



THE KING'S DAUGHTERS

B.A. RAMSBOTTOM

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Edited by B.A.Ramsbottom

2003

Gospel Standard Trust Publications
12(b) Roundwood Lane
Harpenden
Herts
AL5 3DD
England

ISBN 1 897837 24 0

This edition first printed 2000
Reprinted 2003

Printed by
The Cromwell Press
Trowbridge

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PREFACE

The publication of *Six Remarkable Ministers* a few years ago was exceedingly well received and requests have since been made that something similar might be produced. The result is *The King's Daughters*, the lives of sixteen godly women – the title of the book being taken from Psalm 45, verse 13. Some of “the King’s daughter’s” were rich, some poor, some with remarkable lives, others living in obscurity; but all were witnesses of the power of God in salvation.

As some of the accounts are autobiographical while others are written by a minister or friend, there is obviously a difference in style and length.

We hope the publication of *The King's Daughters* will prove of interest and spiritual profit to young and old.

B.A.Ramsbottom
October 2000

BUT I OBTAINED MERCY

Cecilia Sloane

By Christopher Woollacott, minister at Little Wild Street Chapel, London, from 1834.

It has been said that “truth is more strange than fiction.” The following narrative confirms the saying, while it also illustrates the distinguishing grace of God

The subject of this memoir was related to a noble family. To give publicity to their name might gratify a morbid curiosity, but could not yield any advantage to the reader. She will, therefore, be known only by her husband’s name.

Cecilia Sloane, from early infancy, was surrounded with every gratification which high station and great wealth could command. One of the first impressions she received was in harmony with the satire of the wise man; “There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good!” She lived in a splendid mansion, around which the park, with its green covering, extended several miles. The deer silently cropped the rich herbage, or playfully sported among the trees. Her dress was elegant, the table was covered with every luxury, and numerous servants were ever ready to gratify her desires. Her life was like a beautiful summer day, in which no envious cloud obscured the brightness of the sun. Who that saw her then would have hesitated to say, “The lines are fallen unto her in pleasant places; she has a goodly heritage”?

The education of young ladies at this period rarely included more than external accomplishments, which enabled them to shine amidst the gay circle of fashion. Such, at least, was the extent of Cecilia’s attainments. She knew very little of the God who made her, or his design in her existence. She was taught the church catechism, yet even this was never explained, and she remembered it only as a burdensome task. A little girl in our Sunday schools knows more than Cecilia knew, for almost the first sentence the child is taught to lisp contains the germ of all divine truth; “Man’s chief end is to glory God, and to enjoy Him for ever.” It is lamentable that even now, there are many parents utterly indifferent to the

inspired precept: "Train up a child in the way in which he should go." Their neglect is productive of the most fearful consequences: "They sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind." Such was the result, as the sequel will show, of Cecilia's defective education.

There were no incidents in her early life sufficiently interesting to require notice. She was without care. The river at the extremity of the park whose waters flowed so tranquilly that they could scarcely be seen to move, may be regarded as an emblem of her existence. The words of the prophet precisely point out the character of her life: "Tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant."

When she had nearly reached her seventeenth year an event occurred which gave a new and painful character to her future history. The gardens belonging to the house were large, and contained almost every variety of plants and flowers, delighting the eye with their beauty, and perfuming the air with their fragrance. Among the persons employed there, one, a young man of showy exterior, attracted Cecilia's attention, and she frequently conversed with him respecting the names and properties of certain flowers. The distance between them* as so great that no suspicion was entertained by her friends of an improper intimacy. It seems, however, that a mutual attachment was formed, and for many months they carried on a clandestine correspondence without discovery. An accident disclosed their secret, and Cecilia's family were exceedingly distressed that she had so far forgotten her station in life, and the duty she owed to her parents and friends. The young man was immediately dismissed from his situation, and Cecilia was threatened with the lasting displeasure of her parents. She seemed to be overwhelmed with shame at her folly, and engaged in the most solemn manner that she would never see him or hold any further communication with him. After some time, her apparent contrition and humility were believed to be sincere, she was again restored to favour, and her life began to move on almost as tranquilly as it did prior to the discovery of this unhappy circumstance.

How painful it is to witness duplicity, especially in the young, from whom we had expected ingenuousness and sincerity! Cecilia was deceiving her friends. The correspondence was continued notwithstanding her solemn pledge to the contrary, and in an unhappy hour she left her home and married the man she had engaged to see no more. Her folly and guilt must be apparent to every reader. Perhaps, however, the evil

* While we can in no way excuse Cecilia's deceiving her parents, yet we cannot see that it is scriptural to regard "marrying beneath one's station" as such a terrible crime, however unwise.

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consequences of this false step are so evident in the following pages that Cecilia's sufferings will form the strongest appeal to young persons, inducing obedience to parental counsels, in reference especially to that connection which death only can terminate.

From the uniform kindness of her indulgent parents Cecilia expected to be forgiven, and also that some lucrative situation would be obtained for her husband. In this she was painfully disappointed. From the moment her marriage was known, they discarded her for ever. She never saw them again, nor received any intimation that she was forgiven. Solomon says, "The way of transgressors is hard," and Cecilia proved the truth of that saying. She mourned in secret her disobedience and deceit, but it was too late then!

Cecilia's husband brought her to London and engaged an apartment in the neighbourhood of the Seven Dials. The contrast between her former and present abode must have been exceedingly distressing to her feelings. At a very late period of her life the impression continued, though its bitterness was then gone. The magnificent and airy mansion was exchanged for one confined room, and the extensive prospect for the chimneys of the adjacent houses; the superb furniture for a few articles of the plainest kind; the luxurious table for the coarsest fare; and instead of servants anticipating her wants, she had now to perform the most menial services for herself. But in the humiliating comparison there was one thing more difficult to endure than all the others. Instead of companions whose elegant manners gave a charm to all they did, she had the society of her husband only, while every day rendered her more sensible of her imprudence in the choice she had so foolishly made. She was as unsuited to him as he was to her; and now, when she wanted sympathy, there was no one to whom she could impart her cares, no one from whom she could receive consolation. Her neighbours were all poor, and many were depraved. She was as poor as any, but she never sank to their level or practised their vices.

It is due to her husband to state that, although he was bitterly disappointed by the continued silence of Cecilia's friends, he treated her kindly, and laboured hard to supply her wants.

The birth of a son, when she had been married rather more than a year, though it increased her difficulties, lessened their pressure; she had something to love now. For her child's sake she cheerfully endured privation and toil. There were moments when her thoughts would revert sadly to her former condition when she dwelt with her family and knew no want, yet even then the sight of her child would banish the feeling of regret

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and fill her heart with gladness. How tender and self-sacrificing is a mother's love! The God of all grace refers to it to illustrate His affection to His chosen people: "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you. and ye shall be comforted in Zion."

Thus the first ten years of her married life were spent. She had at intervals endeavoured to obtain some notice from her family, but her efforts were entirely unsuccessful; her letters were returned unopened, and not one indication of remembrance ever reached her. Between her parents and herself there was a great gulf. She could not pass it, and they adhered to their resolution; they would not pass to her.

Her mind was now more reconciled to her painful lot, and she clung with increased fondness to her child. There was nothing withheld from him that Cecilia could possibly procure, and she sought continually to promote his happiness. But she never taught him to look to heaven and pray. Alas! she knew not God, and was as unable as unwilling to speak to her boy concerning Him. All this time she had no Bible. Unsanctified afflictions harden, and poor Cecilia's heart was as hard as a rock. She had never said with the prodigal, "I will arise and go to my Father," nor with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." In those days there was no Bible Society to seek out the destitute poor and give the best of books. Even now, ignorance and vice abound, but the company is great who publish "glad tidings," and the Lord has said, "My Word shall not return unto Me void: but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

About this time an event occurred which plunged Cecilia into the depths of affliction and despair, far exceeding anything she had previously experienced. It is probable that her early habits prevented that union of feeling between her and her husband which is so essential to happiness in the married life. They were "unequally yoked." Perhaps, also, the consciousness of his inferiority was mortifying to himself and induced him to regret the step he had taken, by which her position in life was so painfully changed. It is only in this way that she could account for the mysterious and distressing event which must now be related.

Her son was just entering his tenth year, he was an interesting lad and was greatly attached to his mother. One Sabbath morning, when the sun was brightly shining and the church bells were sending forth their cheerful peal, he went out with his father, not to attend the house of God but to take a walk, intending to return in time for dinner. Cecilia made the usual preparation, and after waiting some considerable period after all was ready, she began to feel angry at their stay; but hour after hour passed, and her

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anger was exchanged for alarm. *From that day she never saw her husband or her child, nor heard anything concerning them.* They had not quarrelled, nor had he ever by a single word led her to suspect that he entertained an intention of leaving her. Everything connected with his absence continues to be involved in the deepest obscurity.

It would be vain to attempt a description of the anguish that was felt by the bereaved mother. As the day closed, and the dreary night succeeded, she listened with intense eagerness to every footstep that seemed to approach her dwelling, but as the steps receded she sank down in mute despair. The longest night will end: so did that long night of suffering; yet the day brought no relief, for the sad truth began to force itself on Cecilia's breaking heart: she was forsaken! Her poor neighbours, from whom she had usually stood aloof, now came around her, and with affectionate earnestness sought to encourage her still to hope. The poor are not destitute of sympathy, and they often help those who are poorer than themselves. But their efforts were in vain: Cecilia had ceased to hope, and like Rachel "she refused to be comforted."

When she began to think upon her past life, she remembered with bitter grief her ungrateful conduct to her friends. Her duplicity and disobedience had wrought upon her a heavy punishment; yet she did not confess her sin against God or offer up one prayer to Him for pardon or for succour. He was "an unknown God." "Like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke," she was stubborn and rebellious; and she said as Cain, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Her condition and prospects were indeed most dreary and distressing. There was no ray of light to relieve the gloom, no cheering remembrance to lessen her woe. All was *hopeless – helpless misery!* The language may seem too strong, and yet it simply expresses the state of her mind.

In after life, when she knew the grace of God and had become familiar with the sacred oracles, she used to say that David's "horrible pit and miry clay" must have been very similar to her experience at this period of her existence. In the sunshine of her days she never sought the Lord: in her poverty and toil she had always neglected the means of grace; and now, in her utter bereavement, she had no God to go to!

Reduced by the loss of her husband's earnings to absolute poverty, she was obliged to part with her furniture and clothes to buy bread. She was too proud to solicit charity and she knew no way by which she could obtain the meanest provision, when the remainder of her little property was gone. She had clung to life while there was any hope that her child would return; but now, when every inquiry had been made, and all had

proved fruitless, she only wished to lie down and die.

Affliction is a dark lane, where the enemy of souls is always watching that he may gain advantage over those who have to travel in that path. He was busy with Cecilia now, and she readily listened to his artful suggestions. The temptation was in unison with her feelings: it was self-murder! Poor thing – she had no dread of a future state, for she thought if death only as the end of her existence and of her misery. Her plan was soon formed; and she waited only for the approach of night as the fittest season for her deed of darkness. Scarcely had the shades of evening spread their gloom over her poor abode than she wrapped her cloak around her and went forth, firm in her purpose to end her life and her sufferings for ever.

How awful is the spectacle! An immortal being is about to rush into the presence of her Maker: a sinner, to the tribunal of her Judge. See the destroyer, as with malicious triumph he urges his victim onwards to eternal ruin. Is there no friendly arm to snatch the brand from the burning? There are but a few steps between Cecilia and the pit. Man's aid is vain. Lord save, or she will perish!

She was walking swiftly up Tottenham Court Road, a solitary path then, when she saw a number of persons entering Whitefield's Chapel. She stood still, scarcely knowing what to do. She thought that if she attempted to execute her purpose then, she would be observed and hindered. While she was hesitating, a young man very kindly invited her to accompany him into the chapel. He was quite a stranger, but his manner evinced so much affection and sympathy that she felt herself unable to refuse, and for the first time for many years she found herself in the house of God. She had not, at that time, relinquished her fatal purpose, but was as firm as ever in her determination not to live. She had only for an hour or two postponed the execution of her design. The service, and especially the singing, had soothed her troubled mind, but beyond this the service had made no impression. When the congregation began to disperse, the young man gave her a shilling, and entreated her to come again the next evening. She promised to do so, and they separated. The supply, small as it was, which had been sent just as providentially as the bread and flesh which the ravens brought to the prophet, enabled her to provide a little nourishment, which was greatly needed by her. Her feelings were also tranquilized, and for the time she put away from her the horrid thought of self-destruction.

At the appointed time she again went to the chapel and saw the young man to whose kindness she was so much indebted. Nothing particular

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occurred during the service, but when it ended he gave her a shilling, as he did on the previous evening, and very earnestly pressed her to come on the following day, which was the Lord's day. Such was her destitute condition that it was with great difficulty she could make herself sufficiently decent to be seen in the daytime at such a place. But she went. And now she obtained a blessing for which she had infinite cause for gratitude to that young man and to Almighty God for ever. The preacher seemed to have singled her out from all the congregation, as if his message was only for her. He set before her the ingratitude and rebellion of her whole life. While hearing him she felt that the Lord might, with strict justice, have cut her off in her sins. And now, the thought of the future, as it is set forth in the Scriptures, filled her with dreadful anguish: "the worm that never dies – the fire that is never quenched." Cecilia felt that if her purpose had not been prevented, this would have been her portion. But the minister was not a Boanerges only; he was also a son of consolation: and as the cry burst from her broken heart, "What must I do to be saved?" he pointed to the cross, and to the risen and ascended Saviour. The Holy Spirit applied the Word with power, and Cecilia felt that there is a charm in the name of Jesus. An old writer, commenting on the first chapter of Matthew and the twenty-first verse, thus writes: "O sweet name of Jesus! It is honey in the mouth, music in the ear and a jubilee in the heart." It was all this to Cecilia. She had now entered on a new existence. Satan was defeated and shrunk away ashamed, but there was joy in heaven.

When this service, so interesting and important to Cecilia, had terminated, the young man pressed her very earnestly to continue her attendance. She wept, but her tears were those of joy, for she had now found a "great treasure," of the existence of which she was previously in utter ignorance. He gave her a shilling, and they separated, to meet no more in this life. It is very remarkable that she never knew anything concerning him. Perhaps he was detained by illness or perhaps he was removed, in the providence of God, to some other part of the great city. But it is idle to inquire. Our safest course is suggested by the prophet when he says. "This also cometh from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." He never knew the consequences resulting from his kindness, but the act shall be had in everlasting remembrance.* This young man was an instrument in the hand of the Holy Spirit of "saving a soul from death"; a holier and happier deed than the conquest of a kingdom. "Suffer the word of exhortation," and "go

* What a lesson there is in the simple, humble witness of this young man!

thou and do likewise.”

Cecilia had been unable to thank her benefactor, but she went home with a lightened heart. She was willing to live now, that she might praise Jesus. She had found a Friend, one who “loves at all times” and is “a Brother born for adversity”; others had cast her off, but He would “never leave her nor forsake her.” Happy Cecilia! She served the Lord with gladness, and often longed to have her husband and child with her again, that she might tell them “how great things the Lord had done for her; but this privilege she never enjoyed.

Perhaps some persons, who are inclined to “limit the Holy One of Israel,” as if He were bound in every instance of conversion to certain rules, will conclude that there is not sufficient evidence that the “work was of God.” They think it essential to a sinner’s salvation that he should endure for a certain period all the horror and distress of soul which they have endured; but Cecilia was no sooner wounded than she was healed. Such objectors are reminded that there are “diversities of operations, but the same Spirit.” The interval was very short between the hour when the multitude on the Day of Pentecost were “pricked in their heart” and that in which they “gladly received the Word.” Those who knew Cecilia Sloane never doubted the reality of her conversion.

With some difficulty she obtained employment, and cheerfully toiled for her daily bread. She cared not how hard she laboured, if at the close of the day she could reach the chapel in time for the worship of God. Sometimes she suffered pain in her limbs, from having overtaxed her strength, and at other times she endured great privation, when she had but little employment: yet in every trial, she felt as the poet, when he said:

“And though my cup is mixed with gall.
There’s something secret sweetens all.”

“We glory,” said the apostle, “in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience: and patience; experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

She now lived in the liberty of the gospel for several years, during which there was no change in her outward circumstances. She laboured hard, but she had great enjoyments. The poor frequently possess a larger share of spirituality and comfort than the rich, and thus their covenant God compensates for the privations and toils they endure. “God hath chosen the poor rich in faith.”

One evening, after her day’s work was done, Cecilia was returning home. Her path led her through Little Wild Street, and when she had

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reached the chapel which is situated there, the sound of voices singing the praises of the Saviour attracted her attention. The tune was familiar, and this encouraged her to enter. Doctor Stennett* was preaching: and though his manner was less energetic than that of her favourite ministers, yet his soft persuasive tones interested her greatly, and she left the place with a gladdened heart. From that time she frequently attended there, as it was much nearer her residence than Tottenham Court Road: though she still preferred the chapel where the Lord had so graciously changed her heart.

