

who watches over us. I seldom look deep enough, but dwell too much on the surface of things and let my ideas float. Such is my state. I can't tell how I feel exactly:—at times all seems to me mystery; 'When I look at the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?' Thou must exist, O God! for the heavens declare Thy glory, and the firmament showeth Thy handiwork.

"8th.—Since dinner I have read much logic and enjoyed it; it is interesting to me, and may, I think, with attention, do me good. Reading Watts impresses deeply on my mind how very careful I should be of judging; how much I should consider before I speak, or form an opinion; how careful I should be not to let my mind be tinged throughout with one reigning subject, to try not to associate ideas; but judge of things according to the evidence they give to my mind of their own worth. My mind is like a pair of scales that are not inclined to balance equally; at least when I begin to form a judgment, and try to hold the balance equally, as soon as I perceive that one scale is at all heavier than the other, I am apt at once to let it fall on that side, forgetting what remains in the other scale, which, though lighter, should not be forgotten. For instance, I look at a character; at first I try to judge calmly and truly; but if I see more virtues than vices I am apt soon to like that character so much that I like its weaknesses also, and forget they are weaknesses. The same if evil may preponderate, I forget the virtues.

"30th.—I went to meeting in the morning and afternoon, both times rather dark; but I have been a little permitted to see my own state, which is the greatest favor I can ask for at present; to know what I should do and to be assisted in my duties: for it is hard, very hard to act right, at least I find it so. But there is the comfortable consideration that God is merciful and full of compassion; He is tender over His children. I had a satisfactory time with my girls and boys.

"January 4th, 1799.—Most of this morning I spent in Norwich seeing after the poor; I do little for them, and I do not like it should appear that I do much. I must be most guarded, and tell those who know I do charity that I am only my father's agent. A plan, at least a duty that I have felt for some time, I will now mention. I have been trying to overcome fear. My method has been to stay in the dark, and at night go into those rooms not generally inhabited. There is a strange propensity in the human mind to fear in the dark; there is a sort of dread of something supernatural. I tried to overcome that by considering that as far as I believe in ghosts, so far I must believe in a state after death, and it must confirm my belief in the Spirit of God; therefore if I try to act right I have no need to fear the directions of Infinite Wisdom. I do not turn away such things as some do: I believe nothing impossible to God, and He may have used spirits as agents for purposes beyond our conceptions. I know they can only come when He pleases, therefore we need not fear them. But my most predominant fear is that of thieves, and I find *that* still more difficult to overcome; but faith would cure that also, for God can equally protect us from man as from spirit.

"8th.—My father not appearing to like all my present doings, has been rather a cloud over my mind this day: there are few, if any, in the world I love so well; I am not easy to do what he would not like, for I think I could sacrifice almost anything for him, I owe him so much. I love him so well.

"I have been reading Watts on Judgment this afternoon; it has led me into thought, and particularly upon the evidence I have to believe in religion. The first thing that strikes me is the perception we all have of being under a power superior to human. I seldom feel this so much as when unwell; to see how pain can visit me and how it is taken away. Work forever, we could not create life. There must be a cause to produce an effect. The next thing that

strikes me is good and evil, virtue and vice, happiness and unhappiness—these are acknowledged to be linked together: virtue produces good, vice evil; of course the Power that allows this shows approbation of virtue. Thirdly, Christianity seems also to have its clear evidences, even to my human reason. My mind has not been convinced by books; but what little faith I have has been confirmed by reading holy writers themselves.

"14th.—I hope I have from experience gained a little. I am much of a Friend in my principles at this time, but do not outwardly appear much so; I say 'thee' to people, and do not dress very gay; but yet I say 'Mr.' and 'Mrs.' wear a turban, &c., &c. I have one remark to make; every step I have taken toward Quakerism has given me satisfaction.

"18th.—I feel I must not despair: I consider I first brought sceptical opinions upon myself, and it is only what is due to me that they should now hurt me. I hope I do not much murmur at the decrees of the Almighty: and can I expect who am so faulty, to be blessed with entire faith? Let me once more try and pray, that the evil roots in my own mind may be eradicated. I had altogether, a pretty good day; rather too much vanity at being mistress at home, and having to entertain many guests.

"24th.—What feeling so cheering to the human mind as religion! what thankfulness should I feel to God! I have great reason to believe Almighty God is directing my mind to the haven of peace; at least I feel that I am guided by a Power not my own. How dark was my mind for some days! How heavy! I saw duties to be performed that even struck me as foolish. I took courage and tried to follow the directions of this voice. I felt enlightened, even happy. Again I erred, again I was in a cloud. I once more tried, and again I felt brightened.

