."[40] This does indeed give me great satisfaction, having long been convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that nothing short of this living power can dislodge Satan from our hearts, or dispossess the world and the flesh of their hold on our affections and desires. And having been thus taught in adorable mercy to step a little forward in this new and living way, and seeing Truth itself has declared there is no other way to the Father, it is no marvel then that a concern rests upon me to earnestly recommend it to all my fellow creatures, especially such as are setting out on their heavenly journey.

Hold fast then, without wavering, what you have of this faith, I entreat you; and in simplicity of heart yield yourself up to its workings. Turn a deaf ear to the commonplace arguments in favor of the current systems and outward modes of religion, and rather avoid much discussion about them. By a real and constant turning inward of your heart unto God, you will find a renewal and increase of that strength which will enable you so to let your light shine before men, as to give undoubted evidence of its origin, and thereby convince opposers more powerfully than by argument. By thus accustoming yourself to continually seek access to your heavenly Father, you will become more and more convinced of the emptiness of worldly pursuits and creaturely enjoyments, and a true relish for spiritual things will rise superior to all "lying vanities."[41] By this also you will find your mind enlarged, and the mysteries of the kingdom of God opened by Him who keeps the "key of David" in His own possession. Labor then, my dear friend, to retire out of and turn from earthly objects (as much as the duties of your outward calling will admit), seeking always that bread which comes down from God out of heaven. And do not let your allowed recreations be such as have any tendency to deaden your aspirations after God; keeping in mind the declaration of the

37 Ps. 50:5

38 Revelation 2:4

39 Hebrews 12:25

40 John 6:63

41 Jonah 2:8

apostle, “He that says he abides in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked.”[42]

In taking up a resolution to appear in sober attire and to adopt simplicity of manners, I trust you have followed, and not run before, your spiritual Guide. Truly it is matter of surprise to me that spiritually-awakened persons of all denominations do not see the necessity of bearing a faithful testimony against the manifest pride and vanity in these things. If any then think it strange that you should step out of the common path in this respect, they may be answered in the language of David: “Is there not a cause?”[43]

Though I have said much, there is yet one matter concerning which I do not feel quite easy to be silent, and that is the necessity of “counting the cost”[44]—that cost which all true disciples of a crucified Lord must submit to in order to attain the pearl of great price. Indeed, it is necessary to fully understanding the apostle’s declaration that “we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.”[45] Setting out with this in view, you will be in some degree armed against the assaults and temptations of our cruel foe. For when the ability to sense divine favor is, in wisdom, withdrawn from those who have begun their journey in the light, and when the darkness that remains then becomes more manifest, the enemy frequently tempts the soul with the suggestion that all that it formerly enjoyed and believed in was a delusive imagination. And at these times, when the strength of evil is deeply felt, there is a disposition in the humble to listen too much to the voice of the enemy, and to allow the taunting question, “Where is your God now?”—rather than, in naked faith, to embrace the encouraging language of the prophet, “Who among you walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and lean upon his God.”[46] Nevertheless, I firmly believe that the truly devoted soul, who in sincerity has set his heart to follow the Lamb wheresoever He goes, will be enabled to abide this hour and power of darkness, and that love to their suffering Savior will produce a willingness to go with Him over the Brook Kidron and take their allotted portion of that cup which, in drinking, caused Him to sweat great drops of blood. And so being strengthened by this almighty Redeemer and Preserver of men in whatever trials He may see fit to dispense, may this language be uttered in humble resignation, “Not my will, but yours be done.”

This last comment might appear to some to be ill-timed and discouraging; to me, however, it seems safe. We must not think ourselves more wise than the great and compassionate Teacher who was well acquainted with the timidity of His little ones, and who, while they were yet in a state of infancy, told them plainly that all pretensions to discipleship were vain unless there was a willingness to deny self and bear the daily cross. I have never felt unity with a certain form of fleshly wisdom which, in endeavoring to enlist soldiers under Christ’s banner, endeavors to allure with temporary gratification while keeping

42 1 John 2:6

43 1 Samuel 17:29

44 Luke 14:28

45 Acts 14:22

46 Isaiah 50:10

out of view the hardness which must be endured. And now, my dear friend, I conclude, commending you to God and the Word of His grace, as being that which is able to build you up. May you be favored to increase in the strength of the Lord and in the power of His might, so as to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

I affectionately bid you farewell,

—WILLIAM LEWIS

* * *

TO A YOUNG MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Beloved friend,

At an early period of your life, my pen was used to convey to you something of that love which encompasses all God's intelligent creation in its wide embrace, and which (being pure in nature and origin) seeks glory and virtue for all; directing them to such holiness of heart and life as capacitates them for union and communion with the Fountain of all good.

Neither lapse of time, nor lack of personal interaction, has erased my first impressions concerning you. I still remember the breathings of your spirit to the God of your life at a time when you were led to consider the shortness and uncertainty of time, and the awful condition of those who, on their deathbeds, feel their lack of Christ. Then a lively concern arose in you to improve your talent, and to devote your time to the blessed purpose of seeking, by prayer in your closet, communion with the Beloved of souls. I well remember how, when looking unto Jesus, you were enabled to see the necessity of a more frequent and earnest turning to Him in this manner, and a foregoing of those foolish amusements in which people spend most of their precious hours. Thus yielding to the sweet attraction of everlasting love, you were carried as in the bosom of Israel's tender shepherd; and tasting His kindness yourself, you did manifest to others that "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He (still) ordains praise," testifying to all present that "We must consider this world as given to us merely to prepare us for the next."

All this, I say, dear friend, is now remembered and fresh in my mind. Bear with me then, if under this impression, I suggest to you the danger we are all in of departing from the fervent and chaste "love of our betrothal," unless we maintain a most determined purpose of heart, strengthened by daily watching and earnest prayer to Him who alone is able to keep us from falling. Danger is on every side, and continues through the several stages of our christian journey and warfare, from the combined forces of this world's allurements and the desires of our fallen nature.

If then, after taking steps in the "way to Zion," and attaining some knowledge (by living experience) of

both the Lord's goodness and our own weakness and depravity; if still, through the treachery of our own spirits, we are all in continual danger of falling away, how much more may the crafty tempter of souls draw aside the youthful and inexperienced mind? For young persons are peculiarly beset with desires within and temptations without, and if there is not a constant endeavor to flee from both,[47] these will so wage war against the soul as to gradually bring down all its strength, and rob and spoil it of its peace with God. It is in this stage of your life that I now address you in the love of my spirit; and knowing that there are also many dangers that are unique to your present situation, I cannot help but feel a strong concern on your account, lest the first green buddings of the plant of righteousness in your soul should inhale the infectious breath of the world's spirit, and so be nipped before the blossom fully opens. Or, to change the metaphor, that by forsaking the pure light of Jesus Christ, "your silver should become dross," and "your wine be mixed with water."[48] Nothing, my friend, can preserve you from this but a single eye to the glory of God in all your thoughts, desires and purposes, and an entire dependance upon the quickening, cleansing and illuminating grace which is in Christ Jesus. Without this grace, we can do nothing that can kindle or keep alive one spark of heavenly life, or wash the stain of sin from our immortal souls. And without this single eye, the heart is ever divided and unstable, our faithfulness is as the morning cloud that goes away, and we will have no capacity to receive that shining which makes "the whole body full of light."[49]

Oh this power of God that truly makes Jesus Lord in us, and "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption!"[50] What an error to expect help from anything short of this! For seeing that the need we have of a Savior lies in our deep fall from the holy image of God in which He first created man, into an earthly and sensual life; seeing also that nothing can possibly effect a real change in our state but that same power which first gave life to all intelligent spirits; it is therefore vain and ineffectual to expect the work of redemption from any name (or power) under heaven but that of Christ—the living Word by which all things were at first created. Thus, in all our seeking of God, let us seek Him as a life-giving Spirit from heaven, who alone can raise our inner man up to a heavenly place or state; and who, having so raised it, can keep from falling again. Let us seek him as a seed of the divine nature, a kingdom or manifestation of God within us, "that we might grope for Him"[51] and indeed find Him to be "Immanuel, God with us."[52] I trust I am not speaking to you altogether in an unknown tongue; but that from your attentive perusal of the holy Scriptures, with an understanding measurably enlightened, and a heart opened to receive the truth as it is in Jesus, you are convinced that what was lost in the first Adam, and that which the Lord from heaven, the life-giving Spirit, revives in man, is a state of life, even a divine life, that is according to

