

SKETCHES OF THE LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES
OF
JANE PEARSON

EXTRACTED FROM HER OWN MEMORANDUMS

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INTRODUCTION

by Thomas Wilkinson

When those we have loved and looked up to are taken from us, whatever belonged to them becomes enhanced in its value. When their Christian example is withdrawn, we often thoughtfully return to the circumstances of their conscientious lives; when we can no longer listen to their cheering conversation, we tenderly recur to their affectionate sayings; and when we hear no more their religious exhortations, to the written records of their devout minds we are glad to have recourse, as precious monuments of departed piety.

These observations will apply with propriety to Jane Pearson, the subject of this short memoir. In her last letter to the writer, she expressed a desire that he might look over her papers when she was gone, and dispose of them as he thought best. The use he is now about to make of them, if he is not mistaken, the reader will approve. These memorandums of her pious mind,

were all in her own handwriting, and appear to have been penned under lively impressions. Among her papers were also found several copies of verses; and as it will probably be acceptable to the reader, a specimen or two will be given in the memoir.

Of her religious experience, an opinion may be formed from her writings; and of her religious services, from the testimony of Pardshaw Monthly Meeting, which is introduced at the close of her own memoirs; yet some readers may be inclined to know more of her general character, and how she appeared daily amongst us.

As a reverence for the Divine Being was the leading feature of her mind, so the solemnity of religion was never lowered in her conversation. To some she might appear reserved; for as she has told me, when in her walks she met with acquaintances, she could not like many, stop and hold a discourse with them which meant nothing. From these and other circumstances, her deportment might sometimes appear distant and restrained; but in the circles of her friends, there were few that un-bended more freely.

On such occasions, her sentiments and even the tone of her voice, had as much the hearty expression of sincere good will, as any one I ever met with, while her innocent cheerfulness with youth, and her entering most kindly with them into their little concerns, endeared her to this class, both as a mother and a chosen companion. She was qualified for a companion in the foremost ranks of virtuous society; yet to those in the humblest sphere, she spoke with affection and kindness: indeed I have rarely met with one in whose deportment were united such dignity and sweetness.

She seemed to retire from a thoughtless world, to live in sweet seclusion with her Maker; and those who were set forward on their heavenward journey, she hailed as fellow-travelers towards Zion: to her sisters in religious fellowship, who went forth in humility and simplicity to advocate the cause of righteousness amongst men, she held out the language of endearing encouragement.

Of her own ministry it might be said, that it was plain, powerful, baptizing and new. When I say new, I hope none will suppose I mean that she had any new doctrine to preach; for the ministers of Christ have no new principles to set forth. I mean by new, that her ministry was in the fresh openings of life. I do not covet abundance in our meetings; a few wholesome crumbs, a little fresh water from the pure spring, satisfy me; yet I do not wish to avoid the piercing of that Divine power, which would divide between those things that please the Almighty and those which please Him not; since such a division must take place, or heaven will not be our portion.

Her disposition was modest and retired; yet the reader will find in the following pages, that for

his instruction and encouragement, she has in the sincerity of her heart, spread before him some of her mental trials. The conscientious mind, longing to be united to Divine purity, has sometimes sore conflicts with the evil principle within; but when through the power of the grace of God, evil is overcome, the conflict is succeeded by unspeakable joy. This, I trust, Christian statement, it will appear, was verified in the experience of our beloved friend.

That a truly religious mind is assailed with trials, we see from her own undisguised account. These trials arise from various circumstances; perhaps at times to prove the foundation of our faith, at other times, from a fear of not obtaining what is of all things most desirable, acceptance with the Almighty. But it may be, that the greatest of all are the trials which are needful, when a vigorous understanding and warm affections are to be turned from their natural tendencies into pure obedience to the Almighty; to become fit instruments for proclaiming His Divine will. This is like death; like the breaking up of nature, that the soul may become free, and prepared for entering the holiness of heaven. This at the time is hard to be endured; but it is followed by joy, peace, and unspeakable satisfaction; for surely, above all else to be experienced here, is the enjoyment of Divine favor to a pure mind.

The reader will find something of all this set forth in the following pages, and may read therein a profitable lesson in spiritual religion; though with myself, he may not have attained to the assurance of acceptance, like her whose work is done; yet let us not forego our confidence; but in humility endeavor to continue steadfast in the faith. This will be like an anchor to our minds, so that when others are tossed with the troubles of this world, we may be favored to hold our lot in peace.

It appears from the testimony of those who knew Jane Pearson during the greater part of her life, that a solicitude for the glory of God, joined to a care for her immortal part and the future well-being of her fellow-creatures, was with her paramount to all other considerations. This is true piety. To these ends she labored in public and in private; and dared not to shrink from her testimony for God and His righteous law, by suppressing what came before her. Though of a tender and affectionate disposition, she did not withhold the just denunciations of truth against iniquity. She did indeed pity the individual, but she sounded the alarm in the ear of the transgressor; yet to those who were awakened to a sense of their sins, she joyfully announced the terms of reconciliation.

Early in life she married John Pearson of Graysouthen, by whom she had three sons and four daughters; whom she watched over with the tenderness of a mother; anxious that they should walk in the paths of innocence and virtue, and in the holy religion of our dear Redeemer. Two of her children died before her husband, and the others followed him to the silent grave, while she remained to mourn with many tears. Deprived of the attention and support of her husband

and of all her children, it might be supposed she would sit sorrowful and alone under her afflictions; but her age was cheered by two affectionate granddaughters; and her mind being reconciled to the dispensations of Providence, her disposition was not soured by her trials, but even at the latest period of her age, which exceeded eighty years, in the company of intimate friends, her conversation and manners partook of the pleasantness and cheerfulness of her prime. Her letters too were occasionally lively, but more frequently fraught with deep instruction.

The compiler was but a youth when he first saw his excellent friend; which was at a Northern Yearly Meeting, when her ministry impressed his mind. Several years elapsed before he spoke to her; and he little thought that a faithful friendship would spring up between them. She then had an uncommonly fine person; but it may be said, that her mind was superior, being concerned for the glory of her Maker and intent on fulfilling His Divine will. Her labors are now closed, and we may believe she is receiving her reward, in that state of purity and peace, after which her soul longed while on earth.

It is a serious consideration with the compiler, who is often doubtful whether he has passed “the straight gate which leads to life,” to trace the steps of our pious friend, into the valley of humiliation and discouragement, or to pursue her way in the ascent to the heavenly Jerusalem, and set forth the Divine prospects she beheld there. Diffident of his own judgment, how far these things are within his province, he forbears to enlarge, leaving her own remarks to speak for themselves; but on another point he is inclined to express his opinion more freely. Some minds may be disposed to doubt the foundation of what is advanced in some parts of the following pages; to such the compiler would say, he has long been fully of the persuasion that immediate revelation has not ceased. He believes that the same Almighty Power who presided at the time of Pentecost, who visited Zacharias, Ananias, and Cornelius; continues to manifest Himself to this day. Believing this, and knowing the superior mind and uprightness of the individual, concerning whom he is now writing, he has no difficulty in believing what she has recorded. If any praise is due, let it not be ascribed to her, but to Him who is the Author of all good. This was the fervent desire of our departed friend, in which she is followed by,

Thomas Wilkinson.
Yanwath, Seventh month, 1816

SKETCHES OF THE LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES OF JANE PEARSON.

SECTION 1

Her reasons for writing some memoirs of herself Her birth and parentage—The state of her mind in very early life—Her resolution not to open her mouth in the ministry—Her marriage—The deep inward conflicts she endured for not resigning herself to Divine disposal till she was made willing to obey—Her first offering in the ministry—Her remarks on this important office.

It has long remained with weight upon my mind, to leave a few remarks respecting the Lord's dealings, when He was pleased to lay His hand in judgment upon me, for my backslidings; hoping it may be of service to some poor, tossed, afflicted, tempted, bewildered mind; for I do believe it would have been of service to me in my painful moments, to have beheld the footsteps of others, if I had had stability to read, or quietness of mind to be instructed; which for a time I had not, being feeble and sorely broken, bemoaning myself by reason of the disquietude of my heart.

I was born at Newtown, near Carlisle, of sober, religious parents. My father dying when I was young, I had more experience of my mother's religious care in our tuition. She was left with four of us to bring up; and her zeal and care for her offspring abated not; so that I have a good account to give of her pious solicitude and concern for us. On that account, she hired a schoolmaster in the house, to teach her children, to prevent our being corrupted, or learning the improper customs of the people amongst whom we dwelt; so that we were kept, more than many others of our age, from associating with those of other persuasions.

It pleased the Lord by His good Spirit, to work in my heart in my young years; which brought a godly sorrow over me, and a fear lest I should be taken away in my childish follies. When the bell used to toll for those of other persuasions, oh! the awe and inward fear attendant on these occasions! I would say in my heart; these are now called off the stage of this world, and fixed as forever they must be. My solicitude at times so far prevailed, that I was desirous of knowing the age of the deceased, and whether they were of ages similar to myself; and if they were, it added to my fears, which at that time were piercing. But if they were further advanced, I endeavored to appease these fears by considering myself young, and that I might escape such a removal in youth; for I was afraid to die, and that awful "forever and ever," brought sadness over me.

I loved to read the Scriptures, especially the New Testament; and when I read the passage, where our blessed Lord is described as having suffered so much from the high professors, who despitefully treated Him and crucified Him, it afflicted me deeply; and I believed I should not have done this: so my heart became melted and tendered under a sense of it.

About this time it pleased the Lord to send into our parts Mary Kirby, a minister of Norfolk; and she being alone, requested me to accompany her. My mother gave me up, and it was a time of reaping some advantage; for when I returned home, I felt my heart in a good measure cleansed and emptied of the old inhabitants; my stiff will being measurably subdued; and loving retirement, I was drawn from my old companions.

