

A JOURNAL OF THE LIFE  
OF THAT ANCIENT  
SERVANT OF CHRIST  
JOHN GRATTON

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*Edited by Jason R. Henderson 2016*

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*For God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted with him. Acts 10:34-35.*

It has often been in my heart to write a short account to leave behind me of the Lord's gracious dealings with me, and of the great mercies, which in his infinite love, he has freely bestowed upon me, far beyond my deserts or expectation, to my great joy and consolation. Praises, thanks, glory, honor and renown, be given and ascribed unto him; for he alone is worthy, God over all, blessed forever, amen. To the end that my children and others, who may see these lines, may be encouraged to trust in the living God, and to cast their care upon him, and obey him truly; for he never fails them that put their trust in him, and abide in his blessed counsel.

When it first pleased the Lord to visit me, and to cause his light to shine in me, which is now my life, I was but a child, and was keeping my father's sheep, and was addicted to sin and vanity, for which I was reprov'd and smitten inwardly. It was made manifest to me that I was not in a state of salvation, nor had I any true peace in my mind; but whenever I came seriously to consider my condition, I found an accuser near me. I also found that He who reprov'd me for sin, and showed me the deceit of my heart, also counseled me to embrace truth and righteousness, and was always

with me to instruct me and guide me in the way of holiness, and advised me to sin no more in word or deed, but always to speak truth. When I took his counsel and followed his advice, then was I easy, and my burden seemed to lighten, and it would give me encouragement to hold on and take heed to that good Spirit in me which thus instructed me to godliness, and to shun that which was evil. I found, as it were, two spirits working in me, both striving to gain me, the one from the other. And I found that the good Spirit (for so it was) always counseled me to do good things, and when I was obedient to it, then I found the evil spirit could not break my peace. And had I stood here, and always lived in the counsel of this good Spirit of instruction, and never rebelled against it, then my peace would have been as a river.

I was about ten or eleven years old when the Lord visited me with the light of his Son, and gave me to see the vain life and way I lived in, being much given to play amongst rude boys, and took great delight in playing at cards, and shooting at targets, and ringing of bells, for which I was reprov'd. I came to see that vain sports and pleasures were displeasing to the Lord, to which I was much inclined before I came truly to know the Word of God in my heart and mouth, to hear it and do it. Indeed I was judged in myself for these things, but I knew not the Judge, being but a child. I did not yet know the Lord, nor think it had been he who met me in my heart and conscience, and told me all that ever I did, and made all things manifest that were reprov'd, though I had read in the Scriptures that Christ was come to redeem from a vain manner of life to serve the living God. And Christ taught to pray, "Your kingdom come; your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," and said, "I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me," and, "not my will but your will be done," when he was to drink that bitter cup of the cross. And he said, "He that will be my disciple must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me," and so the cup he was to drink, and the baptism he was to be baptized with, they also should drink and be baptized with the same. Oh, it is beyond words, or the depth of man's wisdom to reach, and yet we must drink it, and be baptized with his baptism!

It was he that appeared in me when I was young, though I knew him not, but instead followed hireling priests, Presbyterians, etc., yet I was uneasy among them all. When I saw that I lived not as I ought, a fear came over me, and I sat down upon the ground and was very serious, and I thought to live more carefully and holy for the time to come. And when this mind was begotten in me, I felt and saw the grace of God appear in me, but I knew not what it was, yet I would gladly have held it, and have kept the enjoyment of it, but did not. For being young, my mind went out again after vain and childish sports, and sinful, foolish pastimes, when I met with my companions, sporting myself in earthly things, and so I fell from the counsel of the heavenly, and lost the sense, sight, and feeling of it. So it was that trouble and sorrow of mind came over me.

Thus I lived for five or six years, and as I grew in years, so trouble and sorrow increased in me. Yet I did often find the heavenly Monitor meet with me, and sometimes did sharply reprove me, and sometimes gently instruct me. And at last he did clearly open my heart to me, and broke my peace, and caused his terrors to seize upon me, and I was wounded at my heart. Great was my sorrow, and my tears were many, and I knew not what to do.

Yet in this state of sorrow I sometimes had a secret hope, and this kept me from sinking under the great weight that lay upon me. This gave me courage to pray to God, though I knew not how to pray. Yet I thought that in secret, where none could hear or see me, I could pray best, and could confess those sins that I was not willing men should know of, and pray for forgiveness and for power over them. But still I did not find power to forsake the sins I was so prone to because I received not the One to whom all power is given, nor yet knew him.

I little thought it had been he who told me all that ever I had done, and who searched out all my secret sins. There was nothing hidden from him, but he discerned the very thoughts and intents of my heart, and I was even laid naked before him, and could hide nothing from him. Yet his appearance<sup>1</sup> seemed such a poor, low, despised thing, that I did not believe in it, nor did I think it possible to find Christ in me, but rather looked for him in heaven, above the skies. And though he appeared to me wonderfully by his Spirit, yet I did not know him, but still rejected his counsel, and came not to him to be taught by him, though he had long waited to be gracious to me. Glory to his name, for indeed he made many things manifest to me.

Great was the travail of my poor soul, and all outward things sometimes seemed of little worth to me. I cried unto the Lord that he would tell me what he would have me to do, and that he would show me who were his people that worshiped him aright, according to his will. I read much and conferred with many about religion, and ran to and fro to hear those that were accounted great preachers, but I neglected the great teacher in my own heart. I esteemed the priests that were then in place, in Oliver Cromwell's time,<sup>2</sup> and went constantly to hear them, but often came home full of sorrow, for I was not satisfied with their doctrine of election and reprobation,<sup>3</sup> which put me into deep trouble. Indeed I was sometimes very near concluding that I was a reprobate, my state appearing to be a state of sin.

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1 He speaks here of Christ's initial inward appearance as a convicter and reprover of sin.

2 Oliver Cromwell was the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1653 to 1658.

3 The Protestant church at this time was almost unanimous in its assertion that God had foreordained a specific and small number of individuals to be saved, and had consequently predestined the rest of humanity (the vast majority) to eternal condemnation.

Yet I believed that men who were in Christ were elected, but men who were out of Christ were out of the way to God. For Christ is the elect and chosen of God, the heir of all things, and all that are in him are co-heirs with him. And if Christ be theirs, then all is theirs, and Christ is all in all to them in whom he lives and reigns. But if Christ be not in them, then they are reprobates, without God in the world, dead in sins and trespasses, and so all they do are dead works, dead prayers, dead preaching, dead worship and performances. Indeed, many are seeking the living among the dead, among dead ordinances, dead faiths, dead observations, and dead professions.

My sorrows increased, yet I strove hard to get ease. I read much, and prayed much in secret, and went to hear sermons very eagerly. I was now become one of the Presbyterian church, and had been much among them, and told some of them part of my condition. But, alas! alas! They could not help me, no, nor themselves neither! For they would tell me it was a good condition, and that I must be troubled with my sins as long as I lived, and that even the best of God's children all along had their failings. All this was to persuade me to sit down contented before I was cleansed and washed from my sins. Oh, these were the physicians of no value! These were they that plastered with untempered mortar, and cried, "peace, peace" when there is no peace at all experienced! So my sorrows increased upon me, and when the people sang psalms in the steeple-house<sup>4</sup> when I was present, I dared not sing the same sayings of David, as they did. It would have been a lie in my mouth. For I clearly saw I was not in the condition David was in, nor could I sing it truly as my own song; and if I had sung, it would have been a false thing, as to myself.

My sorrows still increased night and day, and my tears and fears were also many. Sometimes I secretly prayed unto the Lord, and confessed all my sins, and begged of the Lord forgiveness, and used many words (some of which, it may be, I had learned from the priests, and others were real according to my state). Yet, when I was done, I was condemned and full of sorrow, and my spirit would sometimes be more heavy laden after I was done than before I began, being condemned in myself that I had not prayed in faith, doubting nothing, nor had I prayed in the Spirit of prayer and supplication.

I could find no rest to my poor soul. I mourned deeply because I was unholy and unrighteous, though my neighbors thought better of me, for I saw my sins and trespasses were many, and I believed the Scripture that says, "No unclean thing can enter the kingdom of heaven," and, "without holiness, no man shall ever see the Lord."

I mourned deeply, and was ready to conclude that my heart was not right in the sight of God. I

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4 Because they understood the true church to be the spiritual, corporate body of Christ, the early Quakers were unwilling to refer to church buildings as the "church," and instead used the term "steeple-house."

prayed much in private, in the stable and barns, and in bed, and in the open fields. One day, being alone on the top of a hill in the snow, I cried aloud with strong cries to the Lord, and desired him to show me my own heart. The Lord was pleased to hear and answer my prayer at that time, so that he gave me to see my own heart in such a way that I knew it was the Lord that did show it to me, to my satisfaction. For I plainly saw it to be deceitful, and not a good, humble, and pure heart. I was pleased that I saw it, and knew what it was. But I was sorry it was so very bad. This was the first time, to my remembrance, that I was sure the Lord gave me an answer to my prayers.

I had deep sorrow, yes, very deep sorrow, and watered my pillow with tears. Sometimes I was ready to say, “Oh, that I had never been born!” But it pleased the Lord to put it into my mind to be content, and to await the Lord's time for him to give me further knowledge of his will. For a while I lived in great sorrow and fear and trouble. Oh, it was undeclarable! So that in the morning, I was glad that the day was come, and at night, that night was come. Truly I was apt to think that no man's condition was ever like mine.

About this time, King Charles II came to the crown, and after a while uniformity was concluded on and enacted<sup>5</sup>—that none must have liberty to preach in churches (so called) except such as would conform, and read the common prayer book, and observe those ceremonies that were set up by the Episcopalians, or else be silent. Then the Presbyterian priests, whom I had so much esteemed and admired, made their farewell sermons and left us; for they desired not to conform to the common prayer book themselves, and so would not venture to stay with their flocks, which caused me to weep bitterly.

Whereupon it came into my mind to search the Scriptures to see whether those the Lord sent forth to preach the gospel in the demonstration of the Spirit could be silent at a man's command, even though they were men in authority who forbade them; and whether these, who now pretend to be his ministers, could, according to Scripture, be clear to leave their flocks and congregations for of the will of man, yes or no. For I believed that if God had sent them and set them up, then man ought not to pull them down. I likewise found it plain, by the Holy Scriptures, that they ought not to be silent at man's command, if the Lord had indeed sent and commanded them to preach. They ought rather to obey God instead of man, when the Lord commands one thing and man another—as with the three children and Daniel also, who patiently bore the wrath of the king, and were put into the fiery furnace and the lions' den. These trusted in God, and he delivered them. I found in also Isaiah 62, in plain words, that the Lord commanded those that make mention of the Lord not to keep silence.

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5 He means uniformity of religion, mandated and enforced by the state.

And when the rulers of the Jews commanded the apostles not to preach any more in the name of Jesus, they answered with a query, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey men rather than God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen." And they went straight away into the temple, and preached or taught. In the next chapter, when the Lord delivered them out of prison, they went again into the temple and taught, and one came and told the rulers, "Behold the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." Then they sent for them before the council, and the high priest said, "Did not we strictly command you that you should not teach in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Then Peter, and the other apostles answered, and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." And right away, to their faces, they preached boldly, and did not keep silence, nor flee their testimony, as the priests did in those days.

And that able minister of Christ, the Apostle Paul said, "Necessity is laid upon me, and woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." He and they had the gospel to preach, and knew it to be weighty and powerful, and were filled with the Holy Spirit, so that they could not contain it, or be silent; for if they had, they would have felt the woe. Men could not silence them, though they used violence, for they chose to suffer rather than to be silent; for they dared not be silent, seeing their great Lord and Master had commanded them to preach, nor could they be silent without bringing themselves under that woe which man could not take off. Though they imprisoned them, whipped and stoned them, and used great violence to them, still they testified (even to the very faces of those kings and rulers they were brought before) of their way of worship, and of the truth and life that is eternal, not valuing their lives, or counting them dear unto themselves.

Meeting with the priest who lived in the parish where I did, I spoke my mind to him, and told him that I believed if God was pleased to fit and qualify men for the work of the ministry, gift them for it, and send them to preach, they ought to obey God. And if men forbid them to obey God, they ought not to forbear their obedience to God in order to please men, nor to be silent at man's command if God command them to preach or teach, as he did his servants of old times. Those he sends in these days ought to be obedient to God, even if man be displeased and cause them to suffer for righteousness sake. For the Lord is God, and will help them, and recompense them into their bosoms a hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. The priest told me that he preached in his own hired house, as Paul did at Rome, and was not silent. But that did not satisfy me, for Paul was a prisoner, and they were not. Had they stayed till they were pulled out and put in prison, then they had done like men that trusted in God, and then the question would be whether men truly had power to take them from their flocks. But they fled and left us.

Having searched the holy Scriptures, and found that these priests acted contrary thereto, and that

both the Old and New Testament were against them, and that if they had been true ministers of Christ they could not be silent, though they had laid down their lives, “not knowing but that after them grievous wolves might come in,” I was fully persuaded in my mind upon the aforesaid grounds that the Presbyterians were not the true ministers of Christ. And I felt my mind turned against them, considering that, if God had sent them, they should have stood in their places, but if they were not sent of God, then they ran before they were sent, and were not the men that I had taken them to be, and now they were manifest. So I left them, and saw they were like those spoken of by our Lord in the 10th chapter of John, who were hirelings, and not true shepherds. For when they saw the wolf coming, they left the flock and fled. But the true Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Where to go, or what to do, I knew not, and I was much grieved, and could not tell who the people of the Lord were. I often cried, “Lord, show me who are your people, and those that worship you aright! I pray you join me unto them, and enable me to serve you, that I may enjoy your presence.” Had I then joined to the Lord, and to the gift or grace of God that appeared in my heart, and believed in it, and obeyed the teaching of it, I should then have been joined to the Lord in his Spirit, and also have been brought to them who were in the Spirit before me. For they are his true worshipers who are in the Spirit, and in it worship God aright, who is a Spirit.

When the Presbyterians were removed out of the pulpit (and out of my heart also), then the Episcopal priests came in with their white robes, and read the Book of Common Prayer with long composed forms, (of which there is nothing mentioned in all of holy Scripture). This was as a dead, empty sound to me, and my spirit was grieved with it, for I met with nothing at all of the life or power of God in them; so I saw they had a form without the power. Indeed, this was the form of godliness without the power (2 Tit 3:5), which the Scripture exhorts all to turn away from. For the power that Episcopal priests came in by, was the same that the others were put to silence by; and this power had also authorized the priest to compel all to buy his wares,<sup>6</sup> and if any refused, he had power given to excommunicate him out of the synagogue. And then, if anyone would not have his ware, yet he had power to make him pay for it still, even after he was cast out.

Hearing that all must go to this form of worship, I also went to worship I knew not what. When I came, who should come to carry on the work but an old Presbyterian, who had spoken much against the common prayer, and against those ceremonies which were commanded by men to be used. But rather than lose the great benefits that yearly came in (for praying and preaching to the people), he swallowed down that which before he had vomited up.

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<sup>6</sup> By “wares” he is referring to the “spiritual merchandise” (i.e. sermons, sacraments, rites, etc.) offered by the priests in exchange for obligatory tithes.

I observed their worship, and I searched the Scriptures again and again, and found the power they stood in not to be the power of God, but of men. I found that God commanded, “Whatsoever you desire that men should do to you, do you even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets;” but these went contrary to this. The Lord commanded his servant Paul, saying, “Pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit;” but I found the Episcopal prayers in a book. I found the worship God required to be in Spirit and in truth, but the Episcopal worship was in ceremony and external things without life. I found the Lord commanded in the New Testament not to observe days and times, and months and years, but these priests commanded days to be observed, one above another. The Lord commanded his ministers, saying, “Freely you have received, freely give,” but these gave nothing freely, but sat ready to receive, and even compelled people to give. Finally, I found them to be in nothing suitable to the Scriptures, and I then concluded they were like the false prophets who were spoken of in Scripture.

So I absented myself and did not join with them, but was separated from them by the Lord, blessed be his name forever, who has been gracious to my soul far beyond what I can express; living praises be given to his holy name, forevermore. I left them, with their dead forms, dead sounds, dead works, yes, all seemed dead to me; and to stay there, seeking the living among the dead, would not profit my poor soul at all. I had this saying in my mind—Whoever is right I know not, but these are wrong. Their eyes are blinded, their ears are dulled, their hearts are proud, carnal, covetous, and greedy after their gain, and they do not profit the people at all. And if they leave people after ten, twenty, thirty or forty years tithing them, yet they are no better for all the charges they have put them to. They are “miserable sinners” still, and likely to remain so. But though this was seen by me, I still lacked wisdom to come to the true light which made these things manifest to me. Instead, I was considering in my own wisdom what to do, and yet could not tell, or find the true worshipers.

I heard of a sort of people who were much commended, who used to meet in private houses in great fear of being persecuted, but were much commended by great professors<sup>7</sup> whom I looked upon to be understanding men. I went to their meetings, some of whom were called Independents, some Presbyterians, and some Anabaptists. I found some of this mixed multitude believed that God had elected a certain number to be saved, and had reprobated all the rest. Others of them held forth free grace, or Christ a gift freely given to all. Some held baptizing infants in water; some said no, that none ought to be baptized in water till they believe. And some baptized not at all. But the greatest thing of all that I did not find when among them was the Lord, nor could I see the power of God upon them, or amongst them. Instead, pride abounded, slandering one another, foolish jesting, vain talking, fashioning themselves according to the customs of the world, many of them conforming so

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<sup>7</sup> The word “professors” is used to refer to those who profess Christianity. Here the word has nothing to do with teachers or scholars.



far as to go one time to their own meeting, and another time to the steeple-house, though they had much to say against the steeple-house worship. I saw they feared man greatly, as it appeared; for when the law of man come forth with great penalties upon all separate meetings,<sup>8</sup> they refrained from meeting and were not to be found, and kept silent rather than hazard this world's goods. So I was still in great trouble of mind, and knew not what to do. For indeed the Lord was what I longed for, and to glorify him was my desire; but I knew not how.

Then I went to Chesterfield, to seek out and meet with those people called Independents; for I liked the name, seeing nothing at all in man to depend on. But these depended only upon the death and sufferings of Christ in his own body, yet did not come to see him, nor his appearance in themselves to be their life, and had not heard his voice, and the Word of God they did not have abiding in them. So these were dead professors and dry trees, not bringing forth fruit. But they preached free grace, universal love, general redemption, and tender mercy to all.<sup>9</sup> This pleased me well, far better than the Presbyterian doctrine of election and reprobation. Yet I was not satisfied or easy, for I read Scripture very much, and saw by reading the Scriptures (with the secret help of Almighty God, which he afforded me in his infinite love) that as many as were led and guided by the Spirit of God, these were the sons of God, and that, if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. This is such a clear distinction between the children of God and the children of the wicked one, or the children of this world, that there is no uniting them. This is clear from the holy Scriptures. For light and darkness are opposites; and Christ and Belial, believers and infidels are past uniting without a new creation, a new birth, which the unconverted are encouraged to wait for, seek for, beg and hope for.

I saw that without the enjoyment of God in my own soul all was in vain. It was little comfort to me to read and hear what other men had enjoyed, while I went without it. The wise virgins' oil would not serve them and me too. I saw that a little measure of the Spirit of God was more precious than all this vain world, and that short of this I could not rest. I made my remarks on those Independents, and saw they were very proud, and were afraid of men and sufferings. When we went to

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8 A law was passed by the Parliament of England imposing fines on any person attending a religious assembly (other than those of the Church of England) consisting of five or more people. Attendees were fined five shillings for the first offense, and ten shillings for the second offense. The preacher, and the one offering their home for such meetings, were fined twenty pounds for the first offense and forty for the second.

9 The terms "universal love" or "general redemption" should not be confused with the erroneous doctrine of universal salvation or universal reconciliation. The word universal was used by early Quakers to refer to their belief that God *offers* salvation to all mankind (and not only to a small, predestined number) through a measure of His light or grace that witnesses in the heart against sin, and invites all to find salvation in Christ. It is this gracious, inward *invitation* that is universal. When received, followed, and obeyed, this light becomes the life and salvation of the soul. If rejected, the same light becomes man's condemnation. See John 3:19-21.

meetings, we were cautioned to go as privately as might be, so that they went several ways, one under one hedge side, and another under another, that we might not be taken notice of. Then, when we came to the meeting places, scouts or watchers were set to see and to give notice, that if a magistrate came, we might all run away and break up our meeting. This seemed a wrong thing to me, and it displeased me, for I saw that they were not like the disciples of Christ who were not ashamed or afraid to own Christ before men. Doing this did not tend to spread the gospel, if indeed they preached it.

I found no true peace with God among them, nor enjoyment of the Lord in my poor soul. Whereupon I left them, and all churches and people, and continued alone like one that had no mate or companion. Yet at times, some hope would arise beyond my expectation, and I believed that God had a people somewhere, but I knew not who they were. I was afraid to join with any, lest they should not worship God aright, and then I might be guilty of idolatry, which I had often observed in Scripture to be offensive to the Lord (among the Jews), and I saw that he not only threatened them sorely by his prophets, but also brought judgments upon them for their idolatry and rebellion against him.

The sorrows of hell took hold on me and the very pangs of death encompassed me. Which way to turn I knew not, but I could find none to comfort me, or to lend me a hand in my tears, fears, terrors, grief, amazements, bitterness, anguish, and deep mourning. Yet I was forward to discourse and talk about matters of religion with any who would talk with me, for many had a love to me. But the priests I saw were in deceit, and I was sharp upon them at times. My sorrows were so great that sometimes I roared out, and cried mightily to the Lord when I traveled upon the plains and moors and thought none was near to hear or see me but the Lord alone, who was the only one to whom I did look and in whom I did hope for help and deliverance.

Now it pleased the Lord to open and show me many things. He opened holy Scriptures to me sometimes, and I was mightily afraid of sinning against the Lord, so that I walked carefully. It grieved me to see people live badly, and to see that they could not believe one another in what they said when they bought and sold; and when I heard a man swear I trembled. Sometimes I felt something in my inward parts that was very precious and sweet to me, yet I did not clearly understand what it was. But if at any time I did or said anything that was not right, then I soon lost the sight and feeling of that. Oh, it has been gone in a moment! I saw that everything which offended the holy God and was reprobable would not abide, but all defilement and whatsoever was tinctured with evil was against it, and it let me see it, and condemned it, and me too, so far as I joined with it. Oh, to enjoy this is a comfort beyond utterance to that heart which loves righteousness and hungers after it!

