

## CHAPTER IX.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES IN WORCESTERSHIRE, HER OWN QUARTERLY MEETING, &c.—DEATH OF ANNE CAPPER.—MARY CAPPER RETURNS HOME NEAR THE END OF 1822.

“1821. *1st mo. 1st.* Worcester. We began the visit to the families, being gently constrained to unite in this work by a measure of Christian love.

*4th.* We have sat in many families, we hope to some profit. It is little, however, that we can do one for another, though at seasons, a constraint is felt to leave our own home comforts, and thus to visit the professors of the same religious faith.

*7th. First day.* At meeting we were again favoured to experience that it is good to wait for a renewal of spiritual strength.

*14th. First day.* One of close religious engagement, and of inward breathing of heart to be kept in the path of duty. Heavenly counsel can alone direct, and keep in safety, from day to day.

*18th.* In our meeting for worship, we had renewed cause to acknowledge that the Lord's mercies are both ancient and new.

*23rd.* A fine, mild day. We walked in the garden, and I think gratefully enjoyed the sun, in its brightness and cheerful influence on all around; not forgetting the bountiful Giver of all we enjoy. Bless the Lord! all ye who partake of his mercies, in all places; whether surrounded by the beauties of the country, or supported by his daily Providence in the noise of the town.

O! the heart that trusts in Him can acknowledge his power to sustain in all lawful engagements.

*28th. First day.* The afternoon meeting was largely attended, an invitation having been given, more especially to servants and apprentices employed by Friends. The intent was partly answered, but there was a mixed company, which was not quite so relieving to the minds of those, on whom the weight of the concern rested, as it might otherwise have been; however, when we have done what we can, we must endeavour to be quiet.

*30th.* Left Worcester and came to Netherton. We were pleased with the delightful calm, and with the beauties of nature, surrounding the habitation, and still more so with our reception from the family.

*31st.* We were conveyed to the small meeting, where condescending goodness was in the midst. I thought in my heart, how excellent is a lowly, staid frame of mind, waiting for that spiritual refreshment, which comes from the presence of the Lord.

*2nd mo. 2nd.* My dear companion so unwell that we have had a restless night. In renewed times of proving, and fresh trial of faith, the best we can do seems to be, to endeavour to be still, both in body and in mind, that the secret word of instruction may be rightly distinguished; either in reproving, humbling, or opening new springs of help and of pure knowledge, for our own advantage, or that of others. In something of this state of mind, we sat down with this family; it was a serious time, I hope to mutual profit; a little spiritual refreshment was ministered to my own mind. I do crave this, from day to day, lest I perish.

*4th. First day.* We had a very crowded meeting at Bewdley, some invitation having been given. The gathering was attentive and was affectionately addressed; may it be blessed of Him who giveth the increase.

*5th.* After the morning Scripture reading, something by way

of an affectionate farewell, mingled with some gentle caution to this kind family, most of whom are young, was feelingly expressed, and we separated in much love. Arrived at Worcester.

*2nd mo. 6th.* Called upon a young woman, not of our Society, whom I had before visited, when she was under the reducing effects of sickness, and when her mind was susceptible of good impressions. Returning health, youthful vivacity, with an attractive share of personal beauty, and mixing in gay, dissipating, fashionable amusements, and those frivolities which allure from seriousness, and fail not to mar the growth of holiness, have, I fear, for a time at least, laid waste the engaging loveliness of a humble and broken spirit; though there are still tokens of a tender mind. Dear young woman! my heart feels an interest in her true happiness, and I am well satisfied in having made the call, which she seemed to receive kindly, expressing her sense of the motive, with rising tears.

*7th.* We came to Evesham. Our minds were favoured with a peaceful acquittal, having gone through our late engagements, with a sincere and watchful desire to be kept simple, humble and faithful in the line of duty; the only way of peace and safety. Richard Burlingham and his kind wife gave us a cordial welcome.

*8th.* The Monthly Meeting; a time to be acknowledged as a renewal of condescending favour. What shall we render to the Lord!

*11th. First day.* In the Morning Meeting, Richard Burlingham spoke impressively; in the afternoon, a considerable number of servants in Friends' families, labouring men, &c. came by invitation, and their behaviour was becoming. The nature of silent waiting, for the renewal of our spiritual strength, was a little explained; it is but little understood, among Christian professors; and to be fully so, its incalculable benefits must be, in some degree, experienced. Hearing or doing is too often rested in, as religious worship; with very little sense of that heart-humbling Power that contrites the spirit, and prepares an acceptable sacrifice, though no vocal sound be heard.