After some time, she was kindly noticed by several of the doctor's members: and as she had not up to this period formed any spiritual acquaintance, their attentions were much prized. Familiar intercourse with the children of God tended also to enlarge her views of divine truth, and promoted greatly her establishment in the things of God. Solomon says that as "iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." It is much to be lamented that the example of primitive saints is so little imitated. Christians too much resemble a flock of sheep on a summer day, scattered over the common, and mindful only of their individual ease. Were the clouds to indicate a storm, or the dog to bark, they would soon congregate together, as if they knew that "union is strength." May the church consider this, and even now "speak often one to another." Days of persecution may be nearer than many think; but under any circumstances, the "communion of saints" will greatly advantage the people of God, by the strength and courage it will impart to endure and perform all the will of their divine Master.

While occasionally hearing the good Doctor, she heard with surprise of believers' baptism. The subject was quite new. Like many others, she had always believed that infant sprinkling was the good old way, and that any change from that must be an unauthorized innovation. She attempted to convince her new friends of their error, yet she could not help wondering that all the evidence of the New Testament was in their favour, and there was not one single text to support her views. One argument only remained, and that for some time seemed to her quite conclusive: "The good men whom she had heard with so much profit at Whitefield's Chapel baptized infants: and surely they ought to know what was right." Yet this did not satisfy her friends, nor even herself entirely: for she soon saw that the question is not, "What do others say?" but, "What saith the Scriptures?" She now examined the subject with seriousness and prayer, and the result of her convictions became apparent in her conduct: she was

* This would be Samuel Stennett (1729-1795), whose hymns appear in Gadsby's.

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baptized; and united herself in Christian fellowship with the church in Little Wild Street.

Dr. Stennett, whose name is still fragrant in the church, having heard from Cecilia the history of her eventful life, endeavoured to effect a reconciliation with her relatives. In this he failed, and they still adhered to their determination never to see her again. His intercession, however, induced them to settle on her a small annuity, to be paid quarterly. By this arrangement, she was mercifully relieved from the necessity of labouring for the bread that perisheth, just at the time when her strength began to fail. When the writer of these pages became the pastor of the church, he several times had the pleasure of paying her the quarterly allowance, which was handed to him for that purpose by the agent of the family. At her death, also, when he transmitted an account of charges for her funeral, and for previous medical attendance, the amount was immediately paid, without any comment.

In making a public profession and uniting with the church Cecilia found, like many others, that “in keeping the Saviour’s commandments there is great reward,” and, as the eunuch, she “went on her way rejoicing.” Her days were now free from anxiety respecting temporal things, and she was permitted constantly to attend the means of grace. Her cheerful godliness, also, rendered her society valuable to her fellow Christians. Indeed, there was always a sweet savour of Christ in her conversation, and the apposite manner in which she would introduce a text of Scripture, part of a hymn, or a sentence from the sermons of Whitefield, Berridge and others, whose names were embalmed in her memory, was exceedingly pleasant and profitable. The writer of this memoir remembers the solemn manner in which, a short time after he became acquainted with her, she addressed him in the following lines:

“O servant of God, your Master proclaim,
And publish abroad His wonderful name:
The name all-victorious of Jesus extol;
His kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.”

The death of Dr. Stennett was a great loss to the church, and was painfully felt by Cecilia. His worth is too well known to require an encomium now. He was succeeded by other pastors, among whom the names of Coxhead, Waters and Hargreaves are still held in affectionate remembrance. All of these, after labouring for a few years, were removed to other places, and have now entered into their eternal rest. In the month of January 1834, when the present pastor entered on his ministerial labours in Little Wild Street, his acquaintance with Cecilia commenced. At that

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time, she had just entered on her ninetieth year. She was still in the possession of her faculties; indeed her memory was remarkably retentive, but her bodily strength was nearly gone, and she was unable without assistance to come to the house of God.

Her enjoyments were very great. Every sermon was to her a "feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." She found, as she often said, "a full Christ for empty sinners; a rich Christ for poor saints." Her pastor heard her express her strong confidence in God, saying, "*No! how can I doubt after all the Lord has done for me?*" and then added with singular emphasis:

"He by Himself hath sworn,
I on His oath depend –
I shall, on eagles' wings upborne.
To heaven ascend.
I shall behold His face.
I shall His power adore.
And sing the wonders of His grace.
For evermore."

Thus she seemed as "a shock of corn, fully ripe in its season": she was willing to wait the Lord's time: yet she had "a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

When on any occasion her husband and son were mentioned, she always referred to them with the confident expectation of meeting them in heaven. She had prayed for them, and she believed that a faithful God would not permit any of his children to pray in vain. Of her other connections she ever spoke with gratitude. Her parents were dead, and scarcely any who had formerly known her were now alive. She felt that if they still existed, the change in her religious views and habits would have unfitted her for their society. She sighed not for her former splendour, for she had "learned to be content with the things that she possessed." Indeed, "Christ and a crust" were sufficient to make her happy. Of death she had no fear. He was a chained enemy, and she knew that her best Friend held the chain. She would frequently say:

"And when I'm to die, 'Receive me,' I'll cry,
For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why:
But this I do find, we two are so joined,
He'll not stay in glory, and leave me behind."

Her last Sabbath was spent in the house of God. She was on the mount. In answer to an inquiry respecting the state of her mind, she said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them: and Thy Word was unto me

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the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts.” That night she went to bed as usual, but she never left it. Before the morning an attack of paralysis deprived her of the use of her limbs, and of the power of speech. Yet even then she indicated by signs that she was happy. In this state she remained two or three days and then, without a struggle or a groan, she fell asleep in Jesus.

In the original account the author here makes various comments on Cecilia’s life, and then concludes:

In concluding the memoir of Cecilia Sloane, the reader is assured that it is a truthful narrative. The facts have been obtained by the author from several sources, all of which may be relied on with entire confidence. He gratefully acknowledges the kindness of an aged gentleman, who acted as agent for the family in the payment of her annuity; to whom he is indebted for much interesting information in reference to Cecilia and her parents. Other parts were communicated to him by his much esteemed friend and deacon, the late William Paxon, to whom she was personally known during many of the latter years of her life. But the principal part of the narrative was from Cecilia herself. She seemed to derive both pleasure and profit while she related the interesting and affecting events by which her life had been so remarkably distinguished. It may be further remarked, that she ever sought to magnify the sovereign grace of her heavenly Father, “who remembered her in her low estate: because His mercy endureth for ever.” Such also has been the sincere desire of the author. May the Holy Spirit deign to make this little account a blessing to many.

SEARCH FOR REALITY

Henrietta Gilpin

Early Memories

My mother having died when I was an infant, and my father being much engrossed in human learning, and not till many years afterwards impressed with the importance of religion, I do not recollect receiving any early religious instruction beyond hearing a chapter in the Bible and one of Spinkes's prayers read daily, morning and night, in the family. I was also required to take my stand among my brothers and sisters while we repeated the Church Catechism with perfect correctness to my father every Sunday evening, and this was followed by the reading of a sermon. I used to pay little attention to these forms, which constituted at that time the extent of our family religion. On the contrary, I often found them most irksome, my spirit being wholly set upon this world.

Still I felt sometimes convictions of sin when very young, but they were transient. The first I remember occurred when I was between five and six years old. I was unaccountably urged, out of mere curiosity, to try a foolish experiment, which though really harmless, I childishly supposed might prove dangerous. I pursued my purpose, however, in a reckless spirit till suddenly a cutting conviction of sin struck into me. I thought I was hardened, daring and presumptuous above other children, and I felt a measure of terror, with a vague expectation of judgment to come, that I long remembered with fear.

When I was about seven or eight, I used to hear more about the importance of the soul from my elder sisters, and then I would frequently make resolutions of being very religious, and set about the business most earnestly; but my natural disposition being very inconstant, I never could persevere long together. This was a great distress to me, but I would try again and again, and sometimes kept up for a good while, very constant in private prayer and laboriously striving against sin. I was often warned by my friends of the necessity of continuance in well-doing, and was taught to believe that converted people might turn back to the ways of sin again, and be eventually lost, which I always pondered with distress, believing it would be my own case. I thought it a most grievous pity that those who

had at any time been in a state of salvation should outlive that and become heirs of hell again. This used to make me consider death, even in its most violent form, as the greatest blessing that could possibly befall a person as soon as ever he was once religious. Accordingly, as soon as I had kept on (as I supposed) long enough in private prayer, etc., I began to long to die, as my best chance of ever getting to heaven. Once on a walk, I found I had got into a field with a bull, and though exceedingly afraid of those animals, I really felt glad in the hope that it would kill me, for I thought my pain would soon be over and I should be out of the danger of becoming wicked again. So again, when I awoke with a noise in the night, I really hoped there were thieves and that they would kill me. (We lived in a lonely house and were more than once robbed.) But death would not come, and after some time I got wearied out with my laborious religion, which was as hard to me as Egyptian bondage, and I began by degrees to relax a little and at last to let all go and return to the world again, but not without grievous smitings of conscience and bitter regrets. These efforts were thus repeated with little variation, and with shorter or longer success, at intervals during the remaining years of my childhood.

The Unpardonable Sin

One circumstance occurred, however, when I was about nine years old, which I will relate because my sin on that occasion was sorely visited on me many years afterwards. One day my eldest sister was reading some of the Scripture to us, and coming to that chapter where “the sin unto death” is spoken of, she stopped to comment on it, saying that it was a great mystery and that no one can tell what that sin is; adding that it was a great warning to us to resist sin in every form, lest we should commit it unawares. I felt while she was speaking an amazing curiosity to know what this secret mysterious sin could be, and indulging this curiosity, I thought of little else. At last, something seemed to whisper, “Commit that sin.” I was in the greatest horror, but still the temptation haunted me. I tried in vain to drive it away. “How can I commit it?” I said. “I don’t even know what it is.” And now I was glad I did not, lest I should be hurried into the commission of it, which I felt would be deplorable indeed. In spite of this, I was tormented by this fearful and unaccountable temptation to that degree that at last I desperately shut myself up in a dark cupboard and tremblingly said, “I commit it.”

Thus I sought to obtain quiet, but the moment the words were out of my lips, I was terrified. I would have borne anything to have recalled them; surely I thought myself sealed for destruction. I feared and trembled

greatly, but still a hope glimmered within that perhaps it would not be imputed to me, that perhaps that sin was kept secret on purpose to keep people from committing it. With this little hope, I knelt down and begged the Lord very earnestly to tell me if I had committed it, for I knew that if I had, it was useless to ask for forgiveness contrary to His positive determination expressed so strongly in Scripture. I therefore confined myself to entreating Him to let me know if I had absolutely committed it past hope. I had never in my life heard a word that could lead me to think that God ever sensibly speaks to the souls of His people nowadays, and therefore I have often been surprised to think what could put me upon asking such a thing. I kept begging and watching for an answer, and when none came in the day, I implored Him to speak to me in a dream and reveal the truth of my case to me. I so feared the answer that I hardly dared close my eyes at night, yet I longed to be at some certainty, for nothing, I thought, could be worse than suspense. However, days and nights passed, and nothing occurred from which aught could be gathered, and by degrees the follies and pleasures of childhood wore away my terrors. My impression is though I have forgotten particulars, that the remembrance would frighten me for about a year, but after that, I completely lost sight of the whole transaction, insomuch that I am not aware of its recurring to my memory till many years afterwards.

Legal Bondage

When I was about fourteen, I was confirmed, on which occasion I again set hard to work at my religion, which I continued as long as my natural inconstancy of disposition would permit, and then gave up as before. Many efforts of this kind all leading to the same issue recurred during my early youth. On my coming home from school at the age of sixteen, my father required me to attend the sacrament. This excited many anxious fears in my mind, for at that time I was quite worldly and dared not attend in that state. Yet I was kept by shame and fear from refusing to attend, which I thought would be deliberate avowal of irreligion. So after many debates in my mind, and some distress, I came to this conclusion—that as I must be religious some day or else perish, I had best set about it at once. Indeed I thought it an excellent opportunity, for I hoped that receiving the sacrament would be a strong tie to bind me to perseverance, vainly presuming that I should never be so wicked as to live in deliberate sin again after joining in that sacred ordinance.

I therefore prepared myself with great earnestness and many long prayers, together with diligent self-examination according to the routine

prescribed by Spinkes and Doddridge and such authors, and approached the table pretty confident of the goodness of my state. Often did I pity and wonder at those poor creatures who could dare to receive the sacrament unworthily, as I called it, though the most ungodly among them could not possibly be more ignorant of all that is signified by that ordinance, even Jesus Christ and Him crucified, than I was. My mouth indeed was full of the mention of His name, but I spake that I understood not.

After my return to school, I found it hard work to maintain my strict religion among my thoughtless companions. However, I succeeded pretty well on the whole, and as I patiently endured some ridicule and stood through one or two strong temptations, I began to think myself established. In about three quarters of a year more, I finally left school and returned to live with my family at Petersham, near Richmond. Here my religion seemed to flourish well. I became more and more earnest and constant in private prayer and more self-denied in my daily walk.

I have often looked back with surprise at the strict scrutiny I used to keep over my thoughts and actions—though I was perfectly my own mistress and my time at my own disposal, yet I seldom ventured to undertake the smallest employment, without seriously asking myself, not whether it was most agreeable to *me*, but whether I had reason to believe it was more pleasing in the sight of God than anything else I could be engaged in. This, of course, obliged me often to sacrifice even my strongest inclinations, which I found frequently very painful, but was supported by the thought that surely now I must be a converted character. Sometimes I would set apart a day for secret self-examination and humiliation before God. On these occasions I would take great pains to call to mind all the sins of my early youth and infancy, of which indeed I had a black catalogue to reflect on, for between my fits of religion I had been much given to deceit and lies and in many other ways worse than other children. All these I would reflect on, dwelling upon all their aggravated circumstances till I have often lain prostrate on the ground with shame and remorse, and wept over, confessed, and begged forgiveness for them; and I have more than once felt at such times that there was no indignity the meanest servant could insult me with, that I should feel *able* to resent. All this I used to suppose must be godly sorrow and genuine repentance, though I now see nothing in it but what was self-wrought. In this way I went on, supposing I had found all that was to be found in religion and that nothing now remained but to persevere to the end and so be saved. Thus I made great account of prayer and searching the

Scriptures, but of the answer to prayer or finding the God of the Scripture, I knew nothing.

The Unpardonable Sin: Fresh Concern

In this state I was when one morning I rose and began to repeat hymns or psalms as usual, while dressing myself. All of a sudden it was darted into my mind, "What is the use of all your prayers, etc? You had better leave them alone, for it is utterly impossible you should ever be saved; you have delierately and of free choice committed the unpardonable sin." And immediately the transaction I have already related was brought quite fresh to my memory. My spirit was thrown into great hurry and alarm, and I tried hard to fortify myself against it and withstand the fearful conclusion which was pressed on me as hard. I thought how pious I had become and endeavoured to consider that a proof to the contrary. After a while, I calmed myself a little and as an infant was going to be buried close against my window, which looked into the churchyard, I thought I would sit at the open sash and follow the funeral service, a thing I was particularly fond of doing.

Just at this moment, I heard the bell ring for family morning prayer below, and I felt much tempted to absent myself, so strong was my desire to witness this funeral. After some struggles, my conscience seemed to drive me to give up my inclination and go down, which I did. It happened that the chapter in course was not read that morning, but instead of it, that one that contains our Saviour's mention of the sin against the Holy Ghost, saying, "It hath never forgiveness, neither in this world nor in that which is to come." I cannot describe the terror that seized me while these words were being read. It seemed to me that the remarkable circumstance of this chapter being selected, just after the conviction I had had upstairs, was ordained to prove my guilt and stop my mouth. My whole soul was in an agony. I shut myself up in my room and spent the day in the bitterest anguish.

I dared not open the Bible nor pray, for I thought that I was utterly forbidden to do either. I can never forget the value and blessedness I then saw in the Scriptures and the envy I felt for those that might read them. I shut the book and laid it at the further end of the table and sat looking at it in deep distress. I thought I must give up all profession of religion and never presume to go to a place of worship, and how I was to drag on the rest of my existence, I knew not.

At last I ventured to go and tell my distress to one of my sisters in the faint hope that she might help me to a glimmer of encouragement. She

answered that the exact nature of that sin was not revealed and therefore it was not our part to enquire into it. I replied that I feared the way in which I had committed it cut off all hope that I was mistaken in the sin, for that I had actually been so mad as to say, "*Whatever* it is, I commit it." I then confessed all the circumstances to her, which quite staggered her, and after some silence she only said, "Well! It's astonishing how wicked children can be." Thus I got small comfort from her and went again to my room worse than ever.

