

1829

An account of the gospel labours, and Christian experiences of a faithful minister of Christ, John Churchman

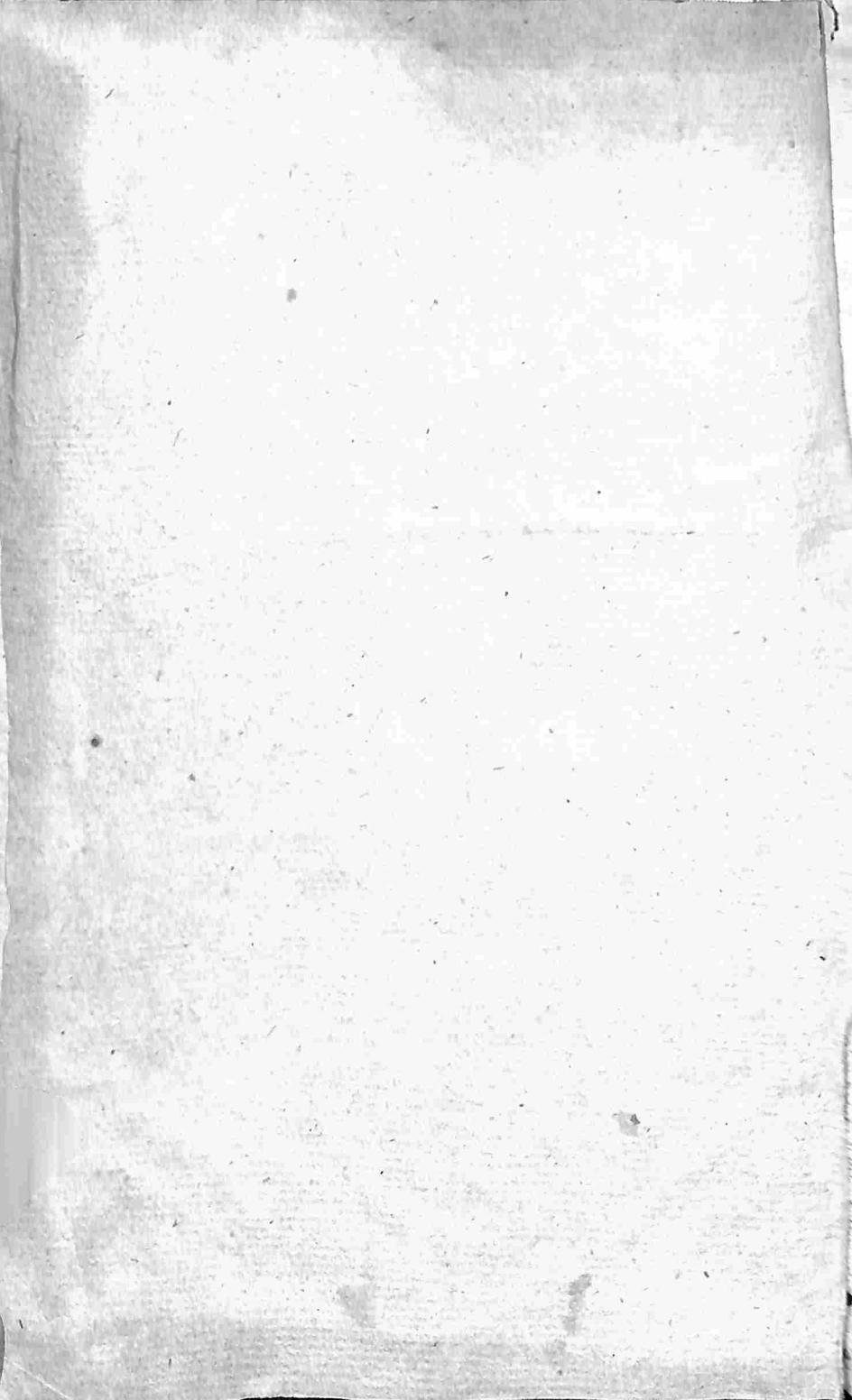
John Churchman

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John Cox Junr

A N

A C C O U N T

O F T H E

G O S P E L L A B O U R S,

A N D

C H R I S T I A N E X P E R I E N C E S

O F A

F A I T H F U L M I N I S T E R

O F C H R I S T,

J O H N C H U R C H M A N,

Late of Nottingham in Pennsylvania, deceased.

To which is added a short MEMORIAL of the Life and
Death of a fellow Labourer in the Church, our valuable
Friend *J O S E P H W H I T E*, late of *Bucks County*.

D A N I E L xi. 33. xii. 4.

*And they that understand among the People, shall instruct many.
Many shall run to and fro, and Knowledge shall be increased.*

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T O T H E
R E A D E R.

IN the perusal of the following pages thou wilt receive a pious man's plain account of his beginning in the weighty work of religion, and his progress in a life devoted to promote the cause of righteousness, and the real happiness of mankind.

Having experienced the Spiritual baptism which is essential to salvation, and abiding in a state of watchfulness and humility, he became, under the Lord's Anointing, a well qualified instrument for the instruction and edification of others in the way of Godliness, and by attending to the gift of Gospel ministry committed to his trust, and performing the duties required of him, he witnessed a growth from stature to stature, and attained to be an upright elder and father in the church, *being an example to the believers in word in conversation, in spirit, in faith, and charity.*

It is not for form sake or from a mere motive of commendation, that any thing is here premised

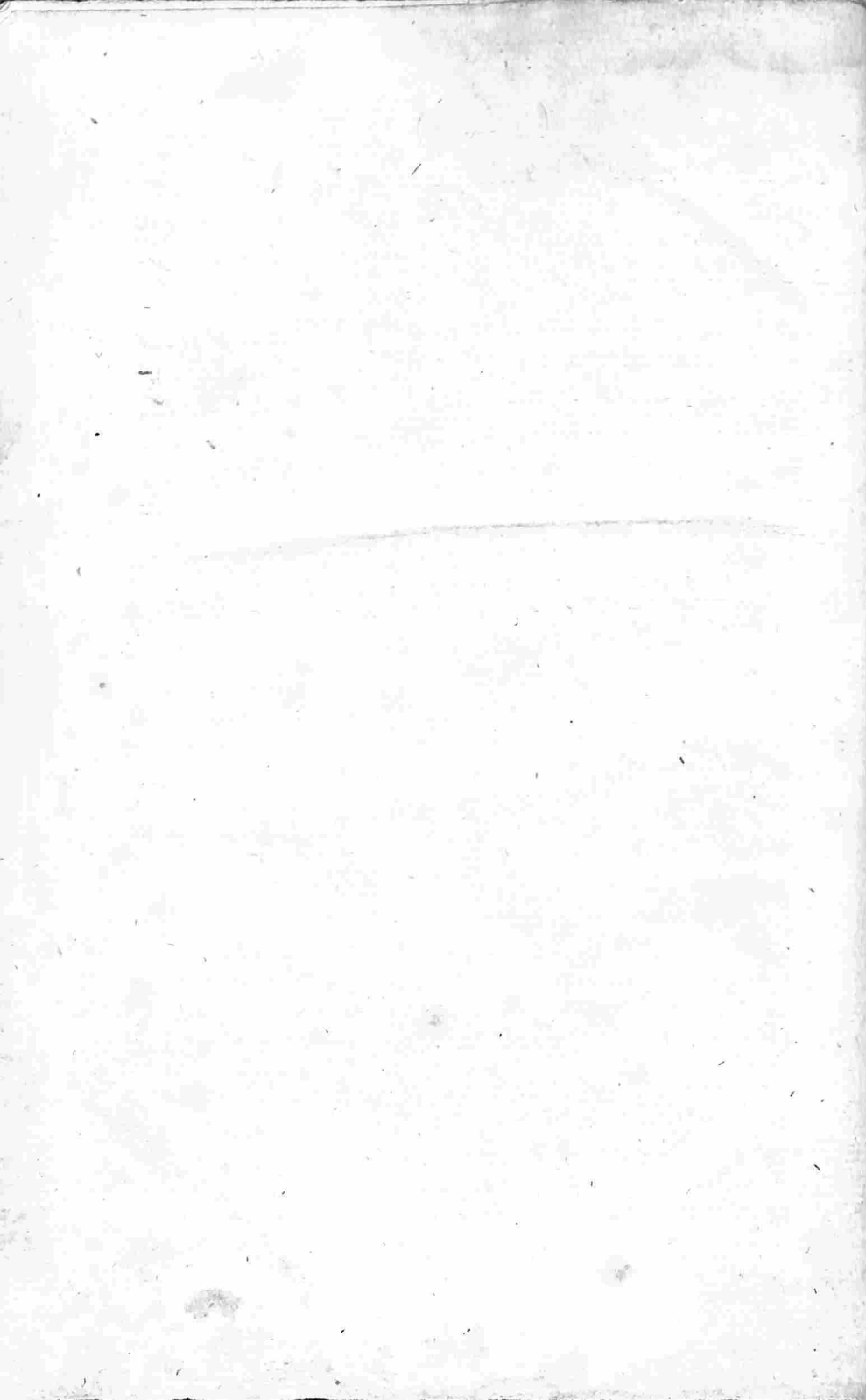
His deportment was grave, and reverent, his judgment sound and clear, in matters of a spiritual or temporal concern, and his natural disposition being chearful, he sometimes discovered a turn of pleasantry in conversation, which being careful to circumscribe within due limitations, rendered his company innocently agreeable and instructive.