*13th.* In the evening, I read to the family an account of my dear brother Jasper's illness and close; a very precious feeling spread over us in contemplating the dissolution of a brother, so beloved by me in life. We separated under a tendering sense of heavenly goodness and mercy toward the children of men. O! that every rational creature would seek to know the God of our salvation, that so all might praise Him.

*14th.* Sat with a young woman to whom tender counsel was given, with sincere desire that she might be preserved from the strange notions of liberty, and of alienation from the Cross of Christ, which seem to abound. Our safety is in humility and in stillness; that we may be taught to know ourselves, and often to resort to the place where secret prayer is wont to be made, where the simple-hearted wait for an increase of understanding, to know and to keep in the paths of uprightness, that they may be at peace. These read the Holy Scriptures with reverence and lowliness of mind, that they may come unto the Light, the Life and the Way, whereof the Scriptures do testify, even Christ the Lord. We had our fears for this dear young woman, but parted in the tender clothing of Christian love.

*16th.* A day of much engagement. In the evening, sat with the heads of this family. How precious are the Lord's visitations! when received and cherished, how wonderfully does He, here and there, raise up servants and handmaids, to set forth his praise,—to testify of his power and mercy!

*17th.* An unlooked for opportunity occurred to express our interest for two young persons, for whom we had felt much when under their father's roof. This seemed a time of tenderness not to be lightly esteemed. Times of instruction, we may feelingly say, are in the hand of Him from whom all our mercies flow. Soon after dinner we left this kind, interesting family, and little circle of friends, with hearts united, I believe, in a bond of love and precious fellowship, strong and lasting; to endure so long

as we continue upon the immutable foundation of Christian faith. We came to Alcester.

18th. *First day.* In the afternoon a little company of serious neighbours sat down with us, and we may gratefully acknowledge that it was a precious season.

19th. Sat with the heads of the family where we dined; the children were not present, though some of them old enough. We thought it a privation; in some visits of this nature, we have had cause to believe that heavenly kindness was extended to the dear young children. We returned before tea, and sweetly enjoyed the domestic comfort of the family. How precious is Christian harmony, and quietness of mind, when either the toils of life, or the duties of a day, are drawing to a close, without a bitter sting or restless anxiety! O! this is marvellous mercy! soul-satisfying reality! no idle tale! no cunningly-devised fable! May my soul, in unison with every humble believer, bless the Lord.

20th. I felt unwell, but set out, with my dear companion and helper, and I believe true burden bearer. We had some distance to walk, to sit down with a widower and his sister; our feelings were those of lively sympathy; but hope shone, as a cheering ray, upon the way to obtain the crown immortal, at the close of the earthly pilgrimage, when we shall no more mourn the separation one from another. The one redeeming Lord and Saviour worketh his own righteous work, in the humble, contrite heart.

21st. A precious meeting in the morning. In our little evening company, we had some beautiful Scripture reading; the concluding chapters of the Gospel of John. How pathetic, how convincing, to minds which resist not heavenly influence, is the language! setting forth the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the re-appearance of Christ to his disconsolate disciples, as they were assembled together, 'the doors being shut,' He manifested Himself in the midst. O! how graciously were we enabled, at this

time, to comprehend something of this heavenly visitation, and to close, with sweetness, the evening of this day.

22nd. After taking a serious and affectionate farewell of our kind friends, and of a valuable female servant who had waited on us, we went to Warwick, where we arrived about noon, and entered the neat, comfortable habitation of my endeared companion and friend Hannah Evans. We were received with smiles of welcome by her sister and faithful servant, and are thankful for such an asylum, being weary and in want of rest.

After a few days repose at this place, my mind was unexpectedly tried and brought low. I trust I am not apt to seek, or to enter into important engagements, without seriously pondering the subject in secret, ere I venture to open it even to my dearest friend or companion; but after some time of trial, and I may say distress, I thought it best to acquaint Hannah Evans, that I believed I must visit four poor unhappy men, recently committed to the County Jail, for robbery and murder. This disclosure did not surprise my friend, for she had had a secret sense of the conflict of my mind, and this was helpful and encouraging to me. Thus I believe the dedicated mind is renewedly prepared for every fresh act of service, whether it be considered little or great. It is not having been helped in times past that will suffice or sustain; but through self-reduction and abasement, our confidence is afresh fixed upon the unfailing Helper of those who seek his Divine direction and guidance.