When I have been talking with a person who did not see that I spoken a wrong word, yet I have seen it, and the Lord's Spirit gave me to see it, though it may have slipped from me unawares for lack of diligent heed, and watching like a doorkeeper as I ought to have done—oh, then my sorrows would be renewed upon me, and tears and fears in abundance! Yet a secret desire was in me that I might die, and go out of this wicked, sinful world, where I found it rare to find a true-hearted man or woman.

One first-day, after I had been reading one while and weeping another under a wall in a field, about the middle of the day I came home, and found my father and mother had come over to see us (for I then lived with my grandfather as an apprentice). I thought they would hinder me from minding the exercise I was in, which was deep. In the afternoon I fell ill of a bodily sickness, and when I felt my illness grow upon me, I was glad, and in some hopes I should be taken out of this world, for I was plainly sick with trouble of mind. Yet a secret hope was underneath, that if I did die, the Lord (who is gracious and merciful) would forgive the sins of my childhood and youth.

After I was pretty well again, I went to the moor to pull shrubs, and being alone, as my manner was, I was very full of inward exercise, and began to think that that which I had sometimes felt so sweet and precious, and other times as a swift witness, a reprover, a just judge, and a condemner of all unrighteousness, was the Holy Spirit of God. I remembered that I had been often visited by it, and yet did not know it. For I thought I was not worthy to have the Holy Spirit given to me, and that it would be presumption in me to expect it. Yet now it came into my mind to think much of it, and of its operations and workings in me. It darted into my mind that it was really the Spirit of truth, and also that I had not felt it, or seen its appearance for some time past. Then I was full of fears, lest I had sinned against the Holy Spirit, and such a terror fell upon me that I dared not tarry upon the moor, but arose (for I was lying on the ground) and got away home. I then remembered what made me so desirous to die the day my parents came to see us, when I had been reading and weeping much, and such a tender frame came over me that a hope sprung up in me that if I died in that frame of spirit, the Lord would have mercy on me, so that I was desirous to die while that frame and hope continued.

Yet after all this, I fell into trouble again, and sorrow took hold on me. In this time I happened to meet with a young man that was dissatisfied about matters of faith and worship. We appointed to meet on the following first-day at a woman's house, who was called a Quaker (but I did not know that till after, or but little of any such people, though I had heard of them). When the day came, we met, and it fell out that two other men came and met with us who were both called Quakers, but had not long been so. This day we spent mostly in discourse. One of the men was of small appearance and slow utterance, and one that never used to preach in meetings, yet that day the Lord's power

came upon him, and he so spoke that he reached the witness of God in me, and I thought that that exercise came upon him in mercy to me. But, alas! I had entertained such hard thoughts of these people that I went homeward very sorrowful. My cry still went up to the Lord that he would show me Zion, the city of my God, and who they were that dwelt therein.

And that first-day, as I was alone, and in great exercise of mind about these things, it pleased the Lord to show me his people who served him. As I walked along through a dark wood, I was so exercised that I scarcely knew how I was. And as I came out of the wood to go up a hill, I had a vision, and I saw a people laid close one by another in a very low place, lower than the other parts of the earth, where they lay still and quiet. I looked upon them, and it rose in my heart that they were the Lord's people. This made me look earnestly to see who they were, that I might know (to my comfort) the ones whom the Lord owned for his people, and I saw plainly that they were the people called Quakers, a poor, despised, low sort of people. When I perceived this, I was as one amazed and in great trouble, for these were a people of all others that endured the greatest sufferings, and were by all the rest hated, reviled, and scorned.

As I walked on, the vision ended, but I was in a strange frame, and considering the matter, I felt a change in me, and I knew that my countenance was altered. I drew near a little village (my way lying through it), but I had a mind to escape being seen as much as I could because I concluded that they would take notice that my countenance was much altered. But it fell out, that when I had gotten almost through the town, there was a woman who saw me and called to me, though I went as far from her as I well could and still keep in the road. She asked me how I did, and what ailed me to look so? I gave her little answer, but said, "Not very well." So I passed on, and coming to a wall that was upon the top of a high hill, I sat down upon it, and there it was shown me that if I would be a true follower of the Lamb, I must forsake the world, its corrupt ways, fashions, customs, worships, and all the vain glory, love, and friendship of it. I saw that if I now came into obedience to the Lord, who had thus graciously heard my cries, and answered my breathings (or rather, the breathings which he had begotten in me), that I must part with all the repute, friendship, love, and praise of men, which I then had lived in. I must forsake my old companions with whom I had wasted much precious time in vain sports and gaming, in which we lived and delighted, with many other things I prized highly. All of this I must now let go for the Lord if I would choose and follow him.

At this I was much troubled, for I was very unwilling to lose either, and would gladly have had both the love of God and the love of men too. I would have liked to enjoy both God and the world, but could not. My love to these vanities was so great, and I prized them so much, that it went very hard with me to think of losing all for Christ. Yes, this was almost as bitter as death to me in appearance because of the love and favor of the people I valued highly, and the cross seemed so great that I

could then by no means persuade myself to take it up. Great was the conflict I was in, and a very sharp war there was in me, yet I did not disclose my condition to any, but kept all secret from man.

But the all-seeing eye beheld me, and allowed me not to be overcome, nor the enemy to destroy my poor soul, though he allowed him to try and prove me, till the Lord was pleased to raise up his living witness in me, which I admired at. I could not tell what this was, and did not know that it was the grace or gift of God that brings salvation which had appeared to me (though I had grieved it, and disobeyed it) until it seemed to grow less and less, and to withdraw so long that I could see but little of its appearance. Yet it never wholly left me, though I rebelled often against it, but still it rebuked, reprov'd and judg'd me. Indeed, I could not be at peace, because it loved me and would not let me alone, but waited to be gracious to me, though I was unwilling to take its counsel.

I was greatly exercised in my mind and was dissatisfied about the things of eternity, and my sorrows were deep, and no man knew them. Before I got home, the enemy came near as if he would have whispered in my ear these words, "Who knows but this may be a trick of the enemy," meaning the vision. And presently there appeared a part in me which was seemingly pleased with this whisper, and said, "It is very likely it may be so." Thus the old self sought to save himself. Then I remembered that the priests of those days had preached against all such things as not to be looked for in these days. They said that visions, revelations, and miracles were all ceased, and that it was presumption for any man to look for the Spirit of God to be given to him now as formerly.

So I threw off all again as a dangerous thing, and would take no further notice of it. I even desired, and was ready to say in my heart, "Oh, that the Lord would be pleased in these perilous times to speak audibly to some man, as he did to Moses, that we might assuredly know his mind, seeing that one cries, 'Lo, here,' and another cries, 'Lo, there!' But Christ, the power of God, is in none of them." So great blindness, darkness, and woeful ignorance seized upon me, when I had rejected the Lord's counsel and trampled such an extraordinary visitation under my feet, and turned my back on it as the work of the enemy. I have great cause to admire the Lord's mercies towards me, that I was not wholly forsaken by him. For indeed his eye was still over me, though for a time I was in deep darkness and distress, and my concern was very great. In which time I conferred with many men of several opinions, but I found none that could help me in this matter, because I came not to the One that is mighty, upon whom help is laid. Thus I was like a bird alone in the woods without a mate, joined to none.

In this state I met with an unexpected exercise; for within a few days after this (on a first-day), there came to me a young man who was full of inquiry, and a great seeker, who told me there was a book lately come out that had the greatest mysteries in it that ever were, as far as he knew. He said that

God had spoken audibly to one John Reeve of London (or thereabouts) and had told him his mind, and bade him go to one Lodowick Muggleton, and he should be as his mouth, as Aaron was to Moses. And that God had given them commission above all men, and power to bless them that believed them, and to curse them that spoke against them; and whomever they blessed, they said were blessed, and whom they cursed were cursed to all eternity, with many other strange things.

I greatly desired to see the book, for if true, this was the thing I had desired, and I thought within myself, that no man would dare presume to say such a thing unless it were really true. In a few days I went to Chesterfield and saw it, and as one that had my wish, I read it eagerly. Upon reading where he said the Lord had spoken to him, and had given to him and Muggleton a commission, and that they were the two witnesses spoken of in the 11th chapter of Revelation, I was ready to believe it. I borrowed the book then, and afterwards bought it, and as many other of his books as cost me eight shillings, and read them through several times. I concurred with him in many things, and at last I was so taken with the story that I was likely to be deceived by it, as was also the young man who spoke to me of it.

Then it pleased the Lord in mercy to visit me again, to open my eyes and enlighten my understanding, and he gave me to see great errors in the book, and that his writings were clearly opposite to the holy Scriptures in many respects. For they that were of that opinion, and were carried away to believe the false prophet Muggleton (for Reeve was now dead), had no worship at all. When we met together at one widow Carter's home, we were not for either waiting upon God, or for any other exercise at all—either of preaching, praying, or reading holy Scriptures. No, we had no more to do besides believe Muggleton, and be saved. So we spent some time in discourse, and then parted.

I saw it was clear from the holy Scriptures that it pleased the Lord that men should worship him according to his own will, in all ages, and that he would be sanctified in the assembly of his saints, and be held in reverence by all that were about him. But there was nothing of this among the Muggletonians. And though the Lord had said, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” this neither they, nor I, knew anything of. We were simply to trust in Muggleton's name and power, and if he blessed us, we were blessed, live as we would. But if he cursed us, we were cursed, and there was no remedy. This doctrine I found was contrary to the doctrine of Christ, the true prophet, who said, “Bless, I say, and curse not.” And I found that Muggleton's spirit took more delight to curse than to bless. So I wrote a letter to him and made twelve or fourteen objections against his doctrine, and sent it to him at London, to which he sent me a letter, and referred me to his books, but did not answer any of the objections. He told me he judged that I wrote in ignorance and inquiringly, and therefore forbore to curse me till further trial. But I left him, and sat down satisfied that he was a false prophet.

So I was like a man in a cloud; nobody saw my case, and I hardly saw it myself. In this time I was sorely tempted, and yet some hope lay very deep that I should meet with Christ in Spirit, and know his Spirit in my own soul. For I understood by the Scriptures that this Spirit was poured forth upon all flesh, sons and daughters, and that nothing could be done well pleasing to the Lord without it, and that they who were led and guided by the Holy Spirit of God were the sons of God. I saw that all worship which was not in Spirit and in truth was not acceptable to God. For all the prophets and the apostles came in this Spirit, they having received it according to the prophecy of Joel 2:28, and the promise of Christ in Luke 24:49, and Acts 2.

After I had been concerned with this man's books, and had finished with them, I resolved to cease reading such strange books, and to read the Scriptures of truth only, by which I was made a little easy. Yet how to come to Christ (of whom I stood in great need), I knew not, and was almost out of hope. I discoursed with many, but found no true peace, comfort, or satisfaction, but remained under much secret sorrow, and I was still not so wise as to mind the gift or witness of God in me. If I heard any evil reported of the people called Quakers, I was glad and took courage to go on slighting the appearance of Truth in my inward parts. Yet the love of God was so great towards me that he did not take his Holy Spirit from me. Praises, living praises, to his holy name forever!

I removed from the place where I had lived all my time, and came to live at Monyash, six miles from there. I inquired what sorts of professors were there, and I found a people called Anabaptists, of whom I knew very little, but chose rather to accompany them than the rude, worldly ones. I conferred much with them, and took a liking to them, which brought me to be acquainted not only with their principles, but also with their practices in worship, which coming to understand, I could say little against them, thinking they came nearest to the Scriptures of any I had yet tried. I therefore went to their meetings, and was almost persuaded that I ought to be dipped into the water, for unless I was dipped, I could have no admittance into their church. Seeing no further, I could gladly have done so, for this was a far easier way for the flesh than to obey the gift of God in me.

But I could not get to water baptism in faith. For I heard them preach that water baptism is a sign of death, burial, and resurrection, and that a man ought to be dead before he be buried; for said they, "It is monstrous in nature to bury a man before he is dead." Then finding the Holy Scripture say, "He that is dead is freed from sin," and "How can you that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" I examined myself, and found I was not free from sin, so I was not dead, and therefore I was not fit to be buried. And before I was dead and buried, I could not know a rising unto holiness and righteousness. And if I should go and be buried under water as though I were dead, it would be as a masquerade and a lie, and I would deal falsely both with God and man. This kept me out of the water, but one of the chief of them came to me one day to ask me why I came not to be dipped, and

I told him as above. Yet he said to me, “Many do come, that I believe are more unfit than you are.” I said that was nothing to me, for I dared not.

After this I went to see my sister dipped in a river called the Wye, and after her two young men. And when they came up out of the water, I spent some time with them, and observed them who were passed from death to life (as they signified). But I saw no appearance of the Spirit, or newness of life, or power, or evidence that they thereby received the Holy Spirit—their baptism being only with water, which can only wash away the filth of the flesh (1 Pet 3:21).

But such as are baptized into Christ, must be baptized into his death by dying unto sin, and be buried by his baptism into death, so that being made free from sin, they may come to have a part in Christ, the resurrection and the life, by whom they are made alive unto God. For in Christ life is manifest, and we have seen it, and have tasted of and handled the good Word of life, which has been as a fire, and as a hammer, to break our rocky hearts asunder, and indeed water has gushed out, and we have felt our hearts made new, and our consciences clean, being washed with pure water to answer the pure requirings of the Lord. Our souls being baptized into Christ, and he being put on, in him we have a safe habitation, and come to see that even as none were saved by the ark of Noah but the few that were in it, so none can know salvation but those that are in Christ, the ark of the everlasting covenant. For he is given to be a covenant to the people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, to open their blind eyes, and to be God's salvation to the ends of the earth. And there is no other name under heaven by which any can be saved, but by Jesus Christ. To him be all glory given forever.

I found that they to whom I looked should have been dead to sin, as they professed they were, yet they lived therein, and pleaded for it during their term of life. Then I began to question their form, and through mercy I found it was but a form without life or power, and I plainly saw they were not in the power and Spirit of God. Thus the mercy of the Lord preserved me, and his long suffering was salvation to me. He drove me out of all the inventions and imaginations of men, and stripped me naked and bare. I had no hiding place, for these fig trees bore nothing but leaves, and it was bread I needed. These outward things brought no inward peace, power, or life, and could not, nor can ever sanctify or make those that come thereto perfect as pertaining to the conscience, and therefore cannot satisfy the immortal birth.

Yet I continued with them, until one day as I sat in the meeting, I observed that the elders and chief speakers were putting one another to preach and to pray, saying, “You do it, you are more able than me.” Thus they were urging one another, and as I saw and heard them, there arose a dislike in me of these doings, and I said in my heart, “Why do you put such things on one another? Let God put it



on whom he pleases.”

Afterwards, there came a mighty power and weight over me, and it was in my heart to go and speak to the meeting. When I felt that this increased upon me, and I knew not how to contain it if I did not yield to speak, I gave up and went through the meeting to those who had been treating one another as aforesaid, and desired I might have liberty to speak a few words. One of them told me that it was not their manner to admit any to speak among them before he was dipped, and had entered in by the door, and had passed through the ordinances, or to this effect. “But,” said he, “we believe you are an honest man, and will come, and so you may take your liberty.” So I turned to the meeting, and spoke so that tears ran down. I admired at the condition I was then in, for I was like a bottle uncorked, and the power of the Spirit flowed in me, and when it stopped I ceased to speak.

The next first-day I went again, and the meeting fell in course to be at an elder's house, one Humphrey Chapman. At this time a very wicked act was put in force against religious meetings held in any manner other than according to the liturgy or practice of the Church of England, where above the number of five persons, besides the family, were assembled. The fine was twenty pounds for the house, twenty pounds for the preacher, and five shillings for each hearer. But the elder (so called) refused the meeting for fear of being fined twenty pounds. So the meeting was tendered to another, who was not only an elder but a preacher, who had dipped the two men aforesaid; but he too refused it for fear of his twenty pounds. Then it was offered to a third, who accepted it for that day, though it fell not to be at his house by course. But when I saw the other two refuse the meeting for fear of suffering, one being a preacher, who had dipped two men when I stood by, I was not a little troubled. For I remembered the words of Christ who said, “He that denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven.”

So after the meeting was ended, they discoursed about what they must do for the time to come, and the query was where and when they must meet. About this they differed much. Some were for meeting in the bottom of a valley, to save the fine of a house. And as for the meeting time, some were for meeting early, so to be done by the time that the priest and people came from the steeple-house to dinner, but some were for beginning then. Some were of one mind and some of another. But there was one that I loved best, who desired they might meet as they had done formerly. As I sat and beheld them, I felt the same power arise in me (in which I had preached amongst them the week before) with these words, “These people are not the people of God, for they do not stand in the power of God.” This I believed, and went away satisfied that it was so. So I left them, and went no more to join with them in worship.

I was once more singled out, and dared join with none of those formalists. I was like a lost sheep,

strayed from my Shepherd, whom, after a long time, I now came again to remember. At last I was persuaded that it was the gift of God, or the Spirit of Truth, that had come to me to lead and guide me in the way of truth. This wrought in me a great fear and dread, lest I should have sinned out my day of visitation, and I greatly questioned whether it would ever appear to me again. Yet I had a secret hope, which kept me from being entirely hopeless. I came again to be much exercised in mind, and the travail of my soul was to truly enjoy the Lord, and to be an instrument for his glory. I longed to know his will and worship, and to perform the same, and be joined to those who were joined unto him. I was like a speckled bird, with none like me, for as yet I had not been at a Quaker's meeting. But I sought to live as holy and righteous as I could among men, and to join with none in worship, for fear of being deceived by joining in false or will-worship and idolatry.

Sometimes I went two miles to see a woman at Overhaddon, who pretended to live without food. There I met with professors (I think I may say) of all sorts. One day, a man of London came, called an Independent, and there was a meeting. This man, having heard of me, desired me to pray before he began to preach, but I felt a zeal rise in me against putting men upon that service, which belonged to God alone to require and move men to do. So I refused, and he went on to do what he had a mind to do, as far as I could see, in his own will. Then he prayed and preached. But before he had finished preaching, I was so pressed in my spirit to pray, that it was a great exercise to forbear till he had done. Then I prayed, but with such a power that the people were amazed, and truly I was too, for I had never prayed in this way before, for I had wisdom, faith, and utterance given to me.

Afterwards, I went home and kept myself from all people, and joined with none, having tried almost all persuasions among Protestants. I had much sorrow in secret, and was deeply baptized with the "spirit of judgment and burning," and I saw the baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire, for my pride and empty knowledge, notions and opinions, yes, my faith that I had gotten by the wisdom of man, was burned up. Oh, the cup that I drank deeply from at that time is unspeakable! When the Holy Spirit appeared in me, Jordan overflowed her banks. Indeed it was deep at that moment of time, but in the midst of judgment, the Lord showed mercy.

It began to be much in my mind, and I was ready to conclude, that what I had felt in me was really the Spirit of the Lord who had long waited on me, and striven with me. I once said to two professors, "Something appeared in me, as one that had a mind to be received and entertained; but for lack of my being open-hearted, nor inclined to embrace, receive, and mind it, I often lost the sight and feeling of it." Those to whom I told how it was with me said nothing to me at all, nor could they tell me what it was, though I requested that they should inform me. The appearance of it was mild, meek, low and gentle, and full of good counsel, yet it stood firm always, and condemned evil,

reproving, rebuking and judging it righteously. So at last I was much persuaded, in the secret of my heart, that it was the pure, Holy Spirit of God; and then I thought if it did not come again, my state was dreadful, sad, and deplorable. I mourned and lamented greatly, but none knew my sorrows but the Lord alone.

Now I knew not what to do, for my former resolution to live a holy life, and to be as righteous as ever I could, I found did not help me to peace with God. Indeed I had no true rest for my poor soul day or night, for I found I had no power to live as I desired to do. No man could condemn me for any evil things, yet I saw in myself that which others could not see. I lacked the Lord's presence, and without that my soul could not be satisfied or find true rest, even though my life and conduct was such that most loved me who knew me.

About this time I entered into a married state, and went to keeping house. After some time, my wife grew earnest to have me go with her to hear a priest, but I dared not, for I saw they were wrong as much as any, except Papists.<sup>10</sup> Great sorrow fell on us, and we disputed often until we both wept. In this condition I met with great temptation, and the enemy sought my ruin, both of soul and body—all which I kept secret. None knew the deep sorrow I was under night and day, for I had none to whom I could open my mind, except my wife, but I dared not tell her, lest I should trouble her, and put her in fear concerning me. Yet sometimes, upon close search, I found a little hope, but it was very low and very small.

After a time a cry arose in me to the Lord: “Oh, that I knew his will, and what he would have me to do! Oh, that I knew his people, and his true worship with which he is well pleased, that I might be joined unto those that were joined unto him! Oh, that I understood aright the things that belong to my peace!” When I awoke in the morning, a secret cry arose in my heart: “Oh, that this day may be my birthday!” For I saw that I needed to be born again, and to be made a new creature, and my exercise was very great. No comfort could I find in anything that this world afforded without the enjoyment of his presence. For this I travailed in spirit before the Lord, and had some hopes he would show mercy to me, which, blessed be his name, I do now witness. For in his own time he caused the Spirit of his Son to arise in my heart with true power and efficacy, and I clearly saw it was the Spirit of God indeed which I had so long grieved. This begat a godly sorrow in me, and then I came to it to ask counsel, and it showed me the way of life, and gave me power to become a child of God. Blessed be the Lord forever!

One day, in corn harvest, as I was riding on the road to Sheldon in a deep exercise, and taking a view of my condition, being in deep tribulation and anguish, condemning and judging myself, it

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<sup>10</sup> i.e. Roman Catholics

pleased the Lord suddenly, unexpectedly, and unlooked for, to cause the Day Star to arise in my heart, and the Sun of Righteousness to appear with healing in his wings, even when the sorrows of hell seemed to take hold on me. It pleased the Lord to appear in me, and to visit me with the Dayspring from on high, in a very powerful and wonderful manner, in great mercy, goodness, goodwill, and infinite loving kindness. I was, in my inward man, full of the power and presence of Almighty God. Indeed his heavenly, glorious light shone in me so mightily, that I may truly say it far exceeded the brightness of the outward day. The eye of my understanding was opened, and I saw that it was the Lord's Holy Spirit that appeared in me, and I believed, and could do no otherwise.