"25th.—This time last year I was with my dear friend, William Savery, at Westminster Meeting. I can only thankfully admire, when I look back to that time, the gentle lead-

ings my soul has had from the state of great darkness I was in. How suddenly did the light of Christianity burst upon my mind! I have reason to believe in religion from my own experience; and what foundation so solid to build my hopes upon? May I gain from the little experience I have been blessed with. May I encourage the voice of truth: and may I be a steady and virtuous combatant in the service of God. Such I think I may truly say is my most ardent prayer. But God who is omnipresent knows my thoughts, knows my wishes, and my many, many feelings. May I conclude with saying 'cleanse Thou me from secret faults.'

"28th.—We had company most part of the day. I have an odd feeling. Uncle Joseph and many gay ones were here; I had a sort of sympathy with him. I feel to have been so much off my guard that if tempted I should have done wrong. I now hear them singing. How much my natural heart does love to sing. But if I give way to the ecstasy that singing sometimes produces in my mind, it carries me far beyond the center; it increases all the wild passions and works on enthusiasm. Many say and think it leads to religion; it may lead to emotions of religion, but true religion appears to me to be in a deeper recess of the heart, where no earthly passion can produce it.

"March 1st.—There is going to be a dance—what am I to do? As far as I can see I believe, if I find it very necessary to their pleasure, I may do it, but not for my own gratification. Remember don't be vain; if it be possible dance little.

"I began to dance in a state next to pain of mind; when I had danced four dances, I was trying to pluck up courage to tell Rachel I wished to give it up for the evening: it seemed as if she looked into my mind, for she came up to me that minute, in the most tender manner, and begged me to leave off, saying she would contrive without me; I suppose she saw in my countenance the state of my mind. I am not half kind enough to her; I often make sharp re-

marks to her, and in reality there are none of my sisters to whom I owe so much. I must think of her as my nurse; she would suffer much to comfort me; may she, O God! be blessed; wouldst Thou, oh wouldst Thou, let her see her right path, whatever that may be, and wilt Thou enable her to keep up to her duty, in whatever line it may lead. Let this evening be a lesson to me not to be unkind to her any more. I think I should feel more satisfaction in not dancing; but such things must be left very much to the time. How very much do I wish for their happiness! That they may be blessed in every way is what I pray for to the Great Director. But all is guided in wisdom, and I believe as a family we have much to be thankful for, both for bodily and mental blessings."

The conclusion of the struggle is shown in the following:—

"*March 4th.*—I hope the day has passed without many faults. John is just come in to ask me to dance in such a kind way,—oh dear me! I am now acting clearly differently from them all. Remember this, as I have this night refused to dance with my dearest brother, I must out of kindness to him not be tempted by any one else. Have mercy O God! have mercy upon me! and let me act right, I humbly pray Thee. Wilt Thou love my dearest, most dear, brothers and sisters—wilt Thou protect us! Dear John! I feel much for him; such as these are home strokes; but I had far rather have them, if indeed governed by Supreme Wisdom, for then I need not fear. I know that *not* dancing will not lead me to do wrong, and I fear dancing does. Though the task is hard on their account I hope I do not mind the pain myself. I feel for them, but if they see in time that I am happier for it, I think they will no longer lament over me. I will go to them as soon as they have done, try to be cheerful, and to show them that I love them; for I do most truly, particularly

John. I think I might talk a little with John and tell him how I stand, for it is much my wisest plan to keep truly intimate with them all—make them my first friends. I do not think I ever love them so well as at such times as these. I should fully express my love for them, and how nearly it touches my heart acting differently to what they like. These are truly great steps for me to take in life, but I may expect support under them."

How charming is such a spirit! and she had her reward in the conversion of several of her highly endowed brothers and sisters to earnest fellowship in her own faith; she being the pioneer in the movement. Her eldest sister, Catherine, and some other members of the family attached themselves to the National Church. They always, however, remained firmly devoted to each other, and presented a lovely example of unity of heart amid diversities of opinion.