I then witnessed a state of deep poverty of spirit, which caused me thus to address the Almighty: “Lord! what would You have me to do?”¹ At that time I did not know there was any thing in my conduct which displeased Him; but His word in me was, “I must not only cease to do evil, but I must learn to do well.”² Thus I experienced, when the unclean spirit is gone out, we walk through dry places, seeking rest but finding none. Oh! that this time of drought and emptiness was but patiently abode in! But when all the old inhabitants are cast out, the creaturely part is apt to catch at something, to make up the loss it has sustained; for how hard is it to live without life in the creatures, or externals! The senses are continually seeking for something to heal this deadly wound, and to replace somewhat in an emptied mind; for it is hard thus to die to self. Therefore many are apt to connect themselves again with those worse than themselves, and their last state is worse than the first.

I feel such heavenly serenity in my endeavors to bring together these few remarks, which have long lain among my papers, that I have no doubt it is right for me to leave them to posterity; having a living hope in my heart, that the perusal of these faithful sayings will, under Providence, tend to reach and reduce the uncircumcised Philistine nature. The infirmities attending my family in my younger years, kept me much at home; and now my own weakness and infirmities are great and many. Nevertheless my love is true to the great and good cause, and I should be willing to go the world over to edify the body, and promote the reformation of mankind, and the redemption of their souls, through Jesus Christ.

I continued to have this deep sense of privation and emptiness. I was sitting in our women's meeting for discipline at Carlisle, when it appeared clear to me, that if I continued thus inward with God, I should soon have to speak to others. This intimation that I was to be drawn to do well, was so far from humbling me, that I did not even desire to be excused, or pray my Divine Master to have patience with me: but I resolutely said; “I never will do so.” I started aside like

¹ Acts 9:6

² Isaiah 1:16-17

a broken bow, and I believe went into greater alienation from the Divine life than I had ever done before; and just it would have been, if Infinite Wisdom had cut me off in my disobedience. I was guilty of many wrong things, which brought heavy judgment on me; and living with an aunt at Carlisle, I was much exposed; she keeping a shop, and I being from under the strict eye of my mother.

I was now about the seventeenth or eighteenth year of my age. Through every dispensation, I had a great love for good Friends; and they often manifested love for me; owning the valuable part in me, and overlooking that which was rebukable, I doubt not, in the faith that the Lord would carry on His own work; and their open carriage towards me, was so far from begetting disesteem in me, or inducing me to account them undiscerning, that it wrought upon the better part; for indeed I could have washed the saints' feet. Ministering Friends lodged at my mother's, and I sometimes got the blessing, which is fresh with me to this day.

At the age of between one and two and twenty, I was married to John Pearson, a sober, religious young man. About a year after my marriage, my false rest was broken; though I was rightly married, and I trust in best wisdom. United to a choice husband, I swam as in an ocean of pleasure; but I witnessed, instead of peace on earth, a heart-piercing sword. My undone condition was present with me day and night, when awake. Indeed I slept but little; sleep departed from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids; so that when night came, I wished for morning. And though I had been preserved from gross evils, so heavy was the Lord's hand in judgment against the sinful, impure part in me, that there was sufficient work for His heart-piercing sword, which divides between the precious and the vile, that which serves Him, and that which serves Him not.

In my own view, my case was now exceedingly deplorable; so that I neither ate nor slept much, which occasioned a visible decline in my health. Indeed I was a wonder to behold; the people wondering what had befallen me. The enemy followed me closely with most grievous besetments; things that my very soul loathed would he charge upon me to be my own: and I, not having strength to resist, with a "Get behind me, Satan;" or on the other hand, experience to distinguish what proceeded from the enemy and his grievous insinuations, and what arose from the weakness of nature; every thing in me appeared out of order and a confused mass. I did believe none ever was in such a state before; nor had I ever read of any of our Friends who I thought had gone through such various trying dispensations, what if I say for fourteen years, in which I feared I should never get to the better side.

I ate my bread weeping, and mingled my drink with my tears; I was as if amongst fiery serpents, and in the jaws of a devouring adversary, who was exulting over me; insinuating that the next temptation would sweep me away; and darting things into my mind, one after another,

as swift as thought and as dark as the darkest night. Oh! that my troubles were written with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever, for surely they are far beyond my power of description; and had not mercy been extended to me in this trying season, truly I had fallen. The dispensation was so severe, that I could not tell how to live under it; and I wished the Almighty would, by an act of His power, snatch me from mortals, though it might be by an accidental death; for I still believed that if He did take me, it would be in mercy. So earnest was I after holiness and virtue, that I often besought Him that He would never permit me to sin against Him, that I might not be eternally ranked with unclean and abominable spirits, which my very soul loathed.

I now abhorred myself as in dust and ashes, because the enemy was thus permitted to assault me. But through all, my intellect was preserved clear, and my reason sound.

About this time I was much drawn inward in prayer; for truly my tempted, bewildered state called for it; and for a time, I believe I prayed without ceasing; and yet the Lord knew what I needed, to fit me for His work and service, and now, for my further refinement, He permitted the enemy to come still nearer; although I might say with one formerly, “Why does He yet find fault, for who has resisted His will?”³ This was one of the closest trials I ever met with: one evening when the enemy accused me of evil, and I turned in prayer to the Judge of all the earth, making my appeal that He knew I was not wicked, beseeching that He would rebuke the devourer for my sake, and set me at liberty to serve Him; it was darted as quick as lightning, “There is no God!” Oh! then how did I mourn! believing there was none who had the least remains of good, that was ever tried in this manner. I thought I was now sinning against the holy Ghost, and that I was the most wretched creature upon earth; and the enemy followed hard with his bitter whispering, “To what do you pray? There is no God.”

I never opened my case, under this dispensation, to any one; for I believed whoever I opened my mind to, would suppose I had been guilty of some gross thing, and therefore was a castaway; and I thought if I met with discouragement, I should not be able to bear the Lord's hand in judgment, because I had sinned against Him. At length I witnessed the truth of that declaration: “When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;”⁴ for truly I did experience inward purity of heart and cleanness of hands; and in the Lord's own time He gave access to His throne; and the spirit of prayer and supplication was poured out upon me, with a, “Verily there is a God that judges in the earth.”⁵ I then felt a holy sense of this truth, “The Lord lives,” and “because He lives, I live also.”⁶

³ Romans 9:19

⁴ Isaiah 26:9

⁵ Psalm 58:11

⁶ John 14:19

This dispensation, when it had prepared the way of the Lord and made His paths straight, passed away, and I had now to say, the Lord lives, and I speak not falsely, because I know what that precious knowledge of God has cost me. I note these things for the help of any that may be tried as I have been; for if I had met with any such account it would have relieved me. There may be testimonies of Friends in the account of their lives, somewhat similar, but I had not read them or they had gone from me. Nor could I believe that any who were under the Divine notice, or the turning of the holy Hand, were permitted to abide so long a time under such dark bewildering suggestions.

May all who are thus proved, believe that way will be made for their escape! Do not despond nor cast away your confidence! I feel united to the suffering seed wherever they are, or of whatever society they may be: I mourn with those that mourn, compassionating their distress. My commiseration and tender feeling is towards these; and I can address them, not from any degree of experience to boast of, but from the depth of humility, can say, "Trust in God. He can set His seed at liberty and will do it."

I now began to have great scruples respecting my wearing apparel, as also that of my children, and the furniture of our house, and coveted to have all things enough in the simplicity. I thought of John's raiment of camel's hair, with a leather girdle about his loins, and that his food was locusts and wild honey. There was no delicacy here, either in eating or apparel. Whatever the strong will in me seemed to loathe, or have an aversion to, into that very thing, in the cross, was I led; though it seemed an indignity to my very frame and disposition, which was not thoroughly redeemed from nicety and a desire to be somewhat in the eyes of the world. Thus I was led till my will was subdued; and I was simple enough, through being mortified every moment; for I had always some scruple upon my mind whether things were right or not, till I was rendered flexible and docile, ready to take any impression the Lord would stamp upon me; and I pray it may be that of holiness, during my stay in mutability; and afterwards may I join the triumphant church, praising the Lord God and the Lamb forever and ever.

About this time, I began to have some light and life about me. I could not have believed that I should be so clear of the bitter whisperings and insinuations of the crooked, piercing serpent; it being natural to conclude, when things are so out of order, and the adversary has effected such an inroad into the mind, making a prey of it, that things will be hard to set to rights; but it is the Lord's work, and He shall have the praise, for all is due to Him, and nothing is due to the creature.

I measurably witnessed an overcoming, and a little of getting the victory; the head of the serpent being bruised, the accuser cast down, and his accusations silenced, being acquitted of his false high charges against me; and in lieu thereof I obtained a precious feeling of

justification: all old things being done away by that baptism which saves, all things became new, and all things of God. I now began again to have some view that I must tell to others what the Lord had done for my soul; how He had plucked me out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and clay; letting me feel the sure foundation, and that I was to keep upon it, and to proclaim the new song that He would put into my mouth.

This was a day of close trial; for I was brought to the test, whether I would keep my covenant that I had made with the Lord, in the days of my deep distress; which was, that if He would but set me clear of the enemy, command what He pleased, I would obey, let it be what it would. In assembling with the Lord's people, and it was a favor to me that I was amongst a living people, our meetings were often favored with lively testimonies. On such occasions, Scripture sentences would impress my mind with some degree of life and power, and according to my infant state and inexperience, I felt some concern of mind to declare them to the audience, though the evidence was not so full and clear as my diffident mind requested and really needed; for I was desirous that I might be preserved from saying "the Lord says; albeit, He had not spoken."⁷

This caused a strong conflict, a trying of the fleece wet and dry; my natural timidity closely adhering to a corresponding care not to cast untimely fruit, which soon comes to decay. This made me very wary and cautious, as I believed many had taken the preparation for this office to be the commission, and so had been dwarfs. On the other hand, the remembrance of the covenant I had made with the Lord in the days of my sore bondage and deep captivity, and my now not answering His requirings, made this a time of deep wading for me. In meetings, matter would arise and spread in my mind towards the people, and yet I felt not the command. Oh! if any should be thus tried, if they are resigned and have minds devoted to the Lord, to such I would say, "Fear not; the time will come, when you will not doubt respecting the Lord's will."