Oh, then I was glad, and my soul was filled with joy, because I had met with the Lord, who I knew was sufficient to teach me all things! And he gave me to see that my sins would be remitted and forgiven, in and through Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus was now become my light and my salvation, and living faith sprang in me, for I felt power and strength to believe. I then saw and felt what true faith was, and I knew that I had never before had this true living faith. This faith was the free gift of God, for it sprung up in his power, and stands in it. I also saw life eternal made manifest through Christ Jesus, and I tasted the good Word of God, and was made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, and was enlightened. For the life was manifested, and I saw it, and I saw that the Son of God was come, and he gave me an understanding to know him that is true; for he revealed himself, or made himself known in me and to me.

Now my soul was quickened and enlivened in him and by him, in whom is life, and I also heard him as the Shepherd and Bishop of my soul, who had come near, even to my own soul. And the holy Scriptures were opened to me, to my admiration and joy, and I understood them far beyond what I had done before. These became more sweet, comfortable, and precious to me, so that I wondered how I had never seen them so before, having read them so much night and day. But now the Lord gave me in measure to understand them, for they were very plain. And I saw that no man knows the Scriptures but those to whom it is given by the Holy Spirit of him who has the key of David, and who opens and shuts as he pleases.

I kept what I had found that day, and it was to me as the Pearl of great price, hidden in my own field (though I had sought for it in diverse forms and professions). And I now understood the parables of the lost piece of silver in my own house, and of the little leaven that lay hidden in my three measures of meal, which I saw to be my body, soul, and spirit. I saw that this had long been working in me, even while I knew it not, in order to leaven my whole lump with its own divine nature, which was capable of being leavened into good by the working of that good and perfect gift which had come down from above, and was freely given to me of God.

For truly the sons of God were led and guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit of Truth. And it was he that made David wiser than all his teachers, and did attend him from his youth, and enabled him to go against the lion, the bear, and great Goliath in the name of the Lord. And I saw that no man could be a child of God without his Holy Spirit, and it was this which I had lacked the knowledge of all my days. And I was glad when I felt and knew that I had it freely given to me. Now my great concern was to mind it, and be obedient to it, for this was my Master and Witness that would either excuse or accuse, according to my deeds. It was my Reprover and Instructor, which showed me all that ever I did, and no thought, word, or action was hidden from him. I was glad that I had found such a Comforter, and that it was poured forth upon all flesh, according to the promise in Joel 2 and Acts 2.

Great had been the work of this measure of grace in me, which had come by Jesus Christ in order to make me a new creature in Christ (my life, light, and salvation), or to leaven me into a new lump, and work a thorough change in me. For indeed, I had great need of it, being a child of wrath in the corrupt nature, as well as others. Yet I had not a clear knowledge of this measure of grace, for great had been my ignorance. And though light had shone in my dark, ignorant heart, and made all things manifest that were reprov'd, yet my dark heart had not comprehended it, or understood that it was the light of Christ which so wrought in me. For we lived in darkness, and in the night of blindness, and sowed to the flesh, and took pleasure in unrighteousness, and lived in pleasure, having our affections set on things below, and not on things above. Yes, we loved the world and the praise of men more than that of God, for the love of God was not yet known to us, nor shed abroad in our hearts so as to see or feel that it was his love. I was in a profession of religion without life, until the Lord appeared to me, and caused the light of his Son to arise in my heart, to my exceeding joy and satisfaction. But when I was brought to the knowledge of this (which was the Lord's doing, and it was marvelous in my eyes), my sorrow was turned into joy, and greatly did I feel the love of God. And great love arose in my heart unto the Lord, and I was deeply sorry that ever I had sinned against him. I felt true repentance given to me, and saw that I never knew what true repentance was before.

Now I had such a sense and assurance of the love, mercy, and goodness of God to me in Christ Jesus, and for his sake (who had now become precious to me), that if I had died in that hour, I was satisfied of my soul's eternal happiness and peace. Oh, then all fear of death and hell was taken away! For I plainly felt my soul so affected with the love of God, that I was troubled that I had ever grieved his Holy Spirit, and great was my desire that I might do so no more. I went on rejoicing with praises and thanksgiving, which arose in my heart unto the Lord, my joy being great in him, and I was ready to think that my sorrows were ended, and my tears wiped away. A new song was given me that none could sing, but only he that had it, and I was glad to feel the precious Truth in

my inward parts, which God loved; and truly he loves those that love it, live in it, and obey it. O happy day it was to my soul! I loved the holy Scriptures, which were never so sweet and precious to me before as they were now! I loved all people, and greatly desired that they might be brought to the knowledge of the Truth as I was, for I knew that it was the will of God that all should be saved.

Thus, having met with the Lord to my joy and comfort, I felt that his Holy Spirit was rightly called the Comforter, which leads and guides into all Truth, which I now rejoiced to know, feel, taste, and handle. Then I turned my mind in to the Lord, to commune with him, desiring to know who were his people, so that I might join with them, and worship him aright, according to his own will. And the Lord in mercy answered me as I prayed to him, and the word of the Lord was so powerful in my heart that I could do no other than believe it. And the Lord made known to me that the people called Quakers were his people above all other people. When I understood that this was the Lord's people, I felt a part in me that was sorry, for if it had been any other people, I might have been more at liberty to please the world, and to keep the friendship of it, and not be so hated by it. For this people were despised, persecuted, and suffered deeply beyond all others. Others could flee from sufferings, and conform a little at times, but this people stood and abode, though the winds blew and the rains fell and the floods beat upon them. For the Lord enabled them to stand and withstand it. All praises forever be given to him!

I felt the Spirit of the Lord, and could not question the truth of what he had manifested to me. Only I observed in my mind that the Lord said, "The people called Quakers are my people above all other people;" not that they were his people only and no other, but "above all other." So I concluded that there were many more who were not called Quakers that would be brought to know him, as I did then, and feel that he is good, and have his love shed abroad in their hearts, and love him therewith, and one another for his sake. I felt love to all, agreeable to that holy song, "Peace on earth, and good will towards men." Praise, glory, and humble thanks to God! For with him is joy unspeakable and full of glory, far beyond what I thought I should ever have known.

There was a young man walking a little way off from me, and I felt a love to him, though I knew not that he was of any religious society at that time. But he was afterwards convinced of the Truth, and was a very honest man, and his wife and three sons and two daughters were also in time brought to the knowledge of the precious Truth. Some of them remain to this day, and one of them had his mouth opened to preach the Truth.

Seeing that I had such a clear manifestation of Truth, I was desirous to do the will of God, and was afraid of losing the sense, sight, and feeling of that which the Lord had in mercy given me the precious enjoyment of. He was pleased to let me see that no man could take that from me, nor hurt

my soul, if I did not do it myself. Oh, it was precious to my soul! And so, though I had been offended with the people called Quakers, I now called them Friends, as Christ did those of old who obeyed him. I went on to my journey's end with my mind exercised in serious consideration.

But, as I came back, the world was set before me, and all I had in it, and I saw I must give up all, and let all go. And this was not all, but I was likely to go to prison, and my wife and children might be brought to poverty. But I put my trust in the Lord alone, who is all-sufficient, and is the portion of his people, and the rock of their safety, forever, amen.

Though the enemy was busy with me, I was concerned to feel the Lord remain with me, to keep and help me to abide in him and with him. And blessed and praised be his name forever, he did not leave me, nor forsake me, though sometimes he hid (as it were) his face from me. And when I trespassed or offended for lack of a diligent watch, or allowed my mind to wander, yet he has not been angry forever. Though his Word has been to me as a sword and as a hammer, yet in judgment the Lord remembered mercy, and the good Samaritan has come and poured in oil and wine, and healed me wonderfully. Praise, glory, and renown be given to him!

My satisfaction was great, and my heart was turned to the Lord, and my very countenance was so altered that my wife and neighbors took notice and spoke of it. But I kept my mind inward and said little, except as I had it given to me, and I kept my exercises to myself for some time, and neither told my wife, nor anyone else. For as yet I had not been at any Friends' meetings,<sup>11</sup> neither was there any about Peak country, where I then lived.

I met with some Friends at the market, and conferred with them, but told them not of my condition. The greatest part of the town was stirred; some said well of me, and had a love for me, and some said ill of me, and hated me without a cause, and they differed one with another. But after some time, many were convinced and came to meetings. The Lord having showed me again his poor, despised people, it made me glad when I found those with whom I was to wait upon him.

After some time, I heard of a meeting at Exton, at one widow Farnay's house, whose husband had been an honest Friend. I went to it, and found diverse Friends who had come many miles. And when I came, I was confirmed that these were in that Truth whereof I had been convinced, though they were so much derided by the world. There was little said in that meeting, but I sat still in it, and was bowed in spirit before the Lord. I felt him with me, and with Friends, and saw they had their minds retired and waited to feel his presence and power to operate in their hearts, and that they were spiritual worshipers who worshiped God in spirit and truth. I was sensible that they felt and tasted the Lord's goodness, as I did as well at that time; and though few words were spoken, yet I

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<sup>11</sup> i.e. the Society of Friends, who were in scorn called Quakers.

was well satisfied with the meeting. For there arose a sweet melody that went through the meeting, and the presence of the Lord was in the midst of us. And I met with more true comfort, refreshment, and satisfaction from the Lord in that meeting than ever I had in any meeting, in all my life before. Praises be to the Lord forever.

I was assured that these were his people and were guided by his Spirit, by which they came to understand his will, and were brought in their measure into true obedience to his commands, being made willing to bear his cross, deny themselves, and become fools, that they might know true wisdom. For this they wait in silence, to feel the inspiration of the Almighty to give them an understanding of the things of God, which the natural man cannot understand, because he does not wait in the Spirit for the manifestation. I also felt such a love in my heart to them as I had never felt to any people. Oh, it was true love, such a love as none knows but they that have it! And I also felt the same love in them towards me, and some of them got me in their arms and were glad of me, though I knew but few of them, nor they me.

So I came home, and my poor wife was sorely grieved that I had gone among Friends (the people called Quakers). The people of our town began to rage. Some disputed with me; some cursed me (as I heard); some pleaded for me; some derided and mocked me, calling after me, “Quaker, Quaker.” When I heard them thus call after me, my heart was glad and filled with joy that I was reproached for Christ's sake, and was thought worthy to take part with Friends in the sufferings of Christ “that were yet behind in his body” (Col 1:24). And the thought arose in me, “Now I have got the name; oh that I may be truly brought into the nature of God's people!”

But there were several things that as yet I did not discern clearly. Though I felt the Lord with me and was sure it was the truth, yet I intended, in the secret of my mind, not to imitate the Quakers. I continued to put off my hat to men, and to use the same language that I had done before. For I did not like their plain language and behavior to people,<sup>12</sup> and I was not willing to come into the practice

<sup>12</sup> There were several accepted customs of the day to which early Friends could not conform. The common dress of the day was quite flamboyant, with an excess of useless lace, ribbons, flashy buttons, powdered wigs, etc. The normal greetings between peers involved scraping the right foot backwards along the ground, bowing low while removing the hat, and then flattering one another with titles like “your Lordship,” “your Eminency,” etc. Early friends felt that such practices tended towards vanity, pride, and the “fleshly honor which God would lay in the dust.” Moreover, at this time in history, the correct and plain use of “thee” and “thou” to a single person was beginning to give way to “you” and “your.” Most modern English speakers are unaware that the words “you” and “your” were originally used only to address two or more people, whereas “thee” and “thou” were used to address a single 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



of these things merely in imitation of Friends. I then thought I should please people better if I said “you” to a single person, and put off my hat to them (for many love to be worshiped, though there is no worship due to any creature upon earth.) So my coming among Friends was hidden for a time, few knowing what I was, nor what I had seen, heard, and felt. Yet I knew it was the Lord that met with me on the road, and it was with such power that I willingly received it to my great satisfaction and comfort, and believed that the Lord (when he saw fit) would open my understanding and give me to understand the holy Scriptures, which, in his great mercy, he has since wonderfully done.

I was careful to hold fast that which was freely given unto me, and it came into my mind to wait on the Lord to know what he would have me to do. So I waited in my mind to hear what the Lord my God would say to me. After some time, as I was riding on the road and waiting, the word of the Lord arose in great power in my heart, saying, “Speak truth to your neighbor. Be not double-tongued; respect no man's person.” This fully satisfied me; and I saw I was to enter the kingdom of heaven as a little child. I was to learn to speak and walk anew, and I stood in need to be helped and held up by the secret hand of the almighty, omnipresent God, and to mind him in all I said, and in all my walkings and doings. I came to see that this had been the language of God from the beginning, and the language of all righteous people in all ages, and that no prophet, apostle, or servant of God did ever use any other language to him, either in prayer, praises, or in their writings in any age. I saw that God changes not, and that as men truly turn to him, they come to be true men.

But this language and manner of life was hard to flesh and blood, which desired both to please men and to receive praise. I had grown accustomed to such things when I was young, and so it went hard with me to lose it all. But I knew I must, though men took offense at me for my obedience to the Lord. So I gave up in obedience to the will of God, in which I found life and peace to my soul, and great encouragement and joy in the Lord. Nevertheless, this way of speaking and carriage went very hard with me, and was a great cross to my natural part, and helped to lay me very low and to mortify the old man in me, and made me willing to be a fool in the eyes of the world, and to be despised of men.

Now, blessed forever and praised be the Lord God Almighty! He has made my soul glad, and satisfied the breathings of my spirit. He has opened to me the mysteries of his kingdom, and given me a measure of his grace. He has caused his light to arise in me and caused the darkness to flee away. He has given to me the true bread of life, and made my heart glad with the wine of his kingdom. He himself has become my teacher, and has gathered me into his power, and covered me with the

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showing preferment by addressing certain individuals in the plural. These may seem like small matters to the 21<sup>st</sup> century reader, but it is astounding how many thousands of Friends were insulted, beaten, imprisoned, and even hanged for refusing to conform to these outward customs.

banner of his love. He has become my hiding place, my rock, strength and refuge; I need not fear what man can do unto me. He is my portion, I shall not want, and therefore I trust in him alone, my helper in the needful time. He has wrought all my works in me and for me, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. He is a sufficient reward to all those who wait upon him. He is all in all; I have none beside him. He is all-sufficient; I am nothing but what I am in him, therefore he alone is to be praised. Glory is wholly due unto him, for it is he alone that has redeemed my soul from death, and has opened to me the way of life. He has taken my fetters from my legs, and has set my feet upon a sure foundation. He has brought me out of the prison house, and has set my soul in a pleasant place. He has plucked me like a brand out of the fire, and has given me strength above my enemies. He has redeemed my soul from death, and caused me to walk in the path of life. He has heard my sighing, and my groanings were not unknown to him. Indeed, the breathings of my soul he has regarded, and my heaviness he has turned into joy. Yes, he has tenderly waited to be gracious to me, and his long-suffering has led me to repentance.

Oh, what shall I render to the Lord my Savior, who has dealt so bountifully with me? My soul, bless the Lord forever, and all that is within me praise his holy name, for he has caused mercy to surround me. Oh the loving kindness of the Lord! All you that know him praise his name, for his mercies endure forever! He has caused light to shine out of darkness, and manifested thereby those things which are reprov'd. To this light my heart is turned, and I am resolved to turn away from my iniquities and serve the Lord with reverence and holy fear.

Now I know it was he, by his Word, who showed me my thoughts and the intents of my heart. Though I was once ignorant of it, yet now am I assured that it was his Word which often called behind me, saying, "This is the way, walk in it!" (Isa. 30:21) He was still seeking to save me out of the enemy's power, though I then regarded him not. Nevertheless he pursued me, till at last my heart opened to receive him, who is now my beloved, and has given me to taste that God is good, whose goodness far exceeds all that this world can afford. Praised be the name of the Lord!

I have found the Pearl of great price, the one thing needful for my soul to know, and this is Christ within, the hope of glory, the true way to the Father, who promised to be with his disciples to the end of the world. This is he whom we are to hear and obey in all things, lest we be cut off from among his people. This is the anointing which I have received of the Lord, that teaches all things, which is truth, and is no lie. Oh that the children of men would open their hearts, that the king of glory might enter in, to drive out that den of thieves who rob them of that treasure and peace which passes their understanding. Then they would come to witness the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, to lead them into all truth; for it is he who works all our works in us and for us. This is the Lord's doings, and it is marvelous in our eyes; to whom be praise and glory forever!

My understanding being thus opened, I came clearly to perceive the Word of God in my heart, which had wrought powerfully to my full convincement, and by it I knew I must be faithful to its requiring if I would have peace. For it gave me a true sight of my state, and how I should wait for salvation.

Then I did see, to my great satisfaction (which caused joy to arise in my heart) that the despised Quakers were the people who worshiped God in the way he required, in Spirit and in truth. And having come to see through all things to my satisfaction (in the light of the Lord), I went cheerfully to Friends' meetings, and was edified and comforted. The third meeting I was at, the power of the Lord came upon me, and I was pressed in spirit to declare of the Lord's goodness. It was hard to give up to it, yet I dared not disobey, so I stood up and spoke to the congregation (an abundance of Friends and others being met together) what was given me to understand concerning the creation of man, his dominion, work, state of innocency, fall, and restoration by the promised seed, Christ Jesus the Savior of mankind. All of which was to the great joy of Friends, and to the reaching of the people.

At this meeting a woman was convinced who, with her parents, dwelt at Tides-wall. They much desired that I would have a meeting at their house, and accordingly I went, much people being gathered in the garden. This was a town in which I was formerly well known. After the meeting had been some time in silence, I was moved to stand up and speak, which I continued for about four hours. But my very countenance was so much changed that there arose a reasoning among the people whether I was John Gratton or not. In the time of my declaring, a woman who was a Baptist put a question to me, which I answered so much to her satisfaction that she was convinced. This woman's husband was a Muggletonian, and when he came to understand she was turned Quaker, he told her he would write to his prophet to curse me, which he accordingly did. After which, Muggleton, by letter, sent me his curse, the words of which are not worth mentioning. But in answer, I gave him to understand that it mattered to me not at all.

The next first-day I went to a meeting at Matlock, where the informers<sup>13</sup> and officers had made very sad spoil by taking away Friends' goods. Nevertheless, many others, as well as Friends, came to the meeting. As soon as I came within sight of the house, I felt the Lord with me. I went in, and it was very full of people, and after some time I was moved to declare the testimony of Truth. The pres-

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<sup>13</sup> As was mentioned formerly, the so-called "Act Against Seditious Conventicles" was recently put in place against religious gatherings of five or more persons. The fine was twenty pounds for the house, twenty pounds for the preacher or speaker, and five shillings for each hearer. One third of these fines was given to any person who informed against the meeting, so that the nation was quickly overrun with greedy "informers" who rudely and violently broke up meetings, and dragged men and women before magistrates with the aim of plundering their money and goods.

ence of God was so gloriously manifest, that the people gave good attention, and were so affected that the fear of man was much taken away.

At this meeting, some of the people looked earnestly upon me, at which I marveled, but I then perceived it was at a laced band which I had upon my collar. Because of this I was smitten and sorry, for until then I had not thought of it, ever since my conviction. Friends in those days showed no appearance of pride in their apparel. So I was not pleased with myself, for I saw that the Holy Spirit did not allow any superfluity, either in apparel or in anything else. From a sense of this I took it off, and wore it no more; neither did my dear wife ever offer to put it on me again. For when she understood that I was troubled for wearing lace, she took it off all the rest of my bands, although she was not then convinced of the Truth, (though some time after she was).

My being convinced was noised much abroad, and many people disputed and conferred with me. My kindred were sorely troubled, and would have had me forbear the conduct and language that truth had led me into, saying, "We ought not to offend." But I told them it was the little ones that believe in Christ who ought not to be offended. "But woe to the world!" said Christ our Lord, for the world took offense at him without just cause, and so they also do at his true followers who are given up to do his will, and to follow the leadings and guidings of his Holy Spirit. If righteousness offends the wicked, whose fault is it? Abel could not help it when Cain hated him because his works were righteous; and indeed, Abel pleased God, even though Cain was offended. In the same way, he that is born after the flesh hates and takes offense at those who are born after the Spirit to this day, and they think it strange because they do not run with them in their carnal ways to the same excess of dissipation, speaking evil of them.

But when Christ said, "Woe be to the world, because of offenses," He said also, "that offenses should surely come, but woe be to that man by whom they come!" Now why do such kinds of offenses come? So that those who are the tried, living stones, may be made manifest; and that those who will not take up the cross and deny themselves may also be made manifest. For the "friendship of this world is enmity against God;" and, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." So the cause lies here—that unregenerate men are known by their fruits. Woe be to the false prophets, false priests, false professors, and hypocrites, though they walked in long robes, and sounded a trumpet when they gave alms, and prayed in the corners of the streets to be seen of men, and made long prayers for a pretense. For despite all this they were proud, and loved the chief place in the synagogue, the highest rooms at feasts, the greetings in the markets, and to be called master by men. They were covetous and devoured widows' houses. They tithed mint, anise and cumin, but omitted mercy, judgment, and truth; for they were not what they pretended to be.

The Sodomites offended Lot, and vexed the righteous soul of him who entertained the angels of the Lord. And they too were offended at him, but woe and misery came upon the wicked Sodomites, but Lot was delivered. Jerusalem took offense at Jesus Christ, who came to save his people from their sins, and to finish transgression, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. The Jews hated him without a cause—he that would have gathered them as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, to save them from the devouring fowls of the air that would utterly destroy them.

In the same way, Christ spreads the wing of his power over those that are gathered unto him, to save them from the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the hearts of the children of disobedience,” the “roaring lion that goes about seeking whom he may devour.” But the church is safe under the shadow of the Lord, saying, “I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste;” for all his fruit is good. But the fruit of the evil one is all bad, as bitter as death, wormwood and gall, and so it will be forever. Woe and misery came upon Jerusalem also, who would not be gathered or saved, but instead rejected the holy and just One, and chose a thief and a murderer before him, as those do now who choose to serve the devil before Christ Jesus, the Lord of life and glory.

