

Chapter I

From his birth in 1707, to his admission into College

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; 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, after God, is created 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; to show to those who follow, that the Lord is ever near, and will be found of those who seek him early; that He is long-suffering towards those who go astray, and merciful to all who sincerely turn to Him: hoping it may minister information and encouragement to weary travellers 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 hold out to the end, induced me to keep my history in a language unknown to those about 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 them 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 in that way I had my education. 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 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 religious 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 moving 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 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, 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 lustre. But, alas! not keeping my eye single to the light, I lost my Leader; and then, by little and little, the world rose again with splendour to my view. Earthly delights and vanity got such 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 harms. 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 and former Guide. At times it reproved me, at other times 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, if more time and ability were afforded me; and it pleased a kind Providence to be propitious 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 should have to pass through the same, or rather a worse scene of misery and distress. It appeared probable that a more convenient opportunity for repentance than the present would not 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 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 passed it by; that I had been uncommonly favoured with help, and for a time did not accept of it; that I had been made a partaker of the Holy Spirit; that I 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 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, so 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 neighbourhood 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, provided they were not profanely wicked, the elderly part of society were not very uneasy with it. 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 many of the people, who appeared to have little sense of a Divine Teacher in themselves; but asserted that revelation had now ceased, and no such thing was to be experienced in this day. As I had been the companion of those young people in vanity and dissipation, they (knowing nothing of my inward condition, which I had not discovered to any) generally applied to me for counsel and advice; and 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, to spend the residue of my days; where I purposed to remain unknown, and that none of my relations or acquaintance should know what was 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 country people. This was a day of the deepest affliction and distress that I had known. Towards evening, as I followed 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." But I put it by; 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, while I was musing on 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 closely than they had done; but I again put them by; concluding I had lost all right to apply them to myself. So I resumed the consideration of my flight to a foreign land. In the mean time my sorrow and anxiety of mind increased, so that I was not well able to support it, or go on with my business. But while I was still musing, 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 us from all sin." At the sound of them my soul leaped for joy. I felt that a door of hope was opened, and said in my heart, "If all sin, why not mine?" Then a living hope sprang in my soul. I saw the arms of mercy open to receive me, and the way cleared before me as a road through a thicket.

I was now filled with joy unspeakable; thanksgiving and living praise to my redeemer arose in my heart for the experience of so great and marvellous a deliverance. That my feet should be plucked out of the mire, and set upon a rock; that I, who had no hope just before, should now be favoured with a well-grounded assurance of pardon and acceptance, was a mercy never to be forgotten.

From this time I sought for divine assistance; and, in infinite kindness, a hand of help was extended for my restoration, and the healing of my backslidings. Then I was enabled to sing upon the banks of deliverance, and praise the name of Him who lives forever. The Holy Spirit, that blessed Teacher, whom I

had formerly been favoured with, but had forsaken, was now restored, as a Leader and Teacher, to direct and instruct me in the way to peace and rest.

From this time my mind, after such great favour, was humbled and made subject to the cross of Christ, and heartily 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 my vain course of 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 which I gradually learnt, that I could do nothing, acceptably, without the immediate assistance of the Spirit of Christ the Redeemer. Thus I found a necessity to apply continually to my only and all-sufficient Helper, and humbly to 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 favoured 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 the narrow way; representing the difficulties to be so great that I could never hold out to the end; and 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 a stronger than he might appear for my help, and dispossess him. And, in about a year 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.” Faith was given me to believe in this promise, and I hoped for a speedy deliverance. But he continued to afflict me with his assaults, with temptations, and evil suggestions, for some months afterward. Notwithstanding which, I still believed the time would come, according to the promise, and I prayed for its fulfilment in the Lord’s time. At length, a stronger than he did indeed come, and cast him out, and wholly dispossessed him; and not only bruised him under foot, but removed him far from me.

The power of the enemy to assault, or in any wise to disquiet me, was now taken away; neither was he able to lay any temptation before me. Now was my soul daily filled with thanksgiving and living praise for this deliverance; as well as for all other the manifold mercies and favours of God, from day to day bestowed upon me, “a worm and no man.” To the honour of his great name, who has done marvellous things for me, and to the praise of his grace, I may say, that the adversary of all good was not only 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 absorbed in it, and so enamoured thereby, that all the riches, honours, and vain pleasures of this world, had no place in my affections. In this state I longed to be with Christ;

which, I was sensible, 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 least not perceptibly, either to myself or others; for my delight was in objects very different from anything which this world can give or take away. I dwelt as in 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, and 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 see in it a relation of circumstances, corresponding, perhaps, to their own experience of trials passed through, or favours 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 favours conferred upon me by a gracious benefactor; as stated in the preceding narrative.

While I dwelt as on the mount, as before related, my spiritual eyes were opened; my understanding enlightened and enlarged. I then wondered to see that the world, as far as my knowledge of it extended, was more in show than in substance; better in appearance than in reality; that even the true form of godliness was too little to be seen. I had conceived that the people among whom I was educated were better than the 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. 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, and sought for divine wisdom, the stronger were my convictions, the clearer my views, of a general apostasy; 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, and other learning, and now my mind became satisfied that it would be right for me to pursue these objects; but, before I give an account of my progress in this pursuit, I will recur to a subject 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 general. Many that 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 the 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 endeavoured 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, on subjects in which we apprehended there was a difference between us, which soon involved us in trouble.

We were accused of holding heretical opinions; and brought before the church to answer the accusation. Neighbouring 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; with the reasons for our dissent; and when the congregation met to deal with us, I presented it to them. Whereupon a committee was appointed to examine the document, and to judge whether it would be proper to read it in that assembly. On their return, they reported favourably; and it was read. When any difficulty occurred, I was desired to explain my meaning, which I did accordingly. After it was read through, they sat silent for some time. At length, an ancient man rose, and said: "If this be 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. It 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 thought it as ill a name as they did; though we considered it our duty patiently to bear the reproach cast on 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 scholar, but 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, not answer the end proposed. He was a weak man, and had but little experience in religious concerns, in which I had now acquired some knowledge; 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, and 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. 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 I should be disposed of.

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, I did not know how that might be, but 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. On which I was filled with joy, concluding I had done 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 she had put to me before, whether I thought I should die at that time. I answered, "I shall not die with this illness." She seemed surprised that I should answer so positively, and without hesitation; and then, queried how I knew that. "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 the circumstances just related, 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 propitious 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 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 the languages, etc. and was brought into a strict examination, whether I was in the way of my duty in making the attempt; for I had now a clearer sight that human learning was insufficient to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel, than I had before. Being humbled, and 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, 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 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; and to be more careful in future, not too easily to take any thing 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 acceptable to the Lord; and although I had a strong desire for the acquisition of knowledge, yet I was willing to submit to the disposing hand of Providence; and dared not ask for anything but with entire submission to the Divine will; being sensible that if I obtained it in any other disposition, a blessing would not attend it. At length, being on the recovery, and very much exercised in mind on the subject, I had, one morning, as I lay in bed, such a clear manifestation of the Divine will thereon, 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 I soon recovered, and went to the teacher at Danby, of whom I had heard so good a character, as before mentioned. I was well satisfied with him, as I believe he was with me. He was a religious, tender-spirited man; and, I believe, “a lover of good men,” in the apostle’s sense. After I had been with him some time, one of his congregation said to him, “I understand you have a heretic with you, preparing for admission into college.” He replied, “I wish all my congregation were such heretics as he is.” To which his neighbour made no reply. This he told me himself soon after it occurred. I stayed with him six months, when his other scholars left him; and, as it did not suit him to attend on me alone, I went to one Robert Trett, at New-Milford, and spent about six months with him, when 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 endeavoured 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 endeavoured to keep to that which alone could qualify for it.

Here I think proper to remark, that in one respect I was apt to err, until experience taught me better. This was, talking too much about religion in my own will and time. At length I found it tended to poverty, and I learned, when in company, not to be forward to enter into any 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 to speak to the edification of others, and 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.

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.

Chapter II

From his entrance into College, to his finally leaving it, and declining to take a degree

At my entrance into college my principles generally corresponded with those held by the Presbyterians. But I now began to think it was time to examine for myself, and no longer trust in 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 of some of them. But I was convinced that, as a rational creature, simply considered, without a Divine Instructor, I was not competent to the undertaking. 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. I had no outward help but the Bible, and that 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 any difficulty, but to Him. But, being very desirous to know the truth in all things, I made application to Him whom I believe 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 creed, and to discover the Truth in opposition to the doctrines of my education.

That which stood most in my way, and appeared to be a grievous hardship to mankind, as well as a great dishonour 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, as they believed they were the Lord's only people, and that but few of others were within the pale of election. Yet I believe there were some among 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, clearly to perceive the error of this doctrine; and I was enabled to believe that Christ, who "gave Himself a ransom for all," would "have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth."

I rejoiced in 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 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 discover my genuine sentiments.

By the time we were willing to close the debate on that subject, I had something new to propose, and as strange as new to my opponent. When we were at leisure from our studies, we entered into debate upon it; and so, from time to time, we reasoned the point till 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 became satisfied that I believed in the doctrines I produced 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, 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 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 favoured with further and clearer discoveries thereof. In this state I felt desirous that others should come to be acquainted with it, and continued to give to my fellow student, aforementioned, my views on the various subjects that presented. We reasoned on them, as they were brought under consideration, until we had discussed the principal disputable points of doctrine. I do not remember that we omitted anything that Robert Barclay had treated as a doctrinal point, 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 any man do his will he shall know of his doctrine, whether it be of God;"¹ and that "we need not that any man teach us, but as the anointing teaches us of all things." Though we had debated all those points, as before related, yet, at leisure hours, we again discussed them, and became much of one sentiment on the various subjects, as will appear when I come to relate the particulars of our final separation.