I was about nine months under this trying dispensation. It wore down the bodily strength; my knees were weak; my flesh failed, though not with refraining from food; my face was often sorrowful through much weeping, and on my eyelids sat the shadow of death, through these winnowing, sifting seasons. Yet through all, I had a little hope, which as an anchor stayed my soul, and raised a holy belief that He who was my confidence, would in His own time unfold the mysteries of His kingdom and give an undoubted evidence, with unsullied clearness, that it was His will the candle He had lighted should be set on the candlestick, to give light to those around. Thanks be to His ever worthy name, He fulfilled it; so that when the right time came, in which I was to open my mouth in public, I had no doubt of its being His mind and will: yet, through fear, I reasoned it away, but was not severely chastened for it, as my heart was steadily

⁷ Ezekiel 13:7

purposed to serve Him; the will to do good was present, but in the performance I felt weak; so the Lord forgave me, and my mind enjoyed good till next meeting day. I then went in great fear, to our little meeting at Graysouthen. A few words presented lively, and I well remember the subject; the purport of them was, that if we were but more inward in meetings, they would be more favored than we often found them to be. And is not this a truth at the present day.

My being thus cautiously led in the beginning, has been helpful to me through the remaining part of my life, as to the ministry; in watching against false views and presentations, or taking the imaginary part for the revealed will of God. Oh! the peace that I felt that night, after that short testimony. It would have been acceptable to have been dissolved and to have been with Christ, which is far better.

I had now great peace of mind, so that instead of my heart being a place for dragons, for owls, and for screech owls, for cormorants, and for bitterns; there began to be a melody in it, as it were the voice of the Son of God, whose countenance is comely; and the myrtle, the box, and the pine, sprang up in that heart which had been a breeding place for nettles. This is the change that is wrought in man by being born again of the incorruptible seed and word of God. This was the change that was wrought in me.

I was frequently engaged to speak in meetings, and had satisfaction in so doing, and Friends did not discountenance me in my little childlike movings; but approved, though with a godly care. And through abundant mercy, I moved in my gift in simplicity, and did not choose for myself, nor seek for openings, nor dress my matter according to the creaturely will, neither dared I to restrain openings; all which are unsavory. The Lord taught me to let it go just as it came; though with blushing I may acknowledge that I lay very near a right-hand error, if I may so term it. Great were my care and fear, in joining with first prospects; although they might be such as to lead me to conclude, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before me;"⁸ yet they have passed by, and a query has arisen, "Are all your children here?"⁹ A proper query this; for those who labor for the good of others ought to have an especial care over their own household.

It often happens that the anointing is witnessed on the lesser appearance, a single, seemingly a poor sentence, not produced till the last, and scarcely worth ranking with sublime unfoldings, high in stature; all the rest passing by: "Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down until he come."¹⁰ Oh, then the holy command goes forth, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he;"¹¹ and at some of these seasons, the horn has been filled with oil. But this care, though laudable, yet

⁸ 1 Samuel 16:6

⁹ 1 Samuel 16:11

¹⁰ 1 Samuel 16:11

¹¹ 1 Samuel 16:12

prevailed often so as to keep lively openings, till the tide of good was receding to the fountain or source from which it sprung; and so the testimony was not so demonstrative and explicit, as otherwise it might have been; producing a half strangled though living offering. Read, you that can understand, and escape this rock on the right hand; for by this conduct, I often broke our ranks in the ministry; mine that should have gone first, being kept until the last. Little vessels floating sooner than those of deep service and heavy burdens, by getting out of the way of these, make their passage easier and safe. If any were more forward than myself, they opened the door, and I, through an unavailing trying of the opening, would close it and be excused from meddling.

As I had a great love and care for the blessed cause, that it might not suffer through weak advocates espousing it, so I always thought lowly of myself, and by keeping back as above mentioned, I became the author of confusion and disorder; the people were not so edified, nor I so comforted, as might have been expected, from the conflict I had undergone. I believe this had some foundation, in wanting to have a form of sound words, that none could condemn: for though I did not seek openings, or dress them as I pleased, yet all must have a mode of expression suiting the matter, and to convey to the audience their sentiments on religious things. On this ground, I wished to have the little matter set in order, for I feared being taken to task for misquoting or misapplying the holy Scriptures. But I was led clearly to discover that the ministers of Christ must rise, when perhaps but a word is given them, and minister according to the ability with which they are favored, not at all fearing man, whose breath is in his nostrils, but serve and fear the Lord only.

SECTION 2

Her family Loss of two children—Decease of her husband—Her testimony concerning him—Decease of her only remaining son—First journey in the work of the ministry—Decease of her mother, father-in-law, and daughter Hannah—Visits Lancashire, Cheshire, etc., and some Western counties—Decease of her second daughter—Removal to Whitehaven, 1791—Decease of her youngest daughter—Observations at various times, to the year 1795—Her exercise respecting vocal supplication in meetings.

I NOW began to have great outward trials, when there was an abatement in the inward. I had an affectionate husband, who in my infant state bore part of my sufferings. I had seven fine children, four girls and the youngest boys. Till this time the Lord had made a hedge about us

and all that we had. Though we had not much to begin the world with, we increased fast in temporals. It pleased the Lord to remove two of my youngest children by the smallpox, in a natural way, as we could not be free to inoculate for it. I grieved much that a breach was made upon us; indeed I fretted too much. There was then a language proclaimed to my inward ear, if I did not cease inordinate grieving, I should have more troubles. The affectionate part was strong, yet I trust I did not murmur against the dispensations of unerring Wisdom. In the next year my beloved husband was taken from me! Oh, I could then have parted with all my children to have had him spared; for in him I was so bound up, that I believed if he died, I could not live. He was my outward strength; and on him I relied for every thing in this world. I am inclined to give forth a testimony to his worth, as the widow's mite to her children, or children's children, that when we are gone, they may see from what kind of stock they have sprung. For their welfare my very soul is moved within me, and causes me to go bowed down, imploring that Divine assistance may be their aid through this vale of tears.

Jane Pearson's Testimony concerning her dear deceased husband, John Pearson, who departed this life the 14th of sixth month, 1774

He was born of believing parents, who gave him a tolerable education; and I believe, according to the best of their ability, trained him up in the nurture of the Lord. He was religiously inclined from his youth, so that in some sense he was a Nazarite from his birth; giving full proof that he sought a better country than this world; in which he had various struggles, being more exposed than many others, as his business was a linen manufacturer; yet he conducted himself with honor through all his engagements, and gained a handsome subsistence for his family; and I may say without doubt, he retained the better part through all.

He was a man of an innocent life and conversation, of a meek disposition, readier to take harsh treatment than to give it, and would suffer wrong, rather than resent an injury. He was temperate even to abstinence. In the relation of a husband, he was unexceptionable. When I consider his tenderness towards me and his family, I can scarcely but lament; yet I believe he is removed to the haven of rest; for I thought it was demonstrable that the grave would have no victory at his dissolution. His illness was tedious, but he was quite resigned, whether life or death should be his portion; and he frequently said, he longed to be gone, and that he scarcely thought it would be possible for him to be so willing to leave us.

A Friend coming in the day before he died, had an opportunity with him, which was an acceptable time. The Friend expressed to him that he might yet get a little better. He answered, "I had rather go; I have felt the pains of death; oh let me go!" It appeared that he was quite

reconciled to the grave; and I said, "O then, my dear, you must be satisfied your change will be well?" He answered, "Yes, I believe so;" speaking with becoming humility. The day before he died, he felt his pulse steadily three times, in order to know how near his change was; and inquired of the doctor how long he might continue. I desired he might not ask that question, and he, lamb-like, did not repeat it.

I am satisfied he had an assurance of acceptance with the Almighty, which declared itself in the heavenly fortitude and serenity that accompanied him to his last moments. His mother, who was an aged person, and under great infirmities, being brought in to take her leave of him, he in a prophetic manner, told her he should go first, but she would soon follow after; and accordingly it proved so, for as he expired, she began to show symptoms of her dissolution, and continued but about two hours after him; so they finished their course nearly together.

Oh! my loss is inexpressible! his kindness, his nearness in a religious sense, cannot be set forth by me. I had gone through various and deep provings; many weary years had passed over my head, while I was under the preparing hand of my God; but his compassion, his patience towards me, his condescension to my weakness, in my infant state, cannot be penned. His memory is blessed; and his excellent virtues ascend to the Father of spirits and resemble the prayers and alms-deeds of Cornelius, had in everlasting remembrance.

I have endeavored not to be swayed by affection, in this summary account, but have just related what I think the spirit in me bears witness to the truth of; neither was I easy without doing it. He departed without any struggle, as one falling into the sweetest of slumbers, and was decently buried in Friends' burying-ground, at Graysouthen, aged forty-nine years.

Jane Pearson.

The Lord was now about to divest me of my beloveds; the next year He took my eldest son in a fever, so that I had no son. He also made it manifest to me, that it was His requiring I should travel a little in the service of Truth. I gave up, and my friends favored me with a certificate. I set off on my journey, with my much honored friend Hannah Harris. I accompanied her through Lancashire, and then my dear friend Barbara Drewry met me at Settle. We visited Yorkshire, except Richmond Monthly Meeting. Then feeling a strong draft home, I returned and found my family well, except my dear mother who resided with me. She was a little on the decline, yet not so as to be much noticed; but in about two or three weeks, she fell sick and died. I mention this that Friends may attend to their feelings and drawings, as to returning home; for had she departed in my absence, I should have been in danger of letting in the reasoner. Oh, the

kindness of God, who prolonged her life till my return.

I was now left with my father-in-law, who was a valuable man, and my four daughters. The youngest but one, an amiable young woman of about nineteen, going a little abroad, lost her health. She continued in a state of great weakness, for about three years, and departed this life in 1784, my father-in-law dying a little before her.

[The compiler of these memoirs, has stated in the introduction, that the subject of them occasionally wrote a few verses. On the event just mentioned, she poured forth her maternal feelings, nearly as follows, without any view to their insertion here; but perhaps the introduction of them may not be deemed improper.]

Lines on my beloved daughter, Hannah Pearson.