Being deeply sensible of the weight and solemnity of the Gospel ministry, he manifested great circumspection and care, that it might be preserved pure and unblemished from mistaken, or false appearances in himself or others, and in the exercise of his gift, his declarations were plain, familiar, and concise, accompanied with a fervent concern that his fellow believers and all others might be brought to the sure knowledge of an holy living principle given to direct and lead into true devotion of heart, and the practice of self denial, consistent with the doctrine and precepts of Christ Jesus our Lord, for the prevalence and enlargement of whose peaceable kingdom, he was earnestly engaged, as the following narrative also makes evident, that with a degree of propriety he might have adopted the language of an eminent minister in the early age of the Christian church, addressed to the believers, "*Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewn me; moreover I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease to have these things in remembrance!*"

brance! for we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. i. 14-15-16."

What he hath written, and left us is now recommended to thy perusal and consideration, in which if thou art seriously attentive, and not superficial, thou mayest under the Divine blessing receive profitable instruction in righteousness, which is the intent of the publication.

Philadelphia, 9th Month, 1779.



A N
A C C O U N T
O F T H E
L I F E A N D T R A V E L S
O F
JOHN CHURCHMAN.

C H A P. I.

His early sense of the impressions of divine love, and spiritual conflicts in his youth.—Death of his father—His marriage—The settlement of a monthly meeting at Nottingham—His joining with other friends in visiting of families the first and second time—His being appointed an Elder, and first appearance in the ministry, &c.

I Was born in the Township of Nottingham, in the County of Chester, and Province of Pennsylvania, on the Fourth Day of the Sixth Month, 1705, and was tenderly brought up in profession of the Truth by my parents, JOHN and HANNAH CHURCHMAN, who were diligent attenders of Religious Meetings, both on the first, and other days of the week, and encouragers of their children in that practice, which is certainly a duty

in parents so to do, and often owned by the reaches of Divine Love, even to those who are very young in years, of which I am a living Witness; for tho' I early felt reproof for bad words and actions, yet knew not whence it came, until about the age of eight years, as I sat in a small meeting, the Lord by the reaches of his heavenly love, and goodness, so overcame and tendered my heart, and by his glorious light discovered to me the knowledge of himself, that I saw myself, and what I had been doing, and what it was which had reproofed me for evil, and was made in the secret of my heart to confess that, childhood and youth, and the foolish actions and words, to which they are prone, are truly vanity; yet blessed for ever be the name of the Lord! who in his infinite mercy and goodness clearly informed me, that if I would mind the discoveries of his Truth, and pure Light for the future, what I had done in the time of my ignorance, he would wink at and forgive; and Oh! the stream of Love which filled my heart with solid Joy at that time, and lasted for many days, is beyond all expression; indeed I was early taught to think different from such who hold the perdition of infants, and am since confirmed in fully believing that the sin of our first parents is not imputed to us, (tho' as their offspring we are by nature prone to evil, which brings wrath) until by the discovery of light and grace, we are taught to distinguish between good and evil, and in the seed and inward principle that sheweth the evil, we feel the enmity placed against the evil, and the author thereof, the devil, or wicked one; if we afterwards commit those things which we saw to be evil, we then fall under condemnation, and wrath, and here every soul that sins must die to the sin he hath committed, and witness the being raised

raised again by the power of God, into newness of life in CHRIST JESUS, not to live to himself, to fulfil the will of the flesh; but to live unto him, who died to take away sin.

I may not forget to relate this one thing; my father sent me about three miles on an errand; I rode a mare which had a colt perhaps half a year old; on my return home, the colt ran-away from the mare to a company of wild horses, which were feeding not far from the path I was in, so I went home without the colt; my father asked me where the colt was, I told him where it went from me; he bid me go to the place with speed, that it might follow the mare home; I went, and found the wild horses feeding on a piece of ground where the timber trees had been killed perhaps about two, or three years; but before I went among the dead trees, a mighty wind arose, which blew some down, and many limbs flew about; I stood still with my mind turned inward to the Lord, who I believed was able to preserve me from hurt; so I passed among the trees without fear, save the fear of the Lord, which fills the hearts of his humble depending children, with love that is stronger than death; I found the colt, which readily followed the mare, and I returned home with great bowedness of heart, and thankfulness to the Lord, for his mercy and goodness to me on this occasion.

It was my practice when I went to bed, to examine how I had spent the past day, and to endeavour to feel the presence of the Lord near, which I did for some considerable time prefer to all other things, and I found this practice a great help to sleep sweetly, and by long experience I can recommend it to children, and those also of riper age.

I suppose that no one living knew my condition; for I delighted to keep hidden, yet quick to observe the

the conduct of others; I remember that a person once at my father's who spake about religious matters with an affected tone, as if he was a good man; when he went away, I was near him, and when he mounted his horse, taking a dislike to some of his motions, he called him an ugly dumb beast, with such an accent, as bespoke great displeasure, and grieved me much; for I did believe, that a man whose mind was sweetened with divine love truly, would not speak wrathfully, or diminutively, even of the beasts of the field, which were given to man for his use, he did not make them himself; I relate this instance, that it may be a warning to all, that they be careful of giving offence to the little ones.

Notwithstanding I had been favoured as before mentioned; yet as I grew in years, I was much given to play, and began to delight again in several things, for which I had before been reproved, and still by the divine witness in my mind, was brought under judgment for; but having lost my innocence and covering of the pure blessed spirit, I endeavoured through fear to fly from the voice of the holy spirit in my own heart; the enemy persuaded me, that I could never be restored to my former state, because I had sinned against so great knowledge, or if I was, the judgment through which I must pass, would be intolerable to bear, so that I had better be chearful, and take my ease and delight; but when I was about nine years old, my father sent me to school to learn to read, (having been taught to know my letters, and spell a little at home) in which I took great delight, and thereby diverted myself from feeling my pain of mind, for the great loss of my innocence which I had sustained; and altho' the man, by whom I was taught, was poor, and sat in his loom, being a weaver, while the children read to him, I improved very fast,

fast, and he soon put me to writing, and finding my capacity full as ripe as is common in boys of that age, he began to teach me Arithmetic; yet gracious goodness still favored me with conviction, and by his spirit was witness against me, and in mercy the Lord visited me with a sore fit of sickness, and by his rod of correction brought me a little more to myself; this was in the forepart of the winter, when I was between nine, and ten years of age, and being pretty well recovered for some weeks, I had in the following spring a relapse of the same disorder, (the pleurisy) in which, by outward correction with sickness, and inward judgment, he was pleased to draw me to himself, which caused me to renew my covenant with him, and I did hope never more to stray from him, to follow lying vanities, whose sweets I had experienced to be bitter, yea exceeding bitterness in the end. I had taken great delight from a child to play with whistles, and pipes, made of the bark of small branches of trees, and of straws of wheat and rye; but now it grieved me to observe children delight therein, and I ventured to tell my mind to some of them concerning such things

Man is distinguished from other creatures not only by his voice; but by varying the breath together with the orderly motion of tongue and lips; that voice is made to convey the ideas of the mind, and thoughts of the heart to his fellow-creatures, and as he was created to glorify his maker, the end and intention of his voice should be directed to promote his glory among men; whether in things natural, or spiritual, that is of this life, or that to come; music as now commonly used, and whistling and singing, have no such tendency; but are rather diversions of the mind from what it ought to be employed about, and therefore a base consumption
of

6 THE LIFE AND TRAVELS

of precious time, which man must be accountable for, which if enough regarded, instead of music, whistling, and singing merry, foolish, and prophane songs, many would have occasion to lament and weep for their mispent time. I leave it as a caution to parents, to beware of indulging their dear children in any thing, which may impress their tender minds with a desire after music, or such diversion when they grow in years; but that instead thereof, by living in the pure fear of the Lord, and near the spirit of truth in their own hearts, they may be furnished with example, and precept to direct the minds of their offspring, to attend to the voice of him who called to Samuel in days of old, and remains to be the same teacher to his people in this age; may his holy name be magnified for ever, and ever!