Encouragement

At last as I was wandering about the house, I found a heap of books that had lain undisturbed for a length of time, and carelessly picking up one of them, I was somewhat struck with its title, which was *The Redeemer's Tears*. I therefore carried it to my room, for though I durst not read the Bible, I thought as this was only a man's writing, I would venture. Still I expected to be greatly cut up by reading precious things of a Saviour in whom I had no interest. I sat down on the floor in one corner and, opening the book, found a little treatise quite distinct from the book of Howe's, whose title had struck me, but bound up under the same cover, whether by the same author or not, I do not know. This little tract was entitled, *On the sin against the Holy Ghost, addressed to tempted souls*. I was agitated and astonished. I had never before in my life met with anything on that subject, and thought it could not be chance that it should have come into my hands at such a crisis. I therefore had a sort of expectation that it would pronounce my sentence one way or the other, and therefore began to read it through with much attention and anxiety. From what I recollect, I think the author must have treated the subject according to truth and with wisdom. He did not attempt to enter much into the nature of the sin, but shewed clearly that such as are under the guilt of it are utterly destitute of the strivings of the Spirit in their hearts; consequently they are hardened, insensible and dead, or else given over to desperation, with rebellion and hatred to God, His ways and His people. "And therefore," the author continued, "how black soever the circumstances of your sin may have been; how exactly soever (to human judgment) it may seem to resemble the sin against the Holy Ghost, yet, if you feel compunction and grief for your folly and madness—if the love and favour of God seem more desirable in your eyes than all the world—if you long for the influences of the blessed Spirit, whom you fear you have everlastingly offended I may venture to assert that you have not been suffered to sin the sin unto death. On the contrary, you have ground to hope that there is already a seed of

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grace springing up in your heart, which has provoked the malice of the accuser of the brethren against you. He seldom molests any in this way but those whom he is in danger of losing. Possibly you can remember that he never haunted you with this suggestion while you were worldly and careless, but now it may be you have begun to seek the salvation of your soul. There's nothing the devil fears like prayer, and he will surely be put to shame." The treatise was as nearly as I can recollect to this effect, and I found it very encouraging. Indeed, I could not but hope it would in the end prove true for *me*, and though still in doubt and fear, I thought I would venture to the church as the bells were ringing for service.

Deliverance

The first lesson was Isaiah 43, and contained the words, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord *your* Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." These words fell so sweetly upon my spirit and infused such calm, peace and joyfulness that all my fears vanished at once, and if I had tried to recall them, I could not have done it; and from that hour to this, they have never been suffered to return, even weakly—I mean on that one particular subject.

A week or two after, I was pondering the whole circumstance and thinking I should like to read again the tract which had been such a comfort to me in my trouble. I went to seek the book from its place, to which I had restored it after reading, but when I sat down to read the tract, I sought for it in vain. I turned leaf by leaf through the whole book and it was not there—nor any allusion to it in the index. I could not tell what to make of this, but so certain was I that I had been made to read it there, and so certain that it was not there now, that I was ready to think it miraculous, but I never told a creature what had happened.

The Mystery Solved

Several years after, this mystery was cleared up thus. My elder sister (not the same whom I had consulted in my distress) was employed with me in sorting my father's books after a family removal, and we fell into conversation about some of the authors and their writings. She observed that even good men were often very injudicious, and brought up as an example their publishing treatises on the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which, she said, was the very way that such things were put into

people's heads—adding that for her part, she never allowed such things to be in the house. Of course, this called to my mind all that I had gone through, and I said, “What then, have you destroyed any?” “Yes,” she said, “there was one in one of our books and I got it out without hurting the book at all—you can't think how cleverly it could be done, and the place, too, where it was noticed in the table of its contents. I would defy anyone to find out that anything had been removed from the book.” “I know what the book was,” said I, “it was Howe's *Redeemer's Tears*.” She answered, “What then, have you seen it?” I only said, “Yes,” but I felt a good deal, and thought what a mercy it was that, although it had been for years in the house, she had not been suffered to lay hands on it till just after it had done what it had for me! I think that doubtless there must have been some working of the Spirit in what I have related, though it was soon smothered and obscured again in the clouds of self-righteousness and legality.

A Deficient Religion

After I was thus delivered from that fearful temptation, I went on very smoothly and made, as I thought, great progress; and think I may say that after the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. I prayed, read, strove, denied myself in every way. In *word* I renounced all my own righteousness, and I truly thought I trusted wholly in Christ. But I now see, as clear as the sun, that all this while I was wholly ignorant of Christ and was under the law, though couched in gospel terms, and being under the law whose demands are infinite, the more I did, the more it required. Nevertheless, I kept on the whole pretty comfortable, because my gospel notions, such as they were, came in to patch up the deficiencies. It is awful to think how I, like others in this state, could teach and talk of Christ and fill my long prayers with the continual mention of His name and righteousness and yet know nothing in the world of Him experimentally, not having been brought through that tedious and killing work of pulling down off the natural foundation of self-righteousness, without more or less of which, none can be built upon the Rock. How did I neglect full one half of the Word of God, and thus never discerned that the promises are made to the *lost*, the *blind* and the *prisoners*, to which states I had *never* been *really* reduced.

As for *sensible* answers to prayer, I may say I never truly looked for any, and the forgiveness of sins I thought to be what would of course take place without our knowing it, if we were very religious; and that we must take it for granted without any inward experience of it. As for such texts

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as these: "I will *manifest Myself* unto him as I do not unto the world," I either explained them away or neglected them altogether, and I made no doubt whatever that I was a *doer* of the Word and not a hearer only, because of the strict watch I used to keep over my thoughts, words and actions, striving after usefulness to others, as well as inward holiness. I was on the whole very successful. My temper seemed quite subdued and every passion brought into subjection.

In this state I had a short illness, of which I thought I might die, but was so confident of the goodness of my state that I longed for death, and was quite disappointed when the complaint began to yield to the remedies. I am persuaded that, had I died in such a state, I should have said many triumphant speeches about my entrance into glory and being with Christ, etc. This has shown me since that a false hope may support a soul through natural death and therefore that an exulting death does not *prove* a profession of religion to be genuine, as Bunyan implies when he makes "Ignorance" to be carried over the river high and dry by "Vain-hope"; and the Scriptures say the same. For I firmly believe that it was of professors of this kind that our Saviour spoke when He declared: "*Many* shall say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name" (taught Thy Name to others) "and in Thy Name cast out devils" (as the Church catechism says – renounced the devil and all his works) "and in Thy Name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity" – for workers of iniquity all will be accounted who have not known Christ and been known of Him, whatever apparent excellence they may have attained to.

Thus I was alive without the law, and sin was dead; and as I made so sure of my being in a state of grace, it is no wonder that I had often seasons of much happiness. This natural joy and satisfaction I took for the peace of God and thought it one of my tokens for good because the word says, "Rejoice evermore," etc. Therefore I nursed it and knowing nothing (in reality) of the plague of my own heart and the temptations of the enemy, I could pretty easily maintain it, insomuch that I have often taken such delight in prayer and meditation as to pass the *whole* day two or three times in a week in those employments and have thought "If the world did but know this pleasure, they would leave all their vanities to enjoy it."

All this while I knew nothing of Christ, nor of that state of spiritual destitution set forth throughout the Scriptures by number-less figures, as the state to which He brings His people, and wherein He reveals Himself to them as a Saviour in *time of need*.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and therefore I did not suspect at

the time what I have clearly discovered since, and that is that my comfort was *secretly* based on my perseverance and success in religion. I used to go to bed very happy, and after I had lain down commonly repeated aloud two favourite hymns, one of which contained these words, "Jesus, Thou my guardian be, Sweet it is to trust in Thee," and in the other were these words:

"Mean as we are, by sins and griefs beset,
We glory that in Him we are complete."

These last lines especially I used greatly to enjoy on my best days, but I recollect I could not say them if I had given way to spiritual sloth, worldliness or any other sin during the day. I would then feel very uncomfortable and used to pray for forgiveness, but knew nothing of finding the blood of sprinkling to purge my conscience, whereby I should have experimentally entered into those lines, and without which they are but empty sound. I would secretly take comfort from resolving to be more watchful next day and generally lost the pressure of the sense of sin during the night; so that I began pretty clear afresh next morning, and if I succeeded better, which I usually did, all was right again.

"Are you sure you are born again?"

In this state I continued till some time after my removal with my family to Hampstead, and then I remember two occasions on which my confidence received a sudden shake inwardly, the effect of which was very terrible to me.

The first was this. I had been praying very earnestly in private as usual and came out of my room more than ordinarily happy and well satisfied with my state. As I went down stairs I was suddenly arrested by this question inwardly suggested: "Are you sure you are born again?" "Yes," I answered, "surely I must be." The question was repeated. I stood still and wondered what could put such a thing into my head, and answered it as before, only more at length, bringing up, as I thought Scripture proofs. Again, the same question was repeated more solemnly and, as it were, preceded by a "nevertheless." I was chilled throughout in a way I cannot describe, but held fast my integrity and tried to have the last word. Still it presented itself and I was obliged to go away with it sounding unanswered in my heart. This caused a dreadful feeling. I believe it was a conviction of the Spirit, but I thought it came from the enemy, and wore it off by constantly resisting it.

The second occasion was just before a sacrament. I had been earnestly preparing myself all the week and was at the time engaged in

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fervent prayer after long self-examination. If I remember right, I had been blessing God for enabling me to devote myself to His service, and begging Him to enable me to increase. Just at this moment I was conscious of an inward conviction that all this my religion was to come to nothing, to be utterly destroyed. I thought this came from my own imagination and was afraid of giving it force by opposing it; I therefore coolly tried to turn my eyes another way, as it were, and to pursue my former train of thoughts. However, I could not put it aside, for it increased to a most positive intimation of the dreadful truth, for such it was to me at that time. I was horror-struck and in great agony of mind, for I had no idea that the destruction foretold could be in mercy, as it is written: "Thou turnest man to destruction; again Thou sayest, Return ye children of men." Little did I think that in the loss of that specious religion I should but be losing *the shadow, the letter, the form*, to find *the substance, the spirit and the power*. I thought rather it implied final apostasy from grace (a doctrine which I held at that period).

The terrifying effect abode long; indeed, it never went off, for I believe the hopeless feeling it wrought went far towards making me reckless and desperate in the spiritual declension which commenced soon after this. In a few weeks more I found I had lost all relish for religion and private duties; gradually I left off prayer and watchfulness, and at last got quite thoughtless and worldly. I used to have intervals of bitter misery and anguish of soul, in which I would strive in the very fire to regain what I had lost. This was the very utmost bound of my desire, for I really believe I would have ventured my life for it, that that religion was the religion of the Bible.

Marriage (and Deeper Concern)

We had now removed to Buntingford and I was just twenty years of age. I was looking forward to my approaching marriage with a sort of hope that in becoming the wife of a clergyman, a sense of responsibility would urge me to greater exertion to regain and retain my religion, for I had never been brought to discover in any measure the depth of powerful truth which lies hid in those easily quoted words, "By *grace* ye are saved through *faith*, and that *not of yourselves*, it is the *gift* of God." It was at this time that I first had the doctrine of election brought to my particular notice. I found that some of my husband's family, whom I looked up to in religion, strongly held this doctrine and those allied to it, such as the believer's perseverance and the impossibility of *finally* falling from grace. I rather argued against them for the sake of making them bring forth their

proofs, for these things came quite new to me, and I secretly longed that they might be true as they opened a door of hope unknown before, my belief that I had once been a believer being still unshaken.

It was somewhat more than a year after my marriage, on the 5th May, 1830, that I began to feel a return of more abiding concern for my soul. I received a shock on that day by hearing of the sudden death of a worldly relation in the prime of youth and health. This caused much working of fear on my heart. Throughout that summer, I was in a very peculiar state. A little glimmer of light gradually began to “shine in the darkness”; but truly, “the darkness comprehended it not”; for I thought I was getting into a worse state than ever. The enmity of my heart was roused in a way I had not felt before. At times I felt irritated, as I may say, against the Lord for not giving me better success in my religion. Besides this, some of those books which in my former state had been my greatest favourites, now excited in me bitter indignation; I allude to Baxter and Doddridge. I did not yet understand their legal bias, so unlike Gwen, Bunyan, Romaine, etc. but supposed them to be every way faultless, so that I really thought my dislike was only against what was good, and yet could not restrain it. Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress* especially I had formerly delighted in, and governed every day of my life by its rules, to the very uttermost of which I had been able to conform. But now that I was beginning to be brought into a state of spiritual poverty like the Israelites, I was without straw and therefore could not deliver the tale of bricks. Wherefore I hated the task-masters. This arose to such a height that one day I took that book and angrily flung it across the room resolving never to pick it up wherever it might fall. It lighted on the top of an old wardrobe and I don’t recollect that I ever saw it again, though I felt for a long time exceedingly guilty whenever I thought of the top of that piece of furniture.

At this time secret doubts and suspicions used to arise as to the nature and reality of my former profession, but I could find no fault in it whenever I examined it, for there is not a grace of the Spirit mentioned in Scripture but what I had had the counterfeit of in times past. Then I would set apart a day for prayer and fasting before God, in which I would beseech Him most earnestly to shew me the truth of the matter. I would spend hours in examining my religion by Scripture and always came to the same conclusion that it certainly was genuine, that I would harbour no more of these evil questionings; but I was never suffered to rest long so. Soon all my doubts returned, and I very often wondered what would be the end of all this and what it could mean. During that year and the next, my state grew worse and worse to my own feelings. I gradually lost all

power to offer one connected prayer, though I had formerly been very fluent. I could no longer pray for others or even ask for faith or any other grace for myself. I would kneel down with my heart very full, but so dark and confused that I could not possibly put two words together. I would remain perfectly dumb for a length of time and rise without having uttered a word.

Prayer for Reality

At one time for weeks and months together the only prayer I could put up was: "Lord, I know not what conversion means. Thou knowest. O give it me!" I must have repeated this hundreds of times, I think. I was also brought to such a sense of blindness, that really some of the rooms in the Rectory used, for a long while after we had left the house, to convey to my mind the impression of dark rooms without windows, from the exercises of mind I had gone through in them.

After I had gone on thus for a long while without finding any answer or light on my path, or hearing anything from others that could explain my case, I began to give up all for lost. I was in despair of ever succeeding and resolved I would try no more, and even pray no more, except just to repeat over and over as I went about: "Lord, I am weak, be Thou my might; Lord, I am *blind*, be Thou my sight." Here I seemed at the worst, for having given up all hope of finding religion, I was dreadfully afraid of death and feared I should not get through my approaching confinement (my second), and to make my fear greater, the cholera came to our shores, and at last to our town and very door. This dreadfully alarmed me, but I did not betray my fears to others and seldom spoke of religion to anyone.

"They shall be all taught of God"

One evening when things were in this sad condition, I went to drink tea with a sister who lived at Hertingfordbury. There I met my brother Charles, who was staying with her. He was then in the established church and had been brought to some experience of the *power* of religion, which was gradually breaking him off in spirit from the prevailing empty profession around. He shared my husband's duty at that time for a while, and I had been a good deal in his company, but never said a word about religion to him. However, that evening after tea, he said these words in an accidental way, as it seemed: "It is very easy for a person to have an amazing deal of outward religion, and of *closet* religion too – prayer, reading, self-mortification, and everything else that seems good, with their mouths, heads, and (as they think) their hearts full of the Name of Christ,

while they are all the while turning their backs upon Him and the salvation He wrought.” This fell with an unspeakable weight of conviction on my spirit and the words, “Thou art the man,” seemed to sound through my heart. My sister thought the statement unguarded and somewhat overwrought, and said a good deal to soften it down a little. He heard her through, and then quietly repeated all, even more strongly than at first.

I believe I betrayed my emotion, for I remember he addressed me afterwards, but I was so utterly amazed and lost that I neither heard nor heeded a word more that either of them spoke. How I went home I know not; I only came to sufficient consciousness to perceive where I was when I arrived at my own door. Then I remembered with great regret that I had not required Charles to explain to me what the fault of such a religion was, for I had as yet no suspicion in what direction the error lay, and thought myself as far from finding out the matter as ever, when these words came unsought into my mind: “And they shall be all taught of *God*.” For a moment I was comforted, but as I did not understand the voice then, I concluded it was merely a suggestion of my own mind, and therefore put it almost quite from me, saying in my ignorance: O, that is only in the Old Testament spoken to the Jews. I don’t know that it means to allude to the cases of individuals like me now, in such a literal manner as I should need.” Soon after, I opened the Testament on the place where Jesus renews that promise, saying: “As it is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.” It came to my heart then very sweetly for a while.

“Freely”—The Power of the Word

After I was in my room at night, I felt a spirit of prayer come upon me, and a resolution to cry till I obtained this effectual teaching from God. I knelt by my bedside and thought I *could* not rise from prayer all night, but all in a minute, almost before I could lift up a thought to the Lord, a wonderful inward light flowed into my soul accompanied by a verse in the Revelation which contains the word “*Freely*.” “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life *freely*”; but it was only the word “*freely*” that was spoken to my soul, and that with an indescribable power. I saw in it what I had never conceived before. It spoke thus: “Let go all your prayers, all your earnest spiritual desires, all your victories over sin and self; turn away your eyes from beholding such vanities and take my salvation *freely*.” The feeling conveyed to my mind was that that one word “*freely*” filled heaven and earth. The light that came with it, and the discovery made by it astonished me so that I was quite overcome with amazement. “Oh,” I said

to myself, “does every Scripture doctrine contain such a depth within it when revealed by the Spirit? I wonder whether anyone else understands the word “*freely*”; if they do, I wonder they can help speaking more of it to each other!” Many other such things I said in my ignorance, thinking I should have such wonders to tell of it, whereas when I tried to explain the word to others, I found I was only saying the oldest and most commonplace things such as I myself had over and again taught the school children.