47 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Peter 2:11

48 Isaiah 1:22

49 Matthew 6:22-23

50 1 Corinthians 1:30

51 Acts 17:27

52 Matthew 1:23

the image of Him who at the first created him therein.[53]

When it is at last known and felt, that *life*—the life of God—is what we are alienated from and dead to, how many other things dwindle into insignificance! How weak and vain appears the least reliance upon opinions, creeds, modes of worship, and particularly upon man's natural abilities, however highly cultivated! Under this conviction, all is accounted less than nothing and vanity, apart from the manifestation of that life which is the light of men, which quickens and comforts with the sensible evidence of its indeed being in us and we in it, joined to, and one spirit with our redeeming Lord, "hidden with Christ in God."[54]

Now, what is it that prepares the heart for the full reception of such doctrine as this? Nothing less than a hunger and thirst after righteousness; a sincere and ardent longing after that purity of heart in which we can now enjoy, and ultimately see our God. For in seeking and striving after this state, the soul is soon painfully aware of the insufficiency, not only of outward observances or the help of man, but also of its own efforts (however sincere and earnest) to effect a real change, or to lay the axe to the deep root of a fallen nature. With this new discernment and sensibility, the earnest seeker is soon driven from all carnal dependence on this or that thing, and a cry is raised which reaches the ear of Omnipotence. Out of the depths of a contrite spirit, the eye of the soul is then directed unto Him who dwells in the heavens, even to Him who remains the High Priest of His church, and who alone communicates the one thing needful, that is, "the *power* of an endless life."[55] Therefore, the real and constant longing of the soul after heavenly purity, becomes its capacity for true illumination, and its certain way thereto. And when this is accompanied with true resignation and submission of the creaturely will to that of the Creator, in which both become "one spirit," it has the promise of true discernment from Christ Himself, who said, "If *anyone wills to do His will,* he shall know concerning the doctrine,"[56] etc.

Find here, my dear friend, your school and your true exercise therein, if you desire to advance in real christian knowledge and experience. Ponder deeply these words of your Lord, and yield your judgment to all the consequences that necessarily flow from them. Oh that there were more students in this inward christian academy!—then there would be a real benefit in the church from the labors of workmen who themselves had been taught by God. Such ministers, who first knowing in their own experience that His kingdom (or divine life restored to the soul) is not in word but in power, would express a uniform concern that the faith of their hearers stand solely in this power. And on the other hand, seeing clearly how a laborious, brain-studied and scholastic knowledge, clothed with the most attractive display of rhetoric and oratory, can go no further than a ministration of the letter, they would willingly and naturally leave such performances to the wise of this world. But where, or in what church shall we find such pastors

53 Colossians 3:10

54 Colossians 3:3

55 Hebrews 7:16

56 John 7:17

who are willing to forego all the honor that is lavished upon the gifted and eloquent? Were such simple ones again to arise, resting all hope of helping their hearers on the power of Christ, it is to be feared such preachers would not have many hearers.

Perhaps you are a little surprised at my speaking in this way of the present state of the church. I am aware that a different view of things is generally accepted, but that does not shake my judgment in the least. I desire not to exceed appropriate limits on this subject, so I will just touch upon one or two other marks of degeneracy that I feel are too obvious to be overlooked. Can there be a stronger delusion in judgment than to suppose that the seeking of riches, honor and the enjoyment of pleasure in this present world is compatible with the example of our holy Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Is it not apparent, rather, that the first great deceiver and foe of mankind has spread his delusive influence in the human mind, seeing that the bulk of professing christians believe they have taken Christ for their Lawgiver and pattern, even while they are not only allowing but seeking ease and elegance in their dwellings, worldly honors and distinctions, excess of bread, and in some instances an "abundance of idleness"[57] in their daily lives? Though we have eyes, are we yet so blind as not to see the open and glaring contradiction exhibited between the allowed practices and customs of the day, and the plain doctrines and example of our world-renouncing Lord? Surely the enemies of the Lord Jesus, the deists and infidels of every class, are more quick-sighted than this, and are therefore amply furnished for their sarcastic criticism and derision. "These so-called pilgrims and strangers in the earth," they say, "seem to have well-reconciled themselves to this foreign land, though they claim to be so far from their native country and Father's house. Indeed they seem to sit down here like us, each under their own vine and under his own fig tree. And though they say we are to be forever separated at the end of the journey—they raised up to everlasting glory, and we consigned to shame and everlasting contempt—yet we really appear to be traveling in the same direction, walking in great harmony as friends."

Oh how long shall the enemies of the cross of Christ have cause thus to triumph? How long shall they speak proud and contemptuous things against the Lord, because of the occasion given by those who on the one hand profess adherence to doctrines which demand the crucifixion of the flesh, and on the other hand are seen making full provision for the gratification of its desires! My eye, when fixed on these things, affects my heart, and as I watch, sitting alone as a sparrow on the house-top, my inward language often accords with that of the Prophet, "The faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men,"[58] etc.

What has been already mentioned relates to practice; but oh, what shall be said with respect to doctrine, even some of that doctrine which is preached and enforced by those who assume the title of evangelical teachers and gospel ministers? To teach, for example, the appropriateness of using the devouring sword,

57 Ezekiel 16:49

58 Micah 7:2

spreading desolation, destruction, and every kind of horror among the Lord's intelligent creatures through war, and suggesting the compatibility of this with the spirit of the meek, passive, loving, suffering Lamb of God, and with His precepts and commands. Or to charge the God of love with partiality, by declaring that His offer of redemption in Christ Jesus is limited—reaching only to a chosen few; while the rest, myriads upon myriads, in every generation, born heirs of Adam's pollution and misery, are left to perish eternally, never having been designated in the secret counsel of God to be included in His covenant, nor given that redeeming power which alone can deliver from eternal death.

These are some of the marks that the present is, I believe, a dark day—a day in which the children of the light should indeed hold fast to the Word of truth, having no fellowship with such shocking errors. It seems to me very desirable, that even beginners in religion should have a clear view of the time in which their lot has been cast. For indeed, this same sort of blindness so hardened the hearts of the teachers, rulers, and professors of Judaism, as to render them insensible to the combined force of miraculous power, heavenly wisdom, and divine love, united and continually manifested in Jesus Christ their long promised Messiah. Apprehending their orthodoxy to be enlightened and their practices pure, they fled from His convicting light in their own conscience. And though at times they were sensible that no man ever spoke as He did, yet all was rejected, and their Redeemer's doctrines and miracles were despised, because the chief pharisees and rulers "believed Him not." That this old leaven of the religious leaders is too prevalent in the present day, must, I think, be obvious to all seeing eyes. Resting upon the current opinions of orthodoxy of whatsoever community we may be members, is as dangerous now as it was formerly. I therefore cannot help but think that a clear view of the "signs of our times" is needful for all who truly desire to come out of spiritual Babylon and make straight steps towards mount Zion.

The latter part of this communication was not in my view when I first sat down to write you. Were I to reason upon it, my faith might possibly waver a little as to its being food appropriate for your present state and growth. But I retain a hope that it may, at least, prove as "bread cast upon the waters, that will be found after many days;"[59] and in that hope I leave it to your serious consideration. A weakened and still weakening tabernacle makes me admit of the possibility of this being the last token of my christian love to you, my dear friend. I have given freedom to my pen, and kept back nothing that I believed might now or hereafter prove profitable to you. Allow then, this word of exhortation, and may the Father of lights bless it to your understanding and your heart also! May He fit and prepare you for the reception of that anointing which renders teaching through instruments needless, even the living Truth itself, unmixed and infallible! To Him then, and the Word of His grace, as that alone which can "build you up," I must now commend you. Be faithful, I entreat you, to your God! His call to holiness you have heard; His drawings of tender love you have felt and rejoiced in. May He never leave you nor forsake you, until He has done all that to you and for you, which the first gentle whispers of His Spirit spoke to you of, and

59 Ecclesiastes 11:1

which you then did so earnestly desire.