I retained my care, and circumspection for some time; but through unwatchfulness, and a desire for play which led into lightness, and forgetfulness, I lost this state before I was twelve years of age, and tho' the Lord was near, and followed me by his reproof, in order to bring me under judgment, I fled from it as much as I could; having let in a belief, that as I had been favoured to taste in so wonderful a manner, "of the good word of Life, and power of the world to come, and had so shamefully fallen away, there remained for me, no more sacrifice for sin; but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation," which as I thought seemed to burn in me to that degree, that I was afraid to be alone, for it seemed to be loudly proclaimed in me, that whether I eat, or drank, waked, or slept, I was accursed, and when alone I abhorred myself; but when in company used my utmost endeavors to hide my condition, by being chearful and arch in my discourse, and was thought by most young people to have

have a knack as they called it, at jesting and witty turns; yet even in this time, I entertained such a value for religion, that I was not willing to reveal my situation; lest I should be a reproach thereto, or discourage others from seeking happiness; but when night came, and I went to bed, no tongue can express the anguish I felt, afraid to lay awake, and afraid to desire sleep, lest I should be cut off from the land of the living, and my portion appointed in utter darkness; I so far neglected my learning, that when about thirteen years old, I could not read but in a poor manner, tho' once noted to be a ready reader; I was not willing that good friends should take notice of me, or look me steadily in the face; for I thought they would discern my wickedness, and it would be a trouble to them, or by their reproving me, add to my distress; I seemed to be left without any power to resist what I knew to be evil, and being ashamed that I had so lost my little learning, I sought to divert myself by endeavouring to regain it; my former genius, and delight so returned, that when I was about fifteen years of age, I had made great improvement, not only in reading, but in writing, and arithmetick, and several branches of the mathematicks, and began to value myself in some degree thereon, and so got over the convictions of the divine witness, which spoke trouble in me; nevertheless during this time I kept close in attending meetings, hoping at seasons, that perhaps the Lord would condescend once more to visit me; for a saying of an eminent pious man was revived in my remembrance "That
" if there remained a desire in the heart after Re-
" demption, as it was kept to, the Lord would
" again assuredly visit such in his own time." So that I was fearful of neglecting meetings, if my parents had not forwarded me, lest I might miss of
the

the good intended for me; yet the subtle working of the power of darkness was at times very great, suggesting to me that all things came by nature, and that there was no God, no heaven, no devil; no punishment for evil, religion a jest, and painful care about futurity a silly whim, propagated to deprive people of pleasure; but blessed be the Lord! he preserved me from that snare, for while I felt his judgment for sin, I believed in his Being, and holiness, and I am indeed fully of the mind, that no man can be an Atheist before he acts contrary to knowledge, when to allay the horror, and anguish of mind, he feels for the commission of sin, he closes in with this temptation. At other times, the same subtle power would tempt me to despair of mercy, which if given way to, would lead to distraction; but the hand of the Lord was underneath, tho' for my disobedience he suffered me to remain in the wilderness, and to dwell among fiery serpents, until he had wasted that in me, which lusted after forbidden things.

In this state I continued until I was about nineteen years of age, and as I was walking one day to meeting, thinking on my forlorn condition, and remembering the bread in my heavenly Father's house, when I was a dutiful child, and that by straying from him, and spending my portion, I had been eight years in grievous want, I inwardly cried, if thou art pleased again to visit me, I beseech thee Oh Lord! visit my body with sickness, or pain, or whatever thou may please, so that the will of the old man may be slain with the transgression, and every thing in me, that thy controversy is against, that I may be made a sanctified vessel by thy power; spare only my life, until my redemption is wrought, and my peace made with thee!

About

About this time my father died in the tenth month, 1724, which was a great loss to our whole family, and as he had allotted me to live with, and take care of my mother, it became my duty to keep mostly at home; I spent near a year much in the condition above mentioned; often out of hope of ever attaining to that state, I had witnessed when very young; but in the fall of the year after I had arrived to the age of 20 years; it pleased the Lord to remember me, who had been an Exile, in captivity under the old taskmaster in Egypt spiritually, and by his righteous judgments mixed with unspeakable mercies, to make way for my deliverance; I was visited with a sore fit of sickness, which in a few days so fully awakened me, that I had no hope of ever being again intrusted with health; my mispent time, and all my transgressions were brought to my remembrance, and heavy judgment was upon me for them; I was met with in this narrow path, and could no longer fly from God and his spirit in my conscience, whose sore displeasure I had justly incurred. I had heard of men who had been notorious offenders, and fled from the justice of the common law, until they became out-lawed; such in a spiritual sense my case appeared to be; I thought I had as it were heard an act of grace and free pardon repeatedly proclaimed, if I would return and live uprightly for the future; but in the time of such visitations, I concluded it was only to bring me under judgment to take me from my pleasure, for that mine offences would never be pardoned, and so I had withstood, or neglected those visitations; I now saw clearly, that herein I had followed the lying suggestions of satan mine enemy: At this time my old will in the fallen nature gave up it's life, and I cryed, "*I am not worthy to live or enjoy favour, yet Oh Lord! if thou wilt be pleased to look on me with an eye of pity, do*

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what thou wilt with me, magnify thy own name, prepare me by thy judgments and power that thy mercy may be shewn in and by me, whether thou cut the thread of my life, or shall grant me more days, which is only in thy power;" now my heart was made exceedingly tender, I wept much, and an evidence was given me, that the Lord had heard my cry, and in mercy looked down on me from his holy habitation, and a willing heart and patience was given me to bear his chastisements and the working of his eternal word of power, which created all things at the beginning, and by which poor fallen man only is created a new in the heavenly Image, and prepared to praise him with acceptance, who lives for ever, and ever.

Whilst I lay in this condition, perhaps I was thought by those who watched with me to be near expiring; but tho' I said little or nothing, I believe I was quite sensible, yet exceedingly weakened, having for about twenty-four hours felt more inward and inexpressible anguish, than outward pain, which was no doubt great; I take it to be toward the morning of the fifth day and night of my illness, that I felt the incomes and owning of divine love in a greater degree than ever; for the prospect I had of so great forgiveness made me love the more; for love is ever reciprocal. I remember, that I saw the morning light, and thought all things looked new and sweet; I lay where the sun shone near, or on my bed, and have sometimes since thought, that being weak, the strength of the light and too much company hurt me; I leave this hint to excite nurses and those who have the care of very weak indisposed people to beware of letting over much light come upon them, or many visitors, except they be such who are sensible of the weak by being inward and quiet, waiting to feel the sympathy which truth gives, the company of such being truly refreshing.

It

It pleased the Lord so to restore me, that I recovered my usual strength, and was frequently humbled under a sense of the tender dealings of a merciful God, whose goodness and owning love I felt to be very near; I then loved retirement and inwardly to feel after the incomes of life, and was often fearful lest I should again fall away. In this time it was manifested to me, that if in patience I stood faithful, I should be called to the work of the ministry; I loved to attend religious meetings, especially those for discipline, and it was clearly shewn me, that all who attend those meetings should inwardly wait in great awfulness, to know the immediate presence of Christ the head of the Church, to give them an understanding what their several services are, and for ability to answer the requirings of truth, for it is by the light, and spirit thereof, that the Lord's work is done with acceptance, and none should presume to speak, or act without its motion, and direction; for they who act and speak without it, do often darken counsel, mislead the weak, and expose their own folly, to the burthen, and grief of sensible friends; it was in great fear, that I attempted to speak in these meetings, and as I kept low with an eye single to the honour of truth, I felt peace, and inward strength to increase from time to time, and it is good for all who are concerned to speak to matters in meetings for discipline, in the first place to take heed that their own spirits do not prompt thereto, and to mind the time when to speak fitly; for a word in season from a pure heart, is precious, and frequently prevents debates instead of ministering contention, and when they have spoken to business, they should turn inward to feel whether the pure truth owns them, and in that rest, without an over anxious care whether it succeeds at that time, or not, so friends will be preserved from being lifted up, because their
service

service is immediately owned; or if it should be rejected, or slighted, in this inward humble state the labour is felt, and seen to be the Lord's.

It is a great favour from the Lord, that he is pleased to cover his children with his pure fear, and array their souls with the garment of humility, that they may stand in his presence with acceptance, waiting to be taught of his ways, in meekness to be guided in judgment; these only feel the necessity of minding that excellent exhortation "Be ye stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." In a degree of reverent thankfulness, I bless the name of the Lord through his beloved Son, that I then according to my measure knew what I now write, it was a time of growing with me, I rarely passed a day without feeling the incomes of divine life, and was favoured strongly to desire "The sincere milk of the holy word," that in humility I might grow thereby in substance; but afterwards I was left, and withdrawn from, so that for days, yea many days together, I was without inward refreshment, and ready to fear that I had offended my gracious Redeemer, and being thoughtful, and inwardly engaged to know the cause, I had to consider, that children tho' they may be thriving, and darlings of their natural parents, are not fit for much business, until they are weaned, and altho' they grow finely, they are gradually taught to wait the appointed time between meals, before they have much care of their father's business, and are further prepared, so as to miss a set meal, or be a longer time without outward food, before they are fit for a journey, and with these thoughts, (leaving the reader to judge from whence they came) a hope began to revive in me, that I was not forsaken, which indeed, as I kept patient, I was abundantly sensible of at times, even those times which are in the Lord's hand; for his children

dren experience that the times of refreshment come from him, who when he hath exercised and proved them in his infinite kindness is pleased to cause them to sit down, and condescends himself to serve them. Blessed for ever be the name of the Lord who knows how to prepare his soldiers to remain faithful, and to indure with patience (what the natural man would account) hardness!