By this time I had some view of a false ministry and a false worship, which had been introduced into almost all the churches of professing Christians with which I was acquainted; but 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 of the "letter that kills;" but afterwards I 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 will-worship and idolatry. But in process of time I clearly perceived that this was the case. After our minds were satisfied on these points, I first met with Barclay's *Apology*.—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, or chief ruler, sent for me to his house in order to converse with me concerning those reports that had been circulated, of my being a heretic. After I had, at his request, seated myself by him, he told me he had a desire to hear, from my own mouth, an account of

¹ John 7:17.

my state: adding, 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 grounds of them. 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 be as brief as I well might, to be intelligible. I gave a relation of my first setting out on my religious journey, of my travels, exercises, and experience, to that day, which took up about an hour and a half, as I supposed. He was all this 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 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 that opportunity; and so he dismissed me.

I do not know that I concealed from him any of the principles I held at the time he referred to, when I was called a heretic, but I did not unfold to him all my views at the time I was speaking, being sensible he could not bear it. He was a sincere professor, and a lover of good men, and afterwards showed a kind regard for me, saying more in my favour 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, that a blessing might attend my undertaking. I was careful of my thoughts, words, and actions, endeavouring to be exemplary and serviceable to all 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 a strict scrutiny. On trial I found them defective; and hence arose the many debates 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 treated of. He read the work attentively, and made little or no objection to it; but told me Barclay's arguments were unanswerable. Several other thoughtful scholars to whom I lent the book, after they had read it, made the same acknowledgment, with very little objection or opposition to the reasoning of its author.

I continued at the 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 being favoured 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.

Although I agreed with Barclay on doctrinal subjects, yet I knew not that I could join with the Quakers, or any other people with which I was acquainted. I still continued a member of the Presbyterian society; attended their meetings, and partook of their bread and wine. But I was not free to sing with them, not having been, for some time before, in a condition to sing: besides, it did not appear to me an acceptable sacrifice, or any thing like divine worship, for a mixed multitude to sing that of which they knew nothing by experience. My exercise of mind daily increased, for now the time was near at hand in which I must leave them. This was a day of trial; for, although at the commencement of my religious progress, I had forsaken all the youthful delights and vanities with which I had been diverted, and had been enabled to trample them all under my feet, expecting never again to encounter such difficulties, yet now I found that self was not sufficiently mortified in me. To be brought down from the pinnacle of honour, to be esteemed a fool, be trampled under foot by high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, was hard to bear. As I observed before, I had been much esteemed; though, as I was sensible, more than I deserved. I knew the people had undue expectations of my future usefulness, and that if I left the college, as I thought it my duty to do, my credit would sink, and my honours be laid in the dust; and then, instead of being caressed and exalted, I must be neglected and despised.

But I had other difficulties to encounter. My father looked forward with hope that I should be an honour 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, 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 the occasion.

Here, if I complied with my sense of duty, I must “take up the cross,” and turn out unprovided for into the world; 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, fit for nothing.

I laboured 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 discouragements, nor any other of whom to ask counsel, I cried to Him incessantly for wisdom, strength, and fortitude, that I might be favoured with a clear discovery of my duty, and enabled faithfully to 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 should “die in my nest.” I feared I should never be able to resign all my interest, honour, and credit, in the world; submit to a state of poverty; and incur the disgrace of a reputed heretic. These difficulties were presented to my view, and magnified to the highest degree that any one can imagine. In the height of

my distress I entered my closet, or study, 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 an affair of so much importance. All that I have in this world that is valuable, and my everlasting happiness also, are now at stake.”

My present situation appeared so important, that if I mistook my course, and took a wrong direction, all might be lost forever. If I should be led by a spirit of error and confusion, I might offend my Maker and my fellow creatures, forever remain in a dark wilderness, and never be restored to favour with God or good men.

Darkness prevailed over me so far 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 He that should come, or should we look for another?”—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 to ask 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 covenanted 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, but trust to his providence for support and credit in the world, and for everything else He might deem 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, as to my spiritual condition.

While I was thus bemoaning my condition before the Lord; 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 about 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.

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. I was about to take an important step. Like Gideon, I was desirous to “turn the fleece;” to wait in retirement for wisdom, maturely to consider this weighty undertaking, which now pressed heavily on my mind. After staying at home about three weeks, the will of my Divine Master,

relating to my removal from college, was satisfactorily manifested. 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 scholars that I was turned Quaker, and was going to leave them. Yet I did not hear that any of them uttered a hard 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 conclusion; that, heretofore, he had entertained a good opinion of me, and an expectation that I should be useful in my day, but now his hopes were, in great measure, frustrated. We had much conversation on the subject; he signified he did not give me up for lost. He appeared serious, and we parted good friends.

As the time for my departure 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; the sea was driven back, so that there was nothing to interrupt my passage. I went over all, as on dry land, and not a dog was allowed to move a tongue against me. Then was my soul 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, 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 that I did not know that I should 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; if I should conclude not to return, I would write to him, and give my reasons for such conclusion. He replied, and told me I should be welcome to a degree; and that it would give them pleasure to grant me one.

While I was preparing for my journey, my class-mate, before mentioned, being desirous to ride one day with me, obtained permission. The rector told him, that I might, perhaps, instill bad principles into him, and lead him astray. To which 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 contrariwise." Then, having bidden them all farewell, we departed.

I thought it a favour that one of my fellows who was in good credit, and esteemed none of the least in the college, should be willing so far to take up the cross, as to accompany me, who was deemed a heretic, a Quaker, or they knew not what; but feeling a degree of love for me, it made him fearless of shame or any 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 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 they were a living people or not, for a living people I wished to find. I had thought for several years before that there ought to be such a people, a people who had life in them, and 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. Here I gathered strength, and was 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 one as I had never seen before. I rejoiced to find that which I had been seeking, and soon owned them to be of the Lord’s people, and of the true church of Christ, according to his own description of it, where he says, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” I also found they held and believed the same doctrines, the truth of which had been manifested to me immediately by the Holy Spirit; being the same 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 a humble, self denying life, becoming the character of Christians. I was indubitably satisfied that their worship was in spirit and in truth, and they such worshippers as the Father sought and owned. I was convinced, beyond a doubt, that they preached the Gospel in the demonstration of the Spirit; and Divine authority was felt to attend their ministry. They 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 therefore could not profit the people 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 it was marvellous 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. I there 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 the 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, take any authority that 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.

Chapter III

His proceedings after leaving College—His joining the Society—His marriage and settlement at Wilmington in 1737

Having now left the college, and separated myself from the people among whom I had been educated, I saw great cause of thankfulness to the Author of all good; who had revealed to me the errors of my youth, and the falsity of the doctrines imbibed in my education; who had made known to me his truth and people; so that I had no doubts remaining. It now became my principal concern that I might be enabled to walk in the truth, and witness the Holy Spirit to lead me on my way.

In this state I admired the boundless goodness, the infinite kindness, and tender mercy of a gracious God, in effecting my late 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 again, in a short time, how the winds and seas were hushed and still; and how the mountains became a perfect plain, I truly found as great cause to sing upon the banks of deliverance, as Israel did of old, when they had passed through the sea on dry ground; and had turned about and seen their enemies dead on the shore. I rejoiced in the Lord, and sang praises to Him, who had done marvellous things for me; who had made me acquainted with his blessed truth; and at length gave me ability to trample the world, and all its riches, honours, and pleasures, under my feet; to submit to the cross of Christ; and be willing to be accounted a fool of all men. For which favours 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 relatives. After I had parted with my class-mate, on my way home from college, 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 be true, I desire he may never come to my house again." Being informed of this, I went to my brother's. After some days I went to see my father. He would not speak to me; but turned and passed 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 days I went the third time, and met him at the door, and asked after his health; at the same time pulling off my hat; (for at that time I was not convinced of the necessity of bearing a testimony

against that honour;) he replied, he was not very well, and passed away. I then went into the house, and my father returning, we sat down and entered into conversation. He said he had heard I had left the college and turned Quaker. In reply I told him, it had been my endeavour for some years past, to follow my divine Leader, and that I still endeavoured to attend to the same Guide, and follow whithersoever he might lead me; that I apprehended he had led me to leave the college, and forsake the way of my education; and it was possible that the same Guide might some time lead me to join 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 queried what need there was to forsake the way of my education; “For,” said he, “the Lord has favoured you, and been with you in the Presbyterian way: so that if you continue to fear and serve Him in that way, you may do well; and will, no doubt, end in peace.” I answered, it was true I had been much favoured under my former profession; 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 any thing I had deserved, or could have expected; and 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 profession I had made; and thus He had led me to the present time.

Thus we conversed for some hours; my father raising objections to the Quakers, and my joining with them. But, through divine assistance, (with which I think I was favoured,) I was enabled fully to answer all his objections; so that he was willing to leave the subject; and became moderate, and, apparently, more easy in his mind. From that time, during the remainder of his life, although he had many opportunities, he never entered into any arguments with me on religious subjects; but was always kind and affectionate. I thought he concluded I might do well in the way he found me, and so remained satisfied.