Then I found that the difference lay not in the letter, but in the *experience* and *power*. I am very sure that by our natural powers we can get hold of nothing but the letter; and therefore, if a person be not sensible of the infinite difference between these two kinds of knowledge of every truth, and cannot understand and sympathise in the feelings of astonishment excited in the breast of one who is beginning to have these things discovered to him, it is because they have never themselves got beyond the letter, and probably are ignorant that any better knowledge is to be found, and truly I can say that I found none among my former religious acquaintance that could understand me when I laboured hard, as I sometimes did, to convey to their minds what I had found in the word “*freely*.” I was like one that talked strangely to them, not that they denied the truth of what I held, but rather spoke as in this sort of spirit: “Of course it is so; have you never known that before? Don’t you remember the Scripture says so and so?” as if I could have learnt it from the letter alone! I felt that I could not make myself understood and quite gave up trying to speak of these things to others, not laying the fault to them, but rather to my own confusion of mind.

A Bright Light

A few days after this circumstance, my confinement took place and I remember that the power of what I had lately felt in some measure abode with me, and often returned afresh in a remarkable way thus. Almost as soon as ever I began to lift up my heart in prayer, I used to receive the impression of a bright light far, far away, and with it would come such a sense of utter nothingness in myself that I seemed to cease from everything –even from breathing – while the Lord Jesus carried on alone the work of my salvation. I don’t mean to assert that I did actually cease from breathing, or that the light did shine before my natural eyes. It was rather the figure or similitude by which the Lord saw fit to convey to my mind the lesson He designed to teach me; and I desire simply to relate these things just as they were, conscientiously, fearing on the one hand to

add ought for the sake of increasing the effect, or, on the other, to suppress any part for fear of giving offence. Indeed, I have one conclusive evidence that it was not to my bodily eyes, but to those of my mind that this light appeared, which is this. I remember that it seemed shining through clouds, whereas the situation of my bed in that room was such that no part of the sky could have been visible to a person lying down in it. But for this proof to the contrary, I really should have believed I actually *saw* the light.

This happened in May, 1832. It lasted a fortnight or three weeks, and after that, the effect in some measure abode with me, though it is surprising what darkness and legality still encompassed me. The Lord says: "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms, but they knew not that I healed them." So I was utterly ignorant of the way in which the Lord was teaching me by little and little, and therefore, because the sensible feeling of the above experience did not abide, I gave it up to a great extent as if it had all come to nothing, and thus lost sight of it to such a degree that I should never have been able to give a consistent account of it had it not been sweetly revived to my heart many times since.

Meeting with a Sister

At this time, I was entirely unacquainted with the principles of such of my sisters as had separated from the Establishment. Circumstances had never brought us together, nor had we exchanged a line since they left the Church [of England]. When I therefore heard that my brother Charles, after leaving Hertford (with the intention of merely passing a day or two with them) had found such union with the members of their connection that he had determined to cast in his lot among them, I felt astonished and mortified, not doubting but that he was sadly beguiled. At this I was the more disappointed as I had held him in very high esteem ever since what had passed on the occasion I have related; always feeling convinced that he had found that *reality in religion* which I was but darkly seeking after, as it is written: "The *secret* of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will *shew* them His covenant." But I felt no desire to communicate with any of them, especially as I had heard and believed numbers of false reports of various extravagancies and errors which they were *said* to hold.

But at the end of August following, circumstances obliged me to pass through town, and I slept one night at my sister Harriet's house. I had no intention of speaking on the subject of religion to her. However, a very few words passed between us as we were about to part next morning which had an effect on me I did not expect. She began to say something

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on those subjects. I interrupted her by saying: "I really am not able to judge of anything you advance, for I am very ignorant." She answered: "Dear sister, pray don't be too sure you know what being ignorant and blind means." I rejoined: "O, but I am ignorant and blind, and that to such a deplorable degree that for months together I have not been able to make out the simplest prayer, but just to repeat over and over, 'Lord, I know not what conversion means.'"

Her emotion betrayed the pleasure and surprise with which she heard me, and for my part, I was fully as much surprised at the lively interest and tender sympathy excited in her by a confession of what seemed to me so bad. After covering her face with her hands quite silently for some time, she at last said rather abruptly: "Then how can you keep friends with such authors as Doddridge? What can you find in them to suit a case like what you describe? I soon parted company with Doddridge, etc., when I began to understand anything of true inward work; and while I was burning those books I thought, What would my Hertford sisters think of me if they could see what I am about?" "Well," I said, "I can't say but that I think Baxter and Doddridge must have been very good men, yet what you have said makes me confess that my *Rise and Progress* lies covered with dust at the top of an old wardrobe where I flung it in my despair, but I have always thought I did very wrong." She smiled significantly, as much as to say that I should see more on that subject by and by, and she put into my hands Hart's Hymns and a manuscript book wherein was a copy of a few letters of Mr. Bourne's and Mr. Burrell's, and we parted with more than usual affection.

Prejudice

Short as this conversation was, it kindled a feeling of union with her which I had never felt in any religious intercourse with former acquaintances. Indeed, I believe I felt then for the first time in my life a little spark of the true unity of the Spirit. This, however, was soon obscured, for shortly after, circumstances occurred which excited very strong prejudices in my mind against my relations and their friends, whose conduct and sentiments were indeed represented to me under a fresh load of evil report.

However, another sister wrote me a few lines in consequence of what Harriet had told her of my state of mind, wherein she spoke affectionately and said she was sorry she had not come to see me when I had been in town, but had supposed me to be in such a different state as would have made our meeting only a painful one. The prejudices of my mind were so

strong that I did not feel any impression made by her letter. However, one expression abode by me. She said she had been stripped of *all* her former religion, and, truly, thought I, so have I.

This by degrees wrought with me to write and enquire of her whether she had found a better, for I was sure I had not. But no one can tell the jealousy, fear and mistrust with which I wrote that letter, in consequence of which it was not in the least a true index of the state of my mind. I was inwardly much broken and brought down by what I had gone through, but yet the terror I had lest I should be led into error made me express myself in many parts in what must have appeared haughty and positive language, implying that I was predetermined thoroughly to canvass, if not to reject, whatever was said in answer. This letter did not, I suppose, much invite a reply. Certainly, I received none, and this made me the more determined to have nothing to do with them, for I thought theirs was a very bad spirit.

“What, now? in 1832?”

Throughout the rest of that year I went on by myself, groping for the wall of salvation like the blind, and in spite of my resolutions to the contrary, I was conscious of my eyes being often turned inwardly towards Charles and his friends as being possessed of something I had not found. This was exceedingly strengthened by the persual of those letters of Mr. Bourne’s which Harriet had lent me. Had I read them before I understood them *at all*, I should probably have seen little more than common in them; but now, if I may so express it, I understood them sufficiently to see how little I understood of them. They made an impression on me I can never forget. I would read them till I was lost, and would keep turning back and back in the most absurd way to look at the date almost every half page I read. I kept saying: “What, now? in 1832? Is there any religion like this really existing? Is there anybody living just at such a simple place as Somerset Street, Portman Square, Titchfield Street or Oxford Street to whom the Lord really and sensibly speaks in these present days, and to whom He manifests Himself in this beautiful manner? I thought all such things had ceased since the Bible days. I do not think it can be true, yet I feel that this letter is no lie and written by no liar.”

The inward drawing I now had to go and hear what they had to say came, I believe, from the same source as Cornelius’s direction to send for Peter to hear words of him, which words his heart had been previously prepared to receive; and so had mine. And I had no more will or power to disobey the inward voice than he had.

Visit to the London Friends

Accordingly I made an excuse for my going to town in January, 1833, having heard nothing from them in the interval. I was kindly received and introduced to some of their friends, especially to Mr. Abbott,* and in the evening, we met for the purpose of their entering into conversation with me. I felt much embarrassed at first, expecting from past experience that I should have very great difficulty in making myself understood sufficiently to convey to their minds any just idea of the state I was in, and had been in so long. But no sooner had I begun to stammer out a few words all in confusion than, to my utter surprise, I found them received with entire sympathy and such a perfect understanding of my meaning that whenever I was at a loss to express myself, my sentence was taken up and finished for me by others exactly to my heart's content. Mr. Abbott, who especially spoke on that occasion, would take up the thread of what I was trying to say and add: "And then I dare say you often felt so and so, etc., and then such suggestions as these would come continually through your mind, and the enemy would suggest such and such things, and it would seem to you that you were only getting further and further from what you desired to find?" In this manner he would go on describing the secret workings and windings of my experience so minutely and so faithfully that it was to my feelings little short of a miracle. I found I had not come to inform others of what I had felt and where I now stood, but to be informed myself.

This was indeed new to me and convinced me that the truth of God was among them in the same way that the woman of Samaria was convinced that Jesus was the Lord when she said: "He told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" which words of hers came strongly through my mind at the time. I found my heart to join in unreserved union with theirs, and though I heard many things in their experience far above what I had yet reached, yet even such things did sweetly accord with, and explain to me, what little I had been brought to the knowledge of.

The instruction I received here, combined with the various exercises I had gone through, enabled me now to form a decisive judgment, and one which I know will be found according to truth, of the zealous profession I had formerly walked in. It was, as I may say, *crumbled to dust before my eyes*, "so that there was not found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to draw water withal out of the pit." I saw it to be a tissue of refined self-righteousness, and the sum of all that could be said of my

* Deacon at the chapel in London where Joseph Burrell preached.

then state is that I had “a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” All my attainments in that kind of religion I did now heartily renounce and have never since desired to regain them.

Return to Hertford

I returned to Hertford very happy, sweetly assured that I was in the footsteps of Christ’s flock. Being still very ignorant of the Lord’s way of dealing with His people, I took for granted that the light and comfort I now enjoyed would abide and increase and that I should never get into such darkness again, and that the rest of my way would be comparatively smooth. Especially I thought that as my great enemy, self-righteousness, was now unmasked and detected, it would no longer be able to deceive me to my great loss as formerly. I had been seriously warned by my friends to beware of being built up by others before I had been well pulled down; and above all, to let no one persuade me to *rest* short of finding some sensible manifestation of Jesus Christ to my own soul, and of His blood to my conscience, giving me the knowledge of salvation by the remission of my sins. I had heard some of the friends to whom I had been introduced give an account of the way in which they had been brought again and again to this soul-satisfying experience, and the continual necessity they found of obtaining a fresh application of the blood of sprinkling, whereby alone the believer can be cleansed from his daily sins and infirmities and walk with God in peace and equity.

The exceeding sober-mindedness and godly fear evident in those from whom I heard these things gave a just weight to what they said. Besides this, I had an inward testimony of the truth of them in the experience I had had, small as it was, of the experience and power with which the Lord could make His voice to be heard and understood in my soul, and that too in a time when I did not in the least expect any such communication, never having heard that such a thing was to be looked for. I had sometimes been told, I believe, that some deluded people trusted to frames and feelings and pretended to visions and revelations, but I had never met with such people. I have now no doubt that there are many under awful delusions of this kind as well as every other, but still I am very sure that those who are brought to experience the power of vital religion must take up the cross of having to bear the character of deluded persons and bigots among the great mass of high professors who know nothing but the letter.

I was at this time set upon obtaining the testimony of God by the witness of His Spirit in my heart, but little did I know the difficulties that

lay between me and the accomplishment of my soul's desire. Little did I think I had almost everything yet to learn, and, if possible, more to *un*learn; that I had yet an amazing deal further to come down. I feared opposition from without, but knew next to nothing of the opposition from within – the opposition that my own heart would keep up in every form against the new principle implanted, as it were a grain of mustard seed and which would be amply sufficient utterly to destroy it, if it were upheld by any power short of the power of God. I had to discover that the discernment of self-righteousness is one thing, and the power to subdue and expel it quite another. O, what a monster have I since found self-righteousness (or legality, which is but another name for the same thing) to be to my cost! The different shapes it assumes are past man's finding out. Though it seem slain at times, it always revives, and repulsed in one direction, comes on in another. Truly it may be compared to "the beast which had the deadly wound and did *live*." Nothing has ever wrought such self-despair in me as the continual fresh discovery of this sin has brought me to on many occasions. Indeed I have found the path to be most painful to the flesh up to the present time, and have never gained any real token for good but through much tribulation.

From this time I was quite at a point about my own past state, but had very little discernment of the professors by whom I was surrounded, or the nature of their profession. I dared not judge of the religion of those I had always looked upon as great lights, though I uniformly found their society bring on fresh darkness and misery to me, while they evidently considered the change that had taken place in me to be sadly for the worse. I found no refuge but in leaving them and their religion quite alone (as far as my judgment of them was concerned), and endeavouring to mind only myself and to give heed to the things which I had heard, lest by any means I should let them slip.

No Fellowship

Still I used to be present at the Jewish and Missionary Meetings which were held monthly in our drawing room. Though I found nothing to edify or encourage me to attend, yet I feared I might be doing wrong if I absented myself, for I had no light on the subject. These meetings consisted of most of the seriously disposed ladies within some miles of Hertford, and used to be conducted by one or other of those among them who were considered the most experienced Christians. My only wish was to conduct myself there so as to escape all notice. Nevertheless, I soon made myself very conspicuous by my utter inability to put in a word of

assent when the promises contained in Scripture used to be handed about as a matter of course from one to another and appropriated in the most easy, confident manner. I always held my tongue unless the customary words: "Is not this promise sweet?" or, "Is it not very encouraging?" happened to be personally addressed to me, and then I would say, "*Sweet* indeed if we can but obtain the Holy Spirit's application of it," or something to that purpose. These answers were received with a marked silence of dissatisfaction, as if they were judged to proceed from a morose or morbid spirit. And I am sure on the other hand, I was chilled to the heart by this sensible want of sympathy and union from those with whom I was still trying to keep up Christian fellowship. I felt my spirit withdraw further and further from theirs, but still I was in such bondage about the matter that I feared to absent myself.

The principal reason for which I have introduced the subject of these meetings at all is because I wish to give a short account of the breaking of this bondage, since it was connected with the first sensible help and light I obtained from the Lord after my return from my visit to my friends in London, and which came at a time of great need, as follows.

Further Prejudice

The joy I had felt when I first returned from them shortly abated, and my impatient expectation of finding great things all at once was disappointed. Especially I found that the earnest spiritual violence, with which I made sure of taking the kingdom of heaven by force, was not always at my command, so that I too often felt as dead, hard and indifferent to all spiritual things as possible. All this in my ignorance I had not laid my account for and did not understand. Therefore it disheartened me, and filled me at times with doubts as to the truth of those things which I had lately heard and believed. Though I had found such sweet union with my friends when with them, yet after I had parted from them, and the savour of my visit was over, I found I could not recall to mind what I had felt with any power. Our Saviour said that when the Spirit should come, *He* should bring all things to their remembrance that had been said unto them, and it is only *He* that can do it to any purpose. I had felt very confident that I should henceforth be proof against all that I might continue to hear laid to their charge of the principles and character of those whom I now so highly valued, but in my dark and bewildered state, I found this was by no means the case. The enemy did not fail to help forward my calamity, and often succeeded in filling my mind with

suspicious and prejudices, especially by means of some painful and protracted circumstances.

One morning I was especially exercised in this way, and when the post came in, it brought me a letter in which I was assured, with great apparent justice (and that by one I much respected), that certain among my friends were actuated by a very bad spirit. The enemy took this advantage to come in like a flood indeed. He crowded in his proofs with such force that I was quite carried away. He made it seem as clear as possible to me that they were walking in a false light, insomuch that I resolved utterly to renounce all intercourse with them, and inwardly trembled at the narrow escape I had had of being entangled in a dreadful snare.

“I AM THE WAY”

All this seemed certain, but still the question proposed itself: “What then will you do?” I could not answer, for I could not bear the thought of betaking myself to my old empty religion again where, like Baal’s priests, I found neither voice nor hearing nor anything that regarded. “What is true religion?” I cried. “Where is it?” “Who is right? There is a heaven, but as far as I can see, there is no way to it in all the world. As for *men*, they are all deceivers, *one and all*” I do not think I ever felt such anguish as filled my soul while I uttered these words under the pressure of deep temptation. Never did I feel more hopeless or further from the possibility of help. At last I threw myself on the floor in misery and cried out: “There’s *no way*, *all men are liars. All! All!*”

At this moment, these words were spoken to my soul with indescribable power: “I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH.” In an instant, I was set upon my feet again, delivered from all my trouble, and the discovery of *this way* was quite as new to me as if I had never heard of it before. Well may the Lord say: “Behold, I make all things new,” even in this sense, for I am sure that the very oldest and most well-known truth, when revealed by the Spirit to the soul, is new indeed, and that again and again so often as it is revived. I was now full of joy and made to feel Christ alone to be perfectly enough, so that for some time I forgot to think about any *man* or set of people. But when I came by degrees to call them [the London friends] to mind, I found the present light shone upon and revived what I had found before among them, so that my union with them was sweetly confirmed. Thus, like Israel of old, I ate of the old corn because of the new.