I went abroad much, and had meetings in several counties, such as Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire. Many were convinced, and great joy and gladness, love, unity, and concord flowed among us. My wife was not yet convinced, and I was in much sorrow for her, and so was she for me. She disputed with me often, till we both wept, but still we loved each other dearly. Then, before the second meeting at my house, as I was upon the road one evening in great heaviness for my wife, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “I will give you your wife.” At this I was glad and comforted, for I believed that it would be fulfilled before long, as it accordingly was, for she was soon after convinced, blessed be the Lord.

At the next meeting one William Yardley came, and after the meeting she discoursed with him a long while. At last Truth sprung up in her, and in him also, so that he went to her and said, “Ann, God's love is to you,” which, she feeling, gave up to obey it, and was glad. Then our days were made more joyous, and we lived together after this about thirty-five years, and many friends came to see us, of whom we were glad. We had an open house and open hearts to entertain the Lord's people, and were glad he had in mercy fitted and enabled us to be serviceable to his people. And my trade increased, for we had favor with God and men.

I was much concerned in preaching the gospel of our Lord, and went to and fro to meetings. Many people were convinced in diverse places, such as in Darbydale, Matlockside, Ashover parish, Brampton, Harsdale, and in the High Peak. Many and precious meetings we had as we got liberty

in houses, and meetings were settled, and many of my own kindred were convinced, who lived and died in the Truth. I have ground to hope that my aged grandfather, who was about ninety years old, was convinced and glad of the Truth in his old age, for he told my mother, "This is what I have been seeking for all my days," meaning the Truth. After some time, I went to Derby, and got some meetings there, and at Little Chester, and many Baptists were convinced in Cheshire.

Afterwards, it was required of me to go and visit the churches in Nottinghamshire. I went to Nottingham, and found William Smith lying sick, a fine living, faithful man, and brave minister of Christ. It was revealed to me that he would be taken away at that time (as I told Thomas Highfield overnight), and the next day, after the meeting was over, I went to see him and stayed with him some time. Oh, he was in a sweet frame, full of love! Indeed, life and peace were plentifully in him. I left him in great unity, tenderness, and love, and went to Mansfield, and he died in a few days, and left a good savor behind him. His memory is sweet to me, and those parts had a great loss of him. From there I went to Skegby, Hucknell, and then home.

After this, the Lord was pleased to lay it upon me to go abroad again into Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, which I was very reluctant to do, but I dared not disobey. I went to Tupton meeting on the fifth-day, and to Boulsover on the sixth, where we had some disturbance. And on the seventh-day I went to Chesterfield, where we had a glorious meeting, and some were convinced. Oh, the Lord's power was over all! From there I would eagerly have gone home again, but could not, and wept sorely.

I went into Nottinghamshire, and on first-day had a meeting at Worksop, in a barn which William Bailey had hired. His wife happened to fall off her horse and break her leg as she rode near Worksop, and her husband came down from London to see her. Finding that she was not fit to be removed, he hired a house for one year for Friends to meet in. I went to see her, and had a meeting there on first-day. As I was at prayer, the officers, with many more, came railing and raging up into the meeting, making a great noise, as if they desired to frighten us. But just as they came to me, the power of the Lord increased, and my voice rose strongly, and they all stopped and turned back like men smitten, and went quite away, not having power to do us any harm. We had a precious meeting, and went away comforted.

The next day I was at a good meeting at Blyth, and another in the evening, to which came John Seaton, one of the chief men of that town. He was convinced, and proved a faithful man to the Truth till his dying day. Many more in and about that town were convinced of the Truth, and stood nobly in it through suffering times, faithful to the end. The next day I went to a meeting at a town in the forest called Etalstall, where I had a good meeting. Many came to it, and some were

convinced, particularly one John Kent, who received the Truth.

I went to a meeting at Kersall, and the priest of the town came and made a great noise behind me for awhile, in order to stop me. But I held on, and was sorry that he troubled the meeting, for it was in a precious frame. At last I felt I must stop, and so turned to him, at which time he offered to clear himself from the charge of preaching for hire, saying he needed not to preach except when he pleased, for he had an estate to live on if he did not preach. So I bade the people, "Take notice! This man is his own master, and needs not preach unless he desires. But the apostle Paul, and they that were sent of God were not so, for Paul said, 'Necessity is laid on me, and woe unto me if I preach not the gospel.'" By this I showed the priest from his own words that he was no minister of Christ, and that Christ was not his Lord and Master, since he could do what he wished, either to preach or not preach. So he was made manifest, and went away in a great rage, and his company with him. The Lord was mightily with us that day, and we had a good meeting, and were sweetly comforted, and received no harm by man.

Then I went to Akring and had a meeting, and one John Auin came to it and was convinced, and was shaken wonderfully. But though he trembled, yet he rejoiced and cried out, "He is come! He is come! He is come!" After this, he went home and met with high-minded professors, and disputed them much, taking his Bible and going to and fro in the town. But he ran before he was sent, and so came to some loss, so that his relations sent him to me. But when he came to my house and talked with me, he was finely recovered, so that in a few days time he went home.

But his family and the professors about him disputed with him, and he was zealous and discoursed with them till he hurt himself again. Then I took my horse and went and fetched him away to his uncle's at Blyth, where I left him. He did well and proved an honest Friend. After some time he went to London and was taken at a meeting. His wife went with him before the mayor, who, in pity to her, would not send him to prison with the other Friends, though he was freely given up to suffer, and was grieved that his wife came in the mayor's sight. He proved a very sincere Friend as long as he lived.

The next day I went to a meeting at Ogston, which was very large. I had never seen the like appearance before, for the living Truth went through the meeting. Many were reached, and the power of the Lord came over all, to the joy and comfort of many.

I was also at a meeting at Long Clauson, in the vale of Beavor, and there was a young man called William Marriott, who was full of life. And there Sarah Brown, Elizabeth Doubleday, Edward Hallam and other Friends were comforted together.

The next day I went to a meeting at Harby, and the day following, being first-day, I went to a meeting at Crowston, where the lord Ross (so called) came to the steeple-house which was near to our meeting. The officers and others came to break up the meeting with a great noise, as if they meant to frighten us all. As they came up the entry, I turned my face towards them as I was declaring the Truth, and the Lord enabled me to speak boldly, and his power came over them. Before they came to me, they became silent and turned back, like men smitten in their hearts, and in a little time went away and left us. So we had a good meeting, praised be the Lord forever, whose power was over all.

The next day I went to a meeting at Broughton, at John Wilsford's, where a Baptist came privately to hear, and was reached, and confessed to the Truth of what I spoke, as John told me afterwards.

The next day I came to Nottingham, and had a good meeting there on the third-day, and Friends were glad of me, and we were comforted together. But a Friend came to fetch me home from there, for my wife was very weak, and more likely to die than live, and it was thought she should scarcely live to see me. I hastened home on fourth-day, and found my wife very weak, and myself much spent. But thanks be to God, he raised her up again. My mother was with her, but my father was not convinced. And when he heard that I was abroad, and how things were at home, he thought to come and chide me for leaving my wife in her condition. But the meeting happened to be at my house the next first-day, and my father did not come until that morning, and some Friends came in before him. And since he intended to stay all night, he decided to wait, rather than to fall on me in front of them.

When the meeting was gathered, I waited some time and then spoke, and some of the chief persons of that town were present, whose tears I saw run down their cheeks. My dear father was so broken, that he cried aloud in great joy of heart while he trembled, at which I remained silent. Then my father came to me weeping before all the people, and took me in his arms and kissed me. The next day we walked alone and had much discourse, till he fell to weeping again, and desired me to forbear and say no more, after which we parted. My father loved me much, yet he never came into open obedience to the Truth.

I stayed at home some time, and oh the peace that flowed in my heart! Indeed, it is the peace that Christ promised, and not that which the world gives, who cry "peace, peace," when there is no peace at all experienced. But praises to the God of my life, his peace he has given to me, and many thousands in this day. Truly this is a peace that the world does not know; neither can they take it away from us, glory to the Highest forever! Oh, the love and life that flows here, and the springs from the Fountain of living waters, in whom are all our fresh springs! Feel it reader, in yourself!



Have you not seen it gush out of your rocky heart, when Christ (the spiritual Moses) has smitten upon it with the rod of God in his hand.

## **AN EPISTLE TO FRIENDS**

My dear Friends,

It is in my heart to write a few lines to you before I proceed. Have you not found (according to your measures) this Christ of God to be what I say of him? Oh, prize this immortal life that now stirs in you, and praise the Lord for his mercy! Live in this life that frees from death; abide in it, and your joy will be full. The world little knows your joy, little knows your peace. Though you have sorrow, yet always rejoice; though you war daily, yet live in peace. Let the peace of God that passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in one, in that light of life which now shines in your hearts, that you may never fall. Always keep low in your measures, and see that none look out, or mind anything but the Lord, who alone is to be minded in all, by all, and above all, as well as followed, obeyed and trusted.

Dear friends, keep in the innocent life, and this will knit you together, and enliven every member, and quicken you all, and make you savory. Then seasonable fruit will be reaped, and you will be a good savor to one another, and this will feed you, and your strength will be daily renewed. Yes, then the increase of God will be experienced, and you will daily feel his love (which is better than wine) to make your hearts glad, and to surpass the world's love. This will rejoice your souls in times of adversity; for many waters cannot quench this love.

Therefore, dear friends, all keep your minds stayed on the Lord, and take heed that you lose not the things you have received of him. All wait, in your measures, upon the Lord only, and expect nothing from man, for he is not to be accounted. And do not think to live on the manna that others have gathered, but you come and be diligent also. Take heed that the Lord not call for you when you are gone abroad with your minds, about your own business. Keep your habitation, and the Lord will keep you, even as the apple of his eye. Indeed, "Nothing shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good" (1 Pet. 3:13). All live in the true light, and abide in it, by which all dangers whatsoever will be made naked and bare to you. Yes, even all false spirits will be seen and tried in this true light, and you will clearly know the mind of God. If you all keep here and live in this, you will find safety, and the enemy will not be able to touch you.

Therefore, dearly beloved friends, keep in the light of which you were convinced, and by which you were converted and turned to the Lord. Keep in that, for that keeps you truly humble, in sincerity and truth, and so all feigned humility, and all pretenses and false professors will be made manifest, and your enemies' strength will also be clearly seen, which is mere weakness. Be not forward in answering questions put forth by the opposers of the Lord's Truth, but stand singly in obedience to the Lord, and be as fools, that the true wisdom may be preferred. In this way the will the Lord will be done, whether the opposers be answered or not, and your peace will be as a river as you hearken to the Lord. For the Lord will plead his cause with all flesh by himself, and his arising will be the scattering of his enemies. Indeed, Babel's destruction will come upon her by the brightness of his coming, and by the breath of his lips she will be utterly destroyed; the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

So, my dear friends, all keep in your strength, and feel the arm of his power stretched out to carry you on, that you may daily know victory, and praise the Lord in his own sanctuary, and declare of his wondrous works. For with a strong hand he has brought us out of anguish and bitterness of spirit, which we once were in by reason of our cruel bondage in sin. Had not the Lord come to visit us, we would be in slavery even till now, for none else was able to deliver us, neither was there any to intercede for us. Therefore, his own arm brought salvation to us. Now all keep in that grace which saves, which breaks the rocks, and has often broken you even to pieces, and has made your earthly house to tremble, and has filled you with dread. Oh, remember his mighty works in the deep, and receive the law at his mouth! Yes, hear it and do it; behold, it is near you, in your heart and in your mouth, that you may not depart from it.

Dear friends, watch diligently, for in this furnace you will be tried. But though you are allowed to be tempted, yet the Lord will not permit you to be tempted beyond your measures. Therefore, all keep in your measures, for there is your safety. "My grace is sufficient," says the Lord. Therefore, fear not your adversary, for he cannot hurt you, if you always fear the Lord your God, and live in his counsel, whereby your hearts will be kept as clean habitations for his Holy Spirit to dwell in; for stronger is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

From your dear friend and fellow laborer in the work of the gospel.

John Gratton

*3rd of the Eighth month, 1673*

The Baptists were displeased with me when they saw there was no hope of my return to them. They

often disputed with me, and great disputes were had at Monyash between them and Friends. But the Lord had opened my understanding, and also the holy Scriptures to me. I wrote a little book concerning baptism, and therein showed that no man had commission from Christ to baptize with water since John's race was run and his ministry fulfilled, making it appear clearly that the Baptists baptized without any command from Christ.

At this time Truth prospered in the Peak country, in Derbyshire, and the word of God grew and was multiplied. This is the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. "That word," said Peter, "was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached." This is the word which Peter preached to the Gentiles, namely, Christ Jesus the Lord of all, who is the only way to come unto God by—"For no man can come unto the Father," said Christ, "but by me," and "there is no other name given under heaven by which any can be saved." For he is the fountain of eternal life which is opened for all to wash in and be cleansed, and for that end he has poured out his Spirit upon all flesh, that they may have a part in him. And truly, the cleaner we are washed (though it be in great tribulation), the whiter will our robes be.

Now I came to know what the city of God truly is, which I had read about in John's revelations. It is the true church, which has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God does enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, in which light the nations that are saved must walk. There the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor, and "the gates of this city shall not be shut at all by day, and there is no night there." Here nothing "can enter that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."

After this I went to Oxston again, where the informers were very busy. Some officers came to our meeting, and as I was speaking in the power of God, one charged me in the king's name to come down and be silent. But I charged him in the name of the King of kings to be silent, and also asked him if he did indeed come in the king's name. He said, "Yes." Then I said, "Did he send you? Does he know of our meeting?" He answered "No." Then I said, "How can you come in the king's name if he did not send you?" And the man turned from me and went away, taking those away who had come with him. We had a precious meeting that day.

After this I went to Great Markham, where they stoned us as we rode through the streets. Then a man came to our meeting furnished with rotten eggs (as I supposed), for he came and stood just before my face, and flung them towards me, but did not hit me with any of them. Another time I went to Markham again, and the priest came and brought the town officers, and sent them in to break up the meeting while he remained at the door. The officers came in, and Friends made a place

for them, where they sat down and listened very quietly. I was declaring in the Lord's heavenly power before they came in, and they stayed till the meeting was done, and gave no disturbance (except to the priest who stayed outside the door to see the meeting broken up). But when the officers did nothing to stop us, the priest raged and said he brought them to break up a meeting in which they stayed. So he went away angry, and afterwards we departed, sweetly refreshed and comforted.

I ran to and fro, and had many meetings both in the High Peak, Scarsdale, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire, and Truth prospered gloriously. I also had meetings in new places, such as Ashford, Longson, Tideswell, Bradow, Grinlowe, Baslow, and Matlock. There was a conviction at Bradow and thereabouts in the Peak, and one Jonathan Fisher and his wife (along with others) were convinced. We appointed meetings there, and such a large multitude came that the house could not contain them. Wherefore, I went into the street under a great tree in the market place that was walled about, and I got upon the top of the wall and spoke to the people. But a company of rude fellows began to stone us, and the stones flew about my head and rattled in the trees, yet did not hit me. However a great stone struck and wounded a woman that happened to sit near me, and the people came and carried her into a house, but she recovered after some time. At last a man came, blaming those who threw stones at us, and got into the crowd. But after he had stood awhile, he too stooped to take up a stone to fling at me (as was supposed), but one of his neighbors standing by, who for some time had been very attentive, seeing the man who had blamed others about to throw a stone, struck him on the ear, so that he let the stone fall and did not fling it at me. This man who struck the other was convinced that day, and became an honest man, and so continued until his death, for all I know.

At last Henry Jackson and Henry Roebuck came to the meeting, and climbed up on the top of the wall also. As Henry Jackson was declaring, a group of young men came and thrust Friends violently off the wall. Henry Jackson was heavy, and they were very hard set to get him down, but at last they did. I went down and spoke to one of them, asking him why he was so uncivil. He answered, "If we let you alone the entire town will be Quakers." So I went to a part of the wall that was just before the greatest part of the crowd, and climbing up, knelt down on the top of the wall before their faces. All fear of stones or men was gone, and I prayed to the Lord by the help of his Holy Spirit with a loud voice, and the Lord's power came over all, and the people came down in their minds and were still, and became like another people. Then Henry Jackson had good service among them, and our meeting ended in great sweetness. As we rode out of town some blessed us, and seemed very friendly and loving, and never more disturbed me there, though I have since been many times to meetings at Jonathan Fisher's house, who lived and died an honest Friend, and left a good savor behind him, and his memory is sweet. Many were convinced there, and at Slackhall

also.

We went sometimes over the East Moor and had meetings at Totly and Dore, where some were convinced, and also near Beechief, where Justice Pegg lived, but he never concerned himself to disturb us. Most of our meetings were out of doors, but one we had in the hall, and several in a large barn. One first-day we held a meeting near Beechief, which was at the back side of a house in a lane, and many came to it. There came a high constable, whose name was John Stone, who brought officers and a company with him on horseback. While I was preaching, this constable charged me in the king's name to keep the king's peace. But the Lord's power and presence being with us, I held on speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. So he sent one of his company and bade him go fetch me out. The man came and laid his hand on me and began to tremble, but he had no power to take me away. He stood by me awhile as I continued my testimony, and then left me and went through the meeting without me. When he came to his master, he said, "Why have you not brought him?" What answer he gave, I could not hear. Then he took out his pen, ink, and a little book, and called to a Friend to assist him. The Friend went to him to see what he wrote, and he saw that his hand trembled so much that he could not write.

After I had eased my spirit a little, I was silent, and gave way to Henry Jackson, my elder brother, who had good service that day. The officers were very uneasy, and John Stone rode away angry as though he would go to the justice for more power, and the meeting continued. He stayed away, I suppose, above an hour, and when he came again, he had as little authority over us as before. For now the people were so affected and strengthened that they ventured to talk boldly to him, and told him it was fitter for him to go and search the ale-houses, and to take notice of drunkards and bad people, than to come here after that manner to disturb such honest people as we were. He fumed about awhile, and at last put spurs to his horse and rode away, and took all his company with him. So we had a precious time, and he had no power to stir us. Soon after that this high constable died. There were some who went away soon after the officers came, but they have been poor ever since, but the Lord has blessed the faithful every way, thanks be given to him forever! He was with us from day to day, and from place to place, and permitted no weapon or wicked instrument to hurt me wherever I came. Blessed be his holy name forevermore!

Another time I went to a meeting at an old house near Whitwell common. There the officers came as well, but I declared the holy truth amongst them. After awhile they went out to consult what to do (as I supposed), and I heard that one said to the other, "He speaks almost nothing but Scripture." So they were not willing to disturb us, but instead went away after awhile. The Lord was with us, and gave us a good meeting, praises be given to him forever.

I was invited to a meeting not far from Newcastle-Underline, and there I went. But when I came there I found that the house was too little, for many came to it, and William Yardley<sup>14</sup> was also there. So William and I sat down in the house, but the parlor and the other rooms were also filled with people. Then came a man from Newcastle with the aim of being an informer against that meeting. He went into a side room that had many people in it. When the meeting had gathered, I felt the Lord with us, and he enabled me to speak so that my voice was strong, and those who were in the other rooms heard plainly. This informer took offense at some words which I spoke, but he was a dark ignorant fellow (as all informers are, else they would not be informers to hurt the Lord's people for their obedience to him). His offense was so great that he was restless, and he disturbed the people that were in the room with him, though he stayed while William Yardley was declaring to the meeting. I sat silently waiting upon the Lord, and it pleased him to manifest to me that there was a man in another room that had taken offense at some words which I had spoken, and he showed me the very words, and I remembered them, though no creature had told me a thing, nor had I seen the man. But I was so plainly showed it by the Lord, that when William Yardley was done, I stood up again and called out to the man, saying, "Whosoever you are that are offended at these words..." which I then repeated, and spoke fully to, and opened them, making it appear plain and easy to be understood that the words which I spoke were words of truth and righteousness. The man heard me and was satisfied, and got up and went quietly away.

Soon after the meeting ended, the people that were in that room with the man before mentioned, came to me and asked me who told me. I answered them that no man had told me, at which they wondered how I should know so fully, and tell it so plainly. And so God had the glory, and the man did not have the power to hurt us, but went his way, and I saw him no more. Thus were we delivered from the wicked, so that they did not prey upon the righteous who trusted in God. And for this end only I write these things—that they who fear and love God may put their trust in him, and be obedient to him, and valiant for his name and Truth, and fear not man whose breath is in his nostrils, who is here today and gone tomorrow.

After this I went to a meeting at Blyth again, and we met on the side of a highway, for the meeting-house doors were locked up, and we were kept out. But the officers there were loving, and watched lest the informers came in. And when our meeting was done and silent and about to part, then the officers stepped up to us, and walked away with us, feigning as though they had broken us up. They took some before a Justice and told him that the meeting had been silent, and so Friends were not fined, nor were the officers blamed. The officers took this course on purpose, to save them-

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14 William Yardley (1632-1693) was another early minister among the Society of Friends who travelled and preached the gospel in England for over 25 years. In 1682 he purchased 500 acres in the newly formed Province of Pennsylvania from his long-time friend William Penn, and moved there with his wife and two sons.

selves and Friends also.

We had many good meetings at Baslow, till at last they cast Hugh Masland into prison at Derby, and George Ellis and Hugh Masland's wife died. One day two men came to inform against us. They stayed the meeting quietly, but afterwards went to Justice Ayre of Highlow to inform, and desired a warrant to distrain<sup>15</sup> our goods. But this Justice was displeased and sharp with them, and bid them look after themselves. For he said that if he found that they swore falsely against us, or if he ever caught them in a lie, then he would have their ears.<sup>16</sup> By this, the informers were so daunted that they went away and let it fall, and troubled us no more.