After I had been some time at home, new objections arose in my mind against a compliance with the customs of those among whom I resided; such as bowing and scraping; putting off the hat; saying, “Your servant, sir, madam, etc.” and against using the ungrammatical, corrupt language of “you” to a single person.¹ Although, in past years, I had known various exercises, and thought I had learned many hard lessons, yet I found much in me that required mortification, and that I yet had many things to learn. To refuse the use of the plural language to a single person, although it seemed a small matter, yet I found it hard to submit to. I was convinced, that the common mode of speaking in the plural number to a single

1 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 (again, 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 preferment by addressing certain individuals in the plural. These may seem like small matters to the 21st century reader, but it is remarkable how many thousands of Friends were insulted, beaten, imprisoned, and even hanged for refusing to conform to these outward customs that serve no purpose besides flattering the fleshly man.

person, was a violation of the rules of grammar, and unscriptural. I also believed the pride of man had introduced the custom, yet I thought it was not necessary to make myself ridiculous to all about me for a matter of so small importance. So long, therefore, as no necessity was laid upon me to take up the cross in that respect, I continued to use the language of my education. Yet I used compliments 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.

Nevertheless, I found an inclination or temptation so to turn the conversation as to shun this mode of speech; yet this did not afford peace. Small as the matter appeared, I could not be easy without being entirely faithful in every respect; and my duty in this particular being clearly manifested, I reasoned no longer with flesh and blood; but submitted to the requiring. It was a rule with me to do nothing of this kind by imitation; but, when any thing was required of me, to submit; and thus I obtained peace.

About this time, several scholars coming from the college, invited me to accompany them on a visit to the minister in our settlement; 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 was required to bear a testimony against the hat honour. 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; and it appeared remarkable, that it should be required of me at such a time, and in such company: but neither the priest nor 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 like a Quaker; believing it was required of me not to hide myself in any respect; but boldly to 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 think it to be,) in making ourselves a laughing-stock and by-word, by our singularities; because, so it appeared to me but a short time before I was obliged to submit to it. I loved the honour and esteem of men, as well as others; and would have enjoyed it, if I could have had it with peace of mind; but that 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 be 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, it was probable I should 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 but little of my own to support me. And now, being come to the twenty-fifth year of my age, I began to think it necessary to use some endeavours to obtain a livelihood. I had for several years before this period thought I should go 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, 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.

As I observed before, I arrived in Philadelphia in 1733. I concluded that if I could establish myself in business that would be likely to answer, I would, for some time, make the city my residence. After the Yearly Meeting was over, and I had become a little acquainted with Friends, and known among them, I proposed to open a school, to teach the Latin and Greek languages. But, as I was a stranger, and those children that were intended to be taught these languages were mostly entered in other schools, I was doubtful whether I should be able to get a sufficient number of such scholars. I therefore agreed to teach English also; and, in time, I had a school, of both sexes, sufficiently large for my support.

Being a stranger, I consequently met with trials and difficulties. For a while my school was small, and not likely to support me; but I endeavoured to be resigned, and repose with confidence in an all-sufficient Providence, from whom I had often received help in times of great trial. My difficulties were increased by the low state of my funds. The weather was now beginning to grow cold. It was customary for the teacher to find wood for fuel, and for the scholars to pay a proportion of the expense, when they paid for their quarter's tuition; and as I had but few scholars, and no money yet due, and not ten shillings of my own remaining, I was very thoughtful how to procure wood. No one knew the state of my purse; nor did I desire to make it known; and this I should do if I attempted to borrow. I, therefore, omitted to buy, as long as I well could. I did not like to ask for credit; and if I did, it was doubtful whether I should obtain it; so that I was closely tried. But, while I was under this exercise, the weather was more moderate than usual at that season.

After I had been sufficiently tried, to prove my faith and confidence in Divine Providence, a Friend came into my school, and privately gave me twenty shillings;² which, he said, had been sent by a Friend, who did not wish to be known as the donor. For this unexpected favour, I was thankful to the Lord, whose mercies endure forever. Having now the means, I soon purchased some wood; and the weather, in a short time, be coming colder, I had a renewed sense of the kindness of Providence, who had so seasonably relieved me. But afterwards, when my stock of wood was nearly exhausted, I was brought into the same difficulty and trial, as before; and as much needed a renewal of my faith. I strove to be quiet, and to have my dependence placed on Him who fed a great multitude with a few loaves and little fishes; and just as I began to suffer, another twenty shilling bill was privately presented to me by an unknown hand; but I received it as coming from the Lord, who knew all my difficulties.

Thus was I again relieved; and never afterwards received any thing more in this way; nor did I ever need

² Twenty shillings in 1733, would, probably, be equally valuable with ten dollars (forty-five shillings) in 1825.

it, as I was sufficiently supplied by the proceeds of my business. This was a confirmation to me, that I had been assisted by a watchful Providence, who knows all states and conditions, both internal and external; and is able and willing to turn the hearts of his people, and constrain them to help the needy; as, formerly, he sent the ravens to feed the prophet.

I have made these few remarks for the sake of those who may be in similar circumstances, and stand in need of faith and confidence in the care of Divine Providence, over his dependent people; desiring they may afford them encouragement to put their trust wholly in the Lord, and not faint in the day of inward or outward trials.

After I had been about six months in Philadelphia, I requested to be taken into membership with Friends; and was, accordingly, received. Some time after I had joined the Society, I began to think of settling myself, and to marry, when the way should appear without obstruction; which was not then the case. I considered marriage to be the most important concern in this life. "Marriage," said the apostle, "is honourable in all." I concluded he meant that it was honourable to all who married from pure motives, to the right person, and in the proper way and time, as Divine Providence should direct. I believed it best for most men to marry; and that there was, for each man, one woman that would suit him better than any other. It appears to me essential that all men should seek for wisdom, and wait for it, to guide them in this important undertaking; because no man, without divine assistance, is able to discover who is the right person for him to marry; but the Creator of both can and will direct him. And why, in such an important concern, should we not seek for counsel, as well as in matters of minor consequence? There is, moreover, greater danger of erring in this than in some other concerns, from our being too impatient to wait for the pointings of divine wisdom; lest, by so doing, we might lose some supposed benefit. It is common for young people to think and say, "I would not marry such a person; for certain reasons: such as the lack of beauty, wit, education," etc.; and to affirm that they could not love such a one; but we may err by an over-hasty conclusion, as well as by any other neglect of our true Guide.

I now propose to give some hints of my own proceedings in this concern. Near the place of my residence there lived a comely young woman, of a good, reputable family; educated in plainness; favoured with good natural talents; and in good circumstances. Every view of the case was favourable to my wishes.

By some hints I had received, it appeared probable that my addresses would be agreeable to her; and some of my best friends urged the attempt. From inattention to my heavenly Guide, I took the hint from man; and following my own inclination, I moved without asking my Divine Master's advice: I went to spend an evening with the young woman, if I should find it agreeable when there. She and her mother were sitting together; and no other person present. They received me in a friendly manner; but I think I had not chatted with them more than half an hour, before I heard something, like a still small voice, saying to me, "Do you seek great things for yourself?—seek them not." This language pierced me like a sword to the heart. It so filled me with confusion, that I was unfit for any further conversation. I endeavoured to

conceal my disorder; and soon took my leave, without opening, to either the mother or her daughter, the subject which had led me to visit them. And I afterwards had substantial reason to think it was well for me that I had failed in this enterprise.

I was so confused and benumbed by this adventure, that I did not recover my usual state for several months; though I could not suddenly see that my error was acting without permission; but began to suppose that I should never be permitted to marry; and should have to pass my life without a companion or a home. I endeavoured to be resigned to this view; supposing it was the Lord's will; but, for several months, it was a severe trial. At length I was brought to submit, and say, "Amen." This simple account of my visit to that young woman, is designed as a warning to others; that they may shun the snare into which I was so near falling.

I shall now relate another of my movements, with respect to marriage, which I believe was a right one; as it terminated to lasting satisfaction. It may appear strange to some, as if I married in the cross; and, I suppose, few will be inclined to follow my example. Yet, if the Divine Teacher of truth and righteousness be attended to, it may be the lot of some. After I had been much mortified and humbled, under a sense of my former mis-step, I went, one day, to a Friend's house to dine. As I sat at the table, I observed a young woman sitting opposite to me, whom I did not remember ever to have seen before. My attention, at that time, being otherwise engaged, I took very little notice of her; but a language very quietly, and very pleasantly, passed through my mind, on this wise: "If you will marry that young woman, you shall be happy with her." There was such a degree of divine virtue attending the intimation, that it removed all doubt concerning its origin and Author. I took a view of her, and thought she was a goodly person; but, as we moved from the table, I perceived she was lame. The cause of her lameness I knew not; but was displeased with the idea of having a crippled wife. It was clear to me, beyond all doubt, that the language I had heard was from heaven; but I presumptuously thought I would rather choose for myself.