26th. Suitable arrangements having been made, my kind friend Hannah Evans, and a few serious persons, accompanied me to the Jail, where we were freely admitted. The mistress of this vast family, Esther Tatnal, being unwell, we were attended by her daughter, and by the gentlewoman who was with us on a former occasion. My mind was under a weighty concern, as we were conducted, by the head turnkey, into a clean commodious room, where the four poor men were seated on a bench. The turnkey then left us; it was a heart-affecting moment. First sat

the desperate ringleader; then the brother of the unhappy woman who was executed for the murder of her mistress, and whom we visited three times within these walls; this poor fellow seems to have been drawn in by wicked companions, he is about twenty-five and ignorant, but not unfeeling; he was greatly agitated on reference being made to his sister. We have been told that his afflicted mother died, soon after hearing that he was committed under suspicion of being guilty of the same awful crime as his sister. Another of this wretched, deluded gang also appears young; the fourth is middle-aged, and the father of several children; when his poor wife received the sad intelligence, she was taken ill and soon died, leaving a new-born babe. We understand that he was in an agony of distress, when his poor destitute, helpless infant was brought to him, and that he said, 'Had I followed my wife's advice, I should not have been in my present situation.' They all sat very quietly, and seemed to attend seriously to what was expressed. We then took an affecting leave of them, under a mournful sense of human depravity. We had an impressive religious opportunity, in the chamber of E. Tatnal, whom I was concerned to find in a feeble state, her life being of public importance, as well as private benefit. She knows, however, where to seek that which can sustain through every duty, and every affliction.

28th. The Monthly Meeting, when Hannah Evans returned her minute. There is nothing of which self can boast, but we can, in lowliness of mind, speak well of the gracious Power that helped and kept us, as we went along together in the work. I continue awhile with my dear friend, as my strength is much exhausted. Very tender is her care and attention, and I desire to be grateful for this, among many other favours bestowed.

3rd mo. 4th. First day. The morning meeting was small; our numbers being few, and some of these few, not rightly estimating their privileges, possibly not fully knowing them, often neglecting assembling with their friends for worship. The afternoon meeting

was attended by many serious persons, who were invited to sit down with us, in our simple way. The opportunity was a relief to some who often feel a solicitude for the more universal spread of that righteousness which, we read in Scripture, is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

8th. Many calling to see us, it proved something like taking a solemn farewell.

9th. This morning I left the house of my dear friend and companion, Hannah Evans, and her domestic circle, from every one of whom I had received all the soothing kindness and attention which my feeble state required. I have now arrived safely at my own comfortable apartments in Dale End, Birmingham.

My heart craves a lowly, grateful and abiding sense of the Lord's manifold mercies.

13th. I was much gratified with the company of my dear niece M. and her husband; they were returning from visiting their relations in the south; it was to me an unexpected and interesting interview, and I think it was mutually endearing; my heart owns, and my hand records it as very precious to me; and I felt thankful for an apartment and a table furnished with things needful to refresh my dear relatives on their journey. We parted, as we had met, in the sweet feeling of love and harmony, but my mind seemed to tarry with them; they are young, and may live to see many days, and vicissitudes many. One immutable truth will, I hope, be engraven on their hearts; the invincible power of God, revealed by grace in the heart, as brought to light by Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, the Saviour, by whom we come to know our own incapacity, and our need of a new heart, new thoughts and new affections; a knowledge hidden from those who are wise in their own conceits.

14th. Our Monthly Meeting, where I delivered in my certificate granted for the recent religious engagement. The best report I could give was the acknowledgment of heavenly condescension; unto which every faculty of my soul desires to be in subjection; yea, evermore, so be it!

## MARY CAPPER TO A YOUNG MAN.

"3rd mo. 27th, 1821.

DEAR J. G.

It is a precious thing to remember, and to be remembered by one another for good. Oft times, dear youth, have I remembered thee, and I am gratified by thy sweet token of affectionate regard toward me. If a union of Christian good-will can afford help, and surely there is strength in that love which wishes well to souls, thou art favoured. Thy dear Parents, thy Christian friends, all plead for thy establishment on the Rock, Christ Jesus, the Saviour sent into the world, clothed with humanity, to be crucified for the sin of the degenerate human race, who died, in his human nature; was chastised, smitten and bruised, for our sakes; bearing the iniquities of us all. O! who shall understand these things, except the Father reveal them. A Saviour crucified for our sins! a Saviour glorified for our justification! Flesh and blood cannot reveal this great mystery; but heavenly condescension opens the understanding of the babes, the lowly and the simple in heart. It is not by human art and subtle reasoning, but as we become subjected, and receive the kingdom as little children, willing to be turned from the evil of our ways, our self-will, our selfishness in all its devices, that we can understand the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Oftentimes I think of thee; thou art not left to grope in the dark; the instruction of pious friends has been as line upon line, precept upon precept, extended towards thee; and to crown all, that light has arisen in thy heart, which is graciously given to the children of men to profit withal. I humbly hope it may yet shine more and more, unto the perfect day; to shew thee the exceeding great love of God in Christ Jesus, who is revealed herein, to sanctify us throughout, in body, soul and spirit.