A widow'd mother while I sit, In silence and dismay,
I feel a spirit-stirring power, That prompts the sorrowing lay.
Then from a mother's bosom, let The mournful numbers flow;
The ear of pity will forgive. My mingling hope and woe.
There are who hold that life is but A shadow or a flower;
My soul aspires to higher good. Than bounds the present hour:
That good, my Hannah sure has reach'd And will forever prove:
Her bosom was the abode of peace, Of innocence and love.
For those whom evil tongues traduced, She felt compassion rise;
While innocence, the richest gem! Sat lovely in her eyes.
Strict modesty around her form. Was like a mantle cast;
Her features beam'd intelligence, But these from earth are past!
Then who can tell the loss of her, Or number up my tears!
I live: but ah! a sadness hangs o'er my declining years.
My dearest consort died again In Hannah's parting breath:
My days are spent in grief, for who Has known so much of death!
Sweet were your words, my beauteous child, That you to me express'd.

When, watching your declining strength, I hung upon your breast.

And in the anguish of my soul. To God prefer'd my prayer.

That, in compassion, yet your life. He would be pleased to spare.

You meekly answered "Mother dear! I'd rather go than thee,

If such the righteous will of God; For best that will must be:

Tho' parted for a little space, We'll hope to meet again."

Such resignation gave me strength, The conflict to sustain.

Can I describe the setting eye? The faltering tongue restore?

The trembling hand? the shorten'd breath.' I cease For all is over.

Fair as a lily, and as sweet, My lovely Hannah grew;

But soon she from the garden here, To Paradise withdrew.

Ye sister lilies! keep like her, Your innocence and love,

When gather'd from the earth, you'll then In beauty rise above.

I was now left with three daughters. The family sits solitary that was full of people; but the Lord has been exceedingly kind to me. When I mourned for the loss of my connexions, my husband especially, condescending kindness vouchsafed thus to plead with me; "What have I done to you? I have taken your beloveds to a mansion of rest, called them to a better life; and I will remove, as it pleases Me, the remainder of your family; and then you will meet, never more to part." At this moment I had a hope, a precious faith, that the Lord would mercifully preserve me and mine till the conclusion, in a degree of innocence.

I may acknowledge, I had allowed a strong persuasion to prevail in my mind, that the Lord in displeasure, had removed my husband from me; because I had not faithfully discharged myself in the ministry, or that something was wrong with me; and I was even so weak as to require a sign from Him, although He had before fully satisfied me that it was not in displeasure to either of us: but oh! it was with me a time of great dejection. What I asked at that time was, that He would cause some of His servants, with whom I had never corresponded, to write to me, and I would take it as a sign. He had chastened in His mercy, and now He seemed to be entreated; for that valuable Friend, Mabel Wigham, addressed me in tender sympathy, and communicated her feelings that my husband was removed in mercy, and that I and my children would be preserved. I note this, that Friends may be faithful in all respects, for it did me much good.

I had now a concern of mind, and I think it had been before me for some years, to visit the

meetings of Friends in the western part of this nation. Cornwall pressed very close, that had I had wings, I could have flown to it for rest. I informed some of my friends, who encouraged me and united with me in my prospect. I then acquainted the Monthly Meeting, and obtained its certificate, and I had my dear friend, M. Haworth, of Haslingden, for a companion. We visited most meetings in Lancashire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall.

I had a close concern to visit a Friend who had been low for some time, and mentioned it to some Friends, but way was not made suitable to my diffidence. When I got as far back as Plymouth, I did not know but I must have returned; for, if I may be allowed the expression, the furnace was hot, which made my anguish inexpressible; it made all my bones to shake, and affected my health for the remainder of the journey, which till then had been good. Friends had need to be careful how they turn back diffident minds, who are not like the offspring of Sceva, taking upon them, in their own strength, to call over unclean spirits. The Lord wrought mightily in me towards the distressed, for I had passed through much affliction, and was thereby rendered very susceptible, readily catching a sense of sorrow wherever I found it.

I believe the Friends were backward of giving encouragement, wishing to conceal the infirmities that had overtaken so valuable an instrument as she had been: and besides all this, many much more worthy had visited her, with whom indeed I am not fit to be ranked. But I am what I am, by the grace of God; and as He works wonders by mean low instruments, He may work through such to others if He please. I must however own that they gave permission to me, but not to my companion, and an allowance differs from a hearty concurrence; yet I have felt judgment for the omission, but believed before I left the place, that deliverance would come from another source; and I have lived to know and be thankful for it. I missed several meetings in my way home, being poorly, and believing it safe and lawful for me to return. I found my family well, and had the evidence of peace answering my obedience.

I have now arrived at the fifty-sixth year of my age, and still afflictions abide me. My second daughter being removed by death, I have but two remaining. She was an innocent, virtuous young woman, bore a lingering illness with patience and resignation, and I believe is gathered in mercy.

In 1791 I moved to Whitehaven to reside, before the death of my youngest daughter; to whose marriage with a Friend belonging to that meeting, I had consented. Our going there, was also much the mind of both my daughters. My daughter who resided with me was desirous of living there, in order to be helpful to her married sister, whose family was increasing. Oh, the close exercise I have had in this meeting! truly it has worn me down, with other trying circumstances which befell me at that place. Many a bitter cup have I and my poor children drunk of there. If

it has but tended to our refinement, it is well; for surely our bodies were enfeebled thereby. I did my best under the heavy trials I met with. The Lord knows my prayers were almost incessant, while under the weight of unpleasant things.

My youngest daughter was a religious, pious young woman, and died the year we removed. She was exceedingly delicate, of a meek disposition, and tender spirited; and yet she had waded through difficulties, so that in her dying moments she expressed, that streams of tears had run down her cheeks; and that if she died then, which she was not afraid to do, she died innocent; for that she had never done ill to any one. And she often said encouragingly; "The Lord knows what is best for us." She had a strong apprehension that she should die; but from a sweet prospect of good that I had had in our meeting a little before, in my low wading respecting her, I did believe all would be well; and from this discovery, I caught a hope that she might recover; which she remarked during her illness. "Mother," said she, "you have been mistaken." I answered: "My dear, I saw something so comfortable about you, I believed all would be well;" she answered: "All will be well," and added, "I have often thought of that Friend from Manchester, who pointed out to us in a family sitting, that some had not long to stay; but the state he spoke to, seemed too good for me to accept of. I was willing to put it to another in the company, who at that time was indisposed." She left three fine children in charge to surviving relations.

Though it is my lot often to sit silent at meetings in the place where I now reside; yet I have precious openings and Divine intimations on my return home from them, even respecting individuals. But hardness of heart has crept into the minds of some, and it may be right to let them alone.

2nd of sixth month, 1793. I know not for what I am held at this place, except it be faithfully to suffer with the suffering seed here. I have renewedly felt a precious union with our dear Lord in His crucified state, in the hearts of professors. Oh, the plungings witnessed in our meetings! There is an active spirit got in, that takes its food upon the surface, or catches at it flying in the airy regions. With food of this nature, some seek to feed and to be fed. I have painfully sat under some recent testimonies, when it seemed clear to me, sin held its empire: and what was delivered, though sound truths, yet did not slay the man of sin: but I am alluding to none belonging to our meeting; there is a precious seed in this place, with which in a great measure, I can unite.

1st of fifth month, 1794. I have been at meeting this day, which was heavy; I felt clouds gathering thickly, the sun and moon darkened, the greater and lesser lights withdrawn; that in my deeply trying, inward labor, I saw no light in the horizon, and very confidently believed the bitterness of death was around. I struggled in silence till my gracious Master gave me to see,

that where He was, His servant should be also. I derived some consolation therefrom; reposing in a belief that I was of the suffering seed, though the least member in the body, or the meanest in the Father's house. I think I have had in this meeting, such a diversity of feelings, that perhaps I have experienced the two extremes of happiness and woe. At one time in silence, there was a confirming language inwardly spoken; and though a poor worm, I had hopes it might be applied to myself. It was: "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest;"¹² under which I was ready to sing the song of Moses, the servant of the Lord, and the song of the Lamb. At another time, my mind was so overshadowed with the power of Truth, that the season was too solemn for any vocal voice to be heard, the cloud and glory so great, that none could minister.

Sixth month. I am now returned from Broughton, where I have been nine weeks, on account of my only surviving daughter's weak state of health. I felt comfortable while there, and much enlargement of heart towards the few Friends belonging to that place. Oh, may they be profited! Truly it was free mercy handed to them, and not for works of righteousness that they have done, for I think them deficient in that great duty of attending religious meetings. How sorrowful it is, when elders and overseers stay at home by their stuff, while others are wading deeply for the promotion of Truth!

Whitehaven, eighth month, 1794. This day our Monthly Meeting has been a very favored season to me. My soul arose above all its troubles, under a precious sense, that in my sojourning thus far through life, the Lord has always eyed me for good and has watched my goings; and though I cannot say I never made false steps, yet He who knows my heart, knows it to be weakness. Oh, how weak are we, when divested of His saving help! Yet He has in mercy fully forgiven all, and deigned to give me a foretaste of the joys of His kingdom: a sense that has no feeling of sorrow; no more sighing; no weepings, but a joy without alloy. In this state I have been ready to think the days of my mourning are nearly ended, having a strong "desire to depart and to be with Christ;"¹³ feeling all my soul's enemies subdued, so that I could pray for them that have despitefully used me. In this heavenly place in Christ Jesus, it is good for us to abide. This day I was silent; the fulness of glory too great to minister.

22nd, 1794. Have been at meeting. Oh, the sifting I have, in regard to the ministry I am gifted with! Though I believe I was rightly called, that I entered at the right time, and have moved with godly fear in it, not choosing my own way, nor carving for myself, yet I am so low as to think I have never been of use. I opened my mouth this day, as I thought, from a small impulse, or the moving of prophetic instruction, out of my little flour to bake a cake first. Here is no redundancy now, but a grain of faith that a supply may be afforded, answering my need. I

¹² Exodus 33:14

¹³ Philippians 1:23

ventured my offering in the simplicity, so far as I know; but oh, the buffeting at my return home was truly bitter!