The next day the subject was calmly presented to my mind, like a query: "Why should you reject her for her lameness? You are favoured with sound limbs, and a capacity for active exertion; and would it not be kind and benevolent in you, to bear a part of her infirmity, and to sympathize with her? She may be affectionate and kind to you; and you shall be happy in a compliance with your duty." Notwithstanding all this, I continued to reason against these convictions; alleging that it was more than I could bear. The enemy of my happiness was busily engaged, in raising arguments against a compliance with my duty. Suggesting that it was an unreasonable thing that I should be united to a lame wife; and that everyone who knew me would admire at my folly.

Thus, from day to day, and week to week, I reasoned against it; until, at length, my kind Benefactor, in a loving and benevolent manner, opened to my view, that, if I were left to choose for myself, and to take a wife to please my fancy, she might be an affliction to me all the days of my life; and lead me astray, so as to endanger my future happiness. Or she might fall into vicious practices; notwithstanding that, at the

time of her marriage, she might be apparently virtuous; it was, therefore, unsafe to trust to my natural understanding. On the other hand, here was a companion provided for me by Unerring Wisdom; so that I might rely with safety on the choice. Still I was unwilling to submit. But heavenly kindness followed me, in order to convince me that it would be best to comply, and no longer resist the truth.

At length it pleased the Lord, once more, clearly to show me that if I would submit, it should not only tend to my own happiness, but that a blessing should rest on my posterity. This was so great a favour, and manifested so much divine regard, that I no longer resisted; but concluded to pay the young woman a visit, and open the subject for her consideration. But, after I had laid my proposition before her, I still had secret hopes that I might be excused; and only visited her occasionally. During this time, for several months, I endured great trials and afflictions, before I became fully resigned. But, after divine Goodness had prevailed over my rebellious nature, all things relating to my marriage wore a pleasant aspect. The young woman appeared beautiful; and I was prepared to receive her as a gift from heaven, fully as good as I deserved. We waited about six months for my parents' consent, from New-England, (a conveyance by letter being at that time difficult to obtain,) and accomplished our marriage on the thirteenth of the ninth month, 1735, in the city of Philadelphia.

It is now forty years since we married; and I can truly say that I have never regretted it, but have always regarded our union as a proof of divine kindness. I am fully sensible there was no woman on earth so suitable for me as she was. And all those things which were shown me, as the consequence of my submission, are punctually fulfilled. A blessing has rested on me and my posterity. I have lived to see my children arrived to years of understanding, favoured with a knowledge of the truth; (which is the greatest of all blessings;) and some of them, beyond all doubt, are landed in eternal felicity. I have been blessed with plenty; and, above all, with peace. I am, therefore, satisfied and thankful to my gracious Benefactor, for his kindness to me in this concern, as well as for all his other favours; who am not deserving of the least of all the mercies and all the truth which He has shown to his unworthy servant.

I have given this relation so circumstantially, with a view to show how incapable we are to see things in their true light, until we are truly humbled, and brought into subjection to the divine will; and how unsafe it is for poor, frail, short-sighted creatures, to reject so safe a counsellor, and trust to their own wisdom, in concerns of such importance. Therefore, let all seek that "wisdom that comes from above; which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated."

While I was proceeding in my concerns relating to marriage, I was also thoughtful concerning the proper place to reside; and the business I should engage in for support. I had now kept a school nearly four years; and had partly concluded to resign that employment, on account of the confinement necessarily attending it; and having heard of a new settlement then making in the county of New-Castle, (since called Wilmington,) I was inclined to see it; and thought, if it pleased me, I might perhaps settle there. It had been a subject of frequent consideration; but when I mentioned it to my wife, she appeared unwilling to

leave Philadelphia; as she had lived there nearly all her life, and her relations resided in that city. But William Shipley and his wife, from Springfield, in Chester county, proposing, in a short time, to settle in Wilmington, I went with them to see the place. It pleased me so well that I rented a lot of ground there; and, on my return, told my wife what I had done. She thought we should never make use of it.

In those days, by various trials, exercises, and afflictions, I was reduced to a very low state. My natural powers seemed to be so much weakened, that I could not judge what course to take, or how to proceed, in my temporal concerns, as I had formerly done, or as others could do; so that I saw no way for me to move, with prudence or safety, without immediate direction from the Fountain of Wisdom. And I may say, with humility of heart, and thankfulness to the God of all mercies, that as I sought for it, and waited for direction, I sought Him not in vain. I waited upon Him; not daring to move until He appeared to point out the way; and He failed not to show me what step I should take, and when to take it, in a wonderful manner. It was marvellous in my eyes, that a poor worm should be thus favoured; and I should not venture to mention how particularly I was led, if I did not believe it to be my duty.

Observing how ignorant and thoughtless mankind is, in general, of a Divine Instructor, especially in their temporal concerns, (supposing themselves sufficient to manage the affairs of this life, and therefore not expecting or seeking for superior intelligence,) I feel anxious for an amendment, where we are out of the true order; and shall now give some hints of my own experience in relation to this subject.

As before mentioned, I had taken a lot of ground in Wilmington; but as yet it was not clear to me that it would be best for us to reside there; and my wife seeming unwilling to think of it, great were the trials that attended my mind.

To move from one place to another, in our own time and will, I believe is a matter of serious consequence. A change of residence appears to me next in importance to marriage; and, therefore, requires the same Divine Wisdom to direct us aright. We may be qualified for service in one place; and, by removing to a distance, unless we are directed by unerring counsel, the designs of Providence respecting us may be frustrated; and our usefulness lessened.

Under these considerations I was reduced very low in mind; being sensible of my own inability rightly to direct my course. I was full of cares and fears; and so humbled that I was willing to be or do any thing that was pleasing to my dear Master, so that I might be favoured with a knowledge of his will; even if it were to take my axe or spade, and labour for the support of my small family. After many months spent in anxious solicitude on this subject, light gradually arose on my mind. Sometimes it appeared best to move; and again the prospect seemed dark and cloudy; but, at length, the prospect of removing to the new settlement of which I have spoken, and of keeping a store for the sale of goods there, appeared so clear, that I applied for a house convenient for this purpose, if I should conclude to remove. Yet, although I had proceeded so far, I was under a daily care lest I should be mistaken, and take a wrong step; so as to bring a reproach on the profession of Truth I had made to the world.

While I was under this concern, I was taken ill with the small-pox; and had it pretty severely. When on the recovery, as I sat by the fire one evening, in company with my wife, I received a letter from the owner of the house, of which I had the refusal. He informed me that I must write to him the next morning, and say whether I would take it or not; as another person had determined to take possession of it. There was no other house in the settlement which would be at all suitable for my intended business. This brought me into a close trial. After I had read the letter to my wife, we sat silent for some time. At length she cheerfully said, “Well, let us go.” Which I rejoiced to hear; although, at that time, the prospect was enveloped in darkness. I made, her but little reply; and being weak in body, and dark in mind, I retired to bed. After I had lain some time, revolving the difficulties of my situation, with fervent desires for divine direction, I went to sleep; and had a good night’s rest; which I had not enjoyed before, during that illness. About the dawn of the day, it seemed as if I heard a clear and intelligible language, saying to me: “Go, and prosper; fear not; the cattle on a thousand hills are mine; and I give them to whom I please. Behold! I will be with you.” Immediately all my doubts vanished; I saw, with sufficient clearness, that I might go with safety, and hope for a competent subsistence. These circumstances I related to my wife, and told her of my prospects, which afforded her encouragement. I then arose, and wrote to the owner of the house, informing him that I had concluded to take it; and that I hoped to move at the time proposed. Accordingly I removed to it, with my family, in the third month, 1737; taking with me some goods for my store.

After our removal, the minds of the people, both in town³ and country, were inclined to deal with us; and we soon sold the few goods we brought from the city. I then had occasion to think of “the cattle on a thousand hills,” with heartfelt gratitude to Him who keeps covenant with his children, and whose mercies fail not. He neither slumbers nor sleeps; but His watchful eye regards his depending people, as I have ever found.

Chapter IV

His sentiments on Trade—He reverts back to the time of his conviction, and relates his trials and conflicts respecting engaging in the work of the Ministry—His first appearance, in the year

1755

I will now give some of my views on the subject of business, lawful for Christians to engage in. Children may be apprenticed to trades which are inconsistent with a Christian profession. For instance, some are taught to make instruments of war; which they who believe in the peaceable doctrines of Christ cannot lawfully

3 The town at that time contained about forty houses.

engage in. There are several other callings which I believe Christians cannot consistently follow.

It is the duty of those who profess to follow Christ, the Light of the world, to consider whether the business in which they engage, is agreeable to his will; and, if a doubt arise respecting its propriety, to ask counsel, and wait for wisdom, to know how to proceed. I was educated under a supposition that human learning was sufficient to qualify me to teach people the way to peace and happiness.

This was clearly revealed to me to be a mistake, and I had not the shadow of a doubt, that they who trusted in human learning, to qualify them for the gospel ministry, were entirely wrong. In consequence of this conviction, I employed myself in teaching a school, which I believe was right for me at that time. And when I purposed to enter into another business, being convinced I ought to ask counsel of the great Counsellor, I did not run in my own will, and choose my own ways. I was satisfied, that, as we were blessed with a divine Teacher, it was our duty to follow his directions, in temporal, as well as spiritual concerns, especially in movements of importance. And when I believed it would be right to keep a store, I was desirous that I might proceed in the business under the direction of Him who seemed willing to teach me.