After this the priest of that town grew angry, and gave a challenge in writing to dispute with me on three points. First, he said there was no revelation in these days. Second, that no man had the Spirit of God in him in these days. Thirdly, that if I had the Spirit of God, then I might read in a book he had, which was Greek. He set a day and place to meet, and when the day came, I met him in a house of Humphrey Chapman's, in Baslow, a civil man. Many people of diverse sorts were there, and when I had showed the priest's blindness about revelation, he put his book into my hand, and said, "If you have the Spirit of God in you, read in this book!" So I took the book and held it till he had vaunted and made an oration to the people, and then he would have taken the book from me. "No," said I, "You gave it to me to read; first see whether I shall read or no." So I took my Bible and read the Scriptures to the people, and showed them how they spoke quite contrary to the priest, and the priest quite contrary to the holy Scriptures. For the Scriptures say that the Spirit of God is given to all, but not to all alike. For to one was given the gift of tongues, to another the interpretation; some were gifted for miracles, but not all; some do prophesy and preach the gospel, but a manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man for the profit of all.

I read the plain Scripture, but he did not know it was Scripture, but rather spoke against it, till one that stood by told him, "Man, it is Scripture!" So he was sorely despised, and when he saw that he had plunged himself into a great deal of error, he was silent. Indeed, he was made so manifest that one Benjamin Ashton, the justice's son, came to him and took him by the sleeve and led him quite away and left me with the people. There were many Baptists, to whom I spoke awhile, and so the people stayed, all but the man who went away with the priest. We had good service for God that day, and were comforted. Truth prevailed and the people were edified, and the Lord's power was over all. Many talked of this dispute, and the priests of the country were offended with this priest for challenging me, and envied me the more for it.

Our meeting at Monyash increased, and several priests up and down the country were angry and

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15 i.e. to seize property in order obtain payment of money owed

16 The cutting off of ears (called cropping) was a form of punishment in both England and New England at this time.

very envious, so that I and others were served with warrants to appear at the next court sessions. One Wilson, the chief priest of our parish, was to come on a first-day to our town to give (or rather sell) bread and wine to the people. And those who desired none of it, he would still make them pay, for he had formerly sent officers and seized my goods for it, though neither I nor my wife had ever received anything from him.

The meeting was to be at our town that day, and the priest ordered one of the church wardens to go early that morning and call at Ashford, and then take the constable with him to Justice Ashton (who a moderate, peaceable man, one who did much good in his place). The constable was given private notice and so slipped out of the way, but the officer of Monyash still went as the priest had ordered him, and desired the justice to grant him a warrant to break up our meeting that was to be held that day. "What!" said the justice, "A meeting that is yet to be? I will grant him no warrant for a meeting that yet is to be. How do you know it is to be? Had you seen the meeting, I would have granted you a warrant; but I will give you none on such account," said he, or something to this effect, as I was informed.

So the officer came back without a warrant. Even so, this priest Wilson came to our meeting after he had finished his forenoon's work, and sent for all the officers in the town to come as well. He brought his clerk also to act as informer, for he desired to break up our meeting by pulling and hauling us out by force. But when they had pulled some of us out and went to fetch more, we followed them in again; and as some were forced out, others went in. Thus they wearied themselves for a while, until the priest was going away. But having got in again after they had hauled me out, my mouth was opened to speak. And when the priest heard that I had begun to preach, he turned again and stood quiet, and all was still till I had finished. I spoke to the priest before all the people, and told him that if he took himself to be our shepherd, and believed that we were strayed from the flock of Christ, let him then make it appear that we were in an error, and I would take it friendly. But he said he came not to take the sheep, but wolves, and so went away. But he left his informer at a back window looking in through a casement, who confessed that the Lord was among us. We had a precious meeting after they were gone, and a Friend went to prayer, and praised the Lord that his presence was with us. Nevertheless, this informer went after this to the monthly meeting of justices to inform against this meeting.

We had then the high constable living in our town, who was a loving, friendly, moderate man. He was sitting in the room when the priest's clerk came in to inform against Friends, and so asked him what he had come there for. The clerk then told him; but when the high constable understood his business, he got up and put the clerk out of the room, and kept him out, so that he could not inform that day. It happened soon after, that this informer went to shoot his musket (he being a trained



soldier) and it burst into pieces, by which he was wounded and narrowly escaped being killed. He then confessed that he thought it fell to his lot to be so hurt for what he had done to the Quakers, and that he would be done with that business if he could. So he troubled us no more.

After this I heard that Wilson, the priest of our parish, went to the justices himself and wanted some course to be taken with the Quakers, to put down their meeting. Indeed he was hot against us, but against me above all. But the justices held him off, telling him that they were not willing to have any hand in ruining their neighbors, and desired him to take some other course than by informers.

Before these things happened, I was in great exercise of mind, though I was willingly given up to serve the Lord, whatever I suffered for it. In this exercise I was brought very low, being deeply plunged in my spirit, until at a meeting in my house it pleased the Lord in mercy to break in mightily upon me, greatly tendering my spirit, to the gladdening of my soul. Then did my tears become tears of joy, for I rejoiced in the Lord, for his mercy endures forever. Thanksgiving be given to him, who failed me not in this needful time, but supported and bore me up in these days of great tribulation. At this time Friends suffered deeply in many places, both by fines and imprisonments. Also the priests in their pulpits raged against Truth and against us.

In these perilous days I went up to London to the yearly meeting, where I was glad to see such excellent meetings. The first I was at was on Gracious Street, which was so large that the court was almost filled. In this meeting the Lord's power was with me, though I had more of a mind to hear others than to be heard myself, for there were many fine men present who have since gone to their rest. But the power of the Lord came upon me, and at length my mouth was opened in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit, to my great joy.

In the afternoon I went to the meeting at the Bull and Mouth, which was also large. Before I got there, a woman Friend was declaring, whose name was Theophila Townsend. She had a living, powerful testimony. Notwithstanding, the rude people about the door despised her, and spoke discourteously of her. I pressed through them and got into the gallery, and after she was done, I spoke. At first I directed my speech to those unruly men, showing whom the Scripture said would not enter into the kingdom of God, but said to them, "It is likely you think God will be better than his word." Then they were still and silent, for the Lord's power came over all. So I turned to the meeting, and oh the streams of life that ran through the living that day! The next day I went to another meeting, and to several meetings following in that week, and it was a precious time to Friends.

On the seventh-day I met with three Friends who were going to see Lodowick Muggleton, namely Robert Barclay, Patrick Livingston, and William Haglie. I went along with them, only I desired

they would conceal my name from him, for he had received my letter but a little before. When we came there, his wife civilly conducted us into a room, after which he came down and looked on us, saying, "Is any of you John Gratton?" But Robert Barclay answered, "Are you a prophet, and need you to ask?" At this Muggleton stopped and said "You are Scotchmen, and I will have nothing to do with you; for I was recently cheated by a Scotchman, one John Swinton." This John Swinton had been to see this false prophet, and in discoursing with him, supposed him to be a poor man, and gave him half a guinea, upon which Muggleton blessed him. But before J. Swinton went away, he told Muggleton he believed that he was a false prophet, upon which Muggleton cursed him. For this he would not meddle with Scotchmen. Robert Barclay then asked him, "Why did you not then return the man his gold?" to which he made no reply.

Then I spoke to him, saying, "I am an Englishman, talk with me," and I put some questions to him, such as, "Why must all Scotchmen suffer for one man's offense, if indeed you were offended?" He said he mattered not. I told him, "This seems contrary to the nature of Christ Jesus, who came to seek and to save that which was lost." Then I asked him "How did you come by your authority? Did you see anything, or hear any voice?" He answered "No." Then said I, "You have no validation for what you do but what you heard from John Reeve?" He said, "No, I have not." Then said I, "I perceive that all you have for what you do is only the bare word of a man." He answered it was. "Then," said I, "Do you not think it would be a credulous thing for me to venture my eternal salvation upon the bare word of a man?" To this he answered, "You must, if ever you will be saved." "That is strange," said I, for I knew he lied and was a false prophet, (praised be the Lord, who gave me to see him fully).

Then I asked him, "Do you have power to bless a man after you have cursed him?" He answered, "No." "What?" said I, "You have power to curse a man after you have blessed him, but not power to bless him after you have cursed him, provided the man repent?" He answered "No." Robert Barclay then replied that it was strange if he had power to curse men after he had blessed them, for then, by the same rule he should have power to bless men after he had cursed them. All this while he knew not that I was John Gratton.

Then spoke Patrick Livingston, saying, "I was with a disciple of yours at Chesterfield, and she told me I should never have any more openings or fresh springs again. But," said he, "I have found her a liar every day." Then Muggleton said, "Did she curse you?" "Yes," replied Patrick. "Well," said Muggleton, "In confirmation of her curse, I pronounce you cursed." Then another said something to him, and he cursed him also. And when he had finished cursing he was so pleased, that he said it did him more good than if a man had given him forty shillings. Upon this I asked him what he thought of me, and what would become of me? He answered that if I was careful I might do well;

saying several times, "If you be careful, it will be well with you in the end." Then I desired Friends to bear witness that this false prophet says he has not power to bless a man after he has cursed him; and yet, having cursed me before he ever saw me, he now tells me if I be careful, I may do well, and it will be well with me in the end. "O, what a false prophet are you" said I, and then I told him my name. When he heard that, he was sadly confounded and made no further reply to me. So we left him and went away. This I write from the memory I have of it, and have been large in the account so that it may be seen how plainly he was made manifest to be a deceiver, and that others may beware of him, desiring that it may please the Lord to deliver every honest hearted soul from the baits, snares, cunning wiles and devices of the enemy of all mankind.

Soon after this, as I was riding through Islington, I looked upon the city, remembering thankfully the good time I had had there, and it was manifest to me that I should meet with a trial (for the gospel's sake) before I got home. Nevertheless we went forward, and came to Ware. There we called to see Thomas Burr, and from there we went to Huntington, where I had some relations. At this place great spoil had been made on Friends, for it was a time of great persecution. We called to see a Friend at Godmanchester, whose house had been sadly plundered for meeting together. We passed on to Ives, where we stayed their first-day meeting, which was very large. Friends had planned it to be in an out-building which belonged to Tobias Hardmeat, though it fell by course to be elsewhere that day. Here the informers missed us, though they intended to have caught us, but being misinformed about our meeting, we were preserved out of their hands.

From there we went to Stamford in Lincolnshire, to William Collingworth's, where once I had a meeting, and to Oakham, at Joseph Holt's. From there we passed on till we came to Long Clawson in the vale of Beaver. As we walked down the hill, it came into my mind that at this place I should meet with the exercise which I had a foresight of before, notwithstanding which, I was given up to the service I was called to. We came to a Friend's house named Edward Hallam where we lodged that night, and Friends came to see us, desiring us to stay and meet with them the next day. I inquired of them how things were with them, whether things had been quiet (for I was certain we should be disturbed, yet I dared not deny a meeting with them, and so kept all to myself). They told me as of yet they had met with no trouble, but said the priest had recently made threats. However, we agreed to have a meeting the next day, and I told them it might so happen that they would be fined twenty pounds for me. They answered, "If you will venture, we will." So it was resolved.

That night in my sleep, the Lord showed me the meeting in the meeting-house, and let me see a company of great dogs come in and fall on us, and rear up at us with their forefeet upon our shoulders, as if they would worry us. One dog seemed to be upon me, and had gotten my left arm in his mouth, but I lifted up my right hand and knocked him down, and down they all came and went

away. After this, we had a good meeting, and we looked one upon another to see if any were hurt, and no man had so much as his skin broken, so we parted.

The next day, before the meeting was gathered, as soon as I came within sight of the meeting-house door, I saw the priest and officers of the town with two informers in soldier's coats going there. I saw that they were pressing to get into the meeting-house, and I was afraid they would get in before me and keep me out. So I hurried all I could, pressed through the crowd, and got in before the priest and officers. Soon after, they came in and began taking names, but they were so confounded that it was observed that they asked for the names of their own town's people, though they knew them all well enough. After some time, the power of the Lord arose in me. I knelt down and began to pray, so my right hand was lifted up, and they fell and got away out of the meeting.

The priest and constable took horse and went about four miles to fetch a justice, whom they brought back with them to the meeting. Though the meeting had ended before, the informers (by the help they had gotten) kept us in the house till the justice and priest came; so we all sat silent. Then the justice asked, "What is being done here?" After some pause I stood up and went before him and told him, "We are here in obedience to the Lord, to wait upon and worship him according to his own will, in Spirit and in truth. We have not met in any contempt of authority. And though some of us have wives and children, and some estates in the world that we could lose (if it please the Lord to allow it to be so), yet we dare not do otherwise," or to this effect. He then asked me my name and where I dwelt, which I told him. So he went on and took names through all the meeting, and fined me twenty pounds for preaching, and the rest five shillings a piece for hearing. This was in the time called mid-summer, about the time called Michaelmas, the feast in honor of Michael the archangel. After this he sent up a warrant by the informer to Justice Gilbert of Locka, and he gave his warrant to the constable to distrain me of goods to the value of twenty pounds.

The night before they came, when I had lain down in my bed, a great exercise fell upon me. I waited to see what it would come to, and so it increased upon me. I thought I was walking upon a very fine green place, and saw a storm coming with a very strong wind. Upon seeing it, I resolved to stand against it, and so set myself in such a way as I thought to stand fast and not be moved. But the storm came upon me, and took me up, but then I was filled with the power of God. When it was over I considered the exercise, and it came into my mind that it did not come to me for nothing, and I thought the Lord must have something for me to do. I felt him very sweetly with me, and so I said in my heart, "Lord what would you have me to do?" Then the word of the Lord arose in my heart, saying, "Sell all that you have."

After this I fell to rest, and the next morning I went to the quarterly meeting at Tupton. When I

came there, I heard that two red coats had gone up to Monyash to distraint my goods. The rumor was that all that I had must be taken from me for preaching the everlasting gospel, for that was my crime, and nothing else; praised be the Almighty forever! I acquainted the meeting with the exercise I had in my bed the night before, and how the word of the Lord came to me, bidding me sell all. Then I desired that those present give me their sense, whether I should actually sell all, or give up all, and let all go patiently and freely for the truth's sake, if indeed the Lord was pleased to permit me to be so tried with the loss of all? And it was the sense of the meeting that I should give up all into the Lord's hand.

At that time I owed money both to Friends and others, which would have proved hard to pay on a sudden without selling what I had in my own possession, for I also had much owed to me, but I could not get it suddenly, whatsoever came upon me. I owed most to Friends who were at the quarterly meeting, but they came to me and were very tender to me, and encouraged me to give up all freely, and if I lost all, they would be content to take things as they were, or as it did fall out. A precious day it was, and the Lord's power was over all the powers of the earth, and I was strengthened; praises to our God forever!

I came home that night, and the two informers had come to town with a warrant from Justice Gilbert, it being certified to him concerning the meeting at Clawson by the said Lister, called a justice (who never prospered since, but rather wasted and went into a low condition and became poor). The informers sent for the constable, who, hearing that I was not at home overnight, refused to come till the next morning. But early the next morning I sent for a man of the Church of England to whom I owed ten pounds. He came and I delivered goods into his hand to sell and pay himself, and give me the surplus. So he took them and was well pleased to see my honest care of him. To another man I owed three pounds, but it happened he had a cow of mine in his grounds. So I sent to him to keep her for his money, or to sell her and pay himself, and give me the surplus. Then, as for what I owed to Friends I was easy about, seeing they had been so kind and tender, and gave up theirs freely.

Soon after this was done, I saw the constable go into a neighbor's house, to whom I went and spoke. Poor man, he was full of trouble, and wanted counsel. When he saw me, he said to me, "You have brought yourself into trouble, and me too," and was very passionate. "Man," said I, "I have done no man any wrong. I would not have you be troubled. If you will distraint my goods you may, but if you will take my counsel, I will tell you what I would have you to do." He asked, "What would you have me to do?" I said, "Send these men away, and tell them if you need assistance you can call to your neighbors." He was pleased with my advice and went up to the inn. But before he left me, the informers came in, and they knew me, and said I was the man. "Yes," said I, "How is Justice

Lister? I thought he had been more moderate than to have prosecuted the law against me to this height.” One of them said, “You are a people that will be obedient to no law.” I felt the Lord's power arise in me, and I said unto him, “What do you think, are we children of God, or children of the devil? If the latter, you may take courage to do as you do (though I knew he ought not to). But if you think we are children of God, how dare you? But I will tell you one thing, the Scripture says that 'he that is born after the flesh, persecutes him that is born after the spirit.'” “So,” said I, “There is your evidence. And further, we read that persecution 'is an evident sign to them of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.’” The Lord's power appearing with these words, they both were silent, and went away to the inn, and the constable also followed them.

I stayed a little and weighed in my mind what to do, upon which I felt freedom to go to the inn also. There I found the informers eating, and I talked with them, inquiring about Friends at Clawson, how they stood, and whether any shrunk under the pressure of persecution. They told me that indeed Friends suffered deeply. The constable and some neighbors were in another room, and called me to come to them. When I came they said to me, “Are you so mad as to stay with your enemies?” “Ah,” said I, “We must love our enemies, and do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that persecute and despitefully use us.” “Ah,” said they, “It is well for you if you can do so, for we cannot.” Then the informers came to take leave of the constable and told him they did believe I was an honest man. They desired him to be as favorable to me as he could, adding that it would not be hard to convince the town's men to pay it for me, “For,” said they, “We heard as we came up the country that he was an honest man.” Then they begged of the constable to give them some money to help them home, for they had above thirty miles to go, upon which he gave them sixpence.

When they were gone, the constable came down, and I thought he would have followed me into my house, but he stayed in the street, hanging down his head very sorrowfully. Some of the town offered to pay the money and then take it up again as I could pay it, but I could not with freedom do it. But while I was at the inn, some of the chief women of the town came to my house, and finding nobody in it but my wife, they (against her mind) violently took all the best of the goods away, and carried them to a neighbor's house—on purpose to save them for us. When I came home and saw the goods gone, I was sorry, and asked my wife how it happened. She told me she could not help it, and where they had carried them she could not tell, for they had decided to do it, whether she desired it or no.

I went outside and invited the constable to come in, but he desired me to shut the door on him. I answered him, “No, for I had done no wrong, nor was I afraid of any man, and besides, I was not free to shut my doors.” Then he came in and sat down in much trouble, hanging down his head. After some time, we had some warm meat ready for dinner, and we invited him to dine. He roused

himself and ate with us, and after dinner he went and sat down again as before, in much trouble.

At last I began to think what to do with him, for no way had opened to him how to proceed. Indeed it went hard with him to distraint my goods, and he seemed confounded. Then I spoke and suggested he might write down whatever goods were present in my home, and then leave them with me, for I would not take them away if he did not. Then he might proclaim them at the market, and in the steeple-house, and if anybody desired to buy them, let them come to buy them at my house. This proposal he liked much, and did accordingly. But when the people heard my goods proclaimed, they wished sad things to whoever bought any of them, so that none of them were sold.

Soon after this the constable went to the magistrate's court, and meeting with Justice Gilbert of Locka (who had granted the warrant) and another called Sir Henry Every, he offered to deliver them his warrant and his bill of goods that he had restrained, and told them that he could not sell them. Justice Gilbert said to him, "If you cannot sell them in Derbyshire, you must carry them into Yorkshire." "No," replied Justice Every, "We have no need of that. You granted your warrant, and you have done your office," and then speaking to the constable said, "And you, good fellow, have executed your warrant, and have done your office. If you cannot sell them, you can go your way home, and let it be as it is." The constable then came home, and with great joy told me what had taken place, and how he came off so finely, and that my goods were saved. (Now this Justice Every was Chief Justice in that county and loved honest Friends, but hated hypocrites, and was much against proud priests. The Earl of Devonshire and his lady had spoken to him beforehand to be tender to me, as indeed he was ever after. And after this, when I was a prisoner, he laid hold of every twig of encouragement till he got me out again. For when King James put out his proclamation [for liberty of conscience], some sought to hinder me the benefit of it. But Justice Every spoke to the judge and got me discharged.)

Thus the Lord delivered me, defended and pleaded my cause in the time of need. Oh his mercies were great to me at this time! For he filled me with the Holy Spirit the day the informers were with me, so that at times I was ready to say that if I had had a house full of goods to lose, I could freely part with them all for the sake of truth. For to us it is given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake; and truly all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. It is cause of great joy when we are counted worthy to suffer for him. He that loses anything for his sake, shall receive a hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him; but if we deny him, he also will deny us. They are counted happy that endure; for he that endures to the end shall be saved. Therefore we are exhorted to lay hold of eternal life, and to hold it fast, lest anyone take our crown, which the Lord freely gives to all those who love his appearing.

After this sessions I was fined several times, twenty pounds each time, and the constables always took the same course with me, going to see Justice Every, who took their warrants, discharged the officers, and sent them home. So the Lord preserved me from the spoilers, blessed be his name! He allowed the enemies of Truth to go no further, nor to do any more than he was pleased to give his people strength to bear with comfort and rejoicing. Truly, he has been my rock and stay, yes, my portion both for soul and body. He has helped me in all my necessities, and stood by me to hold up my head above all the waters and tempests. Indeed, he is my salvation and my treasure which will never decay. Praises forevermore be given to him!

After this I went to a meeting at a town called Whittington, to which came the mayor of Chesterfield and two men who waited on him. But the priest of the town (as they afterwards told us) sent two informers, who followed the mayor into the meeting, though he knew not what or who they were (as far as I could tell). The mayor came simply and innocently to hear truth declared. I was preaching when he came in, and he stood up close by me. I was opening to the people the parable of the wedding supper (Luke 14) and how those who were invited made excuses, so the servant was sent out again into the streets and lanes of the city to bring in the poor, the maimed, and the blind to the supper. I was showing who these poor, lame, and blind were, and how these that were wounded and lame and sick came to the supper. The mayor asked me how they were wounded? Without stopping, I told him that they were the “poor in spirit” who received the kingdom, and the wounded in spirit, saying, “The spirit of a man will sustain him in infirmities; but a wounded spirit, who can bear?” (Prov. 18:14) So I went on, and the power of God broke mightily through the meeting, so that the mayor cried out, “It is true!” When I was done, he went out and wept bitterly, and desired Francis Davenport (the Friend who owned the house where the meeting was held) to show him where he might lie down awhile. He led the mayor into a chamber where he lay down and wept bitterly, and he was very loving to me all his days after. Nevertheless (poor soul), he was very rich in worldly riches, and it was too hard for him to stand in a public profession of the truth with us. Yet he remained under a spiritual concern in his mind to his dying day.