I am now arrived near the sixtieth year of my age; and my bodily strength is much impaired: I am grown very weak. I do not expect it will be long, before the narrow confines of the silent grave will enclose me. Happy moment, when I shall be freed from the sight and voice of the oppressor: for although some might be sensible that I have undergone hard things, yet none have known the anguish of my heart; it is beyond all description, but it is known to God. I have often had to remember holy Job, and to quote him in the exercise of my gift, in honest labor among the people, and to say, “Even today is my complaint bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning;”¹⁴ and so has mine been, even at this late period of my life. He also declares, he cried out of wrong, but was not heard, yes, cried aloud, but there was no judgment.

I ventured to conclude this day, as at some former seasons, that I would preach no more in this place; for the spring of the Gospel is much shut. I find if I speak, my grief is not assuaged, if I forbear, what am I eased? For I have tried from meeting to meeting what silence would do for me. I search myself to find the cause, that I am not lively in my ministry as in the days of my youth: for truly I conclude there is no life in me, so that I now most earnestly wish for the lodging of a wayfaring man in the wilderness, where I might go from my people and leave them. I feel weary of these suffering seasons; they are more than my frame can well bear.

Fourth month 8th, 1795. I was at our week-day meeting, in which I beheld that we are born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards; that the human mind at seasons, is like a sponge, drinking up affliction, till it sinks in deep waters; yes, they flow into the soul. Oh! the perplexities experienced in this space of time! Few and evil have been our days, and we have not attained to the years of our progenitors. In this state, condescending kindness vouchsafed to lead me to the rock that is higher than I; and my eyes saw that we fret for things unworthy the notice of a redeemed mind; and that if I, or my friends with whom I sat, were but called upon to take leave of every thing below the sun, all these perplexing anxieties would vanish like an atom in the whirlwind, and be of no weight at all. We should then only lament that we had not looked above these momentary afflictions, and fixed our confidence on the invisible Arm, and invincible power of Omnipotence. But oh! how is the natural part attracted by visible objects! while that which is born from above, suffers through our not adhering to the invisible.

In this meeting I desired that I might be favored with an extraordinary visitation, whereby I might be made willing to give up to any requirings, having long had an exceedingly great dread upon my spirit, in regard to praying in public assemblies. Ah! this broke the creaturely part in me, and laid me in the dust. I could be willing to breathe mentally during the whole of a

¹⁴ Job 23:2

meeting: but when I should have fallen upon my knees, oh, the reasonings I had; as that the cup of favor was not full enough: that I had not come so near to His seat as I ought, or was not sufficiently clothed with the garment of praise; that fervent desire for my friends, was not arrived at full height; or that I had not enough of the indwelling of God's pure Spirit, to enable me, in this awful gift of prayer, to keep so close to His precious, directing, all-saving power, as to be preserved from offering a word in prayer, of which He was not the author and requirer.

Although this is a pinching dispensation, and I may now appear very like a weakling, just entered into the service, yet I have at different times been prevailed upon, to call upon the name of the Lord in public. But I have had great searching of heart afterward, lest I should have made the smallest deviation or sally from the precious life, while so concerned; that now nature is likely to fail at the appearance and approach of intercession. May the Lord help me! Perhaps this little delineation, may be as face answering face in a glass, to some who are very conscientious in every movement, especially prayer; and may that always be offered with a right understanding, seasoned with grace.

SECTION 3

Carlisle Quarterly Meeting, 1797—Verses written under trial—Illness in 1800—Prospect of a religious visit—Observations, Remarkable vision—Illness of her only remaining daughter—Her decease and burial, 1806—Observations in 1807 and 1808, on entering her seventy-fifth year, and in subsequent parts of 1810—Extract from Piety Promoted.

20th of eleventh month, 1796. I have felt a desire this morning to be thoroughly washed, until I be made clean, so as no fuller on earth could make more white. Many are made willing to bear the spiritual baptisms, provided they are assured it is Jesus that is dipping them. But so uncertain and seemingly casual are the occasions of their plungings, they believe not that He is the author of their immersion, or that it is His holy hand that is washing and bathing them for their imperfections. Sin being mercifully done away, how can these that are dead to sin, live any longer in it!

Third month 28th, 1797. I was favored once more to attend our Quarterly Meeting at Carlisle, very near the place of my nativity, and the meeting I belonged to for many years. The meeting of ministers and elders was a favored season; I had the evidence of peace in my little labors; and indeed all the meetings were more or less owned with the heart-solacing presence of Zion's King. It was like taking my leave; and I was helped to be faithful: so that in my return for many

miles, my cup ran over, and I seemed anointed with the oil of gladness. Great was my peace; such a full foretaste of heavenly joy, as I have not before experienced, except when I first opened my mouth in testimony. There seemed nothing between my soul and its blessed Redeemer. At that time my joy was so full, that I longed to be dissolved, feeling nothing but purity and holiness about me; or at least, I had the sense of full acceptance with the Father, in my endeavors to obey.

At Carlisle, I felt an engagement to supplicate God on behalf of the people: I felt love for them, and some of the elders and ministers were near my best life. Indeed I had never found more openness to plead with them, than in the select opportunity for ministers and elders, and had great peace in so doing. In the time of supplication, which was at the close of the last meeting, I thought I found near access to the Almighty; if I had not, I dared not have called vocally upon His ever blessed and worthy name. During the awful and solemn season (it was so to me), I supported myself on one knee, my other having no strength in it, which hindered my continuing so long in intercession, as might have tended to my solid comfort. But the Almighty heard the little, who accepts the "Abba Father." I believe my effort was accepted; and if I had but bent my knees and called upon His ever worthy name, He being the author, would in return for this humiliating dedication, have given the answer of peace. Blessed be the name of the Lord forever.

28th of twelfth month, 1798. Much proved.

In age assist me, dearest Lord!
In faith my spirit stay;
And if I've err'd through slavish fear,
Forgive me Lord! I pray.

No other foes assail me now,
Or prey upon my peace,
But false alarms and slavish fears;
Oh cause these fears to cease!

Uplifted hands and downcast eyes,
Bespeak my griefs, O Lord!
To trembling knees and broken sighs,
Your succor now afford.

Desert not Lord, this feeble frame,
You know'st what I can bear,
And when I cry in agony,
Oh! be not slow to hear!

My head is clad with silver hairs;
My limbs their power resign.
Remembering my departed strength.
Let me receive of thine.

Your presence is unsullied joy;
It fills the heavens above.
My earnest cry is, Lord! to feel
A portion of Your love;

My trust in thee was early fixed;
I felt it in my youth;
My age, as then, relies on thee,
Eternal God of Truth!

You have commanded us to ask,
In order to receive;
Admit me to Your holy rest.
When all below I leave.

The mansion You prepare there
Will fully satisfy,
You've raised Your humble handmaid here;
Receive me when I die.

Yet once again, oh! let me come,
Bearing the widow's prayer;
That I and mine, through endless life,
May of Your mercy share.

I have no other claim to make,
Enough for me and mine;
Tho' smallest of the lights in heaven.
If there our lamps may shine.

Fourth month, 1800. I have been confined of late, through bodily indisposition, during the forepart of which, my sickness was extreme. It appeared to me that I was making quick advances towards the grave; although as I apprehended, the first Divine impression was, that I should not die at that time. But as I knew a recent instance of a minister of my acquaintance, and with whom I had travelled, whose dissolution was entirely hid from her, this made me sometimes rather hesitate.

I had much bodily illness, but not much conflict of mind. I was preserved still and quiet, which was not my nature; it was God's mercy: to His praise be it inscribed upon my heart as long as I live. I was favored with a fixed, steady, comfortable hope, that if I then died, it would be well with me. I seek no more evidence, when I shall really surrender life; for it seemed as if my dear Redeemer's arms enfolded me very safely; so that the wicked one, by whom I had often been distressed on a sick bed, touched me not, neither had any power over me.

First-day, 10th of fifth month, 1801. I was at meeting at Whitehaven, and had a precious opening, with which I was nearly ready to stand up; but I am too much like the impotent man at the pool, waiting for the moving of the waters, and while I am making ready, another steps in. It was so this day, and though but a few words were spoken, and they not distinctly heard by me, yet it left unspeakable anguish and bitterness of spirit, so that the daughter of Judah, for the remainder of the day, "was trodden as in a wine press."

Ninth month, 1801. As in me there has been a singular instance of God's mercy and power; His mercy in forgiving, and power in upholding me, I can therefore do no less than praise Him here and eternally. And whoever reads this, let them be humbled in the dust before Him; for truly He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.

The latter part of this year, I have had a time of confinement, through sickness; and have not been so favored in this season of weakness, with that soul-sustaining evidence of Divine regard, as at some former times. It may be that I had too frequent recourse to the redundancy of favor, then mercifully vouchsafed: not doubting, that if I was similarly tried, I might be equally supported; and so was in danger of being like Gideon, who, after his great achievement made an Ephod, and idolizing it, the same became a snare unto him.

Sixth month 30th, 1802. I was at our weekday meeting, and was favored with a solemn silence, resembling that in heaven, where angels and archangels adore in profound silence. Oh! I saw into the joys thereof; a place where sorrow cannot come: none of the inhabitants have any affliction. I was this day favored to partake of Divine good, in the greatest degree that perhaps I ever experienced; the heavenly bread was handed to my soul, in no sparing portion, with, "Take, eat, this is My body."

Towards the latter end of last year, 1801, I had an apprehension that I must visit some of the southern counties, or the southeastern. It came, I thought, with considerable clearness. I endeavored to keep as near to good as possible, and rarely, when awake, was without some sense of the Divine requirings. The latter end of the fifth month, 1802, seemed the right time for me to move in it. I did not stagger at my own weak state, for I was really given up; nor at the extreme weakness of my only surviving child; so that it appeared like Abraham's trial, in

stretching out his hand to offer his only son.

My poor grandchildren, who indeed were orphans, I wholly resigned, not daring to let the affectionate part take hold; but gave up my own life and theirs, and all that I had into the hands of the Almighty; not daring to draw back one jot, or even to wish that the service had not been required of me.

I dared no more dispute the voice, than Abraham did, when he was called to go to the land of Moriah; my nature perhaps recoiled, as his might do, without the hope that he had; “My son, the Lord will provide Himself an offering.”¹⁵ Let the unbelievers step forward and question these and other sacred truths; it matters not; their unbelief will perish with them, and cease to be propagated when they are no more.