Soon after this Elizabeth adopted the numerical style of dates. This peculiarity of the Quakers originated from the impression that it was unbecoming in Christians to engraft idolatrous names upon their language, or to accept usages originating in the worship of false gods. To this scruple the only answer necessary is that given by Paul to those who refused meat which had once been offered to idols, feeling that they thus became partakers of idolatry. "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles eat, asking no questions for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." 1 Cor. x. 25, 26. Words, like meat, cannot be defiled by having been wrongly applied. The sin lies in the mind which uses a harmless instrument to express a wrong sentiment. We might just as well refuse to convert the spear into a pruning-hook, as to reject the word Monday because

the Moon was worshipped on that day by our ancestors, or decline to say "you" to a single person now, because the practice originated in a purpose to flatter persons of rank. Words derive their meaning altogether from usage, and are merely the coin by which we exchange thought. The sturdiest patriot would not refuse a gold piece because it bore the image and superscription of Cæsar—at least, after Cæsar was dead and his kingdom destroyed.

However, such devotion, though logically erring, is pleasant to witness, and we may admire the faithfulness to conviction while we accustom ourselves to translate "First day" into Sunday, &c., and "First Month" into January, through the remainder of this frank and altogether admirable heart-history.

"*Fourth Month 6th.*—I have not done a great deal to-day, and yet I hope I have not been idle: I try to do right now and then, but by no means constantly. I could not recover the feeling of being hurt at rejecting, I suppose, the voice of my mind last night, when I sang so much. They were not, I believe feelings of my own making, for it was my wish to enjoy singing without thinking it wrong.

"*7th.*—I have hopes the day may come when Norwich Meeting will prosper and be enlivened again from a state of cloudiness. In the afternoon I went with them to hear a person preach at the Baptist Meeting. I felt afraid of setting my own opinions up and being uncharitable. It did not seem to suit me like our silent method of worship, and the prayers and sermon did not make their way into the heart as those of our Friends do; but it is likely I should feel that, as I have much love for my own Society. Uncle Joseph was here in the evening and he seemed rather surprised at my going to hear Kinghorn. I had an interesting time with my young flock. I fear I might say rather too

much to them; Mayst Thou, O Father! preserve them, for without Thy aid my efforts are ineffectual. Mayst Thou make me an instrument in leading them to true virtue, and may the day come when Thou wilt call them to everlasting joy.

"*22nd.*—I have read a good deal in Lavater's journal, and have felt sympathy with him. I like the book, as it reminds me of my duty. I hope that I shall have more steady reliance upon God; more regularity of mind; less volatility of thought. To have my heart pure in the sight of Thee who knowest and seest all my weaknesses, all my defects. God have mercy on me, I pray Thee! Mayst Thou find in me a faithful servant, abounding in good works. May my whole heart truly say, 'Thy will be done!' May I ever, with all my heart say the Lord's prayer. Thou knowest my wishes, O God! Thou knowest them!

"*Fifth Month, 1st.*—Even acting right will sometimes bring dissensions in a family, as it says in the Testament. We must not be discouraged even when that is our lot; for whatever may be our situation, if we strictly adhere to what we believe to be our duty, we need not fear, but rest steadily upon Him who can and will support us. I often observe how much weakness of body seems to humble the mind. Illness is of great benefit to us as I have found from experience, if we try to make good use of it: it leads us to see our own weakness and debility, and to look to a stronger for support. So I believe it may be with the mind; dark and gloomy states are allowed to come upon it that we may know our own insufficiency, and place our dependence upon a Higher Power."

Here is a little dip into politics.

"*16th.*—I have not done much to-day, partly owing to taking a walk to Melton, and company this afternoon. I am sorry to say imperceptibly my mind gets wrapped up in the Election. I must take care or I think I shall be off my

guard, and I do think, if I become so warm in it, I shall find it better to go off out of the way; and may perhaps go to London Yearly Meeting. But why not try to command my mind at home? I intend to try, but in such cases as this it is difficult to act a negative character; for even such a body as I am might, I believe, get many votes amongst the poor: but yet I feel as if it were giving to the poor with an expectation of return from them to ask their votes. Still if the cause be such as may be of use in tending to abolish the war, (for every member in the House carries some weight) is it not right to be anxious to get any one who opposes war into it. 'Many a little makes a mickle.'

"27th.—At last the long-wished-for, expected day has arrived; it has been one of real bustle. Before we went to Norwich I was much affected to hear of the death of poor Betty Pettet, and it moved me. Let death come in any way, how very affecting it is! We went to Norwich and there entered its tumults. I have not been so very, very much interested; I might have acted pretty well if pride, vanity and shame had not crept in. We lost the Election which is certainly a very great blank, but we soon get over such matters, and it convinces me the less public matters are entered into the better; they do not suit us. Keep to our sphere and do not go out of its bounds.