Not having served an apprenticeship to the mercantile business, I was ignorant of the quality and prices of goods; it was, therefore, probable that I should be under some difficulty in these respects. But, as I kept near my Guide, He never failed to direct me safely, both in my religious progress and my worldly concerns. The advantages arising from a faithful attention to the leading of the Holy Spirit, are very great; far greater than my tongue or pen can express, even in the management of our temporal affairs. And, I believe, all real Christians might have their understandings enlightened, and their eyes anointed, clearly to see how to proceed in all concerns of importance, provided the pure fear of the Lord prevailed in their hearts; and a humble dependance and full confidence in the all-sufficient Helper were steadily maintained. I speak from experience. He has been my Instructor in a very peculiar manner, much more so than I have mentioned, or than I can describe; and I am far from supposing that I have been more deserving than others. Christ said: "Ask and you shall receive." I asked for his direction and assistance, and He helped me, and I found the promise true.

I believe it is consistent with the Divine will, that all should have their hope and dependance more fully placed in his almighty power, and that they should wait for instruction from Him, in all their undertakings. Thus their understandings would be enlarged, their ideas would be clear, and, having submitted all to the disposal of Divine Providence, who had directed their proceedings, they would go forward without any anxious cares, or distracting thoughts, respecting events. I know this to my comfort. So far as I have conformed to this view, a blessing has attended my undertakings, besides the blessings of peace and an easy mind.

But, before I leave this subject, I will observe, that I did not always so closely attend to my blessed Instructor, as I ought to have done: of which I will relate some instances. It was the practice of shop-keepers to

sell rum, and I was told that if I did not conform to it, I need not expect to do any business of importance. So, without waiting for direction, I fell into the practice, and followed it for several years, until it became a subject of uneasiness to me. I found many used that article to the injury both of body and mind. Some spent their estates to procure it, and thus brought themselves and their families into need and distress; which gave me trouble of mind. But, being unwilling to lose the profits of this branch of business, I adopted an expedient to soothe my pain; which was, to refuse selling it to such as I thought would make an evil use of it. But this did not answer my expectations, for they would send for it by those who were not suspected. At length I was made willing to relinquish the profits on this article, and trust to Providence for the result. I ceased to sell it, which afforded me peace, and made no great diminution of my business.

It was also customary, in those days, for Friends, as well as others, to sell many superfluous articles; such as gay calicoes, flowered ribbons, and other fine things, which we, as a society, did not allow our families to wear; and which it was not consistent with our profession to encourage in others. With these views, I endeavoured to lay aside all such superfluities, and to deal in such articles only, as were really useful. I was told that if I refused to sell such goods, I might quit my business; but, as I did it from a sense of duty, I was not sensible that I sustained any loss by it.

After I had been in business several years, and had increased in wealth, three or four of my fellow-townsmen concluded to build a vessel, and trade to the West Indies; and, without consulting my kind Instructor, I was prevailed upon to join them. But being favoured, after some years, to see my error, I withdrew from the concern as soon as possible, and confined myself to the business of my store. As I attended to this business, I found I could not feel easy to sell my goods for as much as I could get for them, as was the practice with many; but by selling them at a moderate profit, I obtained peace of mind.

I am aware that many, and even some who make a high profession of religion, will deem my remarks on business, marriage, etc. unworthy of notice, and be ready to smile at them, as the whims and notions of a distempered, enthusiastic brain; because they have had no such experience. Yet there may be others, who, having had some knowledge of this way, will be glad of these remarks; for I am sure, beyond all doubt, that what I have written is true, and well worthy of attention.

And if men were universally to attend to the direction of Him who is come to lead us into all truth, the wars and devastation now prevailing in our land [i.e. the Revolutionary War] would not have existed.

I will now recur to the time when I first joined the society of Friends. After I was admitted into membership, I diligently attended all our meetings for worship and discipline, and greatly admired the beautiful order established in the society, and the living gospel ministry with which we were favoured. After I had been a member about one year, I was concerned to appear in the ministry, and excite the careless to a consideration of their "latter end." I had passed through many vicissitudes and tribulations; but when this concern was laid upon me, it seemed heavier than anything I had ever had to bear. I thought I could never be resigned to it.

When I was called out of the vanities of my youth, and was obliged to submit to the cross of Christ, to become a laughing-stock and a by-word to my companions and acquaintances; I was so humbled, so mortified, and self so much abased, I thought I could submit to any thing that might afterwards be required of me. Again, when I passed through that great trial of leaving the college, in the manner before related; to deny all the honours, friendships, pleasant connections, and riches of the world, I concluded I should never again meet with so great a trial. But I was mistaken. This far exceeded all I had previously encountered. I, however, submitted so far as to speak a few times in our meetings; and then, through great fear that I should not be able to persevere, I was induced to be silent, and postpone the performance of this duty until a more “convenient season,” or more full manifestation of the Divine will. I concluded, that if I should continue, for any considerable time, to appear as a minister, and afterwards should be silent, it would bring greater dishonour on my profession than thus to cease at an early period of such a concern. Sometimes I hoped that at a future meeting the trial would not be so severe; at others, that more strength would be granted me. Thus I reasoned, from month to month, and year to year, during seven years. In all which time the concern was often so heavy, that I sat and trembled through the time of meeting; and then went away full of sorrow, trouble, and pain of heart.

For several years after this, I seldom felt this concern, yet I was still sensible that I had a work of this kind to do, and felt great pain in neglecting it. I saw no way to obtain peace of mind, but by a submission to the cross, and becoming willing to be accounted a fool; and this being a severe trial, I evaded it. Sometimes I had a faint hope that I should yet obtain strength to proceed in the work; at other times, I was almost in despair. Thus I passed along for fifteen years, during which time my error was manifested to me in various ways; sometimes by the Holy Spirit, showing me that “obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken to the voice of the Lord than the fat of rams;”—sometimes by the ministry of his messengers; and sometimes by dreams, etc. Thus, in great mercy, the Lord followed me as He did Ephraim of old, saying: “How shall I give you up, O Ephraim!”

One night I dreamed that I saw a large, spacious building in an unfinished state; and the master-builder, who appeared an excellent person, came to me, as I stood at a distance, and desired me to go and take a view of it, to which I agreed; and as we were surveying it, and examining the particular parts, I observed that among the many pillars erected for the support of the building, there was one lacking. I queried of him what was the cause of that vacancy. He replied, it was left for me, and that I was specially designed and prepared for the place; and showed me how I fitted it, like as a mortise is fitted to its tenon. So that I saw in my dream that all he said was true. But, notwithstanding all this, I objected to my capacity and fitness to fill the vacancy; and was, therefore, unwilling to occupy it. He endeavoured, by the most convincing reasons, to remove all my objections, and to demonstrate that I was fitted for the place. He further told me, that they had not another prepared for it, and that the building would be retarded if I did not comply with the design.

After he had reasoned with me a long time, and I still refused, he appeared to be grieved, and told me

it was a great pity that I should be rendered useless in the house by my own obstinacy. And then added, "But it must not be so, for if you will not be a pillar, you shall be a plank for the floor." He then showed me how I might be flattered and prepared for that purpose. But I refused that place also; on the ground that it looked too diminutive to be a plank to be trod upon by all who came into the house. At this the master was troubled, seeing I would accept no place that was offered me: but, after a long debate, he concluded to leave the propositions he had made, for my further consideration; and so we parted.

The next day I was at a meeting on Long Island, and a concern came heavily upon me to say something that was presented to my mind. The burden of the word was weighty, and more difficult to remove than usual; but I contended with it, and, at length, refused to comply. I was then in company with two women Friends. The following night one of them dreamed that she saw me sitting by a pleasant stream of water, before me a table was spread with all manner of dainties; but I was chained, so that I could not reach any of them: at which she was troubled, and asked the master of the feast, why I was deprived of the liberty to partake of the good things on the table. He answered, that the time had been, when, on certain conditions, I might have enjoyed them to the full, but that I had refused the terms, and therefore was now justly deprived of them. She inquired of him whether this must always be my case. He answered, perhaps not; that if I would yet submit, and comply with the terms, it was not too late to partake of all the good things she saw. The interpretation of this dream, and of mine the night before, was easy and plain. They rested on my mind for several years, as cause of humbling instruction, and excitement to future care, diligence, and obedience.

The next day, as we were travelling towards a town where we intended to have a meeting the following day, we were informed that a people, called the New-lights, were to have a meeting there the same day; and that we might, probably, get there at the time their meeting was sitting. As soon as I heard it, I thought the word of the Lord passed through me, saying: "You must go to that meeting." I knew not the object, but supposed it might be to bear a testimony against their errors in worship and practice, and to proclaim the truths of the gospel in their hearing. I rode on without speaking to my companions, but the concern remained weightily with me. I endeavoured, as usual, to get from under it; saying to my Master, "I am in no way qualified for the service;" and desiring that He would send by those who were fitted for such a work; or, as Moses said, "by whom He would send," so that I might be excused.