When the time arrived in which I was to prepare for the journey, the prospect entirely closed, and I was fully released. I bowed in humility, and accepted my discharge, with this caution, to eye the great Leader, and not hastily to reenter into my family affairs; but to be still and wait, without rejoicing at my liberation; since which time I have continued to feel at liberty.

Fourth month 12th, 1803. This morning before I rose, I was pondering in my mind, that many in our Society, are rich and full, as may be seen by their way of living and their clothing; and that though their garb is plain, yet it is costly; and various are their suits of apparel. I then recurred to my own low estate, not regretting that it was so; for it became a redeemed people to be exemplary in eating, drinking, and apparel: in which revolvings, my mind was satisfied by this language; “I will clothe you with salvation, and crown your end with peace.”

Could I ask more for myself? Surely no! and being favored and broken under it, and very near the throne of grace, I was allowed, in humility, to petition for my daughter, that she might have a place in the kingdom of heaven, and accompany my spirit in the mansion seen fit for me to inherit, when I was unclothed of mortality. After this, I prayed for my grandchildren.

Twelfth month 23rd, 1804. First-day, I was at our meeting, in which I had an open time, much to my own satisfaction: and I hope to that of others. Indeed, Truth rose into dominion, and the opposite power sunk into insignificance. Such instances have been rare with me. In leaving the meeting, a sense of acceptance was given me; measurably receiving the sentence of well done in my own particular; with a secret hope, that if I continued to steer my course carefully, eyeing my guide; and in simplicity and godly sincerity dealing out to the people as immediately given; pursuing the thread of my testimony in the power, and depending wholly upon the Lord, He would be mouth and wisdom, tongue and utterance. Thus Satan for a while, became bruised

¹⁵ Genesis 22:8

under foot.

Fourth month 7th, 1805. I have this day experienced deep baptism of soul. I thought it would hasten my dissolution. Oh! merciful Lord, my times are in Your hand; You know what I can bear; lighten my load I pray You, or add to my strength, for I am tried to the very life; “crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”¹⁶ Oh! grant me patience to bear these suffering seasons; surely You care that I serve alone.

In the latter end of 1805, or the beginning of 1806, I had a sickness, in which I was confined for some time; and one night as I lay in bed, between the hours of nine and ten o'clock, being in a solid, weighty frame of spirit, breathing towards the Fountain of all good, I beheld with my spiritual eye, as clearly as ever my outward eye beheld any object, that the Ancient of Days descended; His dread majesty enveloped as in a cloud; and being emboldened through His unmerited condescension, I begged for a place in His glorious kingdom, when unclothed of my mortal robes. I write in awful fear. I thought it was granted, and that I was allowed to proceed, if I had any thing further. I then craved for my only daughter the same favor. I thought that too was granted.

I then lifted up my eyes and heart, and mentally poured forth my soul, saying: “Oh! Lord, the wickedness of man is great;” my mind being expanded, and bending in good will towards all; and the answer I received was: “My mercy is greater;” and the vision closed. But oh! the contented calm it left.

It is now nearly fifteen months since this display of God's mercy occurred; and till this time, I have not recorded it, lest any should think of me above what I am; or that from such a discovery of unlimited mercy, any sinner should presume to go on in their wickedness, in hopes that God would show them mercy at last. But at this time, it has been again opened; and after passing many deep plungings, I am stripped of all glorying, save in the cross; having no desire but that these lines may preach when I am no more, and encourage some poor sinner, to lift up his head in hope at what I have penned.

1806. I am now grown old, and it is announced that my declining years are not to be exempt from trials: they truly increase. My only daughter is afflicted with a cancer in her breast. The pain and dreadfulness of the complaint are such, that we languish without hope of her recovery. Afflictive is this dispensation indeed; no solace but from a comfortable hope, that her troubles will end with the termination of her life.

Twelfth month 3rd, 1806. In our weekday meeting, I was engaged to set forth the necessity of

¹⁶ Galatians 2:20

not only receiving the seed of the kingdom, but, with all readiness, allowing its growth; as the work of Truth in the heart of man is described by our Great Master, to be progressive; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. I had peace in returning to my habitation, and this language presented to me; “Ever since you were born, My love has been to you.” This melted me; may I be worthy of such a favor.

Third month 14th, 1807. On taking a retrospect of the path assigned me through this vale of tears, and the sketches I have drawn thereof, I have thought it may appear to others, that I have been more marred than my contemporaries, in my deep early refinings; and since, in being singularly stripped of my beloved outward connexions; the tree being wholly peeled. But let none of Zion's travelers be discouraged thereat; for, to the praise of my heavenly Father, and of the riches of His grace, be it remembered, that sufficient strength for the day has been afforded, or else I never could have stood to this time. My eldest and last daughter is now released from all her trials, and a gracious God, who never fails in time of need, visited and upheld my mind in a marvelous manner.

At the time of her interment, while I sat in the meeting beside her coffin, oh! the unspeakable peace I felt, with a consoling assurance that all her tears were forever wiped away. They had flowed like rivers, under deep religious exercise; and at that time, the condescension of our heavenly Father was such to me, a poor unworthy creature, that it seemed as if her pure spirit descended and rested upon her remains, during the opportunity. Oh! how can I sufficiently adore!

Fifth month 4th, 1807. Fourth-day, I was at meeting. Some of our Friends are set off for London. A solemn time it was to me; for I was much engaged in mental breathings; the Spirit helping my infirmities inwardly to pray. A large portion of heavenly bread was handed to me, without much wrestling, or having it to set before others: and although our souls' enemies may be numerous, a language livingly opened; “The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”¹⁷ It applied to myself, as I had no commission to divulge it. Somewhat like the earnest of the Spirit of adoption or holy promise, accompanied my mind, and closed with, “Lord, You are good to us, we will praise You; we will exalt Your name.” I had strong consolation in God, only wise. Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent. Always in His sight, naked and bare before Him, oh! who dare do evil!

Twelfth month 13th, 1807. My family all gone to meeting; and I through indisposition, left at home; but I must acknowledge the kindness of a gracious God to me, who has been near in this time of confinement, allowing me to pour forth my soul, yes, I have thought sometimes, to lean

¹⁷ Exodus 14:14

on His very bosom; and the comforting watch-word is: "Fear not, I am first and last."¹⁸

First month 4th, 1808. Rich favor extended this morning to me, a poor worm; and given in these consoling characters; "My love and care, yes, protecting care, have ever been towards you; and I never will leave you nor forsake you: although Satan has, in days past, been permitted to roar and shoot his malignant arrows, he shall now be still."

I craved the renewal of the Divine vision I had been favored with in a former illness; but Infinite Wisdom saw fit to withhold any thing further of that nature; I adore and bless His holy name. Oh! I pray God, with my whole heart, that it may be thus with me in my last moments; and I humbly trust it will, if I keep my place to the conclusion; for truly He has been a merciful God to me. May the members of this meeting, more and more seek after the power, which has so eminently interposed for the deliverance of my soul! May not one of them be lost! For truly great pains have been taken with this part of the vineyard.

Second month 7th, 1808. For many months, my mind has been preserved in a state of tranquillity, exclusive of the things in the outward, that were at times afflicting. There was no evil inclination in myself, nor any temptation thereto; and a merciful Father not far away from me: that I began to doubt my condition, lest I should ascribe this serenity, which might become habitual, to a growth in the Truth and favor with my God, before I had attained it; so that I almost wished to feel my customary poverty of spirit again, and His chastening; believing myself far from perfect. And now He has seen fit to change the benign dispensation, into one more searching and trying; often withdrawing His favor; so that I seemed neither "borne on the side, nor dandled on the knee."¹⁹ I will bear it; for oh! I dread being at ease in Zion, or trusting to any thing short of what is really substantial, that feeds and nourishes the soul unto everlasting life.

Fifth month 7th, 1810. I have now arrived at my seventy-fifth year; and in perusing again what has long since been written of the Lord's dealings with me in my childish state, I feel the renewing of ancient power, which impressed my mind when I penned them; so that I hope they are not words which will fall to the ground, for they are faithful and true sayings. Reader, if when you peruse them, a gentle summons should be heard; "The Master is come and calls for you,"²⁰ rise up quickly, as Mary did; let others suspect what they may, respecting your haste. These are seasons when we are to salute no one by the way.

There are many publications in the world. Some of them have a tendency to corrupt the morals of those that read them; such as these have never come much in my way, nor dared I have spent

¹⁸ Revelation 1:17

¹⁹ Isaiah 66:12

²⁰ John 11:28

my time in reading them. But there are many deemed more innocent; and such books as have been introduced into my family, I have thought it right to view the nature of, and to consider what tendency they might have upon minds that seemed to take delight in them; and I have this to propose to the serious consideration of all, especially the youth, or even those more advanced in our Society, to whom such books are pleasing; to such I say; “Read the Scriptures and other good books,” and observe the tenor of your minds while reading; and you will feel which of them draws nearer to God—these publications I have been hinting at, or those that have been penned by the witnesses of our Savior's life and death.

In the records of His life, we shall perceive where the Master's footsteps have trodden in deep humility. Then view His wounded side, and the print of the nails, in viewing which, living virtue seems to be felt. Such authors, we must believe, have been with Jesus. It was reading His sufferings in my early youth, that melted me, as heretofore acknowledged, and bound me to His pure Spirit. Oh! that all mankind saw it as I now do! how fearful they would be of laying out that money for unprofitable publications, which might be better employed; neither dare they waste their precious time in reading them.

Eighth month 6th, 1810. I have been surprised that the older and more infirm I grow, the more I am enlarged in mind, and the more illuminated in regard to Scripture sentences. Oh! how the watchword, when it comes, brightens upon my mind, and inwardly gives me to expatiate thereupon. It is the Lord's doing, and marvelous indeed in my eyes. Lord, what am I, that You continue thus to acknowledge me, and that You thus expand my heart in old age, when the keepers of the frail building tremble exceedingly; and I am so humbled thereby, as to consider myself abject, mean, and unworthy of a place where the Majesty of heaven resides? Oh! when this mortal shall put on immortality, and every seed its own body, mine must surely be as of the lowest order of angels! sown in weakness, even if it be raised in power. But cease, my soul, to pry into the secrets of eternity! The lowest mansion in the Father's house, will far, very far, surpass my services. Oh, Lord, be near at the winding up of time, is my sincere prayer.