Profession and Possession

Afterwards I was reading in the Bible and came to this verse: “Who of God is made unto us *wisdom*, and *righteousness*, and *sanctification*, and *redemption*.” I dwelt long on this and felt much awe on my spirit in considering what a depth lay under those words, and felt a longing desire that the Lord would some day open them to me as He had just done with respect to those, “The Way and the Truth,” which I had found very blessed.

On the next day was one of the monthly meetings I have described, and I attended as usual. Though I had so lately been happy, yet my spirit sank to such a degree that I believe I looked more dejected than usual, for the lady who conducted the meeting addressed herself particularly to me. What she said and what I answered I forget, but I well recollect that she rejoined again in a tone of expostulation (though I had not referred to the text in any way): “Well, but surely we know that Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?” And then she looked round the room for confirmation of what she had said, and some motion of assent was immediately made by all the rest except one, whose case strongly resembled my own. I can hardly convey an idea of the way in which these words fell on my spirit, and in the light that I had obtained the day before, I saw so clearly the hollowness of that showy profession that my soul sickened, and glad was I to flee from among them. I can truly say that this final separation was not made in a lofty spirit, for my heart felt as if it were bursting and I found it difficult to refrain myself from giving way to a flood of grief till I should have got into my room. My bondage about this matter was from this time effectually broken. I never was present again, and they soon after, of their own accord, withdrew from our house and found another room for their purpose, which I was very glad of.

Sympathy from her Husband

It was a great mercy to me that my dear husband gave me full permission to act according to my conscience in this and other cases. In truth, the very same work was being carried on in his heart about the same time, wholly independent of what was passing in mine, except that the account I gave him of my first visit to London tended exceedingly to convince him that those who had conversed with me were themselves taught of God. He had not been in the same sort of state with myself formerly; accordingly there was afterwards some variety in the way he was led into the full truth. Yet I think I may say that the teaching in his heart and mine did truly harmonize, and brought us each separately to receive or

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reject the very same things, so that we found sweet unity of spirit continually.

I remember well so long ago as the first or second year after our marriage, when I would bemoan myself to him in the thickest of my darkness, he would say to me: "I believe some day you'll find that self-righteousness has in some way come in, but I have not light enough to explain how." I *could* not believe this then, because in the letter, I did so strongly hold Christ to be all in all, but I have since found he spoke very true. Another thing he used to say, which I could as little believe then, but which has been happily verified, and that was: "I believe firmly that God has begun to shew you some especial thing and I hope we shall both be enabled to watch what it is." He was thus made very tender of attempting to stifle any conviction either in himself or me.

I feel a desire to record two very sweet and remarkable dreams I had in the year 1833. The first I wrote an account of at the time of its occurrence, though I did not do so in the case of the second, yet I retain the most perfect recollection of it, and can faithfully declare that I here relate nothing but the simple truth without one addition or embellishment of the most trivial kind.

In my childhood, I never put the least faith in any dreams, and indeed grew up with the most sovereign contempt for those that paid any regard to them. Nevertheless, I can truly say that these have each of them afforded me great encouragement in the reflection, and though unbelief and the effect of early prejudice sometimes prevail to make me question whether they might not have been mere illusions like the generality of dreams, still, on the whole, I must express the fullest conviction that they came from the Lord to convey a hopeful expectation to my soul at a time when I stood much in need of it. Certainly the Scriptures fully declare that He has been pleased from the beginning often to hold communication with the souls of His people while their bodies have slept. Most, if not all, of the *Old* Testament saints had His will made known to them at times in this manner, and so had Joseph, Paul, etc. in the *New*. I have often thought the instance of Solomon a very remarkable one. Not only did God speak to him, but he was also made to reply in his dream, and his answer was favourably accepted of the Lord and the great blessing was pronounced upon him, the abundant fulfilment of which he found when he awoke. In the Chronicles, it merely says: "The Lord appeared to him by night," but in the account given in the Kings we are expressly told that it was in a *dream* by night, and the relation closes with these words: "So Solomon awoke, and behold it was a dream."

The First Remarkable Dream

In the summer of 1833, I was in much anxiety to come to a comfortable assurance of the genuineness of the work of religion in my soul, with some evidence of the Lord's favour towards me. Some of my friends kept urging me to appropriate the precious promises of the gospel, to lay hold on Christ, representing it as a *duty* to believe His love toward us individually. In my former profession of religion I had made no small attainments in this sort of *self-wrought* faith, but I had gradually yet powerfully been made to feel its insufficiency, and I was now desirous above all things to obtain faith that stands in the power of God, *not* in the wisdom of man. Still, my soul was in a very dark and bewildered state, with the feeling sense of blindness and ignorance; and when I cried to the Lord for some token of His favour and seemed to get no answer, I was sadly perplexed and often ready to conclude that I was wrong and presumptuous in looking for any such thing. Then I would think that perhaps my friends were right and that I ought to be contented with that self-application of the promises which seemed to satisfy them as it used to satisfy me. Yet I could not for a moment bear the idea of being driven back to betake myself to that empty religion again, and thus I was grievously tossed about and distressed. In this state I was when one night I slept and dreamed the following dream.

I found myself standing with one of my sisters in a sort of gallery enclosed by high, strong, iron rails, on the other side of which, and at a great depth below, stood a person whom it was infinitely our interest to prove to be our father. My Sister said of course he was so, and looked very contemptuously at me for putting myself at such needless anxiety as to doubt it. "But," answered, I, "I cannot see that he takes any notice of us, and that does not seem as if we were his children." I did everything I could to attract his attention in vain, and my fear and anxiety became intense. My sister then turned from me and went away, and I saw her no more.

As soon as she was gone, I cried out: "O dear, what shall I do? C. has so much more faith than I. I cannot possibly believe that he is my father because he does not look at me." I then seized hold of the railing and a great trembling came over me, for I thought the person began to withdraw. Just as he was within one step of being quite gone, he stood still and looked at my feet. I cannot describe the state of anxiety I was now in, of fear and of hope. After a while he gradually raised his eyes till at last he looked full in my face. The moment his eyes met mine, his whole countenance was enlightened with an inexpressible smile, full of the

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tenderest paternal love. "Now I know well enough that he is my father," cried I in an ecstasy. "Now I can love him indeed."

As I said this, a thrill of mingled love and joy ran through my frame. I sprang towards him, and neither the railing nor the great depth offered any impediment. He opened his arms and I was in his bosom in a moment. "Now," I said, "I am safe from all doubting: it is utterly impossible I should ever doubt again." He then, tenderly embracing me, took me by the hand and led me on. I had not gone far before I felt a misgiving in my mind. "What if I should be deceived? Perhaps after all he is going to destroy me." But when I looked at his face, he gave me the same sweet smile again, and I was as safe and happy as before. This happened several times over as we went along.

The road lay straight before us as far as I could see, but instead of continuing in it as I expected, he very soon led me out of it to a place where was a narrow, black-looking river. The path lay along the bank of this water and was so much sloped that it was as much as I could do to keep from falling in. When first we entered this path, my fears and suspicions returned, and I thought he meant my harm, but on my asking him where it would lead me, he smiled again and gave me an answer that satisfied me, and I went on rejoicing.

After a little while, I looked behind and saw a man seated on a white horse coming at a somewhat swift walking pace down a path that led into mine. "O dear!" said I with some fear. "When he overtakes me, he certainly will throw me into the river." I looked again earnestly for satisfaction to my conductor who still kept near me, and he smiled still and all was right. I then felt assured that the horseman would indeed throw me into the river, but I was as happy as I could be and perfectly willing that he should. Soon he overtook me and threw me in. My father smiled still, and as I was sinking, I uttered some exclamation of joy, declaring that my father had not cast me off. So I awoke, and behold, it was a dream.

At first I thought I never should lose the powerful impression it made on me. I believed and wondered at the kindness of the Lord in sending me so sweet and suitable a dream to instruct and comfort me. And I rose from my bed with a determination to cry mightily to Him for the fulfilment of it. But the enemy came in, and I gave my fool's ear to him and suffered him to rob me almost entirely. Carnal reasoning and early prejudice went far to deprive me of that sweet consolation which simple-minded people would have drawn from it, as I am sure Elihu would. Many times since it has returned to my memory and been made (as I believe) the means of helping me with a little help at times when I have been so much

in need of it that I have been glad to gather all that He gave.

The Second Remarkable Dream

A few months after the dream I have just related, I had a second, which was as follows. In the autumn of the year 1833, I was in much fear in the prospect of my confinement lest I should die without coming to a good supporting hope in my soul, the thought of which was a great terror to me. I had a trying time but was carried safely through on November 6th. About the second or third night after, I had no sooner dropped asleep than I was awakened with a cold perspiration all over me which I had never felt before in my life. I thought it had a very deathly feeling and I was much frightened. On being made dry and warmed, I fell asleep again and the same cold perspiration woke me again directly. This happened several times over; though I had hot flannels round me and a good fire in my room, I was ready to shiver with cold. I was now in great terror indeed. I could not endure the thought of death or even of dangerous illness in the dark and bewildered state my soul had long been in. I dared not go to sleep, and though I cried to the Lord, I seemed to get no relief. In this state I at last dropped asleep and had the following dream.

I found myself in a very dismal place. It seemed to be underneath some great building, for it was almost quite dark. The roof was low and vaulted and I could discern long rows of arches. I was exceedingly anxious to get out to the light, but every effort to extricate myself was in vain. Run which way I would, I was stopped by a dead wall at the end of the dismal, dark passage. At last I thought I could discern a glimpse of light through a very distant arch, but on rushing towards it I found I was disappointed of my hope of finding a door out. Instead of that I found myself in a square place, the walls of which were covered with tablets like tombstones, only these were black and frightful. There was light enough here to read, and I found that instead of epitaphs, they contained nothing but fearful accusations, which I felt to be directly pointed against myself. Some of them I have forgotten. One I remember was *A Lover of Mammon*. Another was *A Friend to Lies*. An unspeakable horror fell on me. I durst read no more but stood trembling with my eyes fixed on the ground, utterly afraid to raise them. As I trembled there, I heard someone approach and bid me follow him. Though I fully concluded he was going to destroy me, I could not help obeying, but still without raising my eyes from the ground.

He then led me some way and stopped, desiring me to look up and read the tablet before me. I told him I dared not, but he again desired me, I think once or twice. I obeyed with great trembling, when, behold,

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instead of these accusations, I read in large fair characters: *Food for the Hungry; Rest for the Weary*. My heart bounded and I ventured to look in the face of my guide and found He was Jesus Christ. He smiled most sweetly and asked me in the softest voice if that frightened me. I said, "No, Lord."

He then touched the tablet, which proved to be a door, for it flew open and displayed a vast variety of most beautiful things of very resplendent colours. With the choicest of these He immediately began to present me, and threw over my shoulders a long sort of cloak or robe of exquisitely beautiful feathers. Whilst He was thus enriching me, He smiled with such melting and softness and spoke so endearingly that I cannot describe it at all. And it seemed as if the same tender love kept flowing back from me to Him. He said I might present Him with some of the things He had given me and He would accept them. "O, may I?" exclaimed I, and the heart-thrilling endearments that kept passing between us by looks, smiles and words, as I offered and He accepted, I cannot by any words convey. Never have I on any other occasion, asleep or awake, been conscious of such sensations, except in my former dream, but this (to my feelings at the time) exceeded even that.

Then I awoke, and behold, it was a dream. My fears were quite gone, and I found myself looking to the Lord very earnestly with peace and a degree of joy on my spirit, telling Him I wanted no more than the fulfilment of the sweet dream He had condescended to send me, and which I felt did most strikingly set forth the desire of my soul.

After this time I was very earnest to obtain some clear manifestation of Jesus Christ to my soul, but was still like the man whose sight was but half restored, who saw men as trees walking. So I was yet very ignorant, and truly I knew not what manner of spirit I was of; for I have been made to discern so much sin, mixing itself with all the earnestness, that I have seen abundant cause to justify the Lord for keeping me so long in darkness. Especially I have been convicted of an inordinate desire of obtaining the testimony of men, that is, of those whom I now looked up to in religion. I longed to be able to commend myself to their favourable opinion by having something great to tell them of my prevalence in prayer, and I have often since seen the wisdom and mercy of God in frustrating these fleshly desires. Nevertheless, in great and undeserved compassion, He did not leave me long together even at that time without some little help to encourage me to keep on waiting upon Him.

Encouragement to Wait

One day when my anxiety was at the height, and I was constantly

entreating the Lord Jesus to reveal Himself to my soul, I was all of a sudden perfectly conscious of His approach. I heard as it were the footsteps of His coming. To those who have *not* known by experience what this means, no explanation will convey it: to those who *have*, none is necessary, for they have felt how every faculty of the soul seems to wake at the sound in breathless expectation, while its inward language is, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." This is what our Lord meant by saying: "My sheep *hear* my voice," and again: "They *know* my voice....they know not the voice of strangers." Also it is written: "They shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak; behold, it is I." This was indeed the case with me then, though I was thinking of other things when it came, for I was busily engaged in giving some orders to a servant. I had never felt this before, yet I wanted no one to explain it to me, and I hurried the servant away, big with expectation of what was coming, nothing doubting but that I was now going to receive the accomplishment of all my desires and prayers.

I went toward a chair, intending, as far as I remember, to kneel down by it, but before I had taken two steps, the Lord spoke to me. I heard nothing with my outward ears: indeed, I think He conveyed His meaning without any words at all, but certain I am that the exact purport of what was said to me was this: "Not *yet*, it would not suit you yet; but *wait on*, and the time will come that you long for, for you shall not be finally disappointed of your desire."

This was done in a moment, and all was past; but the power that accompanied it wrought such a transformation in me that I was as happy and contented as could be. Had any man told me a minute before that I was going to get nothing but the information that I must wait, without knowing how long, for that *sensible* pardon of my sins which I was expecting that minute, I should have been ready to die with disappointment. Nothing that any man could have said could have reconciled me to it, whereas when the Lord spoke, my will was brought in a moment to such sweet and cheerful submission to His will that I kept thanking and blessing Him for intending to answer me at the time that pleased *Him* best, and this in the simplest way without the least force or constraint on my feelings. My heart overflowed with thankfulness and I was quite happy.

But I was yet such an ignorant babe that I understood these things no longer than I actually felt them, so that after a few weeks, when the power of this was gone I knew not what to make of it. I thought of it with disappointment, and even wondered at myself for having felt contented.

Indeed, so little did I comprehend the work of the Spirit, that I actually repented of and regretted the sweet submission He had wrought in me, and thought I had given up the point so easily and thereby lost the blessing.

A Bitter Trial

Friday, August 12th 1836, I was taken very ill with an attack which ended in a premature confinement. I had had a similar trial the year before, but on that occasion was carried through with much less suffering. This time I felt very ill and had scarcely any hope of recovery. I really believed I had, at the most, but a very few hours to live and can scarcely describe what I felt. None but those who have had a near view of eternity can have any idea of what it seems at such a time. I had been very long in a state of dreadful spiritual death, engrossed in this world's cares, business and enjoyments, not without perpetual checks of conscience and temporary seasons of distress. I had also received many severe strokes, for I had been bereaved of both my boys in succession, to whom I was tenderly attached, besides being afflicted the previous year with a stillborn child. And now again, after having long looked forward to the possession of this babe, hoping it would prove a boy, I was sorrowfully conscious that it was also dead.

When first this bitter conviction came upon me, I was like one mad, full of desperate rebellion, and I could not even bring myself to ask for submission. In vain did my husband urge me to do so. I could do nothing but cry in an agony unconditionally for its life, that I might be mistaken in my fears and that animation might return. But I was soon made indeed to cease from my impetuous anxiety about my child's life, for at this time, I was not materially ill myself, but dropping asleep from fatigue, I soon awoke with such sensations and other symptoms of serious illness that I, as well as the members of my family that were around me, really believed I was about to die.

“Through Much Tribulation”

Now I was willing enough to give up my child – its life did not seem to me worth thinking about. I was in such terror for myself. My worldliness and backsliding, after I had had some hope that the Lord had begun a work in my soul, stared me in the face. Bitterly did I lament my madness and folly in wasting away the precious hours of health in vanity; and now death was come, I had no token of the Lord's favour towards me. I sought indeed now in my desperate case to cry to the Lord, if so be there

might be one ray of hope; but my head was so weak that my understanding began to fail when I attempted. Flashes of fearful despair came across me, during which I seemed to see the countenance of poor Mr. B (a person who had been well known to me and who had destroyed himself a week or two before) just before my face. I thought he was hopelessly bewailing and cursing his madness and folly, and that in a minute or two, I should join him in that dreadful employment *for ever*. Yet I was not *left* to utter despair, for many passages in Psalm 107 and other parts of Scripture seemed to say that the mercy of God *could* reach even *me*. Once I even believed that it not only *could*, but *would*. About twenty–four hours after, my child was born. It was a fine little boy, but quite dead – my rebellious tongue was silenced by what I had undergone, and I dared say nothing against it.