While I was struggling to evade this service, one of the women turned to me and said: "Why can you not go to this meeting of the New-lights, and proclaim to them the truth, as our Friends did formerly?" Her speech added fuel to the fire that was burning within me. I thought it came with Divine authority, but I made her no reply, having before as much as I could well bear. I, however, felt an engagement to press forward; and when we arrived at the house where we intended to tarry for refreshment, being under great exercise of mind, I walked backward and forward across the room. The friend who had spoken to me on the road, I observed, was under great exercise also. I walked and reasoned as long as I well could. At length the power of opposition was overcome, and I was obliged to submit. I then observed to the friend,

“I believe I must go to that meeting.” She replied, “I believe so also.” The landlord, hearing what was said, proposed to go with me; and I accepted of his offer. So being pressed in spirit to make haste, we set out, and coming to the meetinghouse, I stepped on the door-sill, to go in, and at that instant the meeting broke up. I then stepped aside, and stood still, in retirement of mind; waiting to know my duty. The people rushed out of the house, and I found my mind relieved of concern; so I was easy to return, without further service. I believed the will to act, in this case, was accepted for the deed, and I returned in peace.

Thus was I shown that my divine Master was able to bring me to a state of submission to his holy will, and I then concluded that, if He would excuse me from such a trying service, I would no longer refuse to speak among those of my own persuasion.

But after all this, I proceeded with a heavy heart, being convinced that my work was neglected. It was several years, after this occurrence, before I fully submitted to the Divine will; in all which time I went on lamenting my unfaithfulness. Sometimes I had a hope, as it were, against hope, that I should obtain a victory over that slavish fear which had so long enthralled me. At other times I was ready to conclude there was no cause to hope for deliverance from it. Yet, during this period, I was not wholly forsaken by my Divine Master, but was enabled to perform, I hope with acceptance, some services for Him; such as warning the drunkard, the profane swearer, and the liar, of the evil of their ways, and advising them to repent. Sometimes, during this period, I was also concerned to accompany Friends who were engaged to visit religious meetings in distant places; in yielding to which I found peace. Yet, when abroad on such services, and my call to the ministry was brought into view, the sense of my neglect sunk my spirits; and pain of heart attended me. Thus I spent more than twenty years!

Although, as has been mentioned, I had been many times invited, and had received indubitable evidence of the Divine will, both immediately and instrumentally, so that every doubt was removed from my mind; yet the fear of man, the fear of missing my way, the fear of doing more harm than good, prevailed against me, so that I thought I should never be able to submit to the Divine will concerning me. But, towards the termination of the aforesaid time, I felt more lively; and a concern to appear in the ministry revived.

Being from home, at a meeting, I was concerned to say something to the people; but, according to my usual custom, I postponed it till a more convenient season. On this account I left the meeting in great heaviness and sorrow, for my disobedience.

On the following night, I dreamed that I saw two generals drawing up their armies, in order for battle. Each captain had his men in order, ready to obey the command of their general, and stood at their head, waiting for orders to march, and stand in the engagement where he should command them. One of the generals came to a captain, who stood near me, and said to him, “You are a valiant man, and skillful in the art of war, therefore march into the right wing of the army, and in front of the battle.” But the captain objected to the post assigned him, and pleaded his unfitness for it; saying, “It is a place of danger, and requires a man better qualified for such a post.” The general answered, that he was well qualified for the

place allotted him, and that if he took it, he might, by his skill and valour, do eminent service for his king and country, and gain great honour; which would be a means of promoting him to places of higher trust. He, however, desired to be excused, and could not be persuaded to take the post assigned him. I stood by, and heard all the general's arguments to persuade him to comply, until I was filled with indignation at the captain's obstinacy; especially as the general had absolute authority to command, and yet was so kind as to use entreaty and persuasion. I then said to the general, "It is my judgment, that this captain is not worthy of the place assigned him, since he refuses to serve his king and country according to his capacity, and rejects the honour and promotion he might obtain. Were I in the general's place, I would set him in the rear of the army, where he will have less opportunity of promotion, and may lose his life as well as in the front." To this the general replied, "The decision is just, and in the rear he shall stand;" where he was accordingly stationed.

I awoke from my sleep in great distress; under a sense of the just judgment which (like David) I had passed on myself. From this time, during several months, I was on the brink of despair, concluding I was wholly unworthy to stand in front; and, therefore, should be placed in the rear, to be killed in obscurity. After a time of great anxiety and distress of mind, the Lord was graciously pleased to look upon me with compassion, and again offered to make me a pillar in his house; and I felt a renewed concern to appear in public for his Name, and in the cause of Truth.

In the year 1755, being in company with Comfort Hoag (afterwards Comfort Collins) and her companion, from New-England, then on a religious visit to Friends in this part of the country, I attended a meeting with them, in which I felt a concern to speak to the assembly; but, as usual, evaded it. After meeting, Comfort said to me: "David, why did you not preach today?" I smiled at the query, seeming to wonder that she should ask such a question; and endeavoured to appear innocent and ignorant of any concern of that kind. As she knew nothing of me but what she had felt, (having never before seen or heard of me,) she said no more. On the following day a similar concern came upon me, and I evaded it as before. After meeting, Comfort again said to me: "David, why did you not preach today?" I endeavoured to pass it by as before, but she said it was not worthwhile to evade it, for she was assured that I ought to have preached that day; and that I had almost spoiled her meeting by refraining, which had hindered her service. When I found I could not conceal my faults, I confessed the whole, and told her I had been for more than twenty years in that practice; and then gave her a history of my life from the beginning down to that day. She admired that Divine kindness was yet manifested to ward me in such a manner, seeing I had so long rebelled against it. And then gave me suitable caution and advice.

The following day, being at meeting, I again felt a concern to speak to the people, but endeavoured to evade it. A man of some note was sitting before me, and increased my reluctance to speak. I supposed he would not be present at the next meeting, and then I would obey the call of the Lord to that service. Thus I spent the greater part of an hour. At length my Divine Master, the great Master Builder, thus addressed me: "Why do you still delay, desiring to be excused until a more convenient season? There never will be

a better time than this; I have waited on you above twenty years; I have clearly made known to you my will, so that all occasion of doubt has been removed, yet you have refused to submit, until your day is far spent, and if you do not speedily comply with my commands, it will be too late; your opportunity will be lost." I then clearly saw that if I were forsaken, and left to myself, the consequence would be death and darkness forever! At the sight of the horrible pit that yawned for me, if I continued in disobedience, my body trembled like an aspen leaf, and my soul was humbled within me! Then I said, "Lord! here am I; make of me what You would have me to be; leave me not in displeasure, I beseech You."

All my power to resist was then suspended, I forgot the great man that had been in my way and was raised on my feet I scarcely knew how, and expressed, in a clear and distinct manner, what was on my mind. When I had taken my seat, Comfort Hoag rose, and had an open, favourable opportunity to speak to the assembly. After meeting she told me that, during the time we had sat in silence, her whole concern was on my account; that her anxiety for my deliverance from that bondage was such, that she was willing to offer up her natural life to the Lord, if it might be a means to bring me forth in the ministry; and that, on her making the offering, I rose to speak. On which her anxiety for me was removed, and her mind filled with concern for the people present.¹

At that time I was made a real Quaker, and was not ashamed to be seen trembling before the Lord. Under a sense of so great and merciful a deliverance, I saw and felt ample cause for it. It was with me as with Israel of old, when the Lord caused their captivity to return; saying He would build them as at the first; and they should fear and tremble for all his goodness, and for all the prosperity He would procure for them. My soul rejoiced in the Lord, and I magnified his excellent Name, who is worthy of all honour, glory, and renown, forever.

It appeared to me wonderful, that I should thus be 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 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. My feelings were like those of a prisoner who had been long in bonds, and was set at liberty.

This appearance in the public ministry was in the year 1755; and in the forty-eighth year of my age. After which it was never so great a cross to speak in meetings as it had been before. At many times, during my long silence, I had a sight that if I were obedient to my duty, I might be made a useful member of the church, and as a pillar in God's house; but, having so long rebelled, I now had no reason to expect that I should be so useful as I might have been, had I rendered early obedience to the heavenly call. However, it appeared necessary, if little were committed to my trust, to be faithful to that little. Sometimes I had

1 Comfort Hoag (afterwards Comfort Collins) survived this journey many years, and died when more than one hundred years of age. She was a lively minister till near her end.

a hope of being useful to my fellow creatures; at other times I was left to myself, and humbled under a sense of my own inability to do anything to the honour of God, or the help of others.

Chapter V

He is acknowledged a minister in 1758, and goes out with Certificate—He unites in further service with Samuel Neale, and with Robert Valentine when the latter was young in the ministry—Close trial from a false report of his property being destroyed—His concern for slaves in North Carolina and Virginia—He again visits New England—His concluding remarks in 1779, about seven months before his decease

In the year 1758, I was received into the meeting of ministers and elders, and soon after obtained a certificate to visit some parts of York Government, and a part of Connecticut. A companion was provided for me; and we left home on the 24th of the third month, 1758. We visited about eighty meetings, chiefly among those of other societies, to our own satisfaction; and, apparently so, to that of the people generally; who sat in their meetings admirably quiet; gave great attention to what was said; and were much affected. They were kind and affectionate; and seemed unwilling to part with us. I was four months and five days from home; rode about one thousand miles, and returned in peace, and thankfulness of heart to the God and Father of all our mercies.

For some years after this journey, I seldom appeared in the ministry. My friends, as well as myself, were inclined to believe that if ever I had a gift for that service, it was taken from me. I was reduced very low; and great distress attended my mind. I was often ready to say, "Is God's mercy quite gone? Will He be favourable no more?" I went mourning on my way, and had little comfort in my life. In the night I wished for day; and in the day I wished for night. None can conceive with what horror and anxiety I was attended, unless they have been tried with similar desertion. The cause of my being so tried, I did not then see; but after I was in some measure mercifully restored, I believed it was to humble me; that I might be brought to a more perfect and entire dependence upon the divine gift; that so nothing of self should be present in my ministry.