I had strong desires that elderly friends should be good examples to the youth, not only in word, and conversation, but in meetings for the worship of God, and it grieved me exceedingly to see any of them overcome with sleep, and my concern for one friend on that account, was so great, that I knew not what was best to do, and reasoned after this manner, Lord! thou knowest that I am young, and he an elderly man, he will not take it well, that I should speak to him, and perhaps I may yet fall; and if so the more I take upon me, the greater my fall will be; besides, tho' I have spoken in meetings for discipline, when truth hath been strong upon me, yet out of meetings, I am not fit to reprove, or speak to particulars: For I was cautious indeed in those days, of talking about religion, or good things, from a fear of getting a habit thereof, and so not know the true motion; which I thought I had observed to be the failing of some. In this streight it came into my mind to go to the person in the night, as the most private time, and manner; for if I took him aside before, or after a meeting, others might wonder for what, and I might betray my weakness, and reproach the good cause, and do no good, and if the friend should be displeased with me, he might publicly shew, what otherwise he would conceal after a private deliberation; so in the evening I went, desiring the Lord to go with me, and guide me, if it was a motion from him; when I came to the house it was dark, I called,

led, and the friend came out to see who was there, and invited me in, I told him I was in haste to go home; but wanted to speak with him if he pleased, and so passed quietly toward home, to draw him from the door, and then told him my concern for him in a close, honest, plain manner, and without staying to reason much, left him in a tender loving disposition, as I believe; I returned home with great inward peace; when thou doest, or givest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right doth, was an excellent precept; that left hand of self should not act in such things, no matter how privately they are done, they often answer the end better; neither is it a fault to lay things low, and familiar, the truth will have its own weight, and accompany what it dictates with its own evidence. My intention in writing this, is to encourage the humbled careful traveller in the way of his duty. At some times, it appeared to be likely to do most good to write my mind to some, which I did with success, as I aimed only at a discharge of duty, in the most private manner, and the good of those to whom I wrote.

When I had entered the twenty fifth year of my age, I accomplished marriage with Margaret Brown a virtuous young woman, whom I had loved as a sister for several years, because I believed she loved religion; I think I may say safely, it was in a good degree of the Lord's pure fear, and a sense of the pointings of truth, on both sides, that we took each other on the 27th day of the eleventh month 1729, (old stile) in an appointed meeting at East Nottingham, and I thought that our Heavenly Father owned us with his presence at that time. The Covenants made in marriage are exceeding great, and I think they never can be rightly kept, and truly performed without Divine assistance; and am convinced, if all who enter into a marriage state would in the Lord's fear

fear truly seek his assistance, they would know their own tempers kept down, and instead of jarring, and discord, unity of spirit, harmony of conduct, and a concern to be exemplary to their offspring would increase, and be maintained.

The Summer following, in the year 1730, a Monthly-meeting was settled at Nottingham, (being before a branch of New-Garden monthly-meeting) by the advice, and appointment of the quarterly-meeting; this brought a fear, and weighty concern upon me, and many others, that the affairs of Truth might be managed to the honour thereof; for we had but few substantial elderly friends. In a sense of our weakness, it was the breathing desire of my soul, that the Lord would be pleased for his own sake, and the honour of his great Name, to be near to his children, and inspire them with wisdom, and judgment for his own work; and blessed for ever be his holy Name! I believe he heard our cry, and in measure answered our prayers; being kept low, and humble, it was a growing time to several. My affection to friends of New-Garden monthly-meeting was so great, that for many months after we parted from them, I seldom missed attending it, and therein had great satisfaction, and some of their members frequently attended ours, for our love towards each other was mutual.

When I was about twenty-six years of age, some friends were appointed to perform a family visit, and being desirous of my company, I joined with them, and therein felt the ownings of Truth in some degree; but notwithstanding I saw at times the states of families, and particulars, yet not in so clear a manner as I thought necessary to become my duty to open my mouth in the service, save now and then, in a private way to particulars, of which none knew except those to whom I spake. At one house the friends on the service had a good opportunity, several

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ral young folks, some of whom were not of the family being present; I felt the Divine presence to be very near, and a motion to conclude that sitting in supplication, and thanksgiving to the Lord, but was not hasty, for fear of doing what was not required of me, so omitted it, and afterwards asked an experienced worthy minister, if he had ever known any friend appear in a meeting in public prayer, before they had ever appeared in public testimony; which enquiry I made in such a manner as to give him no mistrust of me; he answered "nay, I believe it would be very uncommon," it struck me pretty closely, but I kept my condition very private; having been exceedingly fearful of deception, and now began to doubt whether it was not a delusion for me, to entertain an apprehension, that I should be called to the work of the ministry; the concern whereof had been at times very heavy upon me; tho', no motion that felt like a gentle command to break silence, until at the house before mentioned; now I let in reasoning, and so departed for a time from my inward guide and safest counselor, as all assuredly will, who place their dependence on man for instruction, to perform duties required of them; or who forbear, or reason against the humbling, gentle motions, and leadings of the spirit of truth: Much safer it is to attend steadily thereunto for instruction, and ability to perform religious services, which when so performed in meekness, we ought to be tender of the sentiments of our brethren concerning them, and not over confident of our call, and commission; for our brethren have a measure of the same spirit by which we are taught, and have a sense and right thereby given to judge of our service; a becoming diffidence of ourselves, and a readiness to attend to the advice of such, is ever the badge of true discipleship; humbling Divine Love teaches to esteem others, rather than ourselves,

This was an exercising time to me, but I did not discover it to any one; I seemed to be forsaken, tho' not sensible of much judgment for my omission of duty, for I could with sincerity appeal to him who knoweth all things, that it did not proceed from willful disobedience, but a fear of following a wrong spirit, and a secret hope revived that my gracious Lord and master would not quite cast me off, and blessed be his holy name! he did not leave me very long before I was favoured as usual, but had no motion of the same kind.

When this visit was over, I kept much at home, yet was careful to attend meetings on the first and other days of the week, and found work enough to watch against a lukewarm, indolent Spirit, which would come over me when I sat down to wait upon God; tho' I came to the meeting in a lively warm engagement of mind, I found the warfare against lukewarmness, sleepiness, and a roving mind, must be steadily maintained, and if none of these hindrances were given way to, the Lord when he had proved his children, would arise for their help, and scatter his and their enemies, which my soul experienced many times beyond expression: The Lord alone is all-powerful, and worthy to be waited upon and worshipped in humility and reverent adoration of soul for ever. Indolence and lukewarmness bring darkness, and death over a meeting, and when generally given way to, occasion hard work for even the most livingly exercised friends to get from under the burthen and weight thereof; it was a mercy that I was preserved seeking, and could not be satisfied without feeling the renewings of Divine favour, by which I rather grew in the root of religion, tho' I thought very slow, but had hope it would be lasting.

The love of truth, I believe it was, and a desire that the discipline, and good order of the church

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might

might be maintained, made me willing to take considerable pains to attend neighbouring monthly meetings, which I think was a blessing to me in some good degree, being thereby often instructed; and I have often admired at the slackness of some, that suffer trifling things to keep them from their meetings for worship on week days, and first days; for tho' curiosity brings such to monthly meetings, they are seldom of any real service when they come, not being sensible of that pure Divine Love, in which the Church through its several members edifieth itself, and as any one becomes truly sensible thereof, they will delight to wait upon God, with their brethren and sisters, who is the fountain of pure Love, and so fills the hearts of his humble, depending children therewith, that by it, they are known to be his Disciples.

In the year 1731, our antient and worthy friend William Brown, who had been in the station of an elder many years, growing feeble, and incapable to attend the Quarterly-meeting of ministers and elders, Friends of our particular meeting proposed me to the Monthly-meeting for that service, which brought a close exercise upon me, considering myself a youth, and the weight of the service; but after a solid consideration, I found most peace in submitting to the meeting, with fervent inward desires, that the Lord would be pleased to be with me therein, to preserve me from acting, or judging in my own will and spirit, knowing that the service could not be performed but by wisdom, understanding, and ability from him; when I attended those large and weighty meetings of ministers and elders, the care and fear that was upon me is not easily expressed; and may I never forget the gracious condescension of kind providence, who was pleased to own me, by the shedding abroad of his love in my heart, that I verily thought, they resembled

sembled the school of the prophets, the High Priest, great Prophet, and Bishop of Souls, our Lord Jesus Christ being president among them.