—WILLIAM LEWIS

The Journal of David Ferris

When I consider the situation of man in his fallen state, and the great change that all experience who have been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the dear Son of God; and that, in order to attain to this happy state, all must experience a mortification of their natural tempers and evil propensities; must know the "old man" to be slain, and the "new man" to be put on, which, is created according to God in righteousness and true holiness; and that, in order to walk in the new and living way, we must know old things to pass away, and all things to become new; I say, when I consider these things, I feel a concern for my fellow-men, that they may become acquainted with this change. And apprehending that I have had some acquaintance with it, by passing through various dispensations of trial and affliction, I am inclined to leave some account of them to posterity, in order to show to those who follow, that the Lord is ever near, and will be found by those who seek Him early; that He is long-suffering towards those who go astray, and merciful to all who sincerely turn to Him. It is my hope that this may minister information and encouragement to weary travelers in the same road; and induce them cheerfully to comply with divine requirings.

I wrote a short account of the forepart of my life in Latin, continued to about the twenty-fifth year of my age. The many difficulties and dangers in my way, and doubting whether I should be able hold out to the end, induced me to keep my history in a language unknown to those around me. I concluded that if I should hold on my way, I might afterward translate it into English; and add to it, as I found freedom. And now, after about twenty years experience of divine support and preservation, having great cause to say that "God is good to those who seek Him," that none seek Him in vain, and that His tender mercies fail not; I am inclined to translate it, hoping it may be useful, at least to some of my posterity.

I was born at Stratford, in Connecticut, New-England, the 10th day of the third month, 1707. My parents, Zachariah and Sarah Ferris, made profession with the people called Presbyterians; and I had my upbringing in that way. My father, while I was very young, moved to a place called New Milford. It being a newly settled place, I had not the advantage of a school; but, under the care of my mother, I soon learned to read in the Bible, and understood that there was a Supreme Being, who made all things, and preserved and upheld them in their order; and that, as the workmanship of His hand, I stood accountable to Him for every part of my conduct. About the eighth year of my age, I was informed that the Divine Being was self-existent, without beginning and without end; and not being able to understand how that

could be, I sometimes thought so intensely on the subject that I became much bewildered. At length it was shown to me, that the proposition was too high for my comprehension, and I received something like a reproof for searching into things beyond my capacity. From that time I was fearful of prying into such deep mysteries.

My mother, being a pious woman, and much concerned for the good of her offspring (both temporally and spiritually) was frequent in giving them good advice and admonition; desiring that we might shun the paths of error; and teaching us, by her own example, as well as by precept, to walk in the ways of virtue, which lead to peace. This was a great help to us while young, and was not easily forgotten when we came to maturity. Death was a frequent subject of my thoughts; and, in the twelfth year of my age, I was frequently called by the Holy Spirit to forsake evil, and leave youthful vanities, which I then delighted in, and to be sober and circumspect in all my ways. By attention to the divine call, and to the reproofs of instruction daily communicated, I was preserved from evil; and saw something of the beauty of holiness, the happy state of the righteous in the world to come, and the distressing situation of the wicked when they put off mortality and hear the awful sentence pronounced, “Depart, you cursed!”

About this time, a little circumstance occurred that much affected my mind, and afforded me lasting instruction. As I was riding through a river, against a rapid current, a young dog attempting to swim after me, the stream being too strong for him, could not keep up with my horse. He appeared to be in the utmost distress, even to desperation. As my mind was filled with pity for the poor animal, it was opened to my view, the awful amazement a poor soul must be in when leaving the world, destitute of hope. As simple a circumstance as this may appear, it was, I believe, of use to me for years. I was very careful of my thoughts, words, and actions, for several years afterwards; the fear of the Lord preserving me from evil. My mind was humbled under a sense of my daily need of divine help; and as I abode under a religious concern, attending to “the reproofs of instruction which are the way to life,”[1] an increase of light and life was communicated to me, so that I came to delight in virtue. As my desires and care for divine things increased, the knowledge of them was unfolded. I could truly say, the Lord was my delight. And for some years, as I dwelt in His fear, His yoke was easy, His burden light, and all childish vanities were burdensome.

While I kept near the Spring of life, with my mind fixed on the true object, the world and the things thereof lost all their luster. But, alas, not keeping my eye single to the light, I lost my Leader; and then, little by little, the world rose again with splendor to my view. Earthly delights and vanity got such a hold of my affections, that I took great pleasure in airy and vain company. This was an unspeakable loss to me, and I mention it that others may take warning by my ruin. It seemed almost miraculous that I was ever restored from this lapsed state. My mother mourned over me, and often advised and urged my return, showing me the danger of such a course of vanity. Yet I was not wholly forsaken by my inward Monitor

1 Proverbs 6:23

and former Guide. At times He reproved me, at other times He called me, wooing and pleading with me to return. Sometimes, in the midst of my vanity, I saw that I was in the way to death; and that it would land me in everlasting confusion if I did not forsake it.

Sometimes my concern was so great, that I was obliged to leave my vain companions, and retire so full of trouble and distress, that I had no satisfaction until a considerable time afterward. During these seasons of affliction, I was ready to promise to forsake my vain course of life, and to covenant with the Lord that I would do so no more, provided He would be pleased to grant me His assistance. But my efforts, being too much in my own strength, proved unavailing. Vanity so prevailed that I took great delight in music, dancing, and other vain amusements.

In the twentieth year of my age, I was visited with severe illness; so that I, and those about me, had very little hope of my recovery. Then death stared me in the face; and a dreadful scene of woe, anguish, and misery opened to my view. It appeared clear to me that if I were then taken off the stage of action, I should be unavoidably lost; and that evil spirits were waiting round me to convey my soul to the mansions of misery and everlasting darkness; so that my horror, anxiety, and distress were inexpressible. In the utmost anguish of mind, I cried to the Lord for help; promising amendment of my ways, if more time and ability were afforded me. And it pleased a kind Providence to be gracious to me; so that I was restored to health; and in about a month was able to walk about.

After my recovery I remembered the distress I had been in, and the promise I had made, when under the dreadful apprehension of everlasting misery and destruction. I saw the necessity of a faithful performance of my vows. I was sensible that there was a work to be done; and that if I did not now comply with my promise, I would have to pass through the same, or rather a worse scene of misery and distress. It appeared improbable that a more convenient opportunity for repentance than the present would be afforded; and I concluded that this was the time to turn from vanity, forsake my evil ways, and renounce all my sensual delights. But, when I had resolved to begin the necessary work of reformation, the adversary of all good tempted me to believe that it was now too late to think of obtaining peace with my Maker; for this plain reason: that, as there was a day or time in which men might be saved; so, if they let that opportunity pass away unimproved, it would be in vain to attempt it afterward. He suggested, that I had had such a day of visitation, and had let it pass by; that I had been uncommonly favored with help, and had not accepted it; that I had been made a partaker of the Holy Spirit; had tasted of the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, and had fallen from it; so now it was impossible that I should again be renewed unto repentance; seeing I had crucified the Son of God afresh and put Him to open shame. This reasoning appeared so strong, and so consonant to the apostle's doctrine, that I gave up the point; and concluded it was too late to attempt a return with any hope of acceptance.

From that time, during the space of about two months, I never sought for mercy, but remained in utter despair. My distress was as great as could well be supported without loss of reason. I daily wished

for death, desiring that it might occur without laying violent hands on myself, which I was not much tempted to do.

It was usual with the young people of our neighborhood to spend much of their time in vanity and merriment, forgetful of God their Creator, as if they had been made to please themselves in the gratification of a sensual mind. And, so long as they were not profanely wicked, the elderly part of society were not very uneasy with this. But, in the year 1727, there was a great reformation at New-Milford among the young people of the Presbyterian profession. They had been awakened by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit on their own minds, and were brought into great concern for their future well-being, under which they had no outward assistance. The apostolic doctrine of "Christ within," and of being "led by the Spirit of God," was denied by the priest and by many of the people, who appeared to have little sense of a Divine Teacher in themselves. These asserted that revelation had now ceased, and that no such thing was to be experienced in this day. As I had been the companion of these young people in vanity and dissipation, they (knowing nothing of my inward condition, which I had not disclosed to anyone) generally applied to me for counsel and advice. I was much concerned on their account, being desirous of affording them assistance, although I had no hope of relief at that time for myself.

My trouble continued and increased, so that I had no satisfaction in life. On a certain day, in this season of despair and deep distress, I concluded to leave my native land and go into some foreign country, where I intended to spend the rest of my days unknown, that none of my relations or acquaintances would know what had become of me. Being, in my own apprehension, a poor, lost, reprobate creature, I was not willing to remain at home to be a disgrace to my relations and countrymen. This was a day of the deepest affliction and distress that I had known. Towards evening, as I followed behind the plough, my attention was arrested, as it were, by a still, small voice, saying: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin."[2] But I dismissed it, saying in my heart: "It is too late; there has been a day wherein I might have been cleansed; but, alas, I have let it pass over my head forever!"