After it pleased the Lord to revisit my soul with the light of life, I felt a concern to arise, and increase, for the welfare of my fellow creatures. I saw that the professors of Christianity were mostly at ease; and that many under our name were contented with a mere profession of the Truth; and I felt a desire that the careless and negligent might be awakened to a perception of their dangerous situation.

In the year 1771, Samuel Neale, of Ireland, being on a religious visit to Friends in America, came to my

house, on his way to Maryland. Having no companion, I offered to bear him company. He accepted my offer; and we set out in the fifth month, and spent about a month in visiting the meetings of Friends, as far as West River, those on the Eastern-Shore of Maryland, and those between Lewistown and Wilmington; after which we rested a few days at my house. Samuel intended to visit the meetings of Friends in New Jersey, and no better companion offering, I accompanied him in that journey also. From Wilmington we went to Salem; and after visiting all the meetings thereabouts, we crossed the country to Cape May; and visited those of Great and Little Egg Harbour, Shrewsbury, and other parts of New Jersey. Spending between six and seven weeks, to our mutual satisfaction. We parted at a meeting called Solomon's; Samuel going to Philadelphia, and I returning home, where I found my family in health.

Soon after my return, Samuel wrote to me, desiring I would prepare for a journey to New England. It was very pleasant to me, to find he had a concern to visit my native country; for he had often said he saw no probability of making such a visit. I felt willing to go with him, with the approbation of my friends at home, of which I soon received their certificate; and made ready for the journey. I left home on the 19th of the ninth month, 1771; and went to our Yearly meeting at Philadelphia, which proved to me a good, comfortable meeting, as I believe it did to many others. Some friends, whom I highly esteemed, informed me they were pleased with my intentions to accompany Samuel Neale; which afforded me some encouragement, for I was in a low state of mind, feeling great poverty of spirit. I was apprehensive that Friends would prefer a better companion for him, and might advise me to return home; but Samuel seemed well pleased to find me prepared for the journey.

After the yearly meeting had concluded, we set out for New-England on the 27th of the ninth month; and proceeded directly to Rahway, where we had a meeting on First day; and, in the afternoon, rode to New York. Here we had a meeting on Second-day; and rested the day following. On Fourth-day we attended the monthly meeting at Newtown, on Long Island; after which we returned to New York. From there we rode to Shappaqua, and so on to Ammawalk, Peachpond, Oblong, Shearman's meeting, Oswego, Jonathan Hoag's, Over-the-Creek, Nine Partners, and Salisbury, and had meetings at all those places to pretty good satisfaction. From Salisbury we rode about one hundred miles eastward to Leicester; had a meeting there, and lodged at the widow Earle's; another at Bolton, and one at Salem.

Afterwards we proceeded in a north-easterly direction, attending all the meetings of Friends, as far as Case's Bay; and one on the other side of the Bay. We crossed the Bay on the 27th of the tenth month, and returned the following day. On our return, the wind was violent, and we appeared to be in imminent danger. There were fourteen persons in the boat, which was a small one, and the Bay eighteen miles wide, but, through divine mercy, we landed safely; and went that night to Benjamin Winslow's. From there we travelled homeward, fifty-five miles, to Berwick, and attended the quarterly meeting at Dover. From there we went to Kittery, Barrington, Leaping, and to a newly settled place, fifty miles beyond Hampton, called Ware, and had meetings at all those places. From Ware we returned to Hampton; and from there proceeded to Salem, Lynn, and Boston, and so onward to Nantucket; visiting meetings on

the way. Afterwards we visited Rhode Island; and from there travelled through New England, and York Government, and arrived in Philadelphia after an absence of four months and a half; having travelled, by land and water, about seventeen hundred miles, generally to good satisfaction. I returned home in peace, and found my family well.

After this journey, Samuel Neale and I were concerned to visit some parts of York Government; and some within the bounds of Connecticut. We set out on the 27th of the fourth month; and went to the quarterly meeting at Oblong. We spent about six weeks in visiting the meetings of Friends, and holding some among those of other societies. On our return to Philadelphia, I parted with my beloved friend, Samuel Neale; with whom I had travelled, altogether, about nine months.

On the 16th of the tenth month, 1772, having obtained a certificate of the concurrence of my friends, I set out in order to visit the southern provinces, in company with my friend, Robert Valentine, whom I met at York-town, in Pennsylvania. On the afternoon of the day of our meeting, we rode to Newberry; where we attended a meeting the following day, which was not very satisfactory. I was very much depressed under the weight of the undertaking, which appeared a very great one, for two such poor striplings. For though we were not young in years, yet we were so in experience as ministers.

Hitherto, I had generally travelled with old, experienced ministers, upon whom I could lean, as I was too apt to do. But now, under the prospect that the work would devolve with greater weight on me, I was much cast down, although Robert was a valuable friend, and lively minister. I mentioned to him my discouragement; but he spoke cheerfully, saying he believed we should get well along, if our Master would go with us, which he hoped would be the case.

On the following day we had a large meeting at Warrington, and our Master was with us indeed, and favoured us with his life-giving presence. It was an affecting time. The power of Truth prevailed over all. Life was in dominion. Divine love filled many hearts; and we parted with the people in much love and tenderness. This comfortable meeting relieved me of my fears, and renewed my faith. We now went on pretty cheerfully; under the hope that we should be favoured, from time to time, with fresh supplies of Divine help, through our journey. We visited meetings on our way to Fairfax; and were at their monthly meeting, and several others in that neighbourhood. At that time our valuable friend, John Churchman, was at Fairfax; and we attended several meetings with him. Robert and I had an evening meeting at Louisburg. It was held in their courthouse, and many of their great people were present. It proved a very trying time to us both; such as I had never known before. But, after we had been sufficiently proved and mortified, we were favoured with a good, comfortable opportunity to relieve ourselves; for which I was truly and humbly thankful. John Churchman remained at Amos Janney's, in Fairfax, until we had visited all the meetings in that neighbourhood.

After finishing this service, we returned to Amos Janney's; and from there set out on our journey southward. At parting with John Churchman, he told us he had no objections to our going forward, which

afforded us great encouragement. I was inclined to believe he would advise me to return home, and not attempt further to prosecute my enterprise. I concluded he would perceive our weakness, and be honest to us in the cause of Truth; and I felt willing to receive such advice, not desiring to proceed without Divine approbation. But, notwithstanding we had been encouraged to proceed, I went on in great fear; having a daily sense of my own insufficiency for so great and important a service. We, however, ventured to proceed to Hopewell, and attended all the meetings in that neighbourhood; then went to Smith's Creek, from there to Douglas, Camp Creek, Fork Creek, and Genito; to John Johnson's, in Amelia county; to South River, a branch of James's River, to Stanton, and so on to North Carolina. We had meetings at all those, and some other places. In New-Garden settlement we were at one quarterly meeting, three monthly meetings, and eighteen public meetings. Though we had our trials and baptizing seasons, and felt need of daily assistance, the great Shepherd of Israel was near us, and favoured us with help. We felt great love for the people; and I hope our visit may be useful to some of them.

Soon after we entered New-Garden settlement, and before we had had a meeting there, my companion heard a report that a letter had come for me, and that it contained bad news. It was said the letter had passed us, and when or where it would be found, was very uncertain. My companion consulted with some friends on the subject; and they thought it would be best to conceal the report from me, as we were just going to the first meeting in the settlement. However, as we rode along, he thought it right to inform me of the rumour; and told me it was reported I was sent for home. On hearing it I was filled with concern, the enemy was busy, and I was weak, yet I continued my journey, although I had poor meetings. I supposed my friends were uneasy with my proceedings; and had sent to request me to return. The report concerning the letter spread among the people; and it was currently asserted that Wilmington was burnt to ashes, that all my property was consumed, and that I was sent for on that account. These were heavy tidings; and all true, for any thing I knew to the contrary.

After several days of great anxiety, a hope arose in my mind that it was not so bad as was reported; for, as I turned my mind towards home, it seemed to me, that my dwelling house at least was safe. I had now been about ten days under this trouble, when we lodged at the house of a Friend whose wife was a sensible, religious woman; well acquainted with the snares of the enemy; and she, hearing me say something of returning, as I could hear nothing further of the letter, told me she believed there was little or no truth in the reports, but that it was the work of Satan and his emissaries, to hinder my service and send me home. This was a seasonable caution. When we had visited nearly all the meetings in that neighbourhood, and as we designed to proceed to Bush River, in South Carolina, I thought it best to use every means to find the letter, before we went further. I therefore hired a young man to go back in pursuit of the letter as far as Hillsborough, sixty miles, if necessary. After proceeding about thirty miles in the search, he found it; and brought it to me, just as we were going into a meeting. I opened and read the letter, much to my comfort. There was no account of a fire, or any other unpleasant occurrence in it. Thus all my uneasiness was removed.