An apprehension that I should be called to the ministry, and a concern on that account, had been, at times, for several years, weightily on my mind; but I now again thought I was mistaken in that belief, and that it was only a preparative to qualify me for the station of an elder, and thereby my exercise became somewhat lighter for a time; the tenderness and love I felt to those engaged in public ministry, was very great, and I believe I was made helpful to some by giving private hints, when and to whom I thought there was occasion, in plainness, simplicity and fear, which often afforded instruction to myself as well as to them.

In 1733, I accompanied friends on another visit to families, wherein, at times, I felt the opening of truth in the love of it, and a few words to speak to the states of some, tho' in great fear, lest I should put my hand to that weighty work without the real requiring of duty; and at one family, on a morning pretty early, being the first we went to on that day, I thought it would be better for the whole family, in a religious sense, if the heads of it were more zealous in attending meetings: I saw the necessity of being examples to children and servants, by a careful attendance of meetings for worship on the first, and other days of the week; but I was so weak and poor, that I doubted whether it was my duty to mention any thing thereof to them, so concluded to omit it; by which I hoped to judge of what I had been about before, and so grew easy in my mind, and as we were on the way to the next house, I began to judge, that I had no real business to have said any thing at any house; and having borne in my own will, I was now left to my own judgment for a time. At the next house, friends were parti-

particularly opened, and tenderly concerned to speak to several states, and of several matters which I thought instructive; but I sat dry and poor, and so remained during our passage to the next house; where I fared no better, but worse; my feeling and judgment being quite gone, as to the service in which we were engaged; and tho' I did not say any thing to the other friends how it fared with me, yet they were affected therewith as I apprehended; I was in great darkness and distress, and sometimes thought of leaving the company privately, and go home, but again concluded, that would not only be a disappointment to my friends, but dishonourable to truth, which made me determine to go forward, and endure my own pain, as much undisturbed as possible; my companions, as I before observed, were affected, and all save one seemed closed up from doing the service, and in the evening of the same day at the last house, all of them were silent. There was a school-house near, the master being a friend, and the children mostly belonging to friends, whom some of our company appeared willing to visit, but others being doubtful, we omitted it, which now some thought was not right, and therefore this cloud of darkness and distress came upon us, and were willing to meet at the school-house next morning, to try if we could recover our former strength in the ownings of truth, which being agreed to, each took our way home, it being now night, and I alone, I rode slow, under a deep exercise of mind, and humble inquiry into the cause of my own distress, and after some time, being favored with great calmness and quietude of mind, I was inwardly instructed after this manner, *Thou sawest what was wanting in a family this morning, and would not exhort to more diligence, or amendment in that respect, and therefore if they continue to do wrong, it shall be required of thee;* on which I became

became broken in spirit, and cried in secret, may I not perform it yet, and be restored to thy favour? Oh Lord! I am now willing to do whatsoever thou requires of me, if thou wilt be pleased to be with me; and blessed be his name, in mercy he heard my supplication, and I was fully perswaded that I must go to the house again; which I concluded to do next morning, and went home with a degree of comfort, and being weary in body and mind, slept sweetly, and awoke in the morning quiet and easy in spirit, and now began to conclude, that I might meet my company, and be excused; but my covenant of going was brought to my remembrance, and I was given to believe, that peace was restored on condition of my performance; therefore I went to the house, tho' several miles distant, before sunrise, the man of the house was up, he invited me in, and I followed him, and sitting down by the fire (being cool weather,) with my mind retired, I felt that I must not speak before the rest of the family, but rather in private, yet was fearful of calling him out, being unwilling to discover any thing to them; in the mean time, he went out, and walked the way I was to go, I followed, and told him how I felt when we were at his house the morning before, and could not be easy without exhorting him to be more careful in several respects, and a better example to his family in his attendance of meetings; he seemed affected, and said, he hoped he should mind my advice; I then left him, and met my companions at the school house, and enjoyed great peace. I leave this remark, to excite all to dwell in meekness and fear, and to beware of the will of the creature, and the reasonings of flesh and blood, which lead into doubting and disobedience; they who are faithful in small things, shall truly know an increase in that wisdom and knowledge which is from above.

Before

Before we had gone through this visit, I attended the quarterly meeting of ministers and elders at Concord, and as I sat therein, the unwearied adversary renewed a former charge against me, by suggesting to my mind, that I might know I had been wrong and under a delusion, in entertaining a belief I should be called to the work of the ministry; for that all who had ever been rightly engaged therein, it was in a cross greatly to the will of the creature, which was not my case, for I was willing; this I felt to be true, and was therefore now exceedingly distressed, not considering that I was made willing by the weight of the exercise, which had been several years at times very heavy upon me, until it seemed as a fire in my bones, and as tho' *I was dumb with silence, I held my peace even from good, and my sorrow was stirred, my heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned,* Psal. xxxix. 2, 3. While under this conflict, a friend stood up with these words, *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I, send me,* Isa. vi. 8. Shewing, that "to them whose will was rightly subjected to the Lord, it became their meat and drink, to do the will of him, who had subjected them by his divine power, and influenced their hearts with his love to mankind;" by which I was relieved, and my spirit humbled and made thankful. Next morning being the first day of the week, I went to Kennet meeting, and toward the close thereof, something appeared to my mind to offer, but was fearful, that the motion for speaking was not enough powerful, and had like to have forborne, but remembering what I had suffered by neglecting a weak motion in a family visit, as already related, I stood up, and spake a few sentences in great fear and brokenness of spirit, and had solid satisfaction. I attended the Quarterly-meeting of business at Concord

Concord on second day; on my return from whence home, I let in the old reasoner, who suggested to me, that if I was called to the public ministry, I had not waited for a sufficient commission to speak; for some had been raised up with great power, and authority they could not withstand, but that I might have been still and quiet, the motion was so gentle and low, and that I must not think to speak in public testimony in great meetings with so small a motion, and in so doing, I had committed a sin that would not be readily forgiven, perhaps a sin against the Holy Ghost; my exercise was great, but as I endeavoured to be quiet in my mind, seeking to know the Truth of my present condition, I was secretly drawn to follow and attend to something, that spoke inwardly after this manner "if thou wast to take a lad, an entire stranger to thy language and business, however likely he appeared for service, thou must speak loud and distinctly to him, and perhaps with an accent or tone, that might shew thee to be in earnest, to engage his attention, and point out the business; but thou wouldst expect it should be otherwise with a child brought up in thine house, who knew thy language, and with whom thou hadst been familiar; thou would expect him to wait by thee, and watch thy motions, so as to be instructed by thine eye looking upon him, or pointing thy finger, and wouldst rebuke, or correct such an one, if he did not obey thy will on such a small intelligent information." I was instantly relieved thereby, and leave my reader to judge from whence this intimation came; believing it would be no crime in me, to judge it to be from the Spirit of Truth, that was to lead and guide into all Truth.

When this meeting was over, being in the ninth month 1733, we proceeded to finish our family visit, the part which remained was on the west side of Susquehanna, at Bush river, and a few families begun

gun to settle near Deer creek; we were remarkably favoured with the presence of our great and good Master, who opened the states of families to us, and gave ability to speak thereto; may his holy name be praised: The visit being finished, we returned home, and in a short time after; as I sat in a week day meeting, I had a few words fresh before me, with a gentle motion to deliver them, which I feared to omit, still remembring what followed a former neglect, so I expressed what was on my mind, and therein had peace, and afterwards was silent for several weeks, in which time I let in a fear, I was forsaken by my dear Lord and Master, whom I loved above all things, for I had no openings in heavenly things, as I thought, but was left poor and needy, yet I loved friends, and remembring a saying of a minister formerly: *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren,* 1 John iii. 14. I hoped, that I was not quite forgotten; some remarkable sentences had fixed in my mind sometime before, which I now began to understand more sensibly, "ministry should be of necessity, and not of choice, and there is no living by silence, or by preaching merely;" for something in me was ready to wish to be employed, that I might have bread, for when I found a motion to speak, I had the owning love of the heavenly Father; which is and ever will be bread to his children; the creaturely will, would choose and would be busy with questioning, is it not, or may it not be so and so; this is that womanish part, which is not permitted to speak in the church, it runs first into transgression, for want of learning of the husband at home, or being in subjection to him, which if Eve had literally done, in stead of reasoning with the serpent that tempted, she might have been preserved from being a tempter. Our strength, preservation, health, and peace stand in our entire subjection to the will of the Lord,

Lord, whether in silence or speaking, suffering, or reigning, still dwelling with the seed (Christ) in our own hearts; humbly waiting for, and feeling after, his power to arise, who is the Resurrection and the Life, and when he is pleased to appear, his children partake in measure of his glory!