But though the mayor (I believe) neither thought to do, nor did us any harm, yet the laws were such that I was fined twenty pounds again for preaching, and the Friend who owned the house was fined twenty pounds also. For the two men (previously mentioned) whom the priest of the town sent to our meeting, went and informed against it as a conventicle.<sup>17</sup> Justice Barton of Dranfield, according to some ancient laws of the nation, sent out warrants to restrain our goods without calling us before him to hear our accusers face to face. They took Francis Davenport's cattle and horses, and went to Fleshly Fair and sold most of them before Francis and I could get there. But after we came and made it known in the fair how they came by those goods, nobody would buy any more of them.

<sup>17</sup> i.e. a secret or unlawful religious gathering.



One man, who had ignorantly bought some of the cattle, was sorely troubled, and said had he known it he would not have bought them.

The officers my town had the aforementioned precedent, and so took the same method as the former constable had done. They took some goods away from me, but could sell none, upon which the constable acquainted Justice Every, who bid them all to go their way home, and let it be as it was. Thus this justice stood in the gap, and, in favor to me, stopped my goods from being sold time after time, by which means I was preserved wonderfully from being plundered. The goods they took out of my house were brought back again after the sessions. Indeed my neighbors showed much love to me, and were unwilling to have me hurt at any time, so that the Lord was wonderfully good both to me and my family, and was pleased to work for me from time to time. Glory to his great and honorable name forever! For indeed, I never lacked a bed to lie on, or beds for my Friends, nor food to eat, nor clothes to put on.

About this time I went into Cheshire and had a meeting at Chester, where I met Roger Haydock, Eleanor Loe, and Mary Warrel, of whose company I was glad. In this place there were several men who had received the truth, and yet through unfaithfulness had fallen away. When I understood this I was sorry, and went again to Chester; for I had no ease in my spirit for two days and nights. I came there on the sixth-day of the week, and at night I had a few words before the meal, where an apothecary and his wife were at supper. The next day I walked to and fro through the market with a great concern upon my mind, but did not have an opportunity in the street to speak to the people. The apothecary took me to his house, where both he and his wife were very friendly. He also told me that the unfaithfulness of some in that city had hindered them, "Otherwise," they said, "We would have come among you before this day." I talked with them and then we parted friendly.

On first-day I went to Richard Smith's house to the meeting, and sat down and stayed an hour or more before the meeting was fully gathered. I then stood up and walked nearer to Friends (for it was a very large room) and the Lord in mercy was pleased to give us a precious meeting, and there was great brokenness of heart with many tears. At the latter end of this meeting, Richard Smith spoke very tenderly, and desired that they who had been unfaithful might amend their ways, and do better for the time to come. Yet, poor man, notwithstanding this exhortation, he himself, after some time, did worse than he had done before, for he wrote against Friends and against the blessed Truth. However, he, with some others who opposed the Truth, were soon after taken away by death.

At this time, King Charles gave liberty to the Presbyterians to meet together in authorized places, and they acquired a great barn at Ashford. I happened to be in the town one day and saw their meeting break up, and there appeared in the street an abundance of people. It troubled my spirit to

see so many poor people led away by those whom I had tried and found to be false apostles. Within three days the word of the Lord came to me to go to that meeting next fifth-day, but it was very hard for me to give up to go, for there were many there who I loved very well, and who I believed loved me. But the Lord was good and encouraged me, and I acquainted an ancient Friend with the concern which was upon me, and he also encouraged me.

On fifth-day morning a Friend came to me, and together we went to the meeting, where the priest was preaching false doctrine. My message to the meeting was that their meeting should fall and come down before long (and indeed it did in a few weeks after, and there was never a meeting since then in that barn, though they had set up a pulpit in it and fine seats). When the priest was done, I desired to speak, but before I had said what I had to say, they rushed violently upon me, and abused me, hauling me out. The priest looked pale and went away, though I charged him with false doctrine. When I was out I declared to the people in the power of God against their priests and their worship, but none answered me in defense of their way. When I had finished I went away, and soon after saw the word of the Lord fulfilled, for their meeting was not to be found in all the country, because they soon fled and hid in holes during those suffering times.

Another day I was at Wirksworth market and the people swore dreadfully, at which my spirit was sorely grieved. The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, "Go to the market cross and declare against the wickedness of the people." I was reluctant to go, for I knew many of them to be rude, wicked, drunken, swearing people, and I did not know but they might tear me to pieces, and therefore I took my horse and went home. But I was followed with sharp reproofs and righteous judgments from the Lord, which brought me into deep sorrow, and I expected the Lord would not renew this concern upon me. But the next time I went, when I was in the market again, an exercise fell heavy upon me to go and warn the people. This time I went, not standing to consult anymore, and in the heavenly power of God I declared the Truth, and bore my testimony against their great wickedness, insomuch that the people were much reached, and wept aloud, and no man had power to hurt me. I stopped twice and sat down, and waited in stillness for the fresh motion of life, and the Lord enabled me to stand up again. When I had eased my spirit, I came away in peace and great joy. Afterwards I came to my inn, and some followed me there, but it arose in my heart to go out of town, which I did. After I was gone, I heard that one Justice Loe came to the town and sent to my inn to fetch me before him, intending to send me to prison. But the Lord delivered and saved me out of the hands of wicked men; for this justice was a great persecutor of Friends. Thus the Lord was with me and kept me wherever I went. Oh, let my soul livingly praise his holy name!

About this time I went often to meetings, and I ran to and fro, the Lord always helping me (without whom I could do nothing, for in him all fullness dwells). Many were convinced, and our meetings

were greater and greater, and many proved faithful. But the priests raged sorely, for I went abroad as much as I could, and kept my trade going too. My family also grew larger, and my care was great to pay all I owed to everybody. I was often constrained to ride many miles after meetings to gain my markets on the second day of the week, but the Lord blessed me in every way.

Many Friends came to visit me at my house, for the more I traveled and labored in the work and service of the Lord, the more I gained acquaintance with Friends abroad. I went often to the yearly meeting at London, and there I inquired how Truth spread abroad from nation to nation, and I was glad to hear from Friends who had gone in the love of God to visit them. Our town's people thought that my commitment to Friends would break me, as I heard, and they waited to see me fail in the world. But when it did not prove so, but rather the contrary, they changed their minds and said that the Quakers (as they called them) gave me money for preaching. Many such false accusations and slanders I patiently bore in those days. Thus the subtle serpent, by his wicked and false reports, labored to hinder the prosperity of the pure Truth. Yet I saw no other way but to give up my cause, and the cause of Truth, into the Lord's hands for him to plead it as he saw fit.

The priests, seeing that the magistrates in that place did not like to persecute us, put their heads together and obtained a warrant against me and two other Friends. It so happened that I was gone to York and thereabouts in Truth's service, and did not return home till the warrant was near out of date. But the other two Friends were taken and sent to prison at Derby, and were long kept prisoners there.

After this, they cited me to the bishops' court, to which I went. When I was called, I went up towards the high priest and the others, one of whom was called the Register, whose name was Nichols, of Litchfield. When I came near him he looked on me with an envious countenance and said, "Are you here? I thought to have had you in jail before now. But," said he, "I will soon have you in jail." Then said I, "I have read that 'the devil shall cast some of you into prison;' but I never read that any prophet, apostle, or servant of Jesus Christ laid any man in prison for conscience sake." "But," Nichols answered again, "I will lay you in prison." "Then," said I, "You will join with the devil." "Pray, Mr. Wilson," he said to the high priest (the same who came before to our meeting to persecute us, after he had been at his so-called sacrament), "Will you not admonish him?" Upon which I expected some information and counsel from him; but all he said was, "I admonish you to come to church. I admonish, I admonish you to come to church."

I was amazed at their folly and blindness, for I expected they would have labored to show me that it was my duty to come to church, or that I was in error. But seeing nothing came but, "I admonish, I admonish, I admonish you," three times, in order to make way for their wicked court to go on perse-

cutting me for money; I said to him, "Pray tell me, whether you admonish me for the good of my soul, or for the love of my money?" Nichols replied, "I for the love of your money, and he for the good of your soul." With this the people made a noise laughing, for they saw it was money more than the good of souls that they aimed at in that wicked court. Then the Lord's power arose in my heart, and I was going to declare against them; for I saw that the wickedness in their high places was very great, and that it came from an evil, cruel, persecuting, selfish spirit. But before I could speak they cried out, "Have him away!" upon which I was violently hurried out of their court.

At the next court I was cited again, and in the meantime summoned to appear at the court at Derby. The bailiff told me that my Friends and I must go to the clerk of the court. I told him we would not go, for it was in vain to go to him unless we would give him money. "Then," said he, "You must appear before the judge!" I appeared willing to do that, and told him, "It might do well to let the judge know how we were abused by you and your men the bailiffs. For you hurry us to court and to sessions because we cannot give you money, and yet people of other opinions who do give you money, you leave at home." "Yes," said I, "to my own knowledge, you let one man stay at home for a penny." When he heard me so willing to appear before the judge and reveal how they made prey of the people in the country, he bid me get away home if I desired. I said, "Then I must have all my Friends go along with me," (for there were many of us together). He bade me take them, and away we came home. So these greedy men got no prey from us.

The next day I was cited to appear again before the Spiritual Court, so called, (but it should rather be called the Wicked Court) at Bakewell, and three of us went. I came from the Temporal Court one day, and went to the Spiritual Court another, but they all missed their chief design for me. These men were like the governor Felix (Acts 24:26)—they troubled me often, thinking to get money from me.

After this I traveled hard, and went to meetings in many places. One day, as I was drawing home-ward through Derby with William Fallowfield, having been in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, a letter from Abraham Morris of Lincoln met me, desiring me to speak to a wealthy woman, who was about to put some Friends (who were her tenants) in prison for tithes. I went to her, and after some talk with her, she grew very cool and moderate, and ordered me to go to her steward, about eight miles from Derby. William Fallowfield left me, and I went home from Derby, and on the next day I went to see the steward, but he was gone to Brasson. I went there, and he was gone to the hall. I sent for him to my inn, but he would not come. So I went to the hall to see him, where there were two priests, the master of the house, and some of Derby, all of whom knew me. I got the steward away from the others into the hall, where I discoursed him, telling him his mistress's mind, and left him very friendly. After this I heard no more of the Friends going to Lincoln prison.

I pressed on then to go home to my family, though it snowed and blew hard. But when I was on Brasson Moor, the word of the Lord came to me, bidding me go to Auldwark and help them. So there I went, not daring to disobey. There was no priest or steeple-house in that town, and many were under trouble about religion. I had some acquaintance with one John Buzston, to whose house I went, and he bid me welcome. I told him I had a desire to have a meeting, and they acquainted the town, and at the hour appointed the house was full. I was enabled to speak as in the ability of God's Holy Spirit, and was powerfully carried on for about four hours. The meeting ended before twelve, but some stayed till two, and the man and his wife were convinced, and both their parents. Also the servant man was convinced, who has since become a fine minister among Friends, and twenty more of the town. John Buzston said he believed all the town was convinced. Many came to meetings, some till they died, some till they married. Others went into America and did well, as I hear.

I also had meetings about the same time at Newman-Lays-Millen, and a great convincement there was in those days, some of whom are alive to this day, and continue faithful to the truth. Indeed there were many other places where the Lord ordered me and went with me, and by his own right arm did unutterable things. Many were convinced, yes hundreds, I believe, who then came faithfully to meetings, at which the devil was angry, and I was cast into prison.

Soon after this, a writ de Excommunicato Capiendo<sup>18</sup> came out. While I was abroad visiting Friends, I had a great sense of a deep suffering coming upon me, insomuch that I said to a friend, "It appears so deep I cannot see to the bottom of it." I desired in my heart that the Lord might enable to stand it. Before I got home from Yorkshire, I had a dream one night in which I saw, as I thought, a great mastiff dog take hold of me, and hold me by my clothes just by Derby jail. I called to his master to take him off, but could see that he was not inclined to do it. I then saw it was to no purpose to strive, and therefore gave up to let him hold me. The day before I got home I felt the suffering more and more. The next day, the 16th of the sixth month, 1680, I went to Bakewell fair, and the magistrate arrested me before I could get into my inn, or put up my horse in the stable. So to Derby jail I must go, but we stayed that night at Bakewell, where my wife came the next morning and wept. I bid her not to weep, but rather rejoice that we were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, who had suffered so much for us. Then she bore it very well, seeing me bear it so cheerfully.

Now when we came to the jail I demanded a free prison, but the jailer was unwilling, and offered me kindness if I would but stay in his house and pay for my table. But I had a wife and family to support, and could not afford to lie in jail at seven shillings per week in his house, so I insisted to have a free prison, as I knew the law allowed. Now it had happened a little time before this, that there were several Friends in that prison whom this jailer put in the dungeon among thieves, and

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<sup>18</sup> A writ ordering the imprisonment of an excommunicated person until he or she submitted to the church.

would scarcely allow them clean straw to lie upon. So I got hold of a statute book which said that no sheriff, under-sheriff, jailer, or under-jailer, should keep and lodge debtors and felons together, upon the penalty of five pounds. At this time, I took the book and went to the sheriff (whose wife and mine claimed some kindred). They were very friendly to me, and desired me to leave my book with him, and meet him at the court where he would speak to the judge. This being done, the judge ordered my Friends to be put separate from the felons, and to have rooms to themselves.

I was the next one to come to this prison, so I demanded one of those rooms. He said he had already filled the room with corn. “Take it out then,” said I, which he did in great vexation, and put me there, it being an old prison chamber. I borrowed a bed, with some other things, and went in. He came up to see how I fared. I had a fire, and though I could see the stars at night through the holes in the roof tiles, yet I lay warm enough. I had my health, and was well content, and thought in my mind that this was but small suffering compared to what I might go through before I died. I gave up all into the Lord's hand—soul, body, spirit, wife, children, and all I had, saying in my heart, “Sickness or health, life or death, the will of the Lord be done.” Oh, how good the Lord was to me, and I lay quiet and slept sweetly.

But when the jailer saw that I planned to abide there in the free prison, he was angry and went his way, and locked me up close,<sup>19</sup> and I remained so for some time. I did not so much as desire to look out the door. My heart was glad that I was accounted worthy of those bonds. And though I could get nothing unless I drew it in at the window with a cord, yet it happened that I lacked nothing all the time I was there, for indeed I resolved to abide it patiently.

At length a Friend, one Robert Meek, came to see me. The turnkey came to tell me there was one come to visit me, saying I must come down into the jailor's house<sup>20</sup> to see him. By this I saw the jailer desired my Friends and I to spend money in his house, whereupon I told the turnkey that I was not willing to go down. “If my Friends,” said I, “cannot come to me, I am not willing to come to them.” He went down, and in a short time brought up the Friend to me, leaving us together with the door unlocked. When the Friend had stayed his time, I went down with him to see him take horse. And when he was gone, I spoke to the jailer, and asked him, “Why do you carry yourself so severely with me? If you are civil, you will have civility from me. But if you are not willing, you may do as you please.” He said that we were a people that would do nothing but what we wished. But when we had talked awhile, he said, “There hangs the key, take it, and do as you please.”

19 Those who were committed to jail for debt, or for other lesser offenses, were often kept as “open” prisoners. These had a measure of liberty granted them to leave the jail for lawful employment, or to buy necessities from nearby towns, or even to visit families. A “close” prisoner was one who was forbidden to leave the jail premises.

20 At this time, in addition to housing prisoners, jailers often kept ale houses where prisoners were encouraged to buy food and drink.

After this, I went in and out as I had occasion into the jailer's house and the gardens, but home he would not let me go, though my wife was taken so ill that it was feared she would die. I gave up my wife and children, and all I had into the Lord's hand, and was contented, saying in my heart after this manner, "Life or death, poverty or riches, come what will come, the will of the Lord be done." But it pleased the Lord that my wife mended again. And oh how easy it was after I had given up all! My jail was made a pleasant place to me, for the Lord in mercy was with me, so that I even sang a living song of praise; for truly, to him praise is due forever more!

In brotherly love to me, Friends in London sent down a *habeas corpus*<sup>21</sup> to have me appear in London. I went to please them, for it seemed that Justice Nichols had not managed the law rightly in my case, but the court at London would not let me have the benefit of the law at that time. I was very uneasy until I came to hear what tricks the priest's party and Nichols had done. Then I gave all up to the Lord, and resolved to wait his time to bring me out, as he had been pleased to appear to me. The word of the Lord came to me—"Be content and I will bring you out with honor." Upon which I came back to prison, and lay quietly till King James set me at liberty [in March 1686].

After this my jailer went out, and another came in, who was very civil and kind to me, as was his wife. Towards the spring, my eldest son John died. I obtained liberty to go see him, but he died that same night after he had seen me. Some of his last words were that he hoped we should meet again where they (meaning evil men) should not separate us anymore. The next day he was buried, and I left my wife and returned to prison again.

The priests were pleased that I was in prison, for two of them met in my inn at Tideswell, and priest Wilson said to Fern (with whom I had the dispute at Baslow), "Sir, I can tell you news." "What news?" said Fern. "Why," said Wilson, "Gratton is in prison." "I am glad of it," said Fern. These are the hirelings that show their envious spirit, who spare not the flock of Christ!

This year I wrote an epistle to the yearly meeting in London, which is as follows:

Dear Friends and brethren,

In the pure unchangeable truth do I dearly salute you all, who are truly kept faithful in and by the power of God unto his glory. In his endless mercy he has called and chosen us to bear a testimony to his eternal power and godhead, who is God over all the gods of the earth, which are but as grass that soon withers and comes to an end.

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<sup>21</sup> A *habeas corpus* is a legal action or writ by means of which prisoners can seek relief from unlawful imprisonment.

My love at this time is freshly unto you, my dear friends, who dwell in the power of God, in the mountain of true holiness, and in the unchangeable light that is the same at this day as when it first broke forth in us, and I feel you as near and dear to me as ever. Yes, my soul honors and highly esteems you in the Lord, you whom God has made pillars in his house, honorable vessels in his hand, fitted for his service. For I know right well that it is your food and drink to do the will of your Father who is in heaven, and that your hearts are gladly carried on in your Father's business. You can truly say that they (and they only) are your brethren and sisters who are knowers and doers of the will of your Father who is in heaven. For God, even our everlasting God and Father, has raised us up by his own arm, and brought us forth in his own light, life, and power, not to do our own wills, but his. Blessed be his name!

His own people delight to live under his government, and they love his reign, and are exceedingly glad to feel the increase of his kingdom in their own particulars, and also to behold it in others. For this, dear Friends, a travail is known in every upright heart, and a weighty concern is upon the honest minded in all the churches of the saints, that nothing may be allowed which hinders the increase of the kingdom and government of Christ Jesus our Lord.

For this cause, with others I might mention, I know it is well-pleasing unto the Lord that you meet together, and cheerfully bear the weighty concern upon your spirits for the prosperity of the eternal Truth, which is truly precious to you. Oh, how clearly has the Lord our God made it manifest that your meeting is well-pleasing unto him, by giving you his presence in such a powerful and glorious manner, as is beyond my ability to declare. Indeed, he has sealed it in my heart (and I am sure in your hearts as well) that it is a right, good, and honorable thing to meet as you do, and it declares to all the world that, though we be of several counties of this nation, yes, and of several nations, yet we are one body, in one spirit and mind. And truly our unity, love, and concord remain fresh in that life and light which never alters, and is the same at this day that ever it was. For this reason the enemy rages and envies our prosperity in the blessed Truth, and seeks every way to hinder the increase of the kingdom and government of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever! May the Lord rebuke him and chain him down and tread him under our feet.

I earnestly breathe unto the Lord our God to give you a good soul-satisfying opportunity, according to his manner, and I believe he will do it and fill your cups full, yes, and make them overflow abundantly, to the joy and consolation of every sincere heart among you. And may the Lord fill you with the Spirit of judgment, that you may be as helps in his government. Judge for God, and set true judgment on the head of transgression and transgressors, wherever



they are found, and so clear the Truth, which is clear from scandals and scandalous professors of it. May God be glorified, and all his enemies who desire not that he should reign over them, be brought down and slain before him, that he may be exalted over all, who alone is worthy—God blessed forever, amen.

My dear brethren, I can truly say I am with you in spirit, and my love springs freshly to you, and I would be glad to be with you personally, but could not get leave. So as a token of my dear love and true unity unto you and with you, it was in my heart thus to write. I remain your dear friend and brother. Everlasting praises be given to our God forever. Amen. Written in Derby jail, where I am a prisoner for the Truth's sake.

John Gratton

22nd of the Third month, 1683

After some years the jailer gave me leave to go home sometimes and stay some weeks, but it displeased the priests and magistrates. One time when I was at home, a Friend who was to be married came to me and earnestly desired me to come to his marriage, saying he believed there would be a large service because many people of the town of Chesterfield (where he had been an apprentice) would be at it. Accordingly I planned to go. But that night after he was gone, as I sat in my own house, an exercise fell upon me, so I turned in my mind and waited to know the cause. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, “You must not go to this marriage, for the magistrate will be there; but you must go to Derby and return to the jail tomorrow.” I went to bed very sorry that I must go to Derby so soon, for I had leave to stay at home some weeks longer. I told my wife of it, and questioned whether I would be able to sleep, yet through mercy I did. But when I awoke the next morning, the concern remained with me until I went.

When I came to Derby, the jailer was at the bowling green. I told him I had come to see them, at which he was glad, and bade me go down and he would follow me. When I had been just a little time at the jail, two high priests and one called a gentleman came to see me. They asked for me, and I came to them, but when they saw me, they had nothing to say to me. They called for me, it seemed, as though they were sure I would not be there. But finding me present, one whose name was Ouldershaw (who knew me well) put himself to talk a little with me and framed some discourse about religion. He was soon silent, not being able to withstand the Truth, and the priests said nothing, but paid for their drink and went away.

When they were gone, the jailer rejoiced that I happened to be there, and that I was so ready to be seen by them. For one of the priests was the chief priest of Derby town, and the other was also very

influential, and we perceived their design was to make complaint against the jailer for giving me liberty, and thereby to require me to be kept a close prisoner with the hope that some relation of mine would give them money for my release. Indeed, the jailor was so pleased, that he let me go home again the very same day.