This storm being happily blown over, we set out for South Carolina. Zachariah Dicks, John Carter, William Lindley, and John Unthank, accompanied us to Bush River, two hundred miles; which we travelled in five days. Two of the Friends remained at Bush River, while we went to Georgia. We went afterwards to Wateree and Pedee. At the latter place we had two meetings with Friends. There we parted with the four Friends before mentioned. They had been our affectionate and pleasant companions for about a month. After our separation, Robert and I felt lonesome; having to ride one hundred and twenty miles before we could come among Friends again. During two days we had guides to conduct us; then, hoping we should be able to find the way without their assistance, we advised them to return home. We arrived at Richard Cox's, at Neuse River, in safety; and after having two satisfactory meetings there, we rode fifteen miles to Great Contentney; where we had a meeting. From there we went to Henry Horne's, at Tar River, and had a meeting at his house; which was a poor, low time. The professors there seemed inclined to the Baptists.

From Tar River we went to Rich-Square; and, after attending their meeting, we set out towards the old settlement, in North Carolina. As we proceeded towards the lower settlements, in Carolina and Virginia, among a wise people, as I supposed, fat and full, possessing great numbers of slaves, I was very pensive, and so much depressed, that I would gladly have passed them by, and returned immediately home. But I saw no way for me, but to look to my Divine Instructor; and depend on Him who had hitherto been our sufficient helper, in every strait and difficulty. After a time of trial, I was favoured with a degree of fortitude and resignation. I went down among them in fear, but we found some tender, loving, well inclined people; and were favoured with heavenly help, and enabled to proceed, I hope, to the honour of Truth, and advantage of the people; for many of whom we felt a tender regard, and parted with them in much love.

Although they were generally in the practice of keeping slaves, yet they had begun to see the error of it, and were desirous to be relieved of the burden; but saw no way to effect it, to the satisfaction of themselves and their slaves, because of the cruel laws in force in these colonies, by which, if a man set his slaves free, they would be liable to be seized, and sold to the highest bidder; which appeared grievous, both to themselves and their owners.

We visited nearly all the meetings in the lower parts of North Carolina and Virginia, to our satisfaction. We then passed into Maryland; visited the meetings on the Western Shore, as far as Baltimore; from which we came directly home. I found my family and temporal concerns as well as usual; and had great peace and satisfaction of mind, under a thankful sense of the many favours we had received, and that Divine assistance had been afforded in every trying season. We had been engaged in this visit just five months, had travelled nearly three thousand miles, had attended one hundred and five Public meetings, and arrived at home on the 16th of third month, 1773.

After my return from this journey, I did not travel far from home, until the fifth month, 1776; when, in

company with John Perry, I left home to pay a religious visit to Friends in New-England. At Rahway we met Rebecca Wright and Phebe Yarnall, who were engaged to pay a similar visit, and we travelled together about seven weeks. We were at many meetings in York Government, Naraganset, and Rhode Island; and attended the meetings on the way to Nantucket. From there, we returned to the quarterly meeting of Sandwich. After the close of that meeting, we parted from the two women Friends, before mentioned. They went towards Boston, and from there eastward; we returned towards Providence, and visited all the meetings in those parts. From there, we crossed Connecticut, through Hartford to New-Milford, and to Oblong. From the Great Meadows we passed to Kingwood, New Jersey, into Bucks county, Pennsylvania, and from there home; from which I had been absent about ten weeks. We had travelled, by land and water, eight hundred miles. I was favoured with peace of mind, and found my family well.

1779. I am now drawing towards the conclusion of life; being, this day, seventy two years of age. For the encouragement of others, I will now briefly recapitulate some of the kind dealings of Providence towards me. The God of my life, my Maker and Preserver, has been propitious to me, from youth to old age. The fear of the Lord, which preserves from evil, was placed in my heart when I was but eight years old; so that I was afraid to offend Him. In the twelfth year of my age, I was mercifully visited, and called out of the vanities of the world; at which time I received a promise, that if I sought first the kingdom of God, all other necessary things should be added; and I have found the promise true, for I never have lacked any of the good things of this life. I have been blessed with sufficient for myself and friends, and something to spare to the poor; and I esteem it a great favour, that I received a disposition to communicate to those who stood in need.

If all men would “seek first the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof,” and carefully attend to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, with which all might be favoured, I believe they would be blessed with a sufficient portion of wealth. O that mankind were wise! and would early seek that treasure which comes from above; and which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal! And may we all beware of loving the world; and living at ease, in the enjoyment of its good and pleasant things! Even those who have been favoured with remarkable Divine visitations, and have been put in possession of “the upper and the nether springs,” have great need to be on their guard. When we enjoy health and plenty, and all things seem pleasant around us, we are prone to forget the Lord, and neglect those “things that belong to our peace.” This I know, by sorrowful experience. In this way I was brought into a long, dark, and mournful situation; and kept from yielding obedience to my known duty respecting the ministry.

Although I had been called out of the world, and uncommonly favoured, as before related; although I had forsaken the vanities and flesh-pleasing gratifications in which I had delighted; although I had left the college in a way so mortifying, had given up all to death, and freely borne the cross of being esteemed a fool by the world; afterwards joining with the despised Quakers, adopting their language, dress and behaviour; (all which I could not have done without Divine assistance;) yet, after all this, I was so

forgetful, and ungrateful to my heavenly Benefactor, that it is a wonder I was ever restored. And I have no doubt that thousands, through negligence, even after they have been called out of the world, and have run well for a season, have been finally lost; swimming away in the riches and pleasures of this transitory state. This I have written for a warning to others.

In the early part of the winter, after my return from New-England, in 1776, I was reduced to a poor state of health, and so continue. I believe I have not lately been ever clear of a slow fever; but have generally been able to go to our religious meetings, at and near home; sometimes to Philadelphia, and once into Maryland, the lower counties on Delaware, etc.

—DAVID FERRIS

Wilmington, 5th Mo. 1779.

P. S. I do not think it probable that Friends will think the rough remarks and observations I have made, worth publishing; but they may possibly be of some use to my family, to whom, therefore, I leave them.

—DAVID FERRIS

A Testimony

From Wilmington Monthly Meeting, In the County Of Newcastle, on Delaware, Concerning David Ferris.

He was the son of Zachariah and Sarah Ferris, and was born in Stratford, in Connecticut government, New-England, the 10th of the third month, 1707. His parents being Presbyterians, brought him up in that way; his mother being religiously disposed, and much concerned for her offspring, frequently gave them good advice and admonition, which had some good effect with this our friend, as he has often been heard to express.

We find, by some remarks he left, that about the twelfth year of his age, he was frequently visited and called unto by the Divine Monitor in his heart, to forsake evil and youthful vanities, which he delighted in; and, by being in a good degree faithful thereto, was, for a time, preserved from them; but for lack of attending to that which would have continued to preserve him, the pleasures and vanities of this world got hold of his mind, so that he took much delight in airy and vain company, music and dancing, and such like amusements, until about the twentieth year of his age; when it pleased the Lord to visit him with a sore fit of sickness, which proved of lasting advantage to him, as it occasioned him to take up a fresh resolution; to forsake the evil of his ways, and turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart; which he

was, through mercy, favoured with ability in measure to perform.

He still continued in profession with the Presbyterians, not having any knowledge of Friends; although, by attending to the teachings of divine grace, he became convinced of the principle we profess; and hearing of a yearly meeting of Friends to be held on Long Island, went to it, with desires to discover whether they were a living people or not, for such he desired to find; where he met with what he often longed for, a people that worshipped God in spirit and in truth; which was a great strength and confirmation to him, in forsaking the errors of his youth. And by yielding obedience to these inward motions, he gained strength, and was more and more enabled to bear a faithful testimony to the truth, as it was made known to him. In the sixth month, 1733, he removed to Philadelphia, where he joined in religious fellowship with Friends. In 1735, he married Mary, the daughter of Samuel and Sarah Massey; and in 1737 removed to Wilmington, in Newcastle county, where he resided the remainder of his days.

He made some appearance in the ministry about the year 1734, but, through unfaithfulness to the divine call, he from time to time put it off, and remained in a neglect of duty therein, upwards of twenty years; although he was often warned, both immediately and instrumentally, in a remarkable manner; which, at length, produced a submission to the Divine will; so that, in the year 1755, he was made willing to give up thereto, and therein found great peace.

He travelled through several parts of this continent in the work of the ministry; and, by certificates produced on his return home, it appeared, that his conduct, conversation, and labours abroad, were exemplary and edifying, tending to the advancement of truth and righteousness. His doctrine was sound and acceptable to the honest-hearted, though sharp against the hypocrite and rebellious; yet tender to the mourners and disconsolate.

He was very serviceable in our meetings for discipline, which, with other meetings, he diligently attended; not suffering his outward affairs to hinder him from what he believed to be his religious duty. And although he followed shop-keeping for a living, it was his practice to shut up his shop, and take his family with him to week-day meetings, often expressing, for the encouragement of others, that he believed it was attended with a blessing. He was free and open-hearted to entertain Friends; and concerned to bring up his children in plainness, and instruct them in the fear of the Lord, believing that to be the best portion they could inherit; remarkably charitable to the poor, and often administered to their necessities.

Bodily weakness attended him during the last three years of his life; and near the close of his days, he was much afflicted with sickness, which he bore with patience; often expressing his prospect of his approaching end, and his resignation therein; saying, "All is well." Several Friends being present, after a time of silence, he in a lively manner repeated the expressions of the apostle, "To me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He departed this life, the 5th of the twelfth month, 1779, aged upwards of seventy-two, a minister about twenty-four years. On the 7th of the same month, his corpse was interred in our burying ground in Wilmington.

THE END.