I continued in the station of an Elder, and some times delivered a few sentences in public Testimony, which occasioned me to apprehend I should not be in my proper place, except I requested to be released from my eldership; after a time of weighty consideration, I modestly requested, that friends would consider my case, for instead of taking care of the ministry of others, I stood in need of the care of others, and that it would be relieving to my mind, if they would nominate an elder in my room, which was taken into consideration for a time; friends waiting I suppose to see what proof I should make of my ministry. I attended the winter quarterly meeting of ministers and elders, and had to give an account of the ministry at our meeting, the elders being called to answer one after another in order, according to the settlement of the meetings they belonged to, a fear struck me lest a form of words was too much in general observed, particularly, "that the ministry was well received." When my turn came, I could not be easy without varying that part, and instead of saying, the ministry of the ministers is well received, I said, that I believed the ministry of the public friends was generally approved of, and added, that I did wish, that the ministry of all the ministring friends was better received than I conceived it was; whereupon I was asked, what I meant, and under the weight I felt on my mind, I replied, it was not from a thought of bearing hard on the service of the public friends; but from the difference between approving thereof, because they believed it to be right, and attending no
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further, which would not do the work, but to put in practice what they heard recommended, was only well receiving of it, and if that was really the case, our society would appear more beautiful than at present; thus the matter closed, and I had peace in the remark. I think this was the last meeting I attended as an elder; before the next quarterly meeting in the second month 1734, another was recommended in my place.

About this time as I sat in one of our own meetings, I felt a flow of affection to the people, for many not of our society came there, perhaps out of curiosity, several young ministers having come forth in public testimony, in which extraordinary flow of affection, I had a very bright opening as I thought, and expected to stand up with it very soon, but being willing to weigh it carefully was not very forward, viewing its decreasing brightness, until something said as it were within me, "is the woe in it," is necessity laid upon thee, 1 Cor. ix. 16. And therefore woe if thou preach not the gospel. This put me to a stand, and made me feel after the living presence of him, in whose name and power I desired to speak, if I appeared in testimony; and not feeling the pure life and power of Truth, so as to stand up, the brightness of the Vision faded, and left me quiet, humble, and thankful for this preservation; the drawing strength and lusting desire of the unstable, who centre not to the pure gift in themselves, are as the many waters, or sea of Mystery Babylon, for her merchants to sail their ships and trade upon. This was a time of inward growing to me, the welfare of the churches was strongly desired, and the extendings of the love of the Heavenly Father, I felt at times to reach over sea and land, to my great admiration; but however my heart was enlarged, I believed it was my duty to retire inward, and wait with patience until my friends should

should so approve of my ministry, as to recommend me as a minister, before I made any request to go much abroad, though I went to some neighbouring meetings, such as I could go to in a morning, and return home at night, but not without acquainting some elderly friends therewith, and desiring their company, which I generally had.

In the winter 1735-6, William Brown my brother in law, my sister Dinah Brown (then a widow,) and myself, were all recommended to the meeting of Ministers and Elders, as ministers, and at this meeting I let a certain friend know, that for sometime I had a desire to visit friends at Newtown, Middletown, Goshen, Caln, and Bradford meetings, hoping that he would go with me, for without some suitable companion I was not easy to go, because it would be necessary, that notice should be given to answer the end of a visit, which he also thought necessary, and let me know that he would take the needful care, which I supposed was previously to inform some friends of each meeting, in order that they might acquaint their neighbours if they had freedom, and I was easy, not knowing but he would bear me company: On third day I was at the general meeting of worship held at Providence, and at the breaking up thereof, the friend whom I had spoken to, stood up and gave public notice, that I intended to sit with friends at the meetings aforesaid, and named the days in order, and requested friends would take proper care to give notice; at which I was exceedingly surprized, and repented that I had spoken thereof; I would have gladly ran home but for fear of bringing a reproach, and to me it seemed likely it would be the case if I pursued the tract laid out for me; in this strait I was humbled even to weeping; a sympathizing experienced friend came to me, and spake affectionately, bidding me not to be cast down, for it was heard with gladness, that
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it was in my heart to visit those meetings, and that if I lived, and did well, I must meet with greater trials. I suppose friends of those meetings knew more of me than I expected, for I had carefully attended meetings of discipline several years, and had been sometimes active therein; the meetings were generally pretty full, and I believe truth owned my service, which was to me great cause of thankfulness. In this little journey friends were very kind to me, and I was afraid too free in manifesting of it; indeed there are many indulgent nurses, many forward instructors, but too few fathers in the church, who having been acquainted with him the great Alpha in their tender beginning, and by dwelling in his holy counsel and fear, have the care of the members at heart, and in the Wisdom of Truth know how to instruct, advise, and conduct themselves towards such who are called to the Lord's work according to their several dispositions, growths, and gifts received, in order that they might be preserved growing in and by him, the Alpha, experiencing him, their beginning, to be with them, and to be the Omega in their conclusion the First and the Last, all in all, the Lord God over all, Blessed in himself and the Son of his love, our holy high Priest and Instructor. For want of proper caution herein, some have valued themselves above what they ought, and thereby reduced their credit with others.

In the summer following I felt a secret gentle draft to visit the meetings in the back parts of Chester, Philadelphia and Bucks Counties, which continuing with me, and my brother in law William Brown having the like concern, we acquainted friends at our monthly meeting, late in the fall of the year, and had their concurrence, and I believe their good wishes for us; so in the tenth month 1736, we proceeded, and went to Goshen, Radnor, and to a general meeting at Haverford, and to an evening

evening meeting at a school-house in upper Merion, and over Schuylkill to Plymouth; we had good satisfaction mostly. I could see that my brother grew in his gift, and after one of the meetings a wellmeaning friend told me, that I was a seer, and knew the states of people better than they could inform me at which I felt some secret pleasure, yet not without (as I thought) a humble fear, knowing that flattery or unguarded commendation, if listened to, is a kind of poison to young ministers, and sometimes makes them swell beyond the proper size. At Plymouth, I had an open meeting, and it seemed to me, as if what I had to say was received freely by the people, and after meeting I was filled with joy to such a degree, that I wept, and dropped behind my company, (to keep undiscovered,) in our going to a friends house, inwardly prayed that it might be taken from me, for I feared, that by the natural part in me, it was taken to excess. Next day we had a small meeting in Job Pugh's house, where I thought I saw the states of particulars very clear, and had something to say, which perhaps I delivered in too strong terms, considering my age and experience in the ministry; a becoming fear, and modesty in expression is very ornamental and safe for ministers, both young and old; after meeting, we went home with Evan Evans to North Wales, who conversed but little with us, but was grave and solid, and therein a good example to me; for sometimes young ministers hurt themselves by too much talking, and draw from others of like freedom, things not convenient for them to hear. The next day we were at North-wales meeting, which was large, being first day, my brother W. B. appeared in the forepart and had good service, afterwards I stood up with a large and good opening as I thought, but found hard work and soon sat down again without much relief, which

which being a little unusual, I ventured to stand up again, and with a zeal that exceeded my childish knowledge, laid on some strokes with the strength of the mans part more than with the humbling power of Truth; for if we deliver hard things to the people, we should ever remember, that we are flesh and blood, and by nature subject to the same frailties; this would lead us closely to attend to the power, and to minister only in the ability of Truth, in the meekness, gentleness and wisdom which it inspires; I soon sat down again, and in a moment felt myself left in great darkness, and friends broke up the meeting in a minute or two after, which I soon thought was rather unkind, as it seemed to shew a public dislike, when a private admonition, which I believed was my due, would have answered the end better; but when I knew they held an afternoon meeting, I judged that I had infringed on the time, and the weight of the trial settled still deeper on my mind; in the afternoon I sat silent, and was very much dejected, and my good friend Evan Evans, an experienced minister and father in the church, bid me be steady and inward, looking to the Lord who knew how to deal with his children, and gently correct, as well when they went too fast, as too slow; this fatherly tender hint fully opened my eyes; for before I was in some doubt wherein I had missed; I now believed he saw I was too zealous and forward, and believed also that he had the judgment of Truth; this was enough for me; I abhorred myself, and was in great fear that I should not be forgiven. Another friend told me that I only felt an opposing spirit in some, whose states had been remarkably spoken to by me, and desired me not to be too much cast down, for I had the mind of Truth; this instead of relieving, rather added to my affliction; for I saw it would have a tendency, if heeded, to take me from under the

the hand of the Lord, which was heavy upon me, and something in me said, "Let God be true and every man a liar, keep to the witness in thine own heart, attend to the Spirit of Truth there, and mind its reproof." Man through natural affection and sympathy may err, and administer false instruction, but the other proceeds from the God of Truth. I would have given all that I had to have been at home, for I greatly feared that I should bring a reproach on the truth, the honour whereof was dear to me; I hid my distress as much as possible, and proceeded to attend meetings with my brother, whom I greatly preferred, and was afraid to discourage by my complaints.