Some time after this, perhaps half an hour later, while I was pondering what land I should flee to, the same words passed through my mind again with more authority than before, and commanded my attention rather more strongly than before. But I again put them off, concluding I had lost all right to apply such words to myself, and so resumed the consideration of my flight to a foreign land. In the meantime my sorrow and anxiety of mind increased, so that I was not well able to support it, or to go on with my business. But while I was still pondering, the same words, unsought for and unexpectedly, passed through my mind with greater power and authority than at any time before: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin." This time, at the sound of these words my soul leaped for joy. I felt that a door of hope was opened, and I said in my heart, "If He can cleanse from all sin, why not mine?" Then a living hope sprang up in my soul. I saw that His arms of mercy were open to receive me, and a

2 1 John 1:7

way was cleared before me as a road through a thicket.

I was then filled with joy unspeakable. Thanksgiving and living praises to my Redeemer arose in my heart for the experience of so great and marvelous a deliverance. That my feet should be plucked out of the mire, and set upon a rock; and that I, who just before had no hope, should now be favored with a well-grounded assurance of pardon and acceptance, was a mercy never to be forgotten.

I began at this time to seek after divine assistance; and, in infinite kindness, a hand of help was extended for my restoration and the healing of my backslidings. I was then enabled to sing upon the banks of deliverance, and to praise the name of Him who lives forever. The Holy Spirit, that blessed teacher, whom I had formerly been favored with, but had forsaken, was now restored as a leader and teacher to direct and instruct me in the way to peace and rest.

After such a great favor, my mind was humbled and made subject to the cross of Christ, and I was wholeheartedly willing to take it up daily, and follow Him (my kind leader) in the narrow way of self-denial. And as I was obedient, He led me to forsake the vain course of my life, and all those youthful delights and sensual pleasures which were displeasing to my dear Lord and Master; who in wonderful mercy had lifted me out of the dungeon, and heard my prayers in a time of deep affliction. He now became my director in all things, showing me clearly what my duties were, and enabling me to perform them in an acceptable manner. But, if at any time I acted in my own will, I lost my strength, and found no acceptance or benefit by my performances. By this I gradually learned that I could do nothing acceptably, without the immediate assistance of the Spirit of Christ the Redeemer. I thus found a necessity to apply continually to Him—my only and all-sufficient Helper—and to humbly wait for His assistance and direction; and as I was faithful, He led me into the path of life, which, if continued in, will terminate in everlasting peace.

Having gradually learned that nothing of a religious nature could be effectually done without the immediate assistance of the Holy Spirit, I may humbly acknowledge that I was wonderfully favored with Divine instruction, far beyond my expectation, and infinitely above what I deserved. I was led, as it were, by the hand, and helped over every difficulty that attended me. But the adversary of my soul tried every stratagem to draw me aside from the path of virtue. He strove, night and day, to deter me from walking in this narrow way, representing the difficulties to be so great that I could never hold out to the end, and suggesting that all my attempts would be in vain. He seemed to be continually present, whether I was awake or asleep, disquieting my mind as much as possible. But my prayer was incessant for divine aid, that One stronger than he might appear for my help, and spoil his house. And, in about a year's time, after I had been raised from the pit of despair (as before related), I received a promise that "the God of peace would bruise Satan under my feet shortly."[3] Faith was given to believe in this promise, and I hoped for a speedy deliverance. But the enemy continued to afflict me with his assaults, temptations, and evil

3 Romans 16:20

suggestions for some months afterward. Notwithstanding which, I still believed the time would come, according to the promise, and I prayed for its fulfillment in the Lord's time.

At length, one stronger than he did indeed come and cast him out, and wholly dispossessed him; and He not only bruised him under my foot, but seemed to remove him far from me. The power of the enemy to assault, or in any way to disquiet me, was then taken away; nor was he able to lay any temptation before me. My soul was then daily filled with thanksgiving and living praises for this deliverance, as well as for the many other manifold mercies and favors of God that were from day to day bestowed upon me, who am "a worm and no man."[4]

To the honor of His great name, who has done marvelous things for me, and to the praise of His grace, I may say, that the adversary of all good was not only at this time thus prevented from troubling me, but the fountain of divine life was opened, and the water thereof flowed so freely and plentifully into my soul, that I was so absorbed in it, and so enamored thereby, that all the riches, honors, and vain pleasures of this world had no place in my affections. In this state I longed to be with Christ; which, I could see, was better than to be here. I do not know that there was one moment, while I was awake, for the space of nearly two years, in which I could not sing living praises to Him who lives forever and ever. No losses, crosses, or disappointments did, in any degree, disturb me at this time; at least not perceptibly, either to myself or others; for my delight was in objects very different from anything this world can give or take away. I dwelt as upon the mount, out of my enemy's reach; and, apparently, out of danger from any evil. Here I hoped to remain all the days of my life, desiring that I never should be moved.

However strange this relation may appear to many, I believe it is strictly true. I am sensible that some who have no experience in things of this nature, may smile at this narrative; but others may be glad to find in it a relation of circumstances that perhaps correspond to their own experience of trials passed through, or favors received from the divine and all-bountiful hand. I have no vanity in penning this account; but rather a fear, lest the succeeding part of my life should not correspond with the favors conferred upon me by a gracious benefactor, as stated in the preceding narrative.

While I dwelt as on the mountain, as before related, my spiritual eyes were opened, and my understanding was enlightened and enlarged. I then marveled to see that the world, as far as my knowledge of it extended, was far more in show than in substance, far better in appearance than in reality, and that even an outward form of godliness was very little to be seen. I had conceived the opinion that the people among whom I was educated were better than other professors of Christianity; but when my eyes were thus anointed to see clearly, I found very little true religion among them. Primitive purity appeared to be very much lost, and I was affected with sorrow and mourning on account of the great declension among the professors of the Christian religion in general. For the more I was concerned to examine the subject,

4 Ps. 22:6

and sought for divine wisdom, the stronger were my convictions, and the clearer my views, that there had been a general apostasy, and that a life of self-denial, a dwelling under the cross of Christ, was very little regarded.

Before this period I had had a desire to acquire a knowledge of the languages, along with other learning, and now my mind became satisfied that it would be right for me to pursue this course; but, before I give an account of my progress in this pursuit, I will recur to a subject that I briefly mentioned before. It was said that in the year 1727, some of my companions were brought under a concern for their future happiness. This concern spread, and so increased among the young people at New-Milford, that it became a rather general phenomenon. Many who had spent much of their time in vanity and mirth, were at this period exercised for their eternal welfare; crying out, as some did formerly, "What shall we do to be saved?" I think there were nearly sixty of us in about one year, who joined in close communion with the Presbyterians in their participation of the bread and wine. As we were faithful in the discharge of our duty, as far as it was manifested to us, and endeavored to advance in the path of virtue, our understandings became illuminated, so as to perceive some things in a different light from that in which they were seen by our fellow professors—both with respect to practical and doctrinal points. Sometimes we ventured to mention some of our sentiments upon subjects where we apprehended there was a difference between us, which soon involved us in trouble.

We were accused of holding heretical opinions, and were brought before the church to answer the accusations. Neighboring ministers were called in to deal with us on this occasion, but they made little of it. I had previously stated, in writing, the points of difference between us, together with various reasons for our dissent; and when the congregation met to deal with us, I presented it to them. A committee was thereupon appointed to examine the document, and to judge whether it would be proper to read it in the assembly. Upon their returning, the committee reported favorably, and the paper was read before all. When any difficulty occurred, I was requested to explain my meaning, which I did accordingly. After it was read through, they sat silent for some time. At length, an ancient man arose and said: "If this is all wherein our younger brethren are supposed to differ from us, there is nothing in this writing that I cannot unite with, and say 'Amen' to." Others, of the foremost rank, expressed the same opinion, upon which it was concluded that our sentiments were not so heterodox as to prevent communion with us. The issue was settled accordingly, and we were pronounced members in full communion.

But, notwithstanding this conclusion, a report was circulated and generally believed among the people that we were heretics; and I was considered as a leader among them. Some called us Quakers, but we knew nothing of that people, and at that time thought it as bad a name as they did; though we considered it our duty patiently to bear the reproach cast upon us for the Truth's sake.