Thus the wicked plotted against the just; for it seems they had some information that I was expected to be at the aforesaid marriage, and so designed their snare accordingly. For the magistrate went to the marriage to catch me there, expecting to find me preaching, and he brought one justice Gladman with him to the meeting (one who knew better than he practiced), who asked for me there. At the same time, the two priests were to have secured evidence that they came that day to the prison and called for me, and that I was not there. But the good God disappointed them, and ordered me to be at the jail and not at the marriage. Truly, the Lord saw all their plots against me, and in mercy delivered me that day; neither did my jailer suffer for his kindness to me. Oh, what a manifestation of the Lord's great love was this, for which I was not able to fully return the praise and humble acknowledgments that are due to him for his mercy and fatherly care, who knew the designs of our enemies and prevented them!

Though we were ignorant and knew nothing of this plot, yet the Lord in mercy revealed it to me by his good Spirit that I should return to the prison. Oh, what a tender Father and wonderful Counselor we have! Heaven and earth are full of his majesty, and his power is over all. Let the whole creation, and my soul, with all that is within me praise the Lord, for his mercy endures from generation to generation! He is God and changes not; He is the same today, yesterday and forever, therefore his people are not consumed. Though the sea rage, and the beasts of the field roar, yet the sheep and lambs of the flock of Christ Jesus are saved, and the lions and bears are slain by him who has all power in heaven and earth, and will deliver all who truly trust in him. David said, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed;" which the apostle remembered with joy: Acts 4:18-34. Read it and take courage, you that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and do not fear man; for if God is for us, who can be against us? Neither men nor devils can hurt us, though they may tempt and try us; yet if we follow the Lord, he will help us in time of need. My chief end in writing these remarkable things is that others may take courage to trust in God, and be obedient to him in all things, without fearing man, who is but as grass.

Nevertheless the magistrate informed against the meeting and Friends at the marriage were fined. One Friend was fined twenty pounds for preaching (which would have been my lot had they found me preaching there), and the rest were fined five shillings a piece for hearing. The justice also went to take hold of R. C. to pull him out of the meeting, but slipped and fell to the floor, where he lay till

Friends helped him up.

While I lay in prison, I sometimes spoke out the window to the people, and many of them were loving and friendly to me. Some young men were convinced, amongst whom was the jailer's eldest son, who came forth in obedience to the Lord, for which his father was angry, and turned him out of doors. He was likewise offended with me, and said he would put me in the dungeon and lock me to the wall. But this he never did, for he would sometimes appear worse than he really was. Indeed, he loved me more than he made out, and the liberty he gave me declared it.

One day I was concerned in my mind for his son because he got very little business in Derby, for the town was envious and turned from him, and would not trade with him because he had turned to the Truth. His father also became uneasy, for some in the town desired to have the high sheriff put him out from being jailer. But it came into my heart to make the jailer a proposition, that if he was pleased to give me and his son leave, I would go with him to London and place him there. I went and told the jailer's wife, and she told her husband, to which he consented. So I helped his son gather his goods, and then took him with me to London and placed him with an honest Friend, George Watts, where he did very well, for the Lord gave him favor in the sight of Friends, and he grew in the Truth. After some time he found his mind engaged in affection toward a sober young woman of an honest family, a Friend, upon which he came back to obtain the consent of his parents to proceed in marriage. I then returned with him again to London, and liked the young woman well. They married, and he went into partnership with a Friend in trade, and grew rich every way, for the Lord blessed him. After some time his father went up to London and saw how his son lived, and he confessed that I had done more for his son than he ever could have done.

One time, having leave to go home for some time to see my wife and family, it fell out that Robert Meller of Whitehough in Staffordshire died, who had been an honest Friend in his day and a noble standard in suffering times. His wife was also a sincere hearted woman, and his son John was a very honest Friend. Hearing of my being at home, they sent and invited me to come to his burial. Although I was sorry for the loss of so faithful a Friend, yet was I desirous to go to his burial, thinking there would be many people, for he was beloved both by rich and poor, and was of good report amongst men of all sorts. But I being a prisoner was careful that the jailer might not be blamed or turned out of his place on my account, for both he and his wife and children loved me well and were very kind to me. So I waited upon the Lord, desiring to know his mind, whether I should go or no. Then I felt I might go, though I had a sense there would be danger of meeting with some trouble, but how or which way it would come I did not know.

When the day came I went, and many people were there, several of whom were people of note and

figure in the world, and also the high constable, to whom Robert was uncle. I was not easy in my spirit to stay at the house, but it was in my mind to go to the graveyard, and not to stay till the corpse was carried from the house. So I left the people at dinner and went away, and when I came to Basford town's end, I overtook two men in black clothes who opened the gate for me, and as I went on, it rose in my heart that they were informers. They also went on past the graveyard, as though they had been going further, but I knew there was no road the way which they went. So I slipped off my horse and went to a fence to watch them, and saw they went through a village into the Friend's ground who lived there, and lay down under a hedge till the corpse came near. Then they arose and put themselves into the crowd. I did not know what to do, whether I should go to the graveyard or no. For if I should go, I knew not whether my jailer would be turned out of his place, and there were three other ministering Friends besides me: W. F., J. H., and J. J. So I humbly waited on the Lord for counsel, if in mercy he would be pleased to teach and help me to do his will at that time. As I waited and walked about, the people came with the corpse, and it pleased the Lord to encourage me to go to the grave and all should be well. So there I went, and my mouth was opened to speak to the people, and the Lord's power was with me.

After I was done, I went into the Friend's house, sat down, and kept my coat about me. Then the two strangers came in under pretense of lighting their tobacco, and asked the Friend's maid who I was, saying, what an excellent man they had heard preach, and that they wished they could do as he had said. I sat by, and they did not recognize me, but they asked the maid my name and where I dwelt. She told them, and so they achieved their end, and left.

Now these two men in black proved to be informers, one a priest and the other a schoolmaster, as I heard afterwards. They informed against me to the magistrates and they fined me twenty pounds. They also fined the other three Friends who spoke at the grave twenty pounds each, and Thomas Hammersley (the Friend who owned the house) twenty pounds, all in all a hundred pounds, besides the Friends who were fined five shillings a piece for hearers. Yet these informers got nothing of that hundred pounds from any of us, for Friends went to the magistrates and they moderated it. Also the justices of our county refused to grant their warrants to restrain my goods because I was a prisoner. Now the deceased Friend was a rich man, and so were his relations, both in that county and in Derbyshire. So they sent out a warrant to restrain the widow's goods, from whom they took a mare. But no one else lost by these informers, for the hearts of many people rose up against them.

Since I resided in another county, a warrant was sent after me to Sir William Boothly to restrain my goods for twenty pounds. But he said that since the wedding took place outside of his county, he would not meddle. By this means he put them off, and all was well. Then they employed an attorney to go to Simon Degg (a justice of Derby) for a warrant to restrain my goods, but the justice

told them I was a prisoner. “No,” said the attorney, “he is at liberty.” “No,” said the justice, “he is in prison.” It just so happened that there was a prisoner standing by at that time, and the justice asked him, and he bore witness that I was indeed in jail, for I came in overnight and he saw me and was with me some time in the jailer's house. Upon this the justice said, “What would you have me do? He is a prisoner; therefore I will not grant any warrant against him.”

This prisoner, named Porter, returned in the evening and told me (in the presence of the jailer and his wife and many others) what a struggle he had about me at Justice Degg's, saying, “An attorney named Sutton craved a warrant against you for preaching at Robert Meller's burial, but I affirmed you were in prison, and so Sutton got no warrant.” When my jailer perceived that I ventured to go to this burial while I had been home upon leave, he cried out, saying, “You will undo yourself and me too!” But I looked on him, and said boldly as it arose in my heart, “Man, never fear, for you will suffer nothing for any kindness you show to me.”

This was the time of the court sessions at Derby, and the high constable Robert Dale (who was Robert Meller's nephew and was at the burial) privately told counselor Leming that he desired to complain to the judge about my jailer, for letting me have liberty to go to meetings. Counselor Leming told it to a friend of mine (an attorney in the town who wished me well) and he then told me what he had heard. I said to him, “Please ask the counselor if it was not Robert Dale who desired to make this complaint, for he was at the burial as well as I; and it is sad, if we cannot have liberty to bury one another”, or to this effect. But when Robert Dale knew that I had marked him out, he said no more nor made any complaint to the judge; for it would have been a shame to him to complain against me for being at his uncle's burial. My kind jailer received no blame, but all was well, according to what arose in my heart after I went to the graveside, that all should be well. The devil was not permitted to do as much mischief as he would have done, and the Lord comforted my soul through all these exercises. Glory, honor and praise be given to him, who never fails those who truly trust in him.

After some time I went to London again, and I was there when King Charles died and his brother came to the crown, who, after some time, set all at liberty that were in prison for conscience sake.

While I remained in prison, I had discourse with some Roman Catholics (who were in prison with me) about several things. The first time was as follows: The jailer being ill, I went down to see him, and when a Catholic priest heard I was with the jailer, he came also, along with about eight debtors, who were civil men and well brought up. They came to see the jailer, and being pretty cheerful with the old man, the Catholic priest broke out, and said, “It is good that I be cheerful, who suffer for the truth, when I see how cheerfully other men suffer for error.” There were none but he, another

Catholic, and I who suffered for our profession of religion, so that I saw clearly he struck at me. I told him, "There are none here who suffer for their religion but you and another of your own mind and me, therefore," said I, "it must be me you mean that suffers for error. Either prove your charge or own your fault, for I am not willing to accept it." Then I said, "If you can make it appear that I suffer for an error, I will take you for my friend, for I am not willing either to live or die in error, if I know it." Then the priest would dropped it, but I was not willing to pass it by and let him go, for his charge was great. "Prove it," said I, "or confess your error."

So he asked by what our discourse must be tried, and one answered "By the rule of the church." He acquiesced to that, and so did I. Then I asked him what that rule was, but he seemed to evade the question and would not answer. One that sat by said it was the Scriptures, and he said, "No." Then I asked him again what the rule was, to which he made no answer. "Is it the pope?" said I; "No," said he. "Is it the church?" said I. He answered "No," and I did too, for indeed the church is to be ruled by the rule, and therefore cannot be the rule. "But," said I, "What do you say is the true church's rule?" But he seemed unwilling to answer. Finally, being urged, he said, "Tradition is the rule." "Tradition!" said I, "But what was the rule before there were traditions? For there must have been elders before there was the tradition of the elders." "And," said I, "The rule is a firm, stable, standing rule, from the beginning of the world to the end, which does not alter or change, and which cannot be added to nor taken from." He seemed to have but little or nothing to say against all this.

The company then desired me to tell them what I believed this rule was. In answer to their request, I told them; "It is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, which was in the beginning and was God, and is God, and changes not; and since our Lord Jesus Christ suffered death for us and rose again, this Spirit is poured forth upon all flesh," see Acts 2. "This is the rule which guided Enoch, so that he obtained a testimony that he pleased God. This has been the guide, rule, and leader of all the patriarchs, prophets, and the holy men of God, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of Truth. This Spirit leads and guides the true church into all truth, and all true worship is in it. And as many as are led and guided by the Spirit of God, they are the sons and daughters of God. This was and is the true church's rule; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. So then, that which is the guide of the church must be the rule, and he that works by a rule is guided by it and ruled by it. This is that which baptizes men into the church or body of Christ. This is that by which the children of God are born and are nourished, so that it gives them life and inspires them, and gives them understanding, freely manifesting to every man that which is for his profit and welfare. The apostles were ministers or servants of this Spirit. It is the Spirit that brings men into the adoption and enables them to call God "Father," and to say truly that Jesus is the Lord. It directs men to obey, and enables them to do the will of God. This is the grace and the free gift of God to all, and if they will, they may come and drink abundantly of it, for it is a fountain of living water.

Since men have turned from it and run after blind guides, they oppose it and one another and are confounded! Having lost the rule, the true guide, they cry, "Lo here," and "Lo there," and have no love and charity one for another. One is for one head and ruler, and another for another head, so that every head seeks to rule. And now, there being so many heads and horns (even to admiration), they are pushing at one another. Truly in Babylon is found all the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, but the true church is full of love and good will to all mankind." And I spoke much more to this purpose. After this discourse the company believed that the Spirit of Truth was the true rule and guide, whereupon the Catholic priest desired that he and I might be at peace, and desired to have no more discourse.

After this, two men of the Church of England (who wished me well) came to see me and sent for me to come to the jailer's hall. But before I came, another Catholic (who had been imprisoned for clipping coins) got into discourse with them and sadly vilified their church. Then I asked a question, "If," said I, "it can be made to appear that the Pope of Rome is not in the apostle Peter's spirit, will you not then grant that he cannot be Peter's successor?" The Catholic answered, "Yes." Then I asked, "Was not Simon Magus out of Peter's spirit, who thought that the gift of God could be bought and sold for money?" He replied "Yes." "Then," said I, "the Pope is in Simon Magus's spirit, and not in Peter's, for he thinks so still." But he said, "No, the Pope does not think so." "Then," said I, "he is worse than Simon Magus, because he makes other people believe so, otherwise, why does he take their money for his bulls, pardons, and indulgences?" To this neither he nor the priest that stood by said a word more, but went away; and the churchmen were glad.

After this there came in a Jesuit and another priest and two more Catholics. One day the Jesuit showed me a place in a book speaking of a man being born of the Spirit and of water. I asked him why he showed it to me, and he answered, "To let you see that a man must be born of water as well as of the Spirit." I asked him, "What water?" He said, "Baptismal water." "What!" said I, "Elementary water?" He said "Yes." "Then," said I, "Do you believe that elementary water has that virtue in it which can make a man a new creature?" He said "Yes." Then I denied their baptism, and told him he could not prove that ever our Savior Christ baptized any with water, or commanded any man to baptize with water; and I bade him either prove or yield. But he could not prove their baptism, nor was he willing to yield.

After this he fell on me sharply about the Eucharist (or sacrament, as they call it) of bread and wine. He told me that after the words of consecration (so called) by the priest, (we read of no such words in Scripture) the bread was really, corporeally, and substantially the very flesh of Christ, and the wine was his very blood, urging Christ's words, "Take, eat, this is my body."

I told him that Christ also said, "The flesh profits nothing, it is the Spirit that gives life; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," and, "He that has the Son, has life; but he that has not the Son, has not life." But the apostle speaking of the children of Israel (1 Cor. 10) says, "They were all baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea; and they did all eat the same spiritual food, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ." "Now," said I, "if it be the same food and drink, then it is spiritual, and not corporeal, as you say. And if it be not the same, then what apostle says is not true." This put him to silence, for he dared not say the apostle lied. And indeed, if the apostle spoke the truth then it was the same, and if the same, then not the flesh of Christ corporeally. So he was silent awhile, and at last he said, "Well, for my part, I know nothing of spiritual eating or drinking." "Then," said I, "There is no reason to talk more with you."

Another time he began to discourse with me, asking me if I did believe in a purgatory where all go before they can go to heaven. He asserted there was a place of purging after this life, and there were three sorts of people who went into purgatory: one sort were holy, and so went straight through it into heaven, for their works did abide and they had reward for the same; another sort was so unholy that they went straight through purgatory into hell; and still there was a third sort, the most numerous, who were neither so holy as to go straight to heaven, nor so very unholy as to go straight to hell, and these stayed in purgatory fire till they were made clean and suffered loss, because their works did not abide when they were tried by fire. Yet these, he said, were saved but so as by fire, alluding to the apostle's words, "that every man's work should be tried by fire, of what sort it is, wood, hay, or stubble," 1 Cor. 3:12-14. Then he asked, "Can any man's work be tried before it be done?" "I said "No." "Then," said he, "Can a man's work be said to be done before he be dead?" I said "No." "Well then," said he, "if a man's work cannot be tried before it be done, as it cannot, nor done before he be dead, it must need to be tried after he is dead, and it must be tried by fire, therefore it must need purgatory fire." I asked him what sort of fire it was, whether like the one before us, (which was a coal fire) elementary fire? He said, "Yes." "I never heard before," said I, "that a coal fire could try men's works, or that it could burn to all eternity."

Now the Lord was pleased to appear, for I felt him near me, and he opened my understanding. I labored to show him from the holy Scriptures that men were to be baptized into Christ's death and to become dead to sin and be buried with him by baptism into death, and that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. "For if we have been planted together," said the apostle, "in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," Rom. 6. The apostle says, "How can you that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" So the old man being crucified, death has no



more dominion over you; and he that enters into Christ (the true rest) ceases from his own works as God did from his. Indeed Christ works in him, for he is all in all. The baptism of Christ is with the Holy Spirit and fire, and he will purge away the filth of the daughter of Zion with the spirit of judgment and burning; and the day of the Lord shall burn as an oven; and Jacob shall become a flame, and the house of Esau stubble. The Lord shall sit as a refiner's fire and like a fuller with soap, and take away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and purely purge away her dross and take away her tin. The Lord said by his prophet, "I will make a man more precious than gold, than the golden wedge of Ophir;" and that he would purify the sons of Levi. The word of the Lord is as a fire and a hammer to break the rocks asunder; and our God is a consuming fire to all the workers of iniquity, and reveals himself in flames of fire to render vengeance upon all that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord makes all things new, and if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are done away, and they become as dross and dung in comparison of Christ, so that man loses all his own works, for they cannot abide the trial. But Christ is, of God, made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; and if any man glory, he must glory in the Lord, for apart from him there is none. Truly this must be done or known in this life, in the day time, for the day shall declare it, and the fire try every man's work, of what sort it is. "Therefore," said Christ, "Work while it is day, for the night comes wherein no man can work." There are twelve hours in the day in which a man may work, but there is neither work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave. Therefore, whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for as the tree falls so it shall lie, and as death leaves, judgment finds, and in the grave there is no repentance. The grave cannot praise the Lord, death cannot celebrate him. They that go down into the pit cannot hope for his Truth, but they that die in the Lord are blessed. And they that are in Christ need no purgatory after death, having washed their garments and made them white in his own blood. Nothing else can cleanse people or save them from their sins, for there is no other way to God but by him, neither is there any that can save from death and give life eternal, but Jesus Christ.

Much more was said than I can now remember, but he was ignorant and not acquainted with these things, so he did not oppose, nor did he deny what I said. So his purgatory was all thrown aside as an invention of men, and their pretending to pray men out of purgatory was shown to be a cheat to get money, and all their pardons nothing but deceit, for the Lord only has power to forgive sin. Much opened in my mind, and all he could say came to nothing, so we parted friendly.

Oh, blessed be the Lord, who has discovered the great deceiver, and all her abominations, and has exposed the false prophet (with all his transformings), and both are thrown down to the earth together. She is full of the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and she thirsts for more. But the Lord has a remnant that have come out from her and refuse to partake with her of her sins, lest

they should partake with her of her plagues. Indeed, strong is the Lord God Almighty that judges her.

I also had good service with many other people, and sometimes got to some meetings at Little-Eaton and other places, but I did not write down what passed in all places, only some things of note.

I wrote to the priests of Derby about the rude, wicked practices which the people of that town lived in; for they made bonfires, and one year they carried around a thing that they called the Pope, and then burnt it in the fire. The next year they carried around a thing they called Presbyter John, and then burnt that also. These things, along with many others I beheld in the town, grieved me very much.

About this time the priests in their pulpits preached aloud that active obedience must be practiced by all the king's subjects. Henry Ward, having spent a day with the mayor, came to me in the evening and told me that the mayor also said we must obey the king actively, so that if the king commanded us to worship Mahomet, we ought to do it; and if the command was amiss, it would be the king's fault and not ours. At this time an act was put in execution requiring twenty pounds per month against non-conformists who were rich, or against whomever else the prosecutors had a mind to afflict. Then Derby (in order to avoid suffering) conformed, and there was scarcely a man in that town who was willing to be reputed a Presbyterian, for they had no meeting in or about that town unless it were in secret.

Such is the cowardice of men whose religion is built upon the tradition and inventions of men, and not upon Christ. Indeed, how needful it is for men to lay their building upon that Rock which neither the windy doctrines of men, nor the swelling waves of persecution are able to move.

In this time of my confinement, several people came to me in prison on first-days, and we had good meetings there. For though the ministers of the gospel may be shut up in jails for the sake of their testimony, yet the Word of God cannot be bound, and indeed, it had free course and was glorified. This prison was made easy to me, and things were well at home with my dear wife and family. Though my wife was a tender woman, yet she was enabled, through mercy, to keep markets and to carry on our business for their livelihood. She also came sometimes to see me in prison, though it was a journey of sixteen miles, which was hard for her in the winter season.

While I was a prisoner I wrote a little book which I entitled "The Prisoner's Vindication," as well as some epistles and letters to Friends, and meditations in verse for my children. The reason why I wrote the remarkable occurrences in my sufferings for Truth, along with the great things which the Lord has wrought for me (both in supporting me in trials and delivering me from further sufferings),

is that my children and others may be encouraged to be faithful to the Lord and valiant for the Truth upon the earth. For this cause it came into my mind to tell to others how good the Lord has been to me, for which I am deeply engaged to praise his great name.

I was a prisoner for the gospel's sake here above five and a half years before I was set at liberty by King James II. I was discharged in open court the 23rd of the first month, 1686. I then went home to my wife, but after I had stayed awhile I was concerned to visit friends, and so traveled through most parts of this nation, except Cornwall, and was also in some parts of Wales. I also had many meetings in and about Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, and many were convinced and became obedient to the blessed truth. But the priest of Eastwood hearing a great rumor about Friends, as also seeing that many of his hearers left him, bade his son (who was also a priest, and sometimes preached in his father's stead) to preach the same doctrine that I did. But when his son sought to do what his father advised him, he was so confounded that he could not go on.

It happened one day that I had a very large meeting at the house of Luke Hanks, where I heard that this priest of Eastwood would often say that I stole his sheep from him, meaning some of those who had been his hearers. After meeting I went to a friend's house, but that very night the priest sent his clerk and requested that I go to his house. So there I went, and several friends along with me. When we arrived we were invited to sit down, which we did, and we sat awhile in silence. Then the young priest (who had followed us there) spoke to the priest of Eastwood, saying he perceived that I was sent for that he might speak with me. Upon this he asked me, "How were you called to be a preacher?" But before I answered his question, he added, "I grant that a man may be rightly called, though not of God. For," said he, "the king's call is sufficient." I then spoke saying, "I deny that any man can be rightly called if he is not called of God, as was Aaron," and this I was willing to prove by Scripture. The priest of the house labored to help his son out, but he ran himself into the same snare, for they were not able to prove that any man was rightly called to preach unless he was called of God. We talked further till they were both silent and confounded, and in the silence a concern came upon me, upon which I stood up and preached truth among them. When I had finished, the priests gave me their hands, and we parted friendly. But when we were gone, the priest's wife was angry with them, saying, "You sent for him like fools, and let him go like fools; but if ever he comes again, I will burn or scald him!" After this I heard that the young priest of fell into great trouble of mind, and was confounded in his pulpit.