We were at a meeting at Skippack, and at another at Perkioming or New-Providence, in each whereof I had so much light and understanding as to offer a few words, but the service lay chiefly on my brother; from thence we went to Oley, where I had a few things to deliver in a friends house in an evening sitting with his family, which was large; the friend in great tenderness observed afterward, that revelation was not ceased, for their states were very exactly spoken to, at which I marvelled, for I was greatly reduced, and thought myself one of the poorest and most unqualified that ever travelled in that great service, in which we were now engaged; this dispensation though sorrowful to wade through, was very humbling and profitable for me, who perhaps but a little before was ready to think I knew something about preaching, but now knew nothing, that I might more fully understand that he who thinketh of himself "he knoweth any thing, knoweth nothing as he ought to know," to wit, that all pure knowledge is sealed up in him who is the Fountain of Wisdom and Knowledge, to be only opened by himself to his dependant children, by the revelation of his own Spirit, when and to whom he pleases.

From hence we went to Maiden Creek, and to Richland in Bucks County, being still low in my mind, yet favoured for a few minutes in meetings, in which I had a few sentences, and then was closed up again: I was like one who having learned a few things, or rules in literal knowledge, was again turned back to his beginning.

From thence we went to Plumstead in Bucks County; here I was rather more enlarged, and to Buckingham, Wrightstown, Falls, Middletown, Bristol, and over on the ice to Burlington in New-Jersey, the weather being exceeding cold, and came back again on the ice over Delaware the same evening to Bristol, and thence proceeded to Byberry and Horsham meetings, and by this time I was relieved from the depression of spirit I felt before, yet was under a humble reverent fear, not forgetting the meeting at North Wales; I was in some degree again admitted to behold the lifting up of the Heavenly Fathers countenance, which makes the solitary rejoice. From Horsham we went to a meeting appointed at William Hallowell's, the company of the man who undertook to shew us the way not being agreeable, we persuaded him to return, and so were left not knowing the way to the house, which made me very thoughtful, lest we should miss our way, and friends would then be blamed for neglect of duty towards us; as I was thus pondering in my mind, a faith arose, that providence could direct, and that moment I beheld the track of a man who had crossed the road we were in, and felt a sudden turn of mind to follow the same, which made me quite easy; it brought us to a field, where we found the fence down on both sides, and led to the house where friends were gathered, and we were not discovered to be without a guide, for which I was thankful, believing it to be the secret direction of kind providence, and not barely chance. I relate this

this with a view to excite such who may meet with difficulties, to rely on him alone who can shew the way, and give faith to follow, but man must be humble and quiet in mind, to understand the inward gentle sense that Truth favours with; this small gathering was owned in a good degree with the Divine presence.

From thence we passed to Abington and Frankfort meetings, and to Philadelphia; and after visiting of those meetings, we turned to Germantown, and so over Schuylkill to Merion meeting, where we met our worthy friend John Forthergill, who had great and good service therein, with whom my brother W. B. returned to Philadelphia to the quarterly meeting, which began next day, and while he was absent from me I attended Springfield and Newtown meetings, when he again came to me, we attended some other meetings until our quarterly meeting began, at which was our friend John Cadwalader from Horsham, who had good service; after which I returned home and was glad to sit with friends in our own meeting, wherein I did not see it was my place to say much, but by example to recommend silence.

Early this spring (1737,) the Lord was pleased to try me with poverty and inward want, which brought me into great searchings of heart, and secret enquiry into the cause, but could not understand that I had wilfully disobeyed, neither stood convicted in my mind for doing amiss, but my poverty and inward want increased, with distress and doubting to that degree, that I began to fear I had mistaken, and took error for truth, and in my own imagination formed a religion, and for the rebellion of my youth was suffered to go on until now; and all that ever I had done was brought into judgment and reduced to nothing, and the enemy endeavoured to stir me up to impatience, and to per-

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suade me, that my transgressions would never be forgiven; many days of sorrow and nights of sore distress I passed through, and began to despair of ever beholding the Light of the Heavenly countenance lifted up towards me again.

113 Towards the last of the third month I went to Sadsbury, to settle a dispute about the bounds of land and having something to do near Samuel Nutt's Iron works on French creek, as I was going thither being alone and my inward sorrow and distress very great, I thought I would now endeavour to vent it, were it but in mournful groans, and drawing in my breath in order to vent it in a groan, my inward anguish seemed to burn like fire, and I was instantly staid from breaking forth, for I was persuaded my passion of grief if given way unto, would go beyond bounds, to the tearing of my cloaths, if no further, my heart not being tender, I could not weep, which brought me to a more calm pause than I had known for some time, and therein was ready to say, can the good hand be still near to stay me, Oh! that I may have patience given, and resolution strengthened to continue seeking, and if at last I should perish, that it may be at his footstool; for a small space I had some hope of beholding again him whom my soul once loved above all things; but in a few miles riding it began to look pleasant to me, to go into some remote place where I should not be known. When reflecting thus—what! abandon mine acquaintance! violate my marriage covenant, and leave my nearest connections! I suddenly knew this prospect of pleasure was from the evil one, and something in me abhorred it as wicked, and as it were closed my eyes therefrom; so that evening I went to the house of a former intimate acquaintance to lodge, who received me kindly, and in the evening brought a book containing some astronomical problems, and began to converse very freely

freely thereon, supposing it would be pleasant to me as aforetime; but I was heavy in my spirit and inwardly thoughtful about something of another nature, and he soon perceiving his conversation on that subject was disagreeable, proposed my going to bed as fittest for a weary man, judging that to be my present ailment, I was glad of the offer and immediately accepted thereof. I saw now clearly, that when my mind was turned from delighting in that wherein our former friendship consisted, my company was rather unpleasant to him, I soon left his house in the morning, dispatched my business, and returned home with as much speed as I could, without the least inclination to go elsewhere; I believe my prayer was heard; for I had patience granted to me, I say granted, because no man can endure himself therewith, and I think my distress gradually abated after the time aforementioned.

When one has fasted, and suffered the want of natural food for a long season, men of prudence will portion out the food they give to such with care, that strength may be increased and the constitution preserved healthful and sound. The Lord, whose Love and Care to his children doth far exceed that of any natural parent to his offspring, dealt with me in his tender mercy, giving at times by the gentle touches of his Love, to feel that he had not forsaken me, which in a few minutes would be again withdrawn, but tho' of short continuance, was sufficient for me to own it was worth all my sorrowful longing for and hereby he was pleased to let me experimentally know the value of Heavenly Bread by the want of it having food and raiment I was now taught to be therewith content; the renewing of heavenly favour, and the covering of the Holy Spirit, so as to be admitted to stand before him in humble reverence with gracious acceptance, was all my soul craved; I neither wanted

wanted this man's gift, nor the other man's popularity and eloquence, but to be in mercy admitted into the number of his family, and occupying mine own gift to his honour alone that gave it. When Peter was examined by his Lord whom he had denied through fear, "Lovest thou me more than these?" the third time answered; "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee:" He did not answer the question in its full extent, *viz. more than these* with respect to the rest of the Disciples who had not denied their Lord and Master, as Peter had done, who was nevertheless looked upon with forgiving compassion, and therefore had need to love in proportion; perhaps his honest confession and appeal to his Master's knowledge might shorten his answer; his threefold charge of feeding the sheep and lambs of his Lord, was necessary to gain his diligent attention to the work of him whom he had three times denied; he to whom much is forgiven, loveth much if he is not ungrateful: No marvel that I met with this trial of my love and affection, who so often (not through fear, but the desire of indulging my creaturely will,) had denied, or neglected to follow my Lord and Master who had so early made me acquainted with his will, and who now had passed by mine offences, and called me to work in his vineyard; now I was made thankful for favours which before had scarcely been owned as such; for to be preserved inwardly watchful, and quietly resigned, to wait upon the Lord, though we partake not of immediate consolation by the renewing of life, is a great blessing, for which we ought to be thankful, as we cannot stay our own minds, nor curb our thoughts; and I did believe that labour was healthful, created an appetite and sweetened the relish of rest and food in a spiritual as well as natural sense, and therefore I wanted not to eat the bread of idleness and live on the labour of others.

After

After this trial which continued most of the summer, I was much favoured with the incomes of Divine Love and Life, and in the winter following visited most of the meetings in Chester County, and some few in Philadelphia County, the weather was very cold being about the middle of the tenth month when I set out, and in my journey went to visit a worthy friend who was indisposed, and lodged at his house, and as we sat together in the evening, he asked me why I chose the winter season to visit my friends in, for many infirm folks could hardly attend meetings, and said he was sometimes ready to query, whether public friends do not take that time to serve their master, because they could do but little for themselves. I was thoughtful and low in my mind before, and had some reasoning whether it had not been better that I had staid at home than ventured out on the service at that time of the year. Though I thought I had an engagement sufficient when I set out; this query of his made me more thoughtful, and added to my reasoning, but I soon recovered strength, and it came fresh in my mind to ask him whether friends could eat to supply and sustain their bodies in the summer, and partake also of spiritual food for their souls in that season, so as not to labour in the winter and care for the sustenance of their bodies, or assemble and attend meetings to worship and wait upon God for spiritual food for their souls? he acknowledged I had by this query satisfied him to the full, and said he was glad of my visit, and hoped his talking as he did would not discourage me, for I believe he saw it brought a damp over me at first, this answer I believe was given to me for mine own help, and was encouragement to me through this journey, in which I had most of the time Joshua Johnson of Londongrove for a companion, who was very agreeable, and in my return home I felt great peace.