As I was gradually raised up again, I was filled with hope that better things were in store for me, and I believed it was for good that the Lord had spared me, and O, how exceedingly did I wish that I might have grace to employ my lengthened days in seeking till I should obtain that token for good, that clear, sure, evident work in my soul, the value of which I had lately had some idea of! Sometimes I seemed to faint so in my mind, and was conscious of such returning worldliness in my spirit, such hardness and deadness and indifference, being so easily kept off from spiritual things by the presence and foolish gossip of my nurse, that I feared all was going from me. Still a struggling cry was kept up through such violent and forcible opposition from the enemy as I do not remember ever to have experienced before, which has made me often to think I could enter into the word: “Through much tribulation.”

Divine Comfort

This continued about three weeks, and then I obtained a little help one day, which came as follows. I woke with my heart hard and dull on the morning of Saturday, September 3rd, but felt a desire to seek the Lord, and thought I would endeavour to do so when I should be quietly dressed and moved on to my couch for the day. But my heart felt so hard and dull and averse to prayer that I did not think I should be able. However, while the maid was dressing me, without any effort on my part, my heart seemed to kindle within me, and such a spirit of prayer was given me that I could not wait till I should be dressed, but began to cry to the Lord most earnestly in my heart. This continued after I was laid on my couch, with such a melting in my spirit that the tears kept running down my face, and I was obliged to cover my face (by pulling up the blanket that was thrown

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over me) to conceal my feelings from the servant who was still present, cleaning and arranging the room. I was not in the least disturbed by her moving about and pushing by and against me as she took up the carpet to shake it and again laid it down. My heart and all my thoughts were lifted entirely above everything here, and I felt indeed to abound in hope. For hours was this crying kept up within, and when it had gradually subsided, the comfortable savour still remained.

But the next day, Sunday, it was quite gone. In vain did I try to regain something of it. The whole day was spent in fruitless efforts, and all the beginning of the next week I was barren and dull within. It was a week of particular business, for I had decided upon going down to the seaside for the furtherance of my recovery the following week, being strongly urged to do so by my friends; and as I expected to be absent for some time, I had much to settle and arrange before I left. Thus my time, or at least my strength, was quite engrossed (for I was still very weak), and I could not fix my thoughts on anything but business, though I felt frequently a longing desire to find the Lord, and a very great dread of spiritual death, which made me look forward to my intended journey with the greatest fear lest the hurry of travelling, change of scene, and separation from such as fear God, with the loss of outward means, should quench the little spark of life which had lately been kindled within.

I continued to feel languid and lifeless in my soul until the afternoon of Friday, when, after having lain down to rest for an hour before tea time, I awoke with a sweet feeling upon me and found my spirit looking to the Lord. I said, "What is this, Lord? Is it from Thee?" And these words came in very sweetly: "I will not leave you comfortless" – very gently, as if they were whispered. My soul was still, and felt very peaceful. After I rose, and all the evening, I continued looking to the Lord, telling Him I really thought He had just given me a little sip of His kind tenderness and applied the above promise, and that I desired greatly to thank Him for His mercy.

The Promised Blessing

Next morning, Saturday, September 10th He did indeed fulfil this promise with much greater power than I had ever before experienced. I woke in the morning heavy and dull as usual, and some vexatious trifles occurred that disquieted me and entailed some trouble, some business upon me which fatigued me considerably, so that I went into my husband's study to lie down on the sofa till dinner time, as it yet wanted full two

hours to dinner. The maid brought me some coffee and a little dry toast, by my dear husband's desire.

I sat up to partake of this, and before I had finished, a feeling came over me which I had never felt before, but once in a much less degree. I can only describe it in Hart's words, of which it forcibly reminded me at the time, and which exactly express it: "I felt myself melting away into a strange softness of affection which made me fling myself on my knees before God." I did not fall on my knees, literally, yet my spirit fell down before the Lord and sweet comfort flowed from Him. I could not suppress my tears: and it was as much as ever I could do to refrain from crying out aloud. Had I been alone, I must have done so, but my husband was sitting in the room, and though I knew he would only have rejoiced in my joy, yet at that moment I wanted to be quite undisturbed, to enter into no explanations, but to lie quite still and hearken what the Lord would say concerning me.

So I restrained my feelings, though with much difficulty; and multitudes of passages of Scripture kept pouring into my mind with wonderful sweetness and power. Many accusations also from the enemy, who envied my happiness and tried to mar it, were all silenced and answered from the Word as fast as ever they came. I am sorry I did not write down any account of this sweet visitation while it was quite fresh and the power of it lasted, for now I only write from recollection and very much has escaped from my memory. Most of the texts I have forgotten, and the manner and words with which the accuser was answered, though some were very striking and all flowed in quite unsought and unstudied on my part.

Abounding in Hope

One I recollect. The enemy suggested strongly that what I felt was only fleshly excitement, self-wrought, that it did not come from the Holy Spirit, and that at the best it was but hope, though in a greater measure than I had ever felt before. Then this word came in: "That ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," and the temptation vanished, and I wondered with delight at the goodness of the Lord, and at His power and wisdom, who could make even the fiery darts of Satan to be the occasion of increasing my comfort rather than dispelling it, as he maliciously designed. This continued some time till the enemy seemed to retire for the time quite defeated in his attempts against me, and indeed, he could not venture any more for a long while to deny that the Lord had been with me of a truth.

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My husband soon left me as he had to visit a friend in Hertford and would not return till late. He perceived that something unusual was passing in my mind, and therefore, to avoid disturbing me, he went out quietly without speaking, and also gave orders to the servants not to go up to me at all for any reason unless I should ring the bell.

The Blessing Abides

Soon after he left, the great power and sweetness I had enjoyed began to subside and leave me. I felt sorry for this, but I thought to myself. "I know we are not to expect such great indulgences to be lasting. To have any at all is a great favour." Thus I was going to be contented it should go, when these words were powerfully whispered to me: "He made as if He would have gone further, but they constrained Him, saying Abide with us, and He went in to tarry with them." Such a suggestion coming at such a moment seemed to me as a promise of the like happy success, and so indeed it surely was, for on my pleading it earnestly as such to the Lord, He owned it by an immediate fulfilment. All my comfort came again – if anything, increased – and tarried the whole of the rest of the day, so that I had no thoughts to spare for my meals, and dinner hour and tea hour came and went without my observing them, so that (as I did not ring the bell) I saw no one till my husband returned at night.

I cannot describe half a quarter what I felt during that day, but I particularly remember that I did sensibly receive the answers to petitions long past and even quite forgotten by me until they were at that time strangely recalled to my recollection, and, I can truly declare, most sensibly answered. These very petitions, at the time of my making them, had, I well remember, seemed to myself put up, at it were, against a dead wall. I also remember that it seemed to me that the Lord had dealt more wonderfully and beautifully with *me* than with anybody else, for I could believe none so undeserving as myself, none so helpless, none so obstinately opposing. I saw and felt that He had led me from first to last in such a manner that heaven, earth and hell must be constrained to give Him all the glory of salvation. I could freely beg Him to take the sole management for ever of all that related both to my soul and body. I could unreservedly thank Him and bless Him for all that He had ever done to me, even in taking away my children. My whole soul seemed filled with gratitude and wonder, and I kept saying: "Lord, I never knew it was for this!"

Though the enjoyment gradually abated that night, yet a very sweet savour remained with me a long while, and a delightful remembrance of what I had felt that happy day, September 10th 1836. I never could think

of it suddenly, after having been occupied with other things, without a thrill throughout my frame, and I used to say: "Lord, I know of a truth that Thy love is better than wine (the wine of all earthly enjoyments whatsoever)."

Upheld in Deep Tribulation

(January 1839). It is now about two to three years since I wrote the foregoing account and I have kept no notes of anything that has occurred since; but O, if a faithful record could be made of the way I have walked from that time to this, I should, I think, be utterly ashamed that anyone should see it. It would be nothing but a register of mercies abused, patience and longsuffering trifled with, warnings disregarded, instructions slighted and perverted, and deliverances forgotten. How many times I have found the Lord to be to me a God that restoreth the soul, while I have been so often a base backslider. All that I have ever done can only be included in this sentence: "I have sinned and perverted that which was right."

Twice again I have been visited with a stroke similar to the two I have before alluded to. On 30th June, 1837, I was again carried through a premature confinement, giving birth to a stillborn son under circumstances of imminent peril, in which the medical attendant every minute expected my death for about an hour or so. Throughout that night, when I was supposed to be insensible, I shall ever remember the wonderful clearness of my spiritual senses. It was as if the spirit were clearer and livelier in its actings when disencumbered of the body. I seemed to fall into the hands of the Lord with awe and deep seriousness, but was kept from that agitation which would have proved fatal to my body by these texts, which were a sufficient stay to me: "Remember Thy word unto Thy servant upon which Thou hast caused me to hope"; and, "He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy."

The following year again I was for the fourth time seized in a similar way, though I was not this time in the real peril I had been in the time before; yet, from a very singular circumstance which was not discovered till the next day, everyone – even the medical man as well as myself – apprehended a fatal issue. I was dreadfully alarmed because I was in a very backsliding state when it came on, but I was powerfully kept from despair, and Psalms 78 and 107 were made "more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold," to the removing of all my fears. This happened on 2nd September, 1838.

“The Same Lump”

(Written 1840). The Lord was pleased to give me a very sweet and reasonable help which I did not put down at the time, but which I desire to keep in remembrance. My soul had been for some weeks in very peculiar exercise, sometimes relieved by a sense of support from the Lord. But these seasons were so short that it seemed as if I had not time to catch my breath before I was down again grappling hard with such miserable sensations and such discovery of sin that I thought I had no more ground to think that the Lord had any favour towards me than the most abandoned wretches on earth, for I could see no difference between myself and them. Once, under this feeling, these words came very sweetly: “Hath not the potter power over the clay, *of the same lump* to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” This sweetly relieved me, and my soul kept saying: “Truth, Lord, for it is indeed of the *same lump*, the *very same lump*. I never knew that before.”

This lasted but a little while, for in about a day, I lost all handhold and foothold and was down again so low that I said: “If this is the only way, I can never, never endure. I may have years of life before me, and it is quite out of the question to think of going on in such a path. The thought of even another month like this is dreadful. Like Pliable, I must get out on which side I possibly can.” For many days my case got darker and darker. It was impossible for me to think that the Lord had one thought or care for me, or that one of my groanings reached His ear. He seemed so utterly to disregard me.

Light Shining in Darkness

Things went on so, till one evening I was sitting with a friend who had dined with us, and my husband was reading to us. I began to feel so restless in spirit that I could no longer listen and felt inwardly urged to retire by myself into my husband's vacant study. When I could no longer resist this urging, I went. But on seating myself by the fire there, I thought: “What have I come here for? I have no thought either to read or pray; I'll go back again. I'm no better here than there.”

Just then, to my sweet surprise, the Lord showed me His face, and such a light shone on my dark path as I cannot describe. I was astonished and quite overcome to see that He had all the while been close by, carefully ordering every step, and that He would never leave me, but in the end would bring me to Himself. This wrought a mighty change indeed. My headstrong will was quite subdued in a moment, and I felt the sweetest submission to drink of what cup He pleased. Then I knew what it means:

Search for Reality

“My yoke is easy and My burden light,” for all the perverse opposition that makes it otherwise was gone. My will flowed so freely out after His will that I kept telling Him in the simplest way that I then deliberately and freely chose beforehand every dispensation, be it what it might, that He might intend to allot to me during life. The blissful feelings this submission brought with it have made me know experimentally from that time that our happiness consists, not in what the Lord’s will concerning us is, but in our will being swallowed up in His will. For some time there was a sweet interchange of smiles on His part and tears of joy and blessing on mine, praising Him not merely for now showing His kindness to me, but for all that He had ever appointed me; yea, for the very things that I abhorred and so lately would not consent to endure. What power but the Lord’s could have made such a transformation in my soul?

On Christmas 1839, which was soon after this, I composed the following hymn which was wrought out of the last few months’ experience. The 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th verses have peculiar reference to this particular exercise here relate:

Jesus, wilt Thou condescend
Still to be the sinner’s Friend,
Saviour, wilt Thou hear me?
Since for sin Thy blood was spilt,
Let it still remove my guilt,
Let me find Thee near me.

When Thou leavest me, Lord, alone,
All my evils to make known,
Ease and sloth benumb me;
Sins of every shape and kind.
In the flesh and in the mind,
Rise and overcome me.

When for help I try to pray,
And that help Thou dost delay,
Angry murmurs seize me.
Grovv’ling in that dreadful case,
Atheistic thoughts find place.
And no friend can ease me.

When no son nor stars appear,
And my soul is urged to fear
Lest Thou never own me;
When a beam of heavenly light,
Lets me see that all is right,
That e’en there Thou’st known me;

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Then submissive to Thy will,
Patiently my soul lies still;
 Who like Thee can teach me?
From the miry clay and pit,
On the Rock to set my feet,
 Thy kind hand can reach me.

Grant me by Thy Spirit, Lord,
To retain each wholesome word.
 When Thou dost instruct me;
To Thy feet with nought to give,
Full remission to receive,
 Thus Thou dost conduct me.

When again from Thee I stray,
Nor can I regain Thy way,
 Unless Thou direct me;
When my fainting spirits droop,
And the tempter hides my hope,
 Saviour, then protect me!

When he spreads the hidden snare,
Some kind whisper to beware
 By Thy Spirit send me.
Or when taken in the net,
Struggling, I but faster get,
 Even then befriend me.

Fill me, Lord, with godly fear,
And my praises deign to hear,
 For what Thou hast taught me.
Still reveal Thy smiling face,
That with joy I may retrace
 All the way Thou'st brought me.

Out of the Horrible Pit

(26th February, 1840) I desire to set down in simplicity, if the Lord will enable me, a short note of the very precious help I have received tonight. I have been in the horrible pit and miry clay indeed for some time (that is, for about ten days), everything that I had experienced during the last four or five months contradicted, and as it appeared to me, disproved. I felt dreadful murmurings and rebellion and enmity; then checks of conscience and a conviction that I was kicking against the pricks; intervals of bitter misery; utter powerlessness to repent, believe or pray; yet many seasons of earnest desire to find the Lord and a struggling cry which did not feel like prayer. Truly I began to feel myself empty, void and waste – “My heart a

desert waste and wild." I have been getting worse I and worse till today, when I seemed right gone for ever.

Tonight, after I had been complaining to Miss S. and she was gone to bed, my case seemed to have become desperate at last, and I felt I must prevail with the Lord or perish from the way altogether, for I could not possibly get myself out of the miseries, which I now saw and felt I had brought myself into, any other way. As I said, "Lord, are Thy strength and power great enough to reach me even here?" a little faith sprung up and I said strongly, "Yes, they are, but are Thy mercy and willingness great enough?" The spark of faith rose higher and added still stronger, "Yes, they also are." This surprised me, for I could not have said this for many days past. Then a mighty cry came into my soul in which I felt faith work. I had no plea but the desperateness of my condition, nor any hope but in the Lord as a "help in time of need," a Saviour in time of trouble.

Before I rose from the floor, on to which I had flung myself in my distress, I felt a great change. My heart was meekened and I could hear, as it were, the footsteps of His approach. I was very conscious of a power at work within, though but a still, small voice. When I opened the Bible, though I did it with sure belief and expectation that it would not be quite such a sealed Book and dead letter as it had been for some time, I was not at all prepared to find so great a change. I was quite astonished to find it talk with and instruct me everywhere. Every verse seemed alive and alight. O, the understanding and light that flows in when the Spirit shines upon the Word! It must be experienced in some degree to be in the least understood. Psalm 22 in connection with Hebrews 2 were unspeakably sweet to me. I feel at this time a great awe on my spirit at writing what I am going to put down, but I think the Lord knows that it is true.

Fellowship with Christ

He showed me that He had Himself been in my dreadful place and reminded me of petitions that I had often put up that He would conform me to His image. Every word of that 22nd Psalm was made most beautiful, especially the way in which He mixes up His people's case with His own. I did see and feel that I had brought my distress on by my own sins entirely, yet it was as if the Lord would tell me He had been in my case too. At first, I kept trying to put this from me, and I said, "No, Lord, for this is all my sin, and Thou never didst sin." I was quite ashamed to take it; I thought it too much. Still He would make me to feel Him very near as a Brother. And then I lighted on those words: "He is not ashamed to call them brethren," and it seemed quite to break my heart. O, these words

kept sounding in my heart: "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but Thou hadst done nothing amiss." All the Bible seemed to speak the same way. I kept finding unexpectedly such words as these: "Who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"; "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest."

He has by this commanded a great calm in my tempest-tossed soul. Though I do not feel great joy, yet I feel sweet peace and encouragement. The light is real and powerful, though not brilliant. It seems like the early morning which, though inferior to the blaze of noon, is yet quite clear enough to put one beyond all doubt of the reality of the objects discerned. Lord, grant that it may prove the dawn of day.