Eleventh month 14th, 1810. This day we had a very confirming season, in our silent weekday meeting. I thought I should never more doubt being under the notice of heaven, the evidence was so strong, and my love seemed perfect Godward; so that it cast out all fear. I neither feared death, hell, nor the grave. The armies of the aliens, for the present, were entirely put to flight. My faith was strong respecting my own well being, and even I had faith for those who that day gathered with me. We seemed indeed come to Zion, the city of the living God, and gathered in spirit with an innumerable company of angels.

Previous to this precious season, I had had very great openings into Divine things, pertaining to another life; things so sacred as not to be meddled with; which brought me to think I should

soon be gathered; and in looking at the ministry I had been gifted with, and how I had moved under the openings I had been favored with, although I felt no condemnation, my gift seemed as if it might be taken from me, yet not in displeasure; I had such siftings in meetings, and was so emptied, as from vessel to vessel.

I thought the Lord would relieve me from my laborious wadings, which, I thought to others had been of little service; and that He would bestow my gift on some other. I hinted at it in one of our meetings; and although it seemed to me almost unprecedented, to withhold from fruitfulness; yet my spirit was preserved quiet under it. And in this week-day meeting I saw, as from the mount, that such trying seasons as I have often been led into in our meetings, were requisite, lest I should be exalted through those sublime revelations I have been favored with. This effected for me what the thorn in the flesh did for Paul: and I now seemed one of the least, and viewed myself in a truly abject light.

Twelfth month, 1810. I have transcribed a piece out of Piety Promoted, [See the account of Mary Ludgater, part 10, page 139] thinking perhaps it may be, by me, experienced near my close.

“It is not always from the most conspicuous on the scene of action, that we hear the most triumphant expressions of hope and praise, at the approach of death. The same baptisms which are the means of qualifying for eminent service, sometimes induce a fear, a depression, a sense of unworthiness in the instrument, which makes it slow in believing, that the Lord vouchsafes to regard it, and that He will finally crown it with eternal blessings; though it may have often had to hold forth His unfailing loving-kindness, for the encouragement of others.” I am far from looking upon myself as ever conspicuous; but my unworthiness suggests a fear, that I may be thus tried.

Twelfth month, 1810. I was confined through indisposition; and my wounded spirit and bleeding heart, were in great need of inward healing, from the God of all consolation and comfort. Though one of the unworthiest, I ventured to look towards His holy habitation for help, and He graciously vouchsafed to heal with these words; “no weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that rises in judgment against the precious seed, the Lord will condemn.”²¹

²¹ Isaiah 54:17

SECTION 4

Pardshaw Hall Monthly Meeting, 1811—Various remarks in 1812-13—Her concern respecting her grandson—Several consoling seasons—Clear evidence respecting her grandson—Account of his decease—Her last remarks left in writing—Her close—Testimony of Pardshaw Monthly Meeting respecting her Conclusion.

Monthly Meeting, Pardshaw Hall, 23rd of seventh month, 1811. Being at Underwood, I attended this meeting, and thought it a very favored time: the glory of the Lord, as it appeared to me, filled the house; and, sitting upon the mercy seat, each seemed to have the gracious privilege of pardon. It brought to my remembrance the apostle Paul, when he was caught up into the third heaven, and saw and heard what was not lawful for a finite creature to utter; neither dared I to utter, on the side of mercy, what I then felt. I thought if I had continued thus under the immediate sense of God's presence, I should neither have felt hunger nor pain; but it was not a state to be continued in; for upon my return, the gracious presence was withdrawn. I do not say a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet; but I was plunged into heart-rending doubts, respecting my own salvation; thoroughly preventing my being exalted above measure, for the abundant revelation, vouchsafed to me at that precious season.

I did not see that I had missed in my communications to the Friends gathered; I had not kindled a fire and warmed myself with the sparks thereof, that I had thus to lie down in sorrow. How awful would be such another season of rising in my spirit, out of the reach of sorrow, in which there was no partition wall between God and my soul, lest such another fiery baptism should succeed! Oh! Lord, I beseech You, keep me in Your patience; and let Your refining power leave nothing that is wrong in me, unsubdued. You, Lord! know what I have gone through in my youth; and all along, Your hand has been heavy upon me. You, Lord! have often given me to see that You impute no iniquity to me, but have given me a sense that I had full acceptance with You. “Why are you cast down, O my soul! and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him!”²²

In penning these remarks, I find good to arise, which rather binds up my broken heart; for although I have heavy trials in the outward, they have had no share in my present plunging. It was because my Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone. A dispensation of this nature would not have dismayed me so much, provided I had not been so long in the ministry. The Great Master, I thought, had fully tried me as to exaltation, and proved that I did not dare to say, “The Lord says,” when He had not spoken; so that I really hoped I had been established

²² Psalm 42:5, 43:5

upon the immovable Rock; but I find they that think they stand, should take heed lest they fall. Neither are we to recur to those sublime discoveries which the Divine light has manifested; but, after great favor in vision, to allow all to return to the fountain from which it sprang. Ah! then, how emptied and stripped are we; for vessels used, must be washed. How unsafe for us to feed upon any good we have been enabled to do! We experimentally find it to be a truth, that it is not for works of righteousness which we have done, but of His mercy we are saved; and that it is by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the holy Ghost; for which I pray.

First month 29th, 1812. Fourth-day. A precious meeting to me; indeed I thought the solemnity general. Oh! the pure silence that I felt, as if Immanuel stretched forth His wings and covered us: and that sublime and exalted vision of the prophet was brought clearly to the view of my mind, when he “beheld the Lord sitting upon His throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim, each had six wings; with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they did fly: and one said, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; the whole earth is full of Your glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of Him that spoke, and the house was filled with smoke.”²³

I inquired whether I was to divulge it or not; and the answer I received was; that “It was favor and food for myself, and that if I gave to others my own portion, I should soon become meager and thin.” I return thanks, and gratefully acknowledge the favor vouchsafed, and now conclude to keep close hold of the confirming evidence I then had; but fear at times assails me, lest I should lose it again and doubt.

Fourth month 5th, 1812. After a time of illness this morning, it was mercifully handed to me, as Divine consolation; “You are in the hollow of My hand;” and again; “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.”²⁴ Oh, Lord, what an unutterable favor is this, when the weakness of my body is, at times, as much as nature can bear. I have passed thus far through the wilderness of this world, in as great jeopardy, as closely exercised, and as nearly fainting under my trials, as perhaps ever any poor mortal did. What an unspeakable favor, when verging to the confines of the narrow and silent grave, that so unworthy a creature should thus be owned! Oh! gracious Father! continue Your preserving, protecting care of me, to the last moments of my life; and I will laud and praise Your name while here, and eternally. Amen.

Sixth month, 1812. Recovering from a recent illness, I found an inclination to inspect my papers, written under a religious sense; and on reviewing that extraordinary vision, a fear impressed my mind, lest any hereafter should think I had exceeded the bounds of a finite creature; on which it occurred to me, let them call to mind my deep exercises, hard servitude,

²³ Isaiah 6:3-4

²⁴ Psalm 23:1

and bitter bondage in the iron furnace, in a land of thick darkness, which might be felt. I was so marred that I became a wonder to my contemporaries. Now after this, if a gracious God saw fit to bow the heavens and come down to touch my heart that it might melt. He being Omniscient; who, after such great favor, would lightly esteem the Rock of their salvation! Although He is the High and holy One who dwells in the light, and inhabits eternity, yet we are assured that He condescends to revive the spirits of His poor, contrite, humble servants, who tremble at His word.

Our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is our Intercessor and Mediator between God and man, when questioned how He would manifest Himself to His chosen ones, and not unto the world, sealed the promise thus; "If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."²⁵ This is not like the traveling man, that turns aside to tarry for a night, and is gone; but Christ takes His abode with them, a blessed guest, a teacher at home or within, that cannot be removed into a corner.

These openings in my mind, confirm a Divine intercourse; and now I leave it; and if it be thought right wholly to suppress it, or all I have written, the will of Friends be done in the Truth; for oh! I dread presumption; knowing the high tree must be laid low, and the low exalted; the green tree dried up, and the dry made to flourish.

Third month 14th, 1813. A deep acknowledgment of the mercy of God. As I lay in bed this morning, under piercing anguish of mind, on account of my grandson's departure from the Truth; my spirit, though in the deepest affliction, was permitted to ascend, I thought even to the Almighty's throne; and I there poured forth my soul on my own and his account; and condescending kindness vouchsafed, in abundant mercy, to unveil His benign countenance and let me know, that the assurances He had given me of His favor, I ought not to dispute; that if after all the evidences He had given me of His protecting care, I should cast away my confidence in Him, I should be worse than an infidel; and then a little hope was revived, that the poor erring youth would yet be visited in mercy.

This view, if only tending to bind up my broken heart, or to heal my wounded spirit, I accepted in thankfulness from my God. Oh! gracious Father, in Your accustomed kindness, keep this little flock, amongst whom I have often labored, the members of this meeting, when I am no more. May they never become a desolation, a breeding of nettles; but continue to come up in the nobility of Truth. Dear Friends! nothing will do but keeping near to God; dwelling as in His presence. Do nothing in His sight, that you would be afraid any mortal should see: keep a pure heart and clean hands, and the end will be peace. And this love I feel for the Monthly Meeting the members thereof are dear to me.

²⁵ John 14:23

Sixth month 2nd, 1813. Returning from our weekday meeting, in which I had been faithful according to the vision and sense given me, this intimation revived; "The Lord notices your shaking head and trembling limbs, and in His own time, will set you at liberty;" a blessed hope springing up therefrom, that though sown in weakness, I should be raised in power. Oh! blessed be His holy name! for He feeds the hungry with good things, but the rich and full He sends empty away.

Our Monthly Meeting at Whitehaven, in the eighth month, 1813, was to me a solacing season. Nothing heard but the voice of thanksgiving and praise. The grand adversary totally overpowered; not one cloud to eclipse the glory of the day, or dim the beauty of Zion.