But to continue the account of my proceedings relative to the acquisition of learning, I first went to the teacher in our parish and stayed with him as a student about one month, until he refused to teach me any

further; alleging, as a reason for his refusal, that my opinions were too heretical to admit of my reception into the college, so that my labour would be useless, or at least would not answer the end proposed. He was a weak man, and had very little experience in religious concerns, in which I had now acquired a little knowledge; and besides, he was not scholar enough to teach me to any purpose, which made we willing to leave him.

After this I soon concluded to go to Danby, about thirty miles from my father's house, to place myself under the tuition of a teacher whose name was Moss. I had heard that he was a good scholar, and a good Christian. These qualities, I thought, would make the situation pleasant to me, and I was not disappointed. But while I was preparing to go to him, I was suddenly taken sick, and became so ill, that in a few hours it appeared doubtful whether I should recover. I was in hope that my departure was at hand, though I did not then see how the Lord would deal with me.

While I was lying very ill, though my understanding was calm and clear, and my will fully resigned, my mother came to me and asked me if I thought I should die of that illness. I answered that I did not know how it might turn out, but that I should be glad to leave this world if it were the will of God. After some further discourse, my mother left me alone, and soon after, my soul (as I apprehended) departed from the body, upon which I was filled with joy, concluding I had finished with this world and all its troubles. Being now freed from the shackles of mortality, I went on rejoicing toward the land of bliss with great alacrity of soul; and as I departed, I thought I saw my body lying a lifeless lump of matter. But as I went forward, I was met by some excellent person whom I took to be the Son of God, and who informed me that I must not go; saying: "You must return to the body; you shall not die, but live, and declare the wonderful works of the Lord." I was troubled to think of returning, to be confined to a body of clay. However, I stood still, musing and waiting for direction, when it appeared to be my duty to submit. I then said, "The will of the Lord be done," and immediately I was in the body.

Soon after this, my mother came again into the room, and repeated the question that she had put to me before, whether I thought I should die at that time. I answered, "I shall not die of this illness." She seemed surprised that I should answer so positively and without hesitation, and then queried how I knew it. "For," said she, "you told me about an hour ago, that you did not know whether life or death would be your lot at this time." I then gave her an account of what had just taken place, which satisfied her respecting my confident answer. She was filled with joy and thankful acknowledgment to the Fountain of all Good that I was restored to her, and that He had been so gracious to me as to reveal His will in so clear and indubitable a manner. At this time my mother and I were both Presbyterians, and continued in that profession for several years after this event.

Being now sensible that my continuance here was required for a longer season, I became very thoughtful, lest I had been mistaken in supposing I had obtained the knowledge of my Divine Master's will respecting my learning of languages, etc. and I was brought into a strict examination whether I was in the way of my

duty in making the attempt. For, by that time I had come to a clearer sight than I had before concerning human learning, and how it was insufficient to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel. Being humbled, and feeling self entirely reduced, I was willing, if I could discover that my attempt was wrong, to acknowledge my fault to Him who knows all things, to repent of my rashness and confess my error, especially to those to whom I had made known my intentions on the subject. I had told some of my companions that I saw it to be my duty to acquire learning; and some considerable time before there was any probability of it, I had gone so far as to say that I should obtain it. If, therefore, I had been mistaken, there was now great need of my knowing it, and making proper acknowledgments on every hand; as also to be more careful in future not to take anything for granted, and then report it as a certainty.

During this sickness, which continued about three weeks, I earnestly desired that I might receive wisdom to direct me in a way that was acceptable to the Lord. And although I felt a strong desire for the acquisition of knowledge, yet I was willing to submit to the disposing hand of Providence, and I dared not ask for anything but with an entire submission to the Divine will, knowing very well that if I obtained it in any other disposition, a blessing would not attend it. At length, being on the recovery, and feeling very much exercised in mind on this subject, I had, one morning as I lay in bed, such a clear manifestation of the Divine will thereupon, as left no doubts on my mind respecting the course I ought to pursue; and so I proceeded to prepare for admission into college.

After this time I quickly recovered, and went to the aforementioned teacher at Danby, of whom I had heard so good a character. I was well satisfied with him, as I believe he was with me. He was a religious, tender-spirited man, and I believe was "a lover of good men,"[5] in the apostle's sense. After I had been with him some time, a neighbor, one of his congregation, said to him, "I understand you have a heretic with you, preparing for admission into college." He replied, "I wish that all my congregation were such heretics as he is." To which his neighbor made no reply. This he told me himself soon after it occurred. I had stayed with him six months when his other students left him; and as it did not suit him to attend to me alone, I then went to one Robert Trett, at New-Milford, and spent about six months with him, after which time he thought me sufficiently learned for admission into college. Accordingly I went there, passed an examination in relation to my learning, and was admitted without any mention of heresy.

After my admission I endeavored to keep humble, and to live in the Lord's fear, so as to be a pattern of lowliness of mind. I was desirous to be serviceable to mankind, and endeavored to keep close to that which alone could qualify for it.

Here I think proper to make a remark concerning something in which I was prone to err, until experience taught me better. This was, talking too much about religion in my own will and time. At length I found that this tended to poverty, and I learned, when I was in company, not to be forward to enter into any

5 Titus 1:8

discourse concerning religion, or any other subject, but to be content to keep silence and be esteemed a fool, until Truth arose, a subject clearly presented, and liberty was given for conversation. Then I found a qualification given to speak to the edification of others, and also to my own peace and satisfaction. I mention this for the benefit of others, being convinced that many who have had experience of the Truth, and have, in some degree, witnessed a change of heart, have talked so much on religious subjects that their souls have become barren, so as "scarcely to know when good comes."[6]

Now, as I dwelt under a humble sense of my own nothingness, and sought for the direction of Truth, I found the Lord to be near by His Spirit to instruct me in all things necessary to be known; which were clearly manifested from time to time, as I was able to bear them.

At my entrance into college my principles generally corresponded with those held by the Presbyterians. But I now began to think that it was time to examine for myself, and that I should no longer blindly trust the judgment of my forefathers. I found it necessary to subject my principles and practices to a strict scrutiny, because I began to be doubtful concerning some of them. But I was also convinced that, as a rational creature, simply considered, I was not at all competent for the undertaking without a Divine Instructor. I clearly perceived that all right understanding in spiritual concerns must proceed from the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, and that we could not come to the knowledge of God, nor of anything relating to His kingdom, without it.

This belief was very different from that held by the people I made profession with, so that I had no assistance from them. On the contrary, their conversation, their preaching, and their books, were against me in this. I had no outward help but the Bible, and that I knew I could not understand without Divine assistance. There were no people with whom I was acquainted who believed in the Light of Christ within as I did, so that I had none to look to for instruction in this difficulty, but to Him alone. But, being very desirous to know the truth in all things, I cried out to Him whom I believed to be the only Teacher of His people, and as I waited upon Him for instruction, my understanding was gradually enlightened so as to perceive many errors in my former creeds, and to discover the Truth in opposition to the doctrines of my upbringing.

That which stood most in my way, and which appeared to be a grievous affliction to mankind, as well as a great dishonor to a just and righteous God, was their doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation; which would, according to their apprehension of it, shut out the chief part of mankind from all hope of mercy; for they believed that they were the Lord's only people, and that very few others were within the pale of election (though I believe there were some amongst them who had a more extensive charity). I was much concerned on this subject, and being earnestly desirous to discover the truth, it pleased the Lord to open my understanding so as to clearly perceive the error of this doctrine; and I was enabled to

6 Jeremiah 17:6

believe that Christ, who "gave Himself a ransom for all,"[7] "desired all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth."[8]

I rejoiced at this discovery, and when I was fully convinced of my former error on this subject, I proposed, for the consideration of one of my fellow students, whether we had not been mistaken in that point of belief. We reasoned on the question many times, until he was almost convinced that we had been in an error on this subject. He did not then know that my sentiments were different from his own, but supposed that I had proposed the question only for the sake of argument, and to hear what could be said for and against it. I purposely hid my real belief from him, apprehending it not prudent at that time to expose my genuine sentiments.