Another Bitter Stroke

During much of the remainder of the year 1840, I have to confess to my shame that I got back to my own sad place of backsliding and deadness to all spiritual things—not quite as entirely as I have too often done, but still very worldly in spirit and conversation, and consequently obtaining none of the Lord's sensible presence. Gradually, however, during the last month or two of the year, I began to anticipate with hope a return in *spirit*, because I used often to find my heart drawn out greatly in prayer to seek it and to plead with much wrestling at times, and many arguments drawn from former favours; and a secret cry seemed to go about with me when I walked or went anywhere, which I have never yet found vain in the issue.

Early in January 1841, after taking a little gentle walk for exercise (as I was desired to do), I returned so ill that it became too evident to me that the rod was again lifted up over me and would probably descend for the fifth time with the stroke I so much dreaded. I was sorely afflicted, but not suffered to rebel. On the contrary, I was enabled in a great measure to justify the Lord and to confess that my sin had called for this stroke. At first, I was much alarmed, for it was somehow very unexpected to me, and though I believed the Lord would restore my soul, yet it was very long since I had heard from Him, and I thought no doubt it would be by terrible things in righteousness His first voice would come. I thought I should find it very hard work to bear this in weakness and suffering of body. For some days, these lines of a hymn had kept running through my mind in a way of prayer:

"When Thy rod is lifted up,
Let me on Thy love repose.

Search for Reality

Stay Thy rough wind,
When the chilling east wind blows.”

Now I had not read these lines for years, as far as I know, and had neither considered nor sought to remember them at this time, insomuch that I did not perceive their meaning till my attention was attracted by finding myself continually uttering them to the Lord.

Encouragement

When I considered them, I thought them very suitable and found much encouragement to hope that the Lord's intention was to answer the cry He had (as I thought) put into my heart and that He would deal gently with me in my time of extremity; and truly He did, and that most wonderfully. This expression of Hart's came into my mind: “It is the glory of God to bring good out of evil,” with such a realising belief as I cannot express. My soul became filled with a living hope which I have several times felt before, and which has never been disappointed of its object.

This continued for days and was so powerful that I was sure it would find a happy fulfilment, but I could not quite discern what its object was. I knew that its chief expectation was for spiritual mercy, but it did overflow so at times and seemed so large that I thought perhaps it included a temporal deliverance also from the threatened trial. But I always felt an inward misgiving upon that head so that, on the whole, though the medical opinion was favourable, I expected that the uplifted rod would descend. Still I was kept very cheerful during the whole period of suspense, for I was much supported within. I was surprised indeed that the Lord should begin to return in this very kind and gentle way without chiding and rebuking first, but I kept telling Him that He is a Sovereign and giveth not account of any of His matters, and needeth not to be instructed how to deal with His people. Scarcely a day passed but I had something to cheer me in the course of it, which made patience very easy work.

One day I had a clear sense of being included in the everlasting covenant. This was accompanied with a great sense of emptiness and sin in myself. I saw that I was in no wise better than those who are left, and indeed, worse than many of them. But yet I could come boldly to the throne of grace and tell the Lord that He had Himself been pleased to put an everlasting difference between me and them for that His dealings with me were in Christ, and that I came to Him at that moment sheltered under cover of His death and righteousness, which was what they never could do. O what firm standing I found here! Another day, He gave me much light upon His dealings with me and cleared up many perplexities of such

long standing that I had begun to think I should never have any understanding of their meaning.

Support in the Distressing Hour

Thus my mind was so well entertained that I had no time to brood over my outward trouble much, so that I did not look forward to that impending crisis with anything like the fear and dread I should otherwise have done, considering how very severe these times of trial have always been proved with me. Indeed, it is surprising how little I dreaded it. I thought it would be very easy. But herein I was much mistaken. During the night of January 14th 1841, my trial came on, and death with it, as it seemed to all appearances. This was so unexpected that I was thrown into much confusion and alarm. I could not feel the presence of the Lord, and the enemy represented all I had felt as presumption. I cried in great fear and distress and had a reviving remembrance of His past mercies, so that hope sprang up high again. Then it was suggested that this hope was on a false foundation for that it rested only on past experience. This alarmed me, but this word came in most seasonably: "Experience worketh hope, and hope maketh not ashamed."

For some time (that is, for about eleven hours) I was to my own feelings in the very article of death, often thinking that one sigh would release my spirit: but I was perfectly sensible inwardly, though not to outward things. For some time I was up and down with fears as to whether I had ever been really founded on the Rock, till the Lord gave me this text: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." I cannot describe the childlike simplicity with which I was made to rest on this. Everything else, within and without, was quite out of sight and the impression of my mind was that I had got hold of the hem of His garment. This was enough for me during the rest of my extremity. I was satisfied that I should not make shipwreck. Bunyan's allegory was on my mind and I kept saying: "I am going through with my head quite above water; the lord does not suffer it to go under."

Divine Compassion

Afterwards I gradually recovered and the Lord still continued to deal most kindly with me. One day especially He gave me a most sweet view of all the way He had led me, of my own exceeding baseness, and of His own unwearied love and patience towards me. I was lying on my couch pondering on what I had been reading in Judges, especially these words: "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." Here the Lord showed me

to my surprise that He had always shown the same sympathy with me in all my afflictions, outward or inward, and then numbers of instances, which sweetly proved this, kept coming before me without my troubling my natural memory to recall them, till I could truly say that through all my peculiarly perverse carriage towards Him, and at the very worst of times with me, He had never once been able to refrain Himself when He heard my cry of distress. This was quite a new discovery to me and very beautiful. Very often from want of spiritual understanding, I had not perceived His hand, though I felt the support, and very often through unbelief I quickly lost sight of the help I had at the time been able to acknowledge. But I could now discern that His bowels of compassion had in every case yearned over me, and in proportion to the greatness of my trouble had been the clearness of the relief.

This sight seemed to endear the Lord Jesus greatly to my soul, and while it was quite fresh, my husband came up, and, without knowing what was in my mind, began to read some of the last three or four chapters of Isaiah to me. I heard with much comfort, and at last he came to this verse (I had forgotten there was such a verse in the Bible): “Where are the sounding of Thy bowels towards me? are they restrained?” This was indeed sweet to me. This sight of the way He had led me has in a measure either abode with me or else been revived again and again ever since that time.

Another thing He certainly showed me, which I had at times before had some intimation of, and that was that all the many severe afflictions I have been visited with have been, in the strictest sense, the answer to my own petitions in the following way.

About seven years ago, that is in the year 1833, I was under a peculiar influence in prayer for some months. I was groping in darkness and anxiety and in much confusion to find religion *in the power of it*. Here I was made continually to cry to the Lord to use *whatever* means He saw necessary to overcome the carnality and self-righteousness I was made so sorely conscious of. This cry followed me incessantly. I could pray nothing else. I think I must have said these words hundreds of times, and that without vain repetition: “God of the means as well as the end, be pleased to hear me. All the means in the universe are at Thy command; choose out any, ever so severe, but bring me to the knowledge of Thee. If Thou seest the rod necessary, spare it not. If one stroke fails in its effect through my stubbornness, inflict another and another, neither leave off till Thou dost bring forth judgment unto victory. Lord, I know I shall kick hard against Thee in this: I acknowledge that I shall rebel, murmur, complain:

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moreover, I shall pray to Thee to hold Thy hand, but Lord, I do here earnestly beseech Thee, let not Thy soul spare for my crying.”

These were the very words (only the sentences were more broken than they look on paper) that I kept crying from my soul to the Lord. I did not plan them, nor did I intend from one hour to another to continue using them, so that I feel sure the Lord set me to pray them for those months together. Often as I walked up and down the room with my eldest boy in my arms, I would look at his face with dread as to what the issue of my prayer would be, for I doted on him, but I found I could do nothing but begin the very same cry again. Soon after this cry had subsided, I laid that boy in the grave. The next year, his fine, healthy little brother followed him, and since then, I have sent child after child to the grave and been many times brought down to death's door myself with much suffering.

But at this time, these things were shown me in so different a light that the very same circumstance, which before seemed to add a keener edge to my afflictions, now worked in the very opposite way. It made my heart to sing for joy and to welcome all my trials, and quite disarmed them of their sting, for the Lord showed me He had foreseen all these strokes to be really necessary because I was so peculiarly obstinate and a greater spiritual fool than any living; that He could have inflicted them without asking or consulting me, but that He had wonderfully condescended to obtain my consent first and even to convert them into tokens of His favour by giving me the power to number them among the sensible answers to prayer I have received. In this sweet light I can truly say I rejoice in them and would not part with one.

Revelation of the Trinity

Some days after this, I got into great darkness and sorrow, being harassed by much temptation. This continued for several days, and rebellion began to work against the Lord for leaving me, as I thought, to be tempted above that I was able—when on Saturday, January 30th I received a letter from Mr. Abbott, in the reading of which a little light seemed to glimmer (faintly at first). He spoke of Mr. Burrell's having mentioned the darkness he had felt on Sunday and of his having obtained a full deliverance while addressing the three persons of the Trinity distinctly in prayer. I felt while reading this a spiritual resolution to try the same way, but all that day I was resisted and hindered by the enemy, who declared it would not succeed with me, for I had been always very confused in my ideas on the subject of that great mystery.

However, next morning while they were at chapel, I felt that I must try, let the issue be what it might, and to my surprise, I found the Lord very near indeed. He gave me great access with much power to lean on the merits of Christ and come to the Father through the Son. The power of the temptation was quite gone, and I could feel the Lord so kind that I was filled with shame and sorrow at my sinful ingratitude. I knew what Hart meant: "A sinner may repent and sing, rejoice and be ashamed." All that week I had daily, more or less, communion with Father, Son and Spirit. I wrote to Mr. Abbott, but on Sunday was thrown into much affliction and confusion by hearing of his sudden death, so that he had never got my letter. I had much searching of heart and much sin worked up. and through the week was dark mostly.

Last Sunday, February 14th I had a *good* day. I was sweetly sensible of the presence of the blessed Spirit. This increased gradually till evening when the Lord condescended again to give me the clearest light on all His dealings with me from first to last, with a sweet and unspeakable sense of peace with God, through the blood of Christ, applied by the Spirit to my conscience. I felt this to be a sweet and powerful entrance into the doctrine of the Trinity beyond anything I had felt in this way before, and far exceeding any mere light in the understanding. It did sensibly deliver me from guilt, and made me to feel assured that I should never come into condemnation; so that I could say (and still can in some measure), "Bless the Lord. O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy Name."

All the Way

(*May 28th 1841*). I have many times found a great sweetness in the review of all the way the Lord has led me. How peculiarly perverse and unteachable have I been! Like Israel of old, how soon have I forgotten His deliverances out of trouble and returned to the very evils that brought me into those troubles! I have done nothing but return evil for the great goodness which He has shown me, and to this hour I have to confess to my grief that I am bent to backslide continually, being tormented by an evil heart of unbelief, causing me to depart from the living God, so that I can feelingly say with Hart:

"If ever it could come to pass.
That sheep of Christ might fall away.
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day."

On the other hand, with what infinite patience and forbearance has He borne with my manners in the wilderness! How has He instructed me line

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upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, gradually bringing me to a clearer knowledge of Himself, when by my sins I have brought myself again into darkness and trouble! How often has He taken compassion on me and surprised me with His mercy, delivering my soul from death. my eyes from tears. and my feet from falling, so that I can at times joyfully sing:

“His love in time past forbids me to think.
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review.
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.”

This concludes Mrs. Henrietta Gilpin's gracious account of the Lord's dealings with her.

The following is an account of the last days of Henrietta (wife of Bernard Gilpin), written by her husband. She died on October 12th 1841, aged 34

September 28th 1841

She was in darkness and labour of spirit which now reached its height. She said to me, “My darkness is exceedingly great. I do not see how it can possibly be turned into light again. I remember the words: ‘Darkness which may be felt’; that is like the darkness of my soul now.” I encouraged her to hope in the Lord, and found she was very tender and had a hope, but it seemed this way: “Hope that is seen is not hope.”

About three o'clock I heard her groaning in prayer and she added very gently, “Will this dark, *dark* night never end?” I replied with an energy which surprised myself, “You are near Christ's deliverance.” We both of us continued praying secretly for about two hours, but she soon told me that she felt herself better. After a while she added, “There is a light in my heart,” and bid me look at the dawning of the natural light. “That,” said I, “is the light of the morning.” “Yes,” she answered, “and I think there is the light of a better morning in my soul. Don't you remember how you told me at three o'clock that I was near His deliverance? Just as you spoke, I was tempted to reply in bitterness that you were wrong; instead of which, a check passed through my heart and made me say inwardly, ‘Perhaps I am near His deliverance.’ This gave me a little turn and immediately I began to pray in hope.” After a further while she added, “O, this light, this glorious light! The hope has visited my soul. It has laid hold upon everything that the Lord has wrought in my heart *from the very first*, and it points forward into heaven itself.”

In answer to further enquiries, she spoke to this effect: “The Lord Jesus has most clearly and in the tenderest manner revealed His love in my

heart: and while I was entirely taken up with admiring and adoring His kindness, He made me to understand His peculiar attention to the circumstances of my outward condition. I felt ashamed, as thinking His kindness was too great, but the more I shrunk from it, the more He pressed it upon me, till at last I was made entirely willing to resign myself, my family and every other concern, together with the newborn hope which had visited my soul, into His safe keeping, so that I could not feel a shadow of mistrust nor fear of any kind. At the same time He plainly intimated to me that this peculiar support was intended to strengthen me in some approaching trial, which now therefore I expect.”

September 29th

Later in the morning it began to appear that her labour was coming on at the period of seven months, though the symptoms were not at that hour very urgent.

I went to Hertford at her request to desire the surgeon to be in readiness, and to bring back our kind friend Mrs. F. While I was there. she was suddenly taken worse and wrote me a line by messenger: “I am worse, return quickly with Mr. Evans, Mrs. F. and the nurse; but be not alarmed, for I am not.” On my return I found her very quiet; she seemed for a time in a happy state of surprise, and her spirit full of communion with God. She said, “I have not the shadow of a fear. He is with me and enables me to resign myself entirely into His hands. I am quite happy. Soon after you left, I rose and went to lie down on the couch thinking I had in prospect a long, tedious day of suspense. Beginning to ponder on what might follow, I opened the book of Proverbs and read. These words arrested my attention: ‘In all labour there is profit, but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.’ I soon passed them and found a gentle and very peaceful impression from another passage: ‘He that spareth the rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes.’ I felt satisfied of the love of God as my Father and that all my trials would work together for my good, and while I was sucking honey out of these things, the former words returned with a weight of the Lord’s reproof. It was as if He said, ‘*Attend to it—In all labour there is profit. but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.*’

Immediately these words were clenched by the following: ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine. for reproof. for correction, for instruction in righteousness.’ I was frightened and brought very low and entreated the gracious help of the Spirit to keep me from offending Him. I also prayed: ‘Lord, deliver me from this vain talking.’ Afterwards this further word was added and He restored my peace and

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hope: 'The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.' O, how I did cry with all my heart that I might always abide among the wise! When this was over, I suddenly became worse in body. I was alarmed for a moment, not having the requisite helps at hand, but the Lord's tenderness took my fears clean away. He kept assuring me that I should find Him at hand to supply all my need. So now I say again: 'Be not any of you alarmed, for I am not.'"

Throughout the morning she continued very ill but happy. In the afternoon, both body and spirit seemed spent and she had a time of dark temptation. She said, "The enemy presses hard upon me. He would have me mistrust the Lord, and maintains that my hope is only a delusion. At times I have yielded to him, which has made me very miserable." Later in the evening she spoke to this effect: "I have found a return of help from the Lord and my doubts are again scattered."

September 30th

Early in the morning, her state became very critical for a time. She had one severe and distressing fainting fit, and when it began to pass away, she fully considered herself to be dying. She said afterwards, "I was at that time in a state of unclouded peace; no shadow of a doubt perplexed me. I was also both ready and willing to die and indeed sorry to find that I was to return back again. Yet I can now submit to the Lord's will in everything." Afterwards all went on favourably till about seven in the morning when she was delivered of a stillborn son. Her first words to me were: "All is right. I have not one word of complaint to make." However, before that day was spent she began to be very unhappy at times through the intrusion of murmuring thoughts.

October 1st and 2nd

She complained. sometimes very bitterly, of these inward sins. Her rest in the Lord's lovingkindness was broken and she said, "I am afraid that sometimes in conversation I have betrayed the sinful want of submission I have felt within." All bodily symptoms were favourable and she quite expected her recovery.

October 3rd

She passed a day of conflict, though not without some victories, but towards the evening, became alarmed with symptoms of oppression on the brain. There was a favourable intermission, however, though she afterwards passed a wild and restless night.