I visited Friends in Lancashire (and several other parts) and the Lord was with me in his great love and mercy, otherwise my travels had been tiresome and unpleasant. But indeed Lord helped me many a time, and truly the living know it, and have met with him to their great comfort, otherwise meeting with me could have done little for them. The work was the Lord's, and he has wrought in

us and for us of his own good pleasure. Glory, honor and praise are wholly due to him.

After this I went into Cheshire, and to Chester again, where I had formerly been exercised, but where there was now more openness than before. I went to Chester several times after and had good meetings there through the Lord's goodness and mercy, who made them good by his precious presence, according to his blessed testimony that, "wheresoever two or three are met together in his name, there is he in the midst of them." This I have witnessed many a time, for truly if the Lord had not been with us, we could have done nothing without him. He was mouth and wisdom to us, and gave us to understand Scripture. He also gave to us the motion of his Holy Spirit, inspiring us by it; for we spoke as it moved and gave us utterance. Renowned and exalted over all be our gracious God, for we came not with words of our own wisdom, or with words which man's wisdom teaches or had taught us, but with words which the Holy Spirit gave us, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

I went to most meetings in the county of Cheshire, and a fine people there were, and there was much love, unity, peace and concord amongst Friends. After this I traveled in several counties in England, both east, west and south, and through other counties northward, such as Worcestershire and Staffordshire on my return home. I found Friends in great love and unity, and many were convinced. Truth prospered, and we were sweetly refreshed and comforted together; for we were a help and a strength one to another, and the body edified itself in love. Blessed and praised be the name of our God forever.

I went much abroad to meetings, and ran to and fro in most parts of the nation, to the utmost of my ability, preaching the gospel freely. I also traveled into Wales and through a great part of it, and had many good meetings there. We were in great danger in passing over the water at Aust into Gloucestershire, but through mercy got safe to John Bolton's at Ouldstone, and visited most meetings in that county. I was at Frenchay, and from there to Bristol, and then was at many good meetings in Somersetshire, and in Devonshire, as far as Exeter, where a fine meeting house had newly been built. I then traveled through several counties on my way to London. The Lord in great mercy favored me with his power and presence, to my great comfort and joy.

After the yearly meeting at London, I went into Hertfordshire and Essex, and to and fro in Suffolk, Norfolk, as far as Yarmouth, and back to Norwich, and up and down in that county to Downham and Lynn, and into the Isle of Ely, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Rutland, into Lincolnshire, to Boston and Lincoln city, and through most of that great county. Then I visited Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire on my way home. Having traveled in great love, many in this journey were turned to the Lord from the evil of their ways, as at many other

times and places where I traveled. Though I often came home much spent, weak, and weary, yet I had my reward with me, “my sheaves in my bosom,” and was usually soon better after I had rested awhile.

I had it upon me to go and visit Friends in Scotland, and accordingly I went by Halifax, Leeds and York, where I met Thomas Aldam, who accompanied me. We went to North Allerton, Yarm, Stockton, Bishop Auckland and Durham, and from there to Newcastle upon Tyne, where we had large meetings. I was at Sunderland, and many places in Northumberland, which I cannot name. We came to Berwick, where the rude people disturbed our meeting, breaking the windows, but a lady from Northumberland being present went to the magistrates of the town, and the rabble were rebuked.

The next day we went to Kelso and had a quiet meeting. James Holliday went with us to Edinburgh, where we were at their yearly meeting for that nation, and it was a comfortable opportunity. The next meeting we had was at Montrose, and then another meeting before we came to Ury, where the widow of Robert Barclay<sup>22</sup> dwelt. There we stayed several days, in which time I observed that when her children were up in the morning and dressed, she sat down with them before breakfast, and in a religious manner waited upon the Lord. Her pious care and motherly instruction of her children when young, doubtless had its desired effect upon them, for as they grew in years, they also grew in the knowledge of the blessed Truth, and since that time some of them have become public preachers of it.

From there we went to Aberdeen and found a fine meeting of Friends, and stayed there some time. From there we journeyed to John Forbes's, and to Cashore, Kingswells, and back to Aberdeen, Ury and Montrose, Dundee, Leith and then Edinburgh, at which place they stoned us when we were quietly together in the meeting. From there we went to Lithgow, and so to Charles Hambleton's (the duke's servant), and then to Durand, and a town where there was a meeting house in which we had a meeting. From there we travelled on to Glasgow where the people were wicked, and then to Hambleton where we had a good meeting, and so to Argyle and Douglass, and to one James Wood's house where we had a meeting, and then James Wood came with us by Dumfries into England. The Lord in mercy helped me mightily with his heavenly power, and gave us many precious meetings up and down in that nation. However, I felt the Scottish people in a bitter, envious spirit in several places, and we were in perils twice, both at Edinburgh and Glasgow, where they stoned us. At Edinburgh a stone hit me as I was declaring in the meeting, but it did not hurt me.

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Barclay (1648–1690) was a Scottish Quaker, and one of the most eminent writers in the Society of Friends. His most celebrated work, the *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, is still in print today and can be purchased from Quaker Heritage Press ([www.qhpress.org](http://www.qhpress.org)).

After our return out of Scotland, we had many good meetings in Cumberland, which were comfortable seasons to us, for indeed the Comforter was with us, and mightily helped us from meeting to meeting. From there we traveled to Kendal, the Height, and Swarthmore, where we had a fine meeting. We were also at Lancaster, from which place we returned back again to Kendal, and passed from there to Thomas Camm's, and into Yorkshire to John Blakling's near Sedberg. Then we passed by William Ellis's to Skipton, and from there to Leeds and Warnsworth, where I left my companion T. Aldam, and returned home to find my wife and family well, to my great comfort. Praised be the Lord forever!

Friends in Scotland and elsewhere were very loving to us, and we had fine, living meetings in that nation. I felt them in the Life near to my spirit, in which the living ones know one another beyond words, and I hope and believe the Lord will have a great people there in time to come. Though the enemy be angry and desire to hinder the spreading of the holy Truth through its enemies, yet his weapons are but carnal, silly, and weak. I desire that many Friends think of that nation, and in the will of God give up to visit it, for there is a zealous professing people there, and were they brought to the knowledge of the Truth, I believe very many would be zealous for it. I found that those two worthy men, Robert Barclay and Patrick Livingston, had left a sweet savor behind them. The loss of them, especially the former, was a great loss to that nation and a cause of great mourning to Friends there and elsewhere. But blessed be God, for Robert Barclay has left a hopeful family behind him. Praises be given to the Lord forever!

In this year I had a concern to visit Friends with the following lines:

#### An Epistle to Friends in Scotland

Truly beloved friends and brethren,

With pure and unfeigned love, which springs from the Fountain, I do tenderly salute you, and all true Friends with you, feeling you near and dear to me at all times when I remember you. Truly I am glad that the God and Fountain of all our mercies has reached forth so plentifully to your immortal souls, and made you to so largely partake with us of his free grace and gift of eternal life, so that your portions and measures of it are very large, to the mutual joy of you, me, and many more. For this we are deeply obliged to be truly thankful unto our God, from whom every good and perfect gift comes. Unto him alone we ought to continually look, that as men in need of continual supply, we may experience his bountiful hand to minister freely to every one of us. Indeed, it is he alone that both makes and keeps us truly living, faithful, fruitful, and serviceable in this blessed day of his mighty power, and as we abide therein, we have fellowship both with him and one with another.

The travail and earnest desire of my soul to the Lord is that we may all be preserved to the end in true self-denial, humbly, meekly and innocently walking in this glorious Day of gospel light, life and power, so that we may help one another's joy. And as the blessed unity of his Holy Spirit is lived in, no man can take our joy from us, for this joy is possessed by us only as we abide in him who is life eternal, to whom be praise given by us and all that partake with us forever, amen.

Many are the exercises, temptations, sufferings and tribulations which attend us here, both within and without. Well may we say that our God is God and he changes not, or else we might have been destroyed; for truly we are poor, and weak, and insufficient in ourselves even to think a good thought. The enemy knows this, and labors to deceive us with his subtle wiles; for if we keep not in him who is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, we have no wisdom of our own, or righteousness, or power to save ourselves at all.

Oh, the goodness of God to us is undeclarable! And we see as much a need as ever to keep looking unto him for help every moment; for all our time is a time of need, and if the Lord was not with us we could not bear up against the enemy's floods, tempest, raging violence and storms that attend us in this perilous pilgrimage. But glory, honor, praises, and high returns of humble and sincere thanks be given to our great and merciful God! He is with us, and is the same he was in ancient days when he carried Israel through the Red sea on dry ground, and gave them to behold his miraculous deliverance, and saved them out of the hands of their many enemies who sought to destroy them. The sense of his love, and the experience which I have of his goodness, tenderizes my poor heart, and bows my spirit before him. Indeed I hope you partake of this with me, and also feel with me beyond words or writings.

Dear friends, I desire we may all be mindful of him who is our rock and refuge, keeping near him always, not forgetting the Lord. Here there is divine light, for he dwells in it, and in him is no darkness at all. Here we see our states as they are, and that what we are, we are by his grace. Here it is we meet with fresh pastures of life, and feed together, where the enemy cannot come, nor can the lofty, unclean Edomite approach. My heart is glad to feel love run so freely towards you at this time. I do not write these things as though I looked upon you not to know them. No, for if I did, I could not be so free and open with you. I write only to remind you, and with these few lines to confer with you in love; for it is with the fruits of dear, unfeigned love that I now salute you, as those that I can say are of my flesh and bones, and members with me of that sweet, harmonious body, of which Christ Jesus is Head, Lord, and King. Worthy is he to reign; indeed, it is his right. And he that would be great among you, must be least of all. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Oh, that we may know this low estate experientially! For in this place many have met with him, and been met by him who despises not the low estate of his servants and handmaids. Surely it behooves us to be low, for our teacher is meek and lowly in heart. My dear and truly beloved, the meek are most filled with love, even that love which is not puffed up, nor seeks its own, but leads us to seek the good of all, and the things that are of Jesus Christ. I pray that we may always dwell in this love, and then we shall be sure to love one another. I was truly glad in heart when I felt your love to me in the Lord while present with you, and to my companion also. I also felt your love still fresh unto us after our departure from you in person (though not in spirit), how you remembered me in your prayers. I desire you still remember me in prayer, and I hope I shall not forget you.

As your brother, I desire you to keep up the good order of the blessed Truth amongst you, and let not your monthly and quarterly meetings be neglected. Take care of the whole church of God in your nation, and delay not to help one another. For God Almighty has set up his standard, and his controversy is proclaimed against all unrighteousness. I know help was needed in some places when I was with you, and the Lord has gifted some to be of help and to rule well in the church. We know that the apostles in their travels left the brethren decrees to keep, and took care of the churches as they traveled, and also went to see how they did. I hope you will take it well that I am this bold with you, and I hope you will feel my tender love to you.

I was glad when I saw a copy of your letter to G.K.,<sup>23</sup> yet sorry to see the answer from him, or from his wife, or both. He must, it seems, be made manifest. I desire that you may grow in the heavenly root, and multiply to the glory of him that has grafted you into it. My dear friends, in every respect be truly obedient unto the Lord, and may he, by his own power, strengthen, establish, and root you deeply in his blessed Truth. To him I tenderly commit you all. He is God Almighty, even now as he was in Abraham's days. To him be praise, worship, honor, glory, and renown forever more. Amen.

Read this to all as you see a service for it, and send honest Bartholomew Gibson a copy of it, and let him know my dear love is to him and his wife, Francis Soneman, and to Friends in Edinburgh. Let copies of it be sent to all in Scotland. I thank God I am pretty healthy, but not strong in body. So with my true love to you all, I am your sincere friend in pure love.

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<sup>23</sup> George Keith was a prominent Scottish member of the Society of Friends, who spoke and wrote much in defense of Quaker principles and doctrines, and even suffered imprisonment for his testimony with them. Sadly, later in life, because of a restless and ambitious spirit that aspired to preeminence in the society (George Fox having died in 1690), Keith eventually broke out into open opposition, first against specific individuals, and eventually against the entire Society of Friends.



John Gratton

Written at Monyash

the 22nd of the eleventh month, 1694

I stayed around home for some time and had many meetings, and there was a fine increase in the number of Friends. But many of them left for America (about forty from our monthly meeting, and some others) which lessened our meeting significantly.

After some time it came upon me to go and visit Friends in Ireland, several of whom had been in England, and a love towards them lived in me. I gave up to go, and went to Westchester, but there we found an embargo laid upon ships, and we could not go out. When we could not sail for Ireland, we went to Shrewsbury, and then down into Herefordshire (R. Needham being with me), and to the yearly meeting in Wales, at Ponty Moyle in Monmouthshire. This was a fine meeting, from which we passed over into Gloucestershire, to Bristol, and into Somersetshire, to Richard Vickris's, at Chew, John Whiting's at Wrington, and William Laurence's at Axbridge, and then back to Bristol to the yearly meeting there, and then to the yearly meeting at London.

After this I returned home with my wife and stayed about seven days, and then set out again for Ireland with Godfrey Newhall, a Friend of Yorkshire. We went to Whitehaven in Cumberland for George Rook's company, and then to sea. The winds were somewhat contrary, and for a time we were in some danger of our lives, but at last we arrived safe at Dublin in the fifth month. We had many precious meetings in that nation, especially in their province meetings, and Friends were generally in sweet love, unity, peace, concord, and order. There was good government among them, and great love and care of one another's families, and for the poor and the young in all respects. When we had been at all the meetings of Friends that we knew of in the nation, or had seen some Friends of all the meetings, and so were clear to come away. We left them in true love, being well satisfied in visiting them, and so took shipping at Dublin, and came to Holyhead, and through Wales to Westchester, and so home. Many Friends in Ireland had a great care upon them in the oversight of the flock, watching over them that Friends be careful in all respects to keep their profession without blame, and that none run inordinately after the world or break in other men's debt. To prevent this they were advised to labor lawfully for the maintenance of their families, providing things which are honest in the sight of men. By watching in this way over one another, doubtless some things are prevented which otherwise might prove a dishonor to our holy profession.

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[After his return from Ireland, John Gratton kept no exact account of the remainder of his travels, though he visited Friends in diverse counties, laboring in the work of the gospel as he found drawings thereto. In his latter days he was afflicted with disease, which much abated his natural strength; nevertheless he came several times to London, and particularly in the winter, 1699. He also came to the yearly meeting in 1700, and on his return home had many good meetings in the way, being accompanied by John Cade to Blyth, where his wife met him.

The next year he traveled as far as Bristol, and was at their yearly meeting. From there he went to Bath, and travelled up to London to the yearly meeting, which fell in the fourth month, 1701. It was a large and precious meeting, after which he returned home. He also came up to the next yearly meeting in London, 1702. At this time he brought up his Treatise relating to Tithes, which was an answer to a letter, entitled, *The Clergy's Legal Right to Tithes, etc.* In the year 1703, he came again to the yearly meeting, visiting Friends in many places as he came. The 26th of the second month, 1704, he set out again for London, visiting Friends in many places as he came, as in Nottinghamshire, Huntingdonshire, the Isle of Ely, and a great part of Norfolk, and had several meetings in Suffolk, the last of which was at Ipswich, from which place he came to Colchester, and was at their meeting on first-day; after which he visited several meetings in Essex, and then came to London to the yearly meeting; having traveled in this journey three hundred and thirty-four miles, according to his own account.

After his return home at this time, there is no account of his traveling for two or three years. Due to greater weakness growing upon him, it is probable he continued close to home, visiting Friends as he was able. In 1707, he disposed of his estate at Monyash, and dwelt with his son Joseph some time. He then went to visit some Friends in several adjacent places, his wife accompanying him, though both of them were aged and weakly. After they returned home, his wife grew weaker and weaker, and departed this life the 4th of the tenth month, 1707, dying in peace with the Lord and leaving a good report behind her among those who knew her. The account of her death he gave himself, saying she had been a very comfortable wife to him for nearly thirty-eight years, adding that she had never hindered him from going abroad to visit Friends.

In the year 1708, he took a journey to London again, and went into some parts of Essex, Surry and Kent; after which he returned to London again. While he stayed at home he was taken ill, and his weakness increased upon him until he removed out of the city for the benefit of the air, to Richard Richardson's, near Uxbridge, where he was carefully attended for three weeks. During this time, several Friends of London went to visit him. From this place Daniel Wharley took him to his house; and from there he went to Ailsbury, and by small journeys he got home (Richard Needham accompanying him). He continued living with his daughter above three years, being weak until his

decease, which was in the ninth month, 1711, aged about seventy years; dying, no doubt in peace with the Lord, and unity with all the faithful, and is entered into his everlasting rest among the faithful followers of Jesus.]

### **Phebe Bateman's [John Gratton's daughter] Testimony Concerning her Dear Father and Mother.**

It has been much in my mind to give a short account of the latter end of my dear and tender parents, it pleasing the Lord so to order it that they both finished their days with me at Farnsfield, in Nottinghamshire. They stopped keeping house at Monyash, in the fourth month, 1707, and went from there to my brother Joseph's, and after a short stay there, came here. My dear mother had been weakly about half-a-year before, but then was a bit better, and took a journey with my dear father. She had a tender care for us all, being a very affectionate, loving, tender mother; and in our bringing up, she had an eye to the Lord, that we might be trained up in his fear, and she was not slow in reproofing us for any appearance of evil. My father being about five and half years in prison when we were but young, the tuition of the children fell mostly upon her; and as we grew up, she would often advise us to diligence and carefulness, not only to the Lord, but in the outward affairs of the world, that we might not be a burden to any.

Her weakness of body increased fast upon her, so that she much desired her time here might not be long, if the Lord saw it good, yet she was freely given up to his holy will, and would say to me, "Do not desire my life, but give me up freely. I know I might have been helpful to you if the Lord had been pleased to order it, but my desires are more to be gone, if he see it good, than to live any longer here." She had a tender regard in her mind for dear father, that he might not be neglected, and I being pretty much taken up in attending her, she would often say, "Do you take care of your father?" For as their love and sympathy had been great in all times of trial, so it continued to the last. I believe she never hindered or discouraged him once from going out in the service of the blessed Truth, but was an encourager of him, and in his absence was very diligent and careful that nothing might go amiss to make him uneasy at his return, so that he was much at liberty to serve the Lord for many years before he gave up keeping house. Towards her end, she was preserved in much patience and resignation to the will of the Lord, often saying she had hope in him. She was very sensible to the last, and departed this life in much quietness and stillness, as if she had been going to sleep, without either sigh or groan, the 4th of the tenth month, 1707. I believe she is entered into the rest

which is prepared for the righteous, in the sixty-fifth year of her age, my parents having lived together nearly thirty-nine years. She was buried the 7th of the tenth month, in the burying place of Friends, by the meeting-house in Farnsfield, with many Friends accompanying her body to the grave.

My dear father was then very weakly, and the loss of my dear mother was a near trial and exercise to him; for indeed she had been, as he himself said, a sweet help to him in the Lord. He was deeply bowed in spirit for the loss of her, yet freely gave her up to the Lord. He was now brought so low and weak, that few who saw him thought he would continue long after her, but it pleased the Lord in his great love and infinite goodness, to raise him up in some measure. Though he continued weak all along, he was enabled to go up to London the following summer to see and visit Friends, being out near half a year, in which time he had several fits of illness, but the sorest time was at the house of R. Richardson (he and his wife being very tender of him.) Yet his desire was great to get to my house, if the Lord saw it good; and he was pleased to raise him up again, so that he was enabled to get home the 29th of the seventh month, 1708. He continued weakly, being attended with various exercises, which often brought him very low, though sometimes he was enabled to take a little journey to visit Friends. The last winter he sensibly decayed, so that he would often say to me, he could not continue long, his stomach being so weak, he could take little food for several months before he died. His desires were great to go from here, if the Lord saw it good; and as his weakness increased, his desires grew stronger and more earnest with the Lord to remove him out of this troublesome world, being well satisfied his day's work was over; yet he desired to wait the Lord's time.

My eldest daughter being then very ill, he often gave good advice and counsel to her, to fear the Lord, and be obedient to her parents, with more to that effect to all my children. About a month before his decease, I was called on so suddenly, that it was thought he could not live till I came to him. I found my children and the maid weeping, thinking he would not have spoken again, but when I came to him, he broke out into tears, saying, he thought he should never have seen me more. Soon he got a little strength to sit up in his chair, and called all the children to him, one by one, and kissed them, giving them good advice saying it was a great comfort to him to see we should part in so much love and unity one with another. Then, calling for the maid, he spoke very tenderly and lovingly to her. Being attended with sore sickness and pain, he said, "Lord, I pray you give me ease, if it be your holy will, and remove me soon out of this body. You know it is through your great mercy that we have hope in you. Lord, I pray you, be with my children that I leave behind, and with all friends and neighbors of what profession soever. It is through Christ Jesus our Advocate, who is gone before us, that

we are enabled to come to you.” His pain and exercise of body continuing, he said again, “Lord, if it be your holy will, remove me out of this troublesome body.” Another time, I told him some Friends had come to see him, to which he said they might see he was a weak man, and then looking on them as they sat by him, he said, “The Lord bless his people, and prosper his Truth amongst them, and enable them to live in love one with another.” Not long after, weakening very fast, he said, “Lord, I freely commit my soul and spirit unto you;” desiring to have his dear love given to Friends, naming several in particular. A little before he died, he told me he thought he should be gone in half an hour, being very sensible to the last. He departed this life on the 9th of the first month, 1712, and is, I hope, at rest with the Lord, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. He was buried beside my dear mother the 11th of the same, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, having been convinced of the Truth about forty years.

Phebe Bateman.

Farnsfield, 1712