Tenth month 21st, 1813. I have had this day, at the weekday meeting at Whitehaven, the most undoubted evidence of the overshadowing of Divine love and mercy, that I remember to have experienced; truly the wing of the Almighty might be said to be over us. His reconciliation was offered; and on the side of mercy, I saw more than I have freedom to write or speak. Oh, my dear friends! belonging to this meeting, especially those at meeting that day; let us prize the Lord's goodness to our souls. My love was such to you, that it appeared almost insupportable that even one of you should come short of the heavenly rest, which I beheld was intended for us: far, very far beyond the conception of any finite creature.

Tenth month 31st, 1813. Oh! the consoling visions I have experienced during my late confinement. A tribute of thanksgiving and praise is richly due to my blessed Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, for the sense He has been pleased to favor me with, that He has heard my prayers for my poor grandson; for a little before his death, the spirit of intercession was poured forth upon me, and my prayers were strong on his account.

Although I am exceedingly shaken, and my hand very unsteady, yet if it is right for me to leave to posterity, the memorable condescension of the Almighty to me, a poor worm, I shall be able to make it legible. Upon the 13th of twelfth month, 1813, sitting in the evening by my fireside, with company about me engaged in conversing, I felt a strong attraction heavenward, which I was glad to feel: and a gracious God seemed pleased to bow His heavens and come down, directing me to dismiss every doubt respecting my own exit; for that He would take me in His mercy, and support me through what might befall me; and my charge was, never more to doubt of my eternal rest. Also respecting my grandson, I was charged to doubt no more; for that repentance had been granted even to him at a late hour.

[This poor young man was confined to a sick room in the military hospital at Chelsea, with many others in the same apartment, which he very much regretted; because he could not attain to that quiet state of mind which he much wished for. He was brought to a sense of his mis-

steppings, and expressed the distress he felt for the uneasiness he had occasioned his grandmother, fearing he should shorten her days; and was very anxious to read his Bible. He uttered some striking expressions near his close, which are not clearly remembered; but the day and hour of his death accorded with the consolatory impressions which his grandmother had respecting him.]

The spirit of intercession was poured forth upon me with such energy, as seemed to rend the very heavens. O my soul! never forget that season, nor ever cease to extol a merciful God, in pardoning transgressors: in this instance, mercy has covered the judgment seat to a hair's breadth.

The Almighty's presence was so full and confirming, that I found it as much as my frail tabernacle could bear and live. I then experienced that no flesh could see Him in His majesty and live. Although once before I had been in a somewhat similar situation, yet I had not the sense given me at that time, that if Divine favor increased, my body could not retain the spirit. I now desist from pressing after more being exhibited, feeling overcome with the present extension. Oh, gracious God!

First month 16th, 1814. This day after Friends were gone to meeting, I was very low in mind; when the words of the prophet came very lively, that He would make the parched ground as a pool; and after sitting in this disconsolate manner, I was comforted with; "I am near you, though you know it not."

Eighth month 4th, 1814. Oh! the mercy of a gracious God to me in my old age and great bodily infirmity, who has given me to experience this morning that the just live by faith. Were it not for this precious faith, I should conclude myself just going, almost every moment; oh, blessed is Your holy name forever!

Ninth month 19th, 1814. This morning I again had the most strengthening, consoling evidence of Divine favor, that my poor frame could bear; letting me know that as my strength decreased, His watchful care over me increased; and although He had seen fit nearly to deprive me of my outward hearing, He had increased the inward so surprisingly, that I often seem to fall down before Him in astonishment; my mind being so expanded and enlarged, that as naturals abate, spirituals increase; and my dear Redeemer allows me at seasons, to repose as upon His bosom.

After this, the subject of this memoir wrote no more for public inspection; yet for many months, though in great debility, and in bodily pain, she continued to converse with her friends; most frequently respecting the goodness of the Almighty, and her latter end; on which occasion she evinced humble resignation and Christian hope. It appeared to those who attended her, that

the last effort of her pious life was prayer; but the words could not be gathered. She quietly departed about three o'clock, the 20th of second month, 1816, aged eighty-one. The testimony of the Monthly Meeting to which she belonged, may properly conclude these sketches.

The Testimony of Pardshaw Monthly Meeting in Cumberland, concerning Jane Pearson

This our dear and ancient Friend, was the daughter of Jonathan and Jane Sibson, of Newtown, near Carlisle, at the former of which places she was born, in the year 1734. Her father dying when she was very young, the principal care of her education devolved upon her mother, who, we believe, being conscientiously concerned, that she might faithfully discharge such an important trust, gave her a guarded and religious education.

In early life she was strongly inclined to gaiety; but by submitting to the powerful, heart searching operations of Divine love, clearly manifested, those natural propensities were brought into subjection.

About the eighteenth year of her age, she accompanied through this county a female Friend, then upon a visit to the meetings of Friends in these parts.

In the year 1757, being about twenty-two years of age, she was married to John Pearson, a religious young man of Graysouthen, within the limits of this meeting. In the course of several succeeding years, she passed through various deep baptisms and refining operations; and thus becoming obedient to the forming hand, she received a gift in the ministry. She came forth very acceptably in public testimony, about the year 1773.

In the following year her husband was removed by death, leaving her with a numerous family of children, some of whom died in early life, and the rest at different periods, after having attained to years of maturity.

Thus she had deeply to partake of the cup of affliction, and to become acquainted with sorrows; but relying on the mercy and goodness of Him, whose ways are all in unerring wisdom, she was supported through these trying and afflictive dispensations; and we believe she was favored to experience that state of perfect resignation and acquiescence to the Divine will, in which she could truly adopt the language of a tried servant of old: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"²⁶

Though she did not apprehend it to be required of her to travel much in the work of the ministry, yet she was not wholly exempted from this service.

²⁶ Job 1:21

In the year 1777, she visited generally the meetings of Friends in Westmoreland and Lancashire; in 1779, those of Westmoreland, Lancashire and Yorkshire; and in 1787, those of Lancashire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Somersetshire, Devonshire and Cornwall. Her Gospel labors in these visits were, we believe, very acceptable, yielding to herself the consoling reward of peace.

About this period she removed to Whitehaven, at which place she has since resided. She was diligent and exemplary in the attendance of meetings. Her ministry was sound, lively and edifying; and though her appearances were frequent, and sometimes large, she was particularly careful not to go beyond the pure openings of the holy Spirit. In prayer she was remarkably powerful and fervent. She was a truly affectionate parent and friend; tenderly sympathizing with the afflicted. In conversation lively, affable and instructive; being endowed with an excellent understanding. She retained her natural cheerfulness even to very advanced years, and her mental faculties unimpaired to the last.

Sometimes she intimated the serenity of her prospects, when the trials and exercises attendant upon humanity should terminate. Not many weeks prior to her decease, upon a Friend's taking leave of her, she seemed affected, and said, "Though I drop tears, I am not left comfortless. No: we have not followed cunningly devised fables. I think what I feel, might convince the whole world. Oh, it is marvelous! it is marvelous!"

At another time she requested that her two granddaughters, being all the family she had, would not grieve after her; but rather rejoice, that she was relieved from all her sufferings; "for I believe," said she, "that at my dissolution, death will have no sting, nor the grave any victory."

Second month 17th. Being much tried with infirmity and pain, she said with earnestness to those about her: "Join with me in petitioning the Father of mercies, to relieve me from my sufferings: Oh, that I had wings like a dove; for then I would flee away, and be at rest."

In the morning of the 18th, being in great bodily pain, she exclaimed: "My God, my God, forsake me not now." She was soon after seized with faintings. In a little time she revived, and affectionately noticed some Friends that had come to see her. On the 19th she slumbered much and said but little. Very early the next morning her cough became troublesome, and her breathing much affected. About this time she was thought to be exercised in prayer, but the words could not be gathered. She quietly departed about three o'clock the same morning; and we have no doubt but her pure spirit, released from the shackles of mortality, ascended to the celestial mansions, to receive a crown of righteousness and an inheritance incorruptible, that will never fade away.

Her remains were interred in Friends' burial-ground, in Whitehaven, on the 25th of second month, 1816, after a large and solemn meeting. She was about eighty-one years of age, and a minister about forty-two years.

Read and approved in our said meeting, held at Cockermouth, the 19th of third month, 1816; and signed on behalf thereof, by John Wilson Fletcher, Clerk to the meeting. And on behalf of the women's meeting, by Deborah Robinson, Clerk.

The foregoing testimony has been read and approved, in the Quarterly Meeting for Cumberland and Northumberland, held at Carlisle the 28th of third month, 1816; and signed on behalf thereof, by Thomas Stordy, Clerk. Signed in and on behalf of the women's Quarterly Meeting, held at the same time and place, by Lydia Sutton, Clerk.

Jane Pearson has finished her outward labors and inward exercises; and the reader has now finished her own memoirs, here presented for his perusal. Every thing pertaining to this life, whether conspicuous or obscure, must come to an end; but there is a life beyond the grave, that will continue forever. To engage us in a preparation for that life, our friend has written; to none of her readers, may she have written in vain. As for herself, it has been seen, that under accumulated discouragements, she sought for the evidence of final acceptance; and that her constancy was crowned with the assurance she sought for. This ought to animate the diffident and encourage the dejected. By her life, the lukewarm may be also reminded, that though we may be born members of our religious Society; yet having by nature the same propensities as others; we must be "born again," if we would become members of the church of Christ.

We have also seen that the journey through time, of our dear deceased friend, was in the path of tribulation. Independent of her sorrows as a widow and a mother, her "inward conflicts" and "searchings of heart," were equal to most that we read of.

Modest, diffident and humble, how came she then to expose her trials? Surely it was for the benefit of others; and to bear a testimony to the goodness of God in sending the Comforter into her soul, as promised by a dear Redeemer. These things set forth by her own pen, have a value in them beyond what could be produced by the pen of another. In laying down mine, I am inclined to say, Oh! that more full obedience was yielded to the power of Truth, through the various ranks of our religious Society; I include myself in this implied shortness; and my belief is, that it would then rise in its early simplicity and brightness.