By the time we were willing to end the debate on that subject, I had something new to propose to my friend. When we were at leisure from our studies, we entered into debate upon this subject; and so, from time to time, we reasoned the point until we were willing to leave it. Thus, as things opened to my view, and my mind became clear in any point of doctrine in opposition to my former belief, I proposed it for his consideration; and so we reasoned upon it as long as we thought expedient. Thus we proceeded from time to time, debating on several points of doctrine, until my opponent was partly convinced of the truths I advanced, and also became satisfied that I believed the doctrines which I had offered for his consideration. But, as I thought it not a proper time to make my opinions public, I advised him not to expose them at present, to which he consented. We spent our leisure time for two or three years in discussing religious subjects which were new to him, and I was but recently convinced of the truth of them.

I had before this period heard of a people called Quakers, but was unacquainted with any of them. As I had never seen any of their writings, I knew not what doctrines they held, but can truly ascribe all my knowledge in divine things to the inward manifestation of grace and truth, the teaching of the Holy Spirit. It was Christ, the Light of the world, the Life of men, who opened to me the Scriptures, and gave me a discerning of their meaning; and, as I was faithful and obedient to the pointings of Truth, I was favored with further and clearer discoveries thereof. In this state I felt desirous that others should come to be acquainted with the Truth, and I continued to share with my aforementioned fellow student my views on the various subjects that presented. We reasoned on them, as they were brought under consideration, until we had discussed all the principal disputable points of doctrine. I do not remember that we omitted anything that Robert Barclay had treated upon in his *Apology for the Christian Divinity,* although, at that time, I had not seen any of his writings, nor ever heard of them, as I remember.

I have mentioned these things to show that, according to Christ's declaration, "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God,"[9] and that "we need not that any man

7 1 Timothy 2:6

8 1 Timothy 2:4

9 John 7:17.

teach us, but as the anointing teaches us of all things."[10] And though my friend and I had debated all these points, as before related, yet at leisure hours we often again discussed them, and became much of one sentiment on the various subjects, as will appear when I relate the particulars of our final separation.

By this time I had come to some view of a false ministry and a false worship, which I saw had been introduced into almost all the churches of professing Christians with which I was acquainted; however my sight in these two particulars was not so clear as it was in many others which we had debated. Although I perceived a defect in the ministry, yet I did not then see that it was altogether wrong, nor did I then know that it was wholly a "ministry of the letter that kills;"[11] but I afterwards obtained a clearer sight and knowledge thereof. At this time I thought as a child, and understood as a child, with regard to these subjects. And this was also my state respecting divine worship. I did not clearly perceive that all worship performed in the will of the creature, and without the immediate assistance of the Holy Spirit, was truly called "will-worship"[12] and idolatry. But in the process of time I clearly perceived that this was the case. After our minds were already satisfied on these points, I first met with Barclay's *Apology*.[13] But I must now leave my classmate and our discussions, and go back a little.

When I had been at college about a year, the rector sent for me to his house in order to converse with me concerning some reports that had been circulated of my being a heretic. After I had, at his request, sat down beside him, he told me he had a desire to hear, from my own mouth, an account of my state. He said that it was not from any dissatisfaction in his own mind concerning me, for he was well-pleased with my conduct since I became one of their members, that he believed the reports were chiefly owing to misapprehension, ignorance, and ill-will, and that he wished to know from me the ground of these claims. This was the substance of his communication. I replied, that if he would be pleased to have patience with me, I would give him a plain account, and would be as brief as possible in order to be intelligible. I then gave a relation of my first setting out on my religious journey, of my inward travels, exercises, and experiences to that day, which took up about an hour and a half, as I supposed. He was all that time very quiet and attentive, not giving me the least interruption. I thought he listened with much satisfaction. When I had concluded we sat silent for some time. He seemed to be so much affected that he could not easily speak. After recovering, he at last said: "Ferris, I bless God for giving you eyes to see what few see." He said nothing more to me, except just to inform me that he was well-satisfied with the opportunity, and so he dismissed me.

I do not know that I concealed from him any of the principles which I held at the time when I was called a heretic, but I did not unfold to him all the views which I held at the time I was speaking, being sensible

10 1 John 2:27

11 2 Corinthians 3:6

12 Colossians 2:23 KJV

13 An *Apology for the True Christian Divinity,* by Robert Barclay, available on www.friendslibrary.com.

he could not bear it. He was a sincere Christian, and a lover of good men, and afterwards showed a kind regard for me, saying more in my favor than I apprehend I deserved, although not more than he believed to be true. And this was the case with many others whose expectations of my future usefulness had by some means been raised, in consequence of which I was much esteemed by the most worthy class of people. But being kept humble and low in my mind, and seeing my own weakness and infirmities, I was preserved from the snares of popularity, although they made my trials the greater, as will appear in the proper place.

After this interview with the rector, I resumed my studies, which I pursued with diligence, being desirous to be found in the way of my duty in every respect, in order that a blessing might accompany my undertaking. I was careful with my thoughts, words, and actions, endeavoring to be exemplary and serviceable to all who were about me.

I now became increasingly thoughtful on religious subjects. The doctrines I had been taught, and the way of worship in which I had been educated, were subjects of anxious concern. I was desirous to ascertain whether they would bear up under a strict scrutiny. Upon trial, I found many of them to be defective, and from here arose the many debates which I had with my class-mate, as before related.

About the middle of the last year of my residence at the college, I met with Barclay's *Apology;* and after reading it I let my classmate also peruse it, with whom I had before discussed the doctrines there considered. He read the work attentively, and made little or no objection to it, but rather told me that Barclay's arguments were unanswerable. Several other thoughtful students to whom I lent the book, after they had read it, made the same acknowledgment, offering very little objection or opposition to the reasoning of its author.

I continued at college until near the time for taking my degrees; and, being convinced of the errors of my education relating to the doctrines we held, and the worship we performed, I apprehended it was time to consider what was best for me to do. And at last, having been favored to see that a qualification or commission derived from man was not sufficient for the gospel ministry, I concluded not to take their degrees, nor depend upon their authority.

But although I agreed with Barclay on doctrinal subjects, yet I did not yet know if I could join with the Quakers, or with any other people with whom I was acquainted. I still continued a member of the Presbyterian society, attended their meetings and partaking of their bread and wine—though I did not feel free to sing with them, not having been, for some time, in a condition to sing; besides, it did not appear to be an acceptable sacrifice, or anything like divine worship, for a mixed multitude to sing of things about which they knew nothing by experience. My exercise of mind daily increased, for the time was near at hand when I felt I must leave them. This was a day of great trial for me. For, although at the commencement of my religious progress I had forsaken all the youthful delights and vanities with which I had been amused, and had been enabled to trample them all under my feet, expecting never again to

encounter such difficulties again, yet I now found that self was not sufficiently mortified in me. To be brought down from the pinnacle of honor, to be esteemed a fool and trampled under foot by high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, was hard for me to bear. As I mentioned before, I had been much esteemed; indeed, far more than I deserved. I knew some people had undue expectations regarding my future usefulness, and that if I left the college (as I thought it my duty to do) my credit would sink, and my honors would be laid in the dust. And then, instead of being caressed and exalted, I would surely be neglected and despised.

But I had other difficulties to encounter as well. My father looked forward with hope that I should be an honor to him and his family. He had promised to set me out in the world in the best manner his circumstances would admit. I knew that if I were obedient to my convictions of duty, he would regard it as a disgrace to my family and connections, and would be more likely to turn me out of his house, than in any way to assist me. Besides this, I had heard of a vacancy for a minister, and that the people were waiting for me to occupy it. The congregation was numerous, a larger salary was offered than any I knew of in that part of the country, and I was informed that the rulers of the college had been consulted on this occasion.

Here I knew that if I were to comply with my sense of duty, I must "take up the cross" and head out into the world without provision; for I had very little property of my own, none to expect from my father, and no salary to support me. Many would regard me as the "off-scouring of all things,"[14] useful for nothing.

I labored under a lively sense of all these difficulties. Poverty and disgrace stared me in the face; and, as I had none but the Lord to whom I could make known my distress and discouragement, nor any other of whom I could ask counsel, I cried out to Him incessantly for wisdom, strength, and fortitude, that I might be favored with a clear knowledge of my duty, and be enabled to faithfully obey Him in all things.