"*Seventh Month, 12th.*—This day was not idle, but not religious. I was most part of the morning at Norwich; in the afternoon I settled accounts; and in the evening cut out clothes for the poor. I don't think I have looked into the Testament, or written my journal to-day. It leads me to remember what Uncle Joseph said to me the other day, after relating or reading to me the history of Mary who anointed our Saviour with the precious ointment, and His disciples said she might have sold it and given to the poor; but Christ said, 'The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always.' Now I thought, as Uncle Joseph remarked, I might this evening have spent too much time

about the poor that should have been spent about better things.

"*Ninth Month, 13th.*—This morning I awoke with a cloud over my mind, and so I must expect both to wake and sleep, if I do not try more completely to do the will of God. I dare not take resolutions, as I know now I cannot keep up to them.

"17th.—I feel a comfortable state of mind, not so inclined to be off my guard as sometimes. I know it is not owing to myself, but being so should be a cause of gratitude.

"This evening I did a thing I felt I had to repent of; but it has at least made me clear upon the subject. As they were singing and playing they begged me to sing, and I did it; but I felt far more pain than pleasure from doing it. A really uneasy mind was my portion the rest of the evening.

"18th.—This morning I went to meeting and fully felt my weakness; but I have found myself to-day and yesterday a little under the influence of religion which is a blessed thing. I had much palpitation at the Meeting of Discipline, because I saw some things so clearly, but being mentioned by others, I thought I might get off giving an opinion. I was proposed to be a representative, and said I had no objection, on my own part, because though I know how weak I am, yet even the weak should not fear to exert the little power they have; and I do feel interested for the Society, and for the most part approve its principles highly.

"*Tenth Month, 1st.*—I feel in a state of much mental weakness, real and true discouragement; I have little faith and little hope, and am almost fallen so as not to be able to rise. But if there be a God and a Saviour I need not rear; for though I know and find my state of corruption, yet I believe the warmest wish of my heart is to do the will of God and act right: I do most truly hunger and thirst after righteousness. I find one thing very hard to overcome, which is pride and vanity in outward religious matters. True religion I believe will not admit of pride and vanity. Another

temptation is that I have too much formed in my own mind what I think I am to be; which may outwardly encourage me in a path that nothing but the dictates of conscience should lead me into. I am really weak in faith and in works. I believe, at least I have a hope, that if I exert the little power I now have given me, the day will come when I shall feel the power of God within me.

"13th.—Narrow is the path that leadeth unto life eternal, and few there be that find it. There are many called, but few chosen—for though we are blessed with being called, yet if we follow not when we are called, and that strictly, we do not deserve to be called the children of God, for, as it says in Revelations, 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son.'

"*Eleventh Month, 17th, First day.*—In the evening, with my children, I had, in some respects, a very comfortable time; it was at least my wish to act right with them. In part of one of the chapters I seemed carried through to explain something to them in a way I hardly ever did before. It was striking the difference in my power this evening and this day week. This day week I tried and tried to explain, and the more I tried the more I seemed to blunder; and this evening I was determined not to attempt it unless I felt capable; and that I did, suddenly and unexpectedly to myself. I had a flow of ideas come one after another, in a sweet and refreshing way. The rest of the evening was principally spent with Hannah Scarnell talking about my poor mother, who died this day seven years.

"26th.—Towards the latter part of yesterday evening I had some uncomfortable mental feelings, and this morning they really amounted to pain of mind. I believe they were deep and inward temptations of the imagination. Silent waiting upon God seemed my only resource, and it was difficult to do so. It was like a trial in my mind between the two powers. My imagination I think was partly set at work by being nervous, rather more so than usual; and it

requires spiritual strength to overcome the painful workings of nervous imagination. There are few temptations, I believe, so hard to overcome, as those that try to put on the appearance of duties. They are willing to represent the Spirit of truth in our hearts. At such times, before I act try quietly to wait upon God; look to Him for help: and when things at all appear in the light of duties, the thought of which produces agony to the soul, it requires much deliberation before we act.

"*Twelfth Month, 11th.*—In the afternoon I was rather industrious. I was uncertain whether to go to the Grove or not, but at last I fixed to do so. In going there I observed the sweet states I had experienced for being obedient. My path seemed clear, and my heart acknowledged 'I have sought and have found, I have knocked and it has been opened unto me.' It also appeared to me in how beautiful a manner things work together for good. After all this again myself got the victory, and I came home with a degree of remorse for saying more upon some subjects than I should have said. How great a virtue is silence, properly attended to!"