Search for Reality

October 4th

She continued slowly getting worse, though the symptoms were yet by no means clear. In the evening she was in great pain and anxiety. At the same time her soul became oppressed with sore darkness and it was as though “sin revived and she died,” though not without vehement cries to the Lord Jesus. From eight o’clock till eleven, I continued by her bedside entreating for mercy and endeavouring to direct her oppressed spirit to the Saviour. She said, “O, what sin and rebellion I have found within, and how I have dared to entertain murmuring thoughts and at times strengthened them by giving them utterance, as I fear! Will He ever return and pardon me and blot out my transgressions as a cloud? I am now labouring in the dark. What fears I feel! What mountains of fears! Lord Jesus. Thou knowest my heart. It is neither life nor death, ease nor pain that I now care about, but my whole cry is for mercy, Thy rich *mercy*, Thy full *mercy*, Thy *free mercy*. That is all I seek, Thou knowest it.” I repeated the hymn, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me!” She said, “That hymn seems to me good a *little*; it expresses the thing that I want, but the thing I cannot now feel. O, how I long to feel it!” Afterwards I repeated to her the whole account of Hezekiah’s great conflict: “I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.” She followed me till I arrived at the last passage and then outran my words very seriously: “O Lord, *I am oppressed*, undertake for me.” She sank down oppressed with a heavy kind of sleep from which she awoke twice without apparent refreshment. The second time was about three in the morning when I perceived she was alarmingly ill. She said, “I fear lest I shall become distracted and die with the pain in my head” – and indeed, there was too much reason to apprehend this to allow of our speaking a word to her on spiritual subjects. Every medical means was most promptly attended to, but all was scarcely enough to avert the violence of the disorder.

October 5th

Throughout the whole day she could neither speak nor be spoken to. At night she was still worse.

October 6th

The symptoms were decidedly favourable, and as the power of speech returned, she began to utter expressions of adoration and joy. I am not

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aware that she described to any the manner in which the consolation was restored to her soul (her great weakness rendering it inexpedient to converse much with her), but her state during that and the three following days was a very blessed one; her faith full of resolution, and “for a helmet the hope of salvation.”

October 7th

In the evening, her sister, Mrs. Latter, came down. As soon as she saw her, she said, “Is that my sister? God bless you; I love you; I believe I love you in the Lord and am glad to see you. I do not now expect to recover, but the Lord has been very gracious to me, very gracious indeed, full of tenderness. I cannot tell you how tenderly kind He has been.” She then gave her an account of many of the particulars that have been related.

October 8th

She seemed to have a strong presentiment of her approaching end and a powerful revival in her heart of some very instructive spiritual teaching, which she had first had some time before.

Calling her sister and me to her bedside that she might describe this to us, she first asked me to read John 5. 24: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” She then proceeded thus: “I had those words opened in a wonderful manner to me; it began with a glorious perception of the presence of the three Persons in the Godhead. My heart was filled with reconciliation through the blood of Christ, which brought in the Father’s love, all through the application of the Holy Ghost. Had I never heard of the doctrine of the Trinity before, I should have believed it from that day forwards. My joy was for a time suspended by the appearance of an awful shadow. Nothing was unfolded in it, but I was made to understand that this was the shadow of eternal death; but it was said to me: ‘This shall never be your portion.’ I was then made to pass on and behold a very bright and glorious light, wherein, as before, nothing was unfolded, but I was made to understand that it was the representation of heaven, and these words followed: ‘You are passed from *death* unto *life*: this glory – come it soon or come it late – shall be yours for ever.’ Now all this I saw and felt. I was so convinced of the divine reality of it that I could have staked the life of my dearest husband or children *entirely* upon it. Yet, for all that, I cannot say the reality is so clear to me now. Nevertheless, Lord, I appeal to Thee; I believe that teaching was from Thee and I perceive that now while

I speak to Thee, Thou dost not contradict what I say.”

About the same time she requested me to read several passages to her, especially Psalm 42: “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.” She said, “That’s like me; so do I pant and long after the mercy of the Lord, and it is not far from me. I feel Him near and He encourages me to go on praying and using all the pleas I can think of, and I don’t think He will reject me any more than He rejected the Samaritan woman we read of in John 4.”

In the afternoon, she was restless and anxious. She called me and said, “Unless *you* will stay and remain with me all the evening and through the night, I fear I shall get no rest.” When I told her I must go presently to Hertford and preach, it being Friday, she said, “I am quite willing you should go, and be very cautious that you do nothing in compliance with my wishes which would bring a cloud over your own soul. Do be cautious of that; and when you return after service, come and stay with me if you feel it right, or I fear I shall get no rest.” This conversation troubled me because I knew that I could not remove her restlessness. I left the room inwardly praying. In a few minutes she said to our kind friend Mrs. F. “Go to my husband and ask him to return. I wish to see him.” When I came, she said, “The Lord has whispered a word *very softly*. It is that verse that begins: ‘I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.’ Now read that Psalm to me and perhaps the Lord will put me to Sleep upon it.” I read it and she begged to hear the last verse repeatedly, following it up herself very slowly: “‘I will both lay me down in peace and *sleep*, for Thou, Lord, *only* makest me to dwell in safety.’ That’s it; now, that’s enough for me. I don’t want anything better; now I think I can go to sleep.” After this, though she got but little refreshing bodily sleep, yet she continued quiet and her fears of being left without me (she said – I think) never once returned.

October 9th

She was stronger in body and the hope of her spirit was more triumphant. After Mr. Evans had seen her, he told her he hoped she would now continue getting better. On this she said to him, “You consider me better; well, the Lord is able to restore me for a short time. But I can say now, that’s not my concern but *His*, and I wish to abide in that mind, to leave it all with Him and to take no thought about it myself. But I must say, my own belief is that I shall not recover, but *die* very soon; yet I have a hope in my heart. and I believe it is a good hope too, and I tell you it is worth ten thousand worlds to have such a hope when we come

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where I am now.” Very soon after he had left the room, her countenance beamed with joy and she was so evidently in heavenly communion that her sister dared not speak lest it should disturb her, when presently she said herself, “The Lord Jesus is present and sweetly comforts me. I begged Him to open my mouth Himself, if it were His will I should speak to Mr. E. respecting my hope, yet no sooner had I done so than I heard a *taunting voice* within saying. ‘You have been making a vain boast and will have hard work for this by and by.’ I said, ‘Lord, I don’t think that’s Thy voice, for it is *taunting* and Thy voice is not *taunting*,’ when immediately the Lord smiled sweetly and told me that He loved me. Now, sister, did I say anything wrong to Mr. E.?” “No, indeed” (replied Mrs. L.) “for the Lord has shone upon it and approved it.”

About seven in the evening of the day, her sister M. came to see her. As soon as she came into the room she said, “This was very kind of you. I have wished to see you, but you are come to see me do the hardest thing I ever did in my life, and that is to die. I have done many hard things, but this is the hardest of all.” After this, she appeared in conflict for some time and then said, “I have been greatly exercised and I have waded through many deep waters and had many fears since your last visit in the spring, but now I have a hope, a good hope, a living hope, which the Lord has given me and I can put my trust in Him. He has delivered and He *will yet deliver*. God only knows the strength of the hope He has given me.”

October 10th Sunday.

She seemed still better in the morning and seemed to have a near view of the presence of the Lord. She spoke much of the continued conflict she was in because of the accusations of the enemy, which, she said, were very desperate; on this she added, “But the Lord comes in with the mighty torrent of His love and assuages all my grief. I feel I am in His hand whether for life or for death, and He has now given me that resignation to His will that I have no choice of my own; I only want to be assured of His love and I *am* assured of it, for I feel Christ's blood sprinkled upon my conscience, and He tells me that He has died for me, a vile sinner.”

Here her language entirely changed and she cried out, “But is there a hope for me? Tell me, is there a shadow of a hope for me? I cannot tell you the fears with which I am sometimes overwhelmed; my heart fails me and I fear lest after all, I have been deceiving myself. O, to hear those words ‘*Depart from me!*’ I have a great terror lest these words should be said to me.” Here she changed again and proceeded, “Still, I have a hope, a living hope which hath its foundation in Christ. Every hope fails, but this

hope fails me not. It does not fail me now and it is worth thousands of worlds. It is kept alive in Christ. Does it not say somewhere, ‘We are saved by *hope*?’ Now that is the hope that saves me, and I believe I am saved. Is it not wonderful that it should be so when I am such a vile sinner? I do not know how to express my gratitude, for sometimes all fear is taken away except a fear lest I should be raised up again and forget all His mercies and backslide again from Him. O, I fear that more than death, for I have done nothing all my life but grieve Him and pierce Him through and through with my untoward ways. I cannot tell you how I loathe myself, and yet I know I should be as bad again, if He suffered it, for all manner of abominations are in my heart, and more than all. But the Lord Jesus steps in and holds me fast; I am in His hands and He suffers me to touch Him – He suffers me, a sinner, to touch the hem of His garment.”

A short time after this she said, “Now read to me; be all the day long reading to me and feeding me with the crumbs of the bread of life, for I am very hungry for the bread of life and I am very thirsty for the water of life; and while you read, the Lord keeps sending little sentences into my heart and they support me greatly; keep feeding me that way with little crumbs and drops all day.” After this, she expressed great delight in hearing different passages, especially Psalm 27. 4: “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” She said, “That is what I desire now, to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. His house is in Christ, nowhere else but in Christ, and this the Lord teaches me now and He makes me to know what it is to dwell in Him, even in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Ghost. Where is that passage: ‘Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion?’ Read it, for that is just what I feel now—praise waiteth in my heart. I cannot tell you how I feel that praise in my heart is stretching out its neck; yes, it is all on the stretch, ready to burst forth because of His mercy. Could you have thought it possible that He should have mercy upon me and pass by all my transgressions and put His love upon me and fasten it upon my heart and never let it go? Therefore, though I cannot praise Him now, yet praise waiteth in my heart and I am sure if I am saved, my praise must sound the loudest of all for no one has been a greater sinner. Could you have thought it possible that He should have mercy upon me. a vile, corrupt worm, a reptile? I cannot tell you how vile I am in my own sight – a scorpion! O, that is it! I feel myself so very venomous that I can compare myself to nothing but a scorpion.”

I came myself into her room and heard the greater part of the above. Then, turning more especially to me, she repeated what she had said about

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praise stretching its neck. I said, "Do you know that is just the manner the apostle Paul describes the new creature in Romans 8, saying, 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' That word 'earnest expectation' describes in the Greek the *stretching forth of the neck.*" "Now does it?" she said. "How very sweet that is! Do turn to my sisters and tell them that. Now M., do you hear that? Is it not very encouraging?"

Knowing that I should be on that day (it being Sunday) a good deal engaged from her, she appeared at times anxious to take leave of me and to prepare my mind as tenderly as she could for the change she was convinced was approaching. Once she said, "It is almost over. We have lived together in the happiest union for nearly thirteen years, and now the Lord is about to dissolve that union. I thank you much for your unvaried kindness to me, and as He has blessed our union, so now may He bless our separation. And I tell you, I have prayed for this and I have found a promise that it shall be so, and I know it!" Also respecting our kind friend, Mrs. Fumival, she said repeatedly, "I have prayed, and I have found an answer. that the Lord will surely bless her and reward her sevenfold for her kindness to me. and I know the promise shall not fail; and if the Lord saw it needful to confirm it, I know that my faith could throw a mountain into the sea."

Her sister, Mrs. L., read to her part of Revelation 21, particularly this verse "It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the be-ginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life *freely.*" She was much moved and said, "Lord, Thou didst give me that verse and it was that word which once appeared so wonderful to me; yes, it was large enough to fill heaven and earth."

After hearing part of Luke 15 read, she said, "I have been like that prodigal son indeed. Were it not for Thy free grace, O Lord, I should have run into all manner of evil and brought myself to shame and destruction, but Thy Holy Spirit has kept me and guided me. I did not formerly feel, as I do now, power to pray to the Holy Spirit, nor had I formerly that sweet and powerful sense of His divinity which I enjoy now. I can now address Him in my prayers, for O, Thou blessed Spirit, Thou knowest, after all that Jesus has done for poor sinners, notwithstanding His wondrous and great salvation, yet such is the hardness and deadness of my soul that it would all have been in vain for me hadst Thou not condescended to reveal these things to me.

On hearing the word: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when

thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee," she said, "The Lord is with me now in these deep waters I am now passing through. I have many fears at times, but my hope rises higher than my fears and I believe I shall not suffer shipwreck." At another time she said, "The Lord has dried Jordan to the bottom before He has required me to step one foot in."

Shortly after this she gave an account of the state of her mind when she was taken ill, saying, "Now I will tell you how merciful the Lord was to me when I was first taken ill. My husband was gone to H. and I was quite unexpectedly taken worse. I knew I was in great danger and my life might be gone before any assistance could be procured, yet the Lord came so fully into my heart that I had not the least dread of any kind, either temporally or spiritually, for He graciously condescended to talk with me and to hold up my soul in communion with Him, and He said that He was my physician both for body and soul. It was some time before the help I was expecting could arrive, but the Lord kept pouring in His comfort into my soul. I cannot tell you how near He was to me, and He told me He would do everything for me. I could touch Him and He touched me and allayed my fears so that not one rose up all the time. I do not know how long it was, but it was more than an hour, though I thought it was scarcely a minute, for I shut my eyes and threw myself into the hands of the Lord as my physician, which He said He would be. and when I opened them – which I thought was the next minute – I was surprised to find myself surrounded with husband, doctor, nurse, friends, and all possible assistance was rendered while I had nothing to do but to lie still in the hands of the Lord and let Him do what He pleased. Surely then I have cause to praise Him and to commit all things into His hands."

After lying quiet for some time, she asked for 1 Timothy 2. 15 to be read. She then repeated the words: " 'Saved in child bearing, if they continue in *faith* and *charity* and *holiness* with *sobriety*.' Lord, how is it that I am saved, for Thou knowest Thou canst not lay these things to my charge; I have them not. Tell me, Lord, how is this? It must be that Thou hast given me these good graces though I have none of them, and so Thou dost save me in Thyself with an everlasting salvation. Yes, Lord, it must be so."

Then she began to speak at intervals of the unchangeable love of God in Christ, saying, "Were it not for that unchangeable love of God, how often must He have cut me off who have been a continual backslider from Him! I think if I am saved, my voice must sound the loudest, yes, the very loudest of all in His praise for having saved me. No one knows the treachery of my heart. Now all fear is taken from me but the fear of

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returning again to the world and of turning my back on such a Friend; *that* I fear greatly, for the Lord has given me such love to Himself that I would not for all the world grieve Him; yet such is the treachery of my heart that if left to myself, I should turn away in one moment."

In the afternoon she was rather worse and had also a return of conflict in hearing James, chapter 1. She said to her sister, "I want to ask you one thing. It says, 'For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.' Now I cannot help wavering. Will He then reject me?" Mrs. L. replied, "Our minister often speaks of that and tells us that wavering is in the *old man* to whom the Lord pays no regard and he need not expect to receive anything; but He hears the voice of the new man of grace that is in all that are born again." She seemed satisfied and glad to hear this and reflected on herself as having been slow of heart, saying, "I am more brutish than any man." Afterwards she gave me an account of what had passed, adding that she was delivered from her fears then.

After this she had an hour's sleep, but woke much disturbed and harassed, as she had been once before, with the bitter accusations of the enemy; also bitter blasphemous suggestions against the Saviour. She was not a moment at a loss here but referred them at once to the tempter, saying with great vehemence, "'Do not I hate them, O Lord, which hate Thee? Yea, I hate them with perfect hatred.' O, what hatred the Lord has given me to Satan, for he keeps hurling in a host of fiery darts to tempt me to think hardly of the Lord's dealings with me; but the Lord is my stay!" Many times during the day she referred to her death, saying, "They say I am better, but I know I am not. I know I shall not recover, but die." And once added, "I have been told so; the Lord has told me so, and I am in His hand." Several times she desired to see our friend Mr. Bourne, wishing us to send for him. "I do not," she said, "want to speak to him, but to hear him speak, seeing the Lord has many times blessed his words to me and perhaps He may again."

After this, being fluttered and in pain, she was reminded of her need of patience, when she became calm and said, "Speak to me one word about Jesus." Her sister quoted the words: "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else." Then she said, "The Lord sees the heart. He knows that I cry to Him without ceasing." At last, turning to Mrs. Furnival, she said, "*Now tell my sister the Lord Jesus has looked upon me and smiled sweetly*"

After this, she fell asleep but was roused for a short time by the arrival

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of her brother Julius whom she recognised and addressed tenderly, and at last said to him, “My tabernacle is being taken down, but I hope it will please the Lord to take it down.” Previous to his coming, she had asked for the words to be repeated: “I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety.” “The Lord,” she said, “has often put me to sleep with those words, and perhaps He will again.”

Her brother having left, she sank gradually into a sound sleep which increased in depth and intensity till at last we became aware she would wake no more in this world. After continuing thus for thirty–six hours, she gradually expired at seven o’clock in the morning of Tuesday, the 12th October, 1841, in the 35th year of her age.

Thus it appeared how signally the Lord’s first promise given her in her childhood had been fulfilled to the end: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.”

Gospel Standard 1973, published from an old manuscript, much of which appears in *Life and Ministry of Bernard Gilin*