At this time my trials and difficulties were so numerous, that I was ready to conclude with Job that I would "die in my nest."[15] I feared I would never be able to resign all my interest, honor, and credit in the world, submit to a state of poverty, and incur the disgrace of being a reputed heretic. These difficulties were presented to my view, and magnified to a higher degree that any can imagine. In the height of my distress I entered my closet, and thus poured out my complaint before the Lord: "O Lord! I know not what to do in this day of deep distress and anxiety of soul! I am not sufficiently clear respecting my duty in the undertaking and execution of so important a matter. All that I have in this world that is valuable, and my everlasting happiness also, seems now to be at stake!" Indeed, my present situation appeared so important, that if I were to mistake my course, and take a wrong direction, all might be lost forever. And if I were to be led by a spirit of error and confusion, I might offend my Maker and my fellow creatures,

14 1 Corinthians 4:13

15 Job 29:18

forever remain in a dark wilderness, and never be restored to favor with God or good men.

Darkness prevailed over me to such an extent at that time, that I seemed to be placed in the situation of John the Baptist when he sent two of his disciples to inquire of Christ, "Are You the coming One, or should we look for another?"[16] I was almost ready to despair, and to conclude that I was altogether wrong in proposing to take a step so contrary to reason as this now appeared to be. Thus I poured forth my complaint, and mourned before the Lord. I had none to depend upon but Him, nor any other of whom I could seek counsel in my distressed circumstances. My dependance was wholly on Him for wisdom and direction in this trying and afflicting situation.

It is difficult to conceive, and not in my power to express, the anxiety of my mind in this proving season; for everything valuable seemed in danger of being totally lost. Nevertheless, I cried to the Lord for help, and made covenant with Him, that if He would be pleased to direct me in the way which would be safe for me to pursue, manifest His will therein, and afford me assistance to perform my duties, I would resign all to His disposal, obey His will, no longer reason with flesh and blood, and put trust in His providence for support and credit in the world, and for everything else He might think best and most convenient for me. For I was now clearly convinced, that if I did not resign everything when it was evidently manifested to be my duty, I had nothing to expect but death, with regard to my spiritual condition.

While I was thus bemoaning my condition before the Lord and waiting upon Him for direction, with ardent prayers for His assistance and wisdom to guide me in the right way, He was graciously pleased to show me that He was seeking to bring the church out of the wilderness, or wandering state, in which she had long been destitute of the true Leader. And He made it clearly known to me that it was His will I should go forth and be an instrument in His hand for the accomplishment of this design.

Just as soon as I was satisfied on these points, I reasoned not with flesh and blood, but immediately gave up to the heavenly vision. I then went to the chief ruler of the college and obtained his permission to go home; but I told no one my reasons for this procedure.

This was a trying time, for I was about to take an important step. Like Gideon, I was desirous to "turn the fleece," to wait in retirement for wisdom, and to carefully consider this weighty undertaking which now pressed heavily upon my mind. After staying at home about three weeks, the will of my Divine Master relating to my removal from college was satisfactorily manifested to me. Without making known my purpose, I returned to the college and settled my affairs in order to leave it. While I was preparing to depart, a report was spread among the students that I had "turned Quaker," and was going to leave them, yet I did not hear that any of them uttered a harsh or railing word against me. The rector, Elisha Williams, took an opportunity to converse with me. He was very moderate, but said he was sorry for my

16 Matthew 11:3

conclusion, and that heretofore he had entertained a good opinion of me, with an expectation that I would be useful in my day; but now his hopes were, in great measure, frustrated. We had much conversation on the subject, wherein he signified that he had not given me up for lost. He appeared serious, and we parted good friends.

As the time for my departure from the college drew near, being wholly resigned to the Lord's will, the cloud was removed from my tabernacle, my sight was clear, my courage returned, and the mountains (whose tops so lately appeared to reach the clouds) were all laid as level as a plain. Indeed, it felt as if the sea was driven back, so that there was nothing to interrupt my passage. I crossed over all as on dry land, and not a dog was permitted to move its tongue against me. Then my soul was filled with living praise, thanksgiving, and rejoicing in the Lord, who had triumphed gloriously. He was my strength, my song, and my salvation. The deeps covered my enemies, and they sank to the bottom as a stone. The right hand of the Lord was glorious in power, and I sang His praises, for He was worthy, having done great things for me.

Before I left college, I told the rector of my intentions, and said that I did not know that I would ever return, but if I should change my mind and wish to take a degree—if it would be permitted—perhaps I might come back for that purpose; and if I should conclude not to return, I would write to him and give the reasons for my conclusion. He replied that I would be very welcome to a degree, and that it would give them pleasure to grant me one.

While I was preparing for my journey, my classmate (before mentioned) being desirous to ride one day with me, obtained permission from the college, though the rector warned him that I might instill bad principles into him and lead him astray. To this my friend replied, "I have lived a great part of the time since I came to the college with him, and I believe he has done me no harm, but quite the contrary." Then, having bidden them all farewell, we departed.

I thought it a favor that one of my fellow-students who was in good standing, and esteemed not of the least in the college, should be willing to take up the cross so far as to accompany me, who was deemed a heretic or a Quaker. But feeling a degree of love for me, it made him fearless of any shame or disgrace that might ensue.

As we rode along, we discussed all the doctrines which we had formerly debated, and he appeared almost as much convinced of the truth of my sentiments as I was. Near night, when we were about to separate, he said: "Ferris, I believe you are right in leaving the college. I believe your principles are sound and good; but I do not see, at present, that I am called to do as you have done. If, at any time hereafter, I should see it to be my duty to follow your example, I purpose to have no will of my own, but to submit to and obey the will of my Master." We bade each other farewell, and I saw him no more; but I afterwards heard that to follow my example was a cross too heavy for him to bear. He took to preaching for a living among the Presbyterians, and never left them, to my knowledge.

After I had parted with my companion, I went on to New-Milford, where my parents and relations resided. About three weeks afterwards, I went to a Yearly Meeting of the people called Quakers on Long Island, in order to discover whether or not they were a living people; for it was a spiritually living people I desired to find. I had thought for several years that there must be such a people, a people who had life in them, and who abounded in love to each other, as did the primitive Christians; a people who knew they had passed from death unto life by their love to the brethren. And there, at the Yearly Meeting, I was strengthened and even more confirmed that I was right in leaving the college; for I found a living, humble people, full of love and good works, such a body of Christians as I had never seen before. I greatly rejoiced to find what I had been seeking, and soon acknowledged them to be of the Lord's people, and of the true church of Christ, according to His own description of it, where He said, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."[17]

I also found that they held and believed the same doctrines which had been manifested to me immediately by the Holy Spirit; being the same as those that Robert Barclay had laid down and well defended in his *Apology*. Before I had read this work, I did not know there was a people on earth who believed and lived in the Truth as described by Barclay; but here I found a numerous society who held the same truths, and lived humble, self-denying lives, appropriate to the character of Christians. I was indubitably satisfied that their worship was in spirit and in truth, and that they were such worshippers as the Father sought and acknowledged. And I was convinced, beyond a doubt, that they preached the Gospel in the demonstration of the Spirit; for divine authority was felt to attend their ministry. These were not like the scribes to whom I had been listening all my life, who had neither commission nor authority, except that which was received from man; being such as the Lord never sent, and who therefore could not profit the people whom they professed to teach. I now clearly saw the difference between man-made ministers, and those whom the Lord qualifies and sends into His harvest field, the difference between the wheat and the chaff; and truly it was marvelous to me, to reflect how long I had sat under a formal, dry, and lifeless ministry.

At the meeting before mentioned, there were several eminent ministers from Europe, both male and female. There it was that I heard women preach the gospel in the Divine authority of Truth, far exceeding all the learned rabbis I had known. This was not so strange to me as it might have been to others, for I had before seen, by the immediate manifestation of grace and truth, that women, as well as men, might be clothed with gospel power; and that daughters as well as sons under the gospel dispensation, were to have the Spirit poured upon them that they might prophesy. And though I had never before heard a woman preach, yet I now rejoiced to see Joel's prophecy fulfilled.

After I returned home from the Yearly Meeting, I wrote a letter to the rector of the college, informing him that I had determined not to return, and that I could not with freedom receive any authority for ministry

17 John 13:35

that a man could give. I also informed him that, since I left them, I had heard women preach the gospel far better than any learned man I had ever heard.

Having now left the college, and separated myself from the people among whom I had been educated, I saw great cause for thankfulness to the Author of all good, who had revealed to me the errors of my youth, the falsity of many doctrines which had been imbibed in my education, and who had brought me to know His truth and people, so that I had no doubts remaining. It now became my principal concern to be enabled to walk in the truth, and experience the Holy Spirit to lead me on my way.