C H A P. II.

His Journey with Robert Jordan to the Western part of Maryland in the Year 1738. Also to the Quarterly-meeting at Shrewsbury in New-Jersey—And with John Hunt through that Province—His Visit to the Eastern-shore of Maryland—His Journey to Fairfax and Hoperwell in Virginia in company with a Committee of Friends—And a second Time to the Eastern-shore of Maryland with John Cadwalader, and companion—And his Visit to New-England in company with Samuel Hopwood in 1742.

IN the Summer following I went with Robert Jordan to West-river yearly-meeting in Maryland, and we visited most of the meetings of friends in that province, and his company was profitably instructive to me who was but young in the ministry; I think I knew him well, he had a good gift of the ministry, and was highly favoured in the living openings of Truth, but was often low in mind and very humble in spirit; one time as we were riding together, he lagged behind for several miles, I asked him why he rode so slow, he made no reply, whereupon I stopt until he came up, his countenance was solid, and looked as if he had been weeping, I asked what ailed him, after some time he told me, that he had been thinking of the great favours which man partook of, particularly in being placed over the beasts of the field, and how easily they were broke, and made subject to his will, what a small turn with the bridle would put them to the right hand or the left, and on a gentle motion would amend or slacken their pace, at the will or pleasure of the rider, and that man, the most noble and intelligent creature, should so far neglect the duty of a willing subjection to his Maker, who so highly
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has favoured him with temporal blessings, and the knowledge of heavenly things. I had been at that meeting about three years before, having had some business to do for a friend of mine on the Eastern-shore of Chesapeake, and crossed over the Bay to the Western-shore, and was at the yearly-meeting, and being grieved at the conduct of some of the elders, whose age, if they had kept to the Truth and had been zealous for the honour thereof, would have made them better examples; I spoke my mind plainly to them, but not without proper caution (as I thought) both with respect to my youth and their age; but some seemed a little warmed thereby, and asked for my certificate, if I had any, I honestly told them, the principal business that brought me from home was temporal, which having accommodated, I thought I might attend that meeting without offence, if I did not misbehave myself. William Richardson desired friends to consider what I had said, for he believed if they did, they would perceive the young man had a certificate with him, that might answer for one of a neighbouring province to attend such a meeting.

It may not be unseasonable to relate that in the year 1736, one night as I lay in bed, my mind was uncommonly affected with the incomes of Divine Love and Life, and therein I had a view of the churches in New-Jersey, with a clear prospect that I should visit them, and in that prospect and the strength of affection which I then felt, I said in my heart it is enough; I will prepare for the journey as soon as I can hear of a suitable companion, for I do not expect that I shall have a clearer sight than I now have, I soon heard of a friend who had a visit to New-Jersey before him, I spoke to him about my concern, he let me know that he knew of a companion, and they had agreed upon a time to proceed; after I had mentioned it to him and some other

other friends my concern seemed to die away; but I remembered the resolution that I took up, and that I then thought I would not look to be bidden again, and was fearful something had drawn my mind from the proper attention to that opening, which was the reason it seemed to go off; but the more I strove to look after it, the duller it grew; I then sorely repented that I had spoken about it, and thought it should be a warning to me in future; for I began to see there was a difference between seeing what was to be done, and being bidden to do the thing shewn, besides this, I had to consider there was a time to bud, a time to blossom, a time for fruit to set and appear, and a time for it to ripen.

And in the forepart of the winter (1738,) I thought it seemed to revive, and when I saw John Hunt a friend from England, I believed I should go with him when he went thro' New-Jersey, and told him what I thought, at which he rejoiced, for we were nearly united; so we appointed a time to meet at Philadelphia, and when we had so far concluded, being about six weeks beforehand, my concern, as I thought, soon withered away, and I began to be in great fear that I had been again too forward therein, but after some time of humbling exercise on that account, the Lord, whom I feared, from the Love with which he was pleased to enrich my heart, gave me to remember, that when I made the appointment with my friend, it was in his fear and great abasement of self, and as I had seen clearly to make the appointment, it was my place to attend in humble reliance on him for ability to perform the embassy; for the Lord who calleth and sendeth forth his own, will also provide all things convenient for them.

When the time came, I set forward very poor and needy, which continued until we entered our service;

service; we took a few meetings before our general spring meeting; and after attending that, we went to Woodberry, Piles-grove, Salem, Alloways-creek, Cohanse, and so to Cape-may, and had some close work, but in the main satisfactory to ourselves at least; after having several meetings at and near the Capes, we went to Great-Egg-harbour and had a meeting there, and another at the house of our friend Japhet Leeds, and so over the Marshes to Little-Egg-harbour river, and had two meetings with friends, in one of which I stood up with a large opening as I thought, but after a short introduction it closed up, and I sat down again, which was some mortification to me as a man, tho' very profitable, being thereby taught to know, that he that would speak as the oracle of God, must, under the gentle burden of the word, in humble fear wait for wisdom, utterance, and ability to perform the service to the edification of the church and his own inward Peace, and not to look after large and specious openings, sometimes desirable to the creaturely part both in ourselves and others, which must suffer famine.

At one of the meetings in these parts, coming very early, a friend belonging thereto invited us to go to his house not far off, and he would put up our horses to hay during the time of the meeting, saying that we must go to his house to dine; but I felt a stop in my mind, and told him that our horses could stand very well there until after meeting; it so fell out that neither of us said any thing in the meeting, which nevertheless was to us satisfactory, for we had a sense that the people had been fed with words, and had a hunger thereafter, more than for the instruction of the pure word of Power and Life nigh in the heart and mouth, that they might not only hear it but be found doers thereof; after the meeting no one asked us to dine, but went

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away and left us, and had it not been for the care of our kind guide that came from the meeting we were last at, we should have been at a loss to have got forward; I mention this to shew how unacceptable silence is to such whose ears itch after words.

From hence we went thro' the desert to upper Springfield, where we had a satisfactory meeting, then taking the meetings Northward to Stonybrook and Trenton, we returned to Bordentown, and so crossed Delaware. Some of the meetings were large and very satisfactory under the owning of truth, the power whereof was in dominion, and the name of the Lord praised, who is worthy forever; and some were remarkably close and hard, which made me remember a saying of that experienced minister and elder John Fothergill, that, "When he was first in this country, he had some extraordinary meetings hereaway, the people being industrious in a natural as well as spiritual sense, some of whom were now removed, and their children possessed the temporal estates of their fathers, and though their outward habitations looked spacious their meetings for worship were dull and heavy, by reason of a wordly spirit, and their indifference about heavenly treasure." One meeting which we were at was remarkably hard; my companion J. H. was exceedingly exercised, under a sense that the people were too rich, full, and whole in their own eyes, he sat the meeting through and suffered in silence, but I had something to say very close and particular, and felt a degree of the strength and power of Truth to clear myself in an innocent and loving manner, and remembering they were brethren, did not preach myself out of charity towards them, and so had peace. We went home with an elderly friend, who in a stern manner asked me from whence I came, and said I was a stranger to him, I answered him with a cheerful boldness; he

he asked me what my calling was, I told him husbandry, he farther queried if I was used to splitting of wood, I let him know I had practised it for many years, he again asked me, if I knew the meaning of a common saying of those who were used to that business, "Tis soft knocks must enter hard blocks;" I told him I knew it well, but there were some old wood that was rather decayed at heart, and to strike with a soft or gentle blow at a wedge in such blocks, would drive it to the head without renting them and the labour would be lost, when a few smart lively strokes would burst them asunder; whereupon he laid his hand on my shoulder, saying, "Well my lad, I perceive thou art born for a warrior, and I commend thee;" And thus we came off better than we expected, for I thought he pointed at my service that day; he was ever afterward very loving to me, and I was inwardly thankful that the Lord was near to me, for which I praise his sacred name. To be becomingly bold in the cause of Truth, at times is particularly necessary, otherwise the weight of the testimony thereof would be lessened, and a carping spirit set over it.

From Bordentown we went to Plumstead in Bucks-county, and on a first day had a pretty good meeting, and to a monthly-meeting at Buckingham, then to Wrightstown, the Falls, and Middletown, which meetings were in a good degree satisfactory, the reaches of the Power of Truth being felt to extend, for which we were thankful; tho' in some of them, there is too great a want of faithful members to put the discipline in practice against those that were disorderly, and thereby brought a reproach on the Truth; we then went to Philadelphia, and next day to Chester, from whence I went home the same day.

In the fall of the year 1740, I had some drawings in my mind to attend the quarterly-meeting at Shrews-