In this state I admired the boundless goodness, the infinite kindness, and the tender mercy of a gracious God in bringing about my recent deliverance; especially when I considered how tempestuous were the seas, and how the billows rolled over me, how the mountains of opposition raised their lofty heads to stop my passage; and then, in a short time, how the winds and seas were hushed and made still, and how the mountains became a perfect plain. I truly found as great a cause to sing upon the banks of deliverance as Israel did of old, after they had passed through the sea on dry ground, and had turned around to see their enemies lying dead on the shore. I rejoiced in the Lord and sang praises to Him who had done marvelous things for me as I submitted to the cross of Christ; for He had made me acquainted with His blessed truth, and had at last given me ability to trample the world, with all its riches, honors, and pleasures, under my feet, though I was accounted a fool by all men. For these favors I felt myself under great obligations to my gracious Benefactor.

I will now return to a former part of my narrative, and give some account of my reception by my family and relatives after returning from college. After I had parted with my class-mate along the way, I heard that my father had received intelligence of my intentions, and was much dissatisfied with my proceedings, saying, “If the accounts I have heard are true, I desire that he never again come into my house.” Being informed of this, I went to my brother’s, but after some days I went to see my father. He would not speak to me, but turned and walked away without taking notice of me. In a few days afterwards I went a second time; but he still refused to speak to me. After a few more days I went a third time and met him at the door. I asked about his health, at the same time pulling off my hat; (for at that time I was not yet convinced of the necessity of bearing a testimony against hat honor). He replied he was not very well, and again walked away. I then went into the house, and upon my father returning, we sat down and entered into conversation. He said he had heard I had left college and turned Quaker. In reply I said that it had been my endeavor for some years past to follow my divine Leader, and that I still endeavored to attend to the same Guide, and to follow wheresoever He might lead me. I then told him I apprehended that He had led me to leave the college, and forsake the way of my education, and that it was possible that the same Guide might at some point lead me to join with the people called Quakers, but that, as yet, I knew but little of them.

After some time spent in conversation of this kind, my father inquired what need there was to forsake

the way of my education; “For,” said he, “the Lord has favored you and been with you in the Presbyterian way, and if you continue to fear and serve Him in that way, you may do well; and will, no doubt, end in peace.” I answered that it was true I had been much favored under my former religious profession; for the Lord had been near me, and His living presence with me. He had led and guided me by His good Spirit, and had revealed His will to me far beyond anything I had deserved or could have expected; and that I still desired to follow that Teacher who had never led me astray, but had brought me, step by step, from one degree of experience to another, until I was obliged to leave the college and bear a testimony against the formal religious profession I had made; and thus He had led me to the present time.

Thus we conversed for some hours, my father raising various objections against the Quakers and my joining with them. But, through divine assistance (with which I think I was favored), I was enabled fully to answer all his objections, so that he was willing to leave the subject, and so became moderate and apparently more easy in his mind. From that time forward, during the remainder of his life, although he had many opportunities, he never again entered into any arguments with me on religious subjects, but was always kind and affectionate. I thought he concluded that I might still do well in the way he had found me, and so he remained satisfied.

After I had been some time at home, new objections arose in my mind against complying with the customs of those among whom I resided; customs such as bowing and scraping the foot, putting off the hat and saying, “Your servant, sir, madam, etc.” and the use of the ungrammatical and corrupt language of “you” to a single person.[18] Although in past years, I had known various trials, and thought I had learned many hard lessons, yet I now found much within me that still required mortification, and saw that I had many things yet to learn. Refusing to the use the plural language in addressing a single person, although it seemed a small matter, I found very hard to submit to. I was convinced that the common mode of speaking in the plural number to a single person was unscriptural, and also a violation of the rules of grammar. Indeed, I knew the pride of man had introduced this custom, yet I also wanted to believe it was not necessary to make myself appear ridiculous to all around me for a matter of so little importance. Therefore, so long as I felt no necessity laid upon me to take up the cross in that respect, I continued to use the language of my upbringing, though I used flattering compliments more and more sparingly, because the disuse of them was not so observable. However, it was not long before I found it my duty to say “Thee” and “Thou” to every individual person.

18 Most modern English speakers are unaware that the words “you” and “your” were originally *plural* pronouns used only to address two or more people, whereas “thee” and “thou” were used to address one person. In the 1600’s, it became fashionable (as a means of showing honor or flattery) to use the plural “you” or “your” in addressing people of higher social status, while “thee” and “thou” were reserved for servants, children, or people of lower social or economic position. Early Friends felt compelled to stick to what was then considered “plain language” (using thee and thou to every single person, and you and your to two or more), rather than showing partiality by addressing certain individuals in the plural. These may seem like small matters to the 21st century reader, but many thousands of early Friends were insulted, beaten, imprisoned, and even hanged for refusing to conform to these outward customs.

Nevertheless, I found an inclination or temptation in me so to steer my conversations so as shun this mode of speech; yet this did not afford peace. Regardless how small this matter appeared to me, I could not feel easy without being entirely faithful in every respect; and when my duty in this particular had been clearly manifested, I reasoned no longer with flesh and blood, but submitted to the requiring. It was a rule with me never to do anything of this kind by imitation of other men; but, whenever anything was required of me, then I was to submit, and so I obtained peace.

About this time, several students coming from the college invited me to accompany them on a visit to the minister in our town, and accordingly I went with them. We walked with our hats under our arms and so entered the house. Just as we were about to depart, I felt it required of me to bear a testimony against the customary hat honor. So I rose, put on my hat, went to the priest, and bade him farewell without putting my hand to it, or bowing my body. This being the first time I had refused these compliments, it was a close trial to me, and it appeared remarkable that it should be required of me at such a time, and in such company. But neither the priest nor any of my companions took notice of it, so as to make any remark. My obedience afforded me great peace; and by yielding to these inward motions of the sure Guide in small things, I gained strength, and was more and more confirmed that I was right in making such a change.

I now began to lay aside some of the superfluities of my dress, and to appear more like a Quaker, believing it was required of me not to hide myself in any respect, but to boldly bear testimony to the truth so far as it was clearly manifested to me. I did not then wonder that people admired at our folly (as they suppose it to be), in making ourselves a laughing-stock and a by-word by our peculiarity and nonconformity; for so it appeared to me but a short time before I was obliged to submit to it. I loved the honor and esteem of men as much as any other, and would have preferred to enjoy it, if I could have had it along with peace of mind. But this is not allowed in the school of Christ, where nothing will do without self-denial and taking up the daily cross. And if, on our part, there is a full submission in every respect, I can say, from experience, that our peace will flow as a river.

Having left the college without taking a degree, I saw it was now probable that I would have no salary to depend on for subsistence. I had disobliged my father, and of course had nothing to expect from him; and I had very little of my own to support me. And now, having come to the twenty-fifth year of my age, I began to think it necessary to use some endeavors to obtain a livelihood. I had for several years before this period thought of going to reside in Pennsylvania, and this prospect now opened so clearly that I was inclined to believe it was my duty to go there. I accordingly made ready and went, in company with three ministering friends from Europe who were then on a religious visit to America. We arrived in Philadelphia about the middle of the sixth month, 1733.

Here ends that part of my narrative which was written in my youth in the Latin language.

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David Ferris went on to become a faithful and useful minister in the Society of Friends, often traveling with Samuel Neale and other eminent ministers, but not before struggling for a very long time with a sense of insufficiency for the work that the Lord had called him to. For nearly twenty years, he felt the Spirit moving him to rise and speak to the Lord's people when they had gathered together for worship, but, like Moses, he continued to say in his heart, "Oh my Lord, who am I that I should speak to Your people. Please send by the hand of whomever else You may send!" But at last, through the counsel and intercession of that highly-respected minister of the gospel Comfort Collins, in the forty-eighth year of his age, he finally yielded to his call to declare the wonderful works of the Lord. "Thus" he says, "I was at last lifted out of this horrible pit of my own digging; and I was so absorbed in the love and mercy of my heavenly Benefactor, that I was filled with thankfulness and praise, attended with a desire that, in the future, I might diligently watch and wait for the pointing of His holy finger, to every service He might be pleased to allot me; that henceforth no opportunity might be lost of manifesting my gratitude, by obedience to His will." He departed this life, the 5th of the twelfth month, 1779, aged upwards of seventy-two years, having been an effectual minister about twenty-four years.