I think of thee, I trust, with a Christian interest; I think of thee as in the dawn of human life, full of warm energies; glowing, at times, with vivid expectations, even of temporal enjoyment. Thy human nature points at this, and urges the natural heart to press after this delusive happiness; we may look round about us, and see to what a mournful crisis this has brought thousands of our fellow sojourners on this side the grave. Surely we may cherish the consoling belief, that a gracious God is dealing very mercifully with thee; in pity for thy immortal spirit; He sends the gentle consumption of the body, to teach the heart wisdom.

Submit, dear youth, to the power of the indwelling Word of light and life; that searching, quick and discerning Word, unto which the Holy Scriptures do amply bear testimony, and of which we particularly read in the first chapter of the gospel records of the Apostle John.

I need not say more, and I hope I have not said too much, to testify my real good will; thou hast indeed a place in my best love. My heart's desire is, that the end of our faith may be crowned with the salvation of our souls. Thy dear Parents have a share in my best wishes. Farewell! whether we see each other again in mutability, or not,

I do cordially and very affectionately subscribe,

Thy friend,

MARY CAPPER."

TO HANNAH EVANS.

"4th mo. 23rd, 1821.

MY DEAR AND KIND FRIEND,

Cherish not the apprehension that I have any view of the near approach of the spirit's dismissal; my hope, if it be best, is, that

my feeble frame may gently decay, without acute disease; nor would I willingly be impatient under the bonds. Let the Lord work his own work, for my full sanctification, is my prayer. I am recruiting, and my voice has returned, though as yet weak.

Dear E. S. with her afflicted daughter! I often think of them. It is in times of lowliness of mind, that we have the sweetest fellowship one with another, in a measure of that blessed union which binds and bends the natural will to the Cross of Christ. May our abiding be here; let others soar above, or where they will!

With love, I subscribe,

MARY CAPPER."

TO THE SAME.

"4th mo. 29th, 1821.

MY PRECIOUS AND ENDEARED FRIEND,

United in the fellowship of the gospel, being partakers in measure of each other's consolations and trials, may our souls be possessed in patience, through drought and famine! I dare not for a moment harbour the thought that heavenly kindness has forsaken us, however we may be tried, tossed and not comforted; it is doubtless a necessary discipline, a salutary chastening. In this I take courage, that nothing in heaven or earth can compare with a Redeemer's love and power, and 'all the fitness He requireth is to feel our need of Him.' Are we not then, in this sense, claimants on his compassion, his mercy and his love? Never did I more fully feel it so.

Thy friend,

MARY CAPPER."

TO THE SAME.

"5th mo. 28th, 1821.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Last week, I was inclined to accept an invitation to visit a young woman who is a member of our religious Society, and who sometimes attends our meetings, but whose appearance, manners, &c. differ widely from the simplicity of our profession, and from that into which the pure spirit of Christianity leads. This dear young woman was deprived of her mother when a babe, left much to inconsiderate persons, and much indulged. No wonder then, that submission to the restraining power of religion, to the cross of Christ, formed no part of her instruction; but the good Shepherd leaves us not thus to stray, wander and perish. With what heavenly kindness He seeketh that which is turned out of the way! and healeth that which is wounded! Yea! hath long patience with that which is crooked. In lowly reverence, my heart ponders and admires the mercy and goodness extended to us all.

We have now an encouraging hope, that this young person is really under a deep consideration of things belonging to the soul's salvation, and I was comforted in this little visit. She has made a decided stand, and determined no more to frequent the theatre, or other places of diversion, though solicited by her companions, and even urged by those who ought to be the guardians of her youth. Instead of the fathers, children become teachers.

I observed, and perhaps a little entered into thy mournful anticipation, of the execution of the sentence on the three misguided, unhappy men, who suffered on Sixth-day; so abiding was the feeling, that on Seventh-day, I called upon the distressed widow and family of B. I found her sorrowful, but not violent in the expression of her grief. She seemed to receive my visit

just in the way I could wish; she said, and I believe, she thought, it was very kind to call upon such a poor afflicted, deserted family. She hoped, that as her husband had told her, he had made his peace with God. She asked if I would like to see his corpse. I secretly started, as it were, at the idea; however, after a little pause, I accompanied a young man, who was there, into a decent, clean chamber, where the coffin was. The young man appeared very serious, and drew aside the face-cloth. The countenance was in no way disfigured. I was satisfied in paying this little visit, as following an impulse of humanity, and my mind seems relieved by it. I understand the poor family are left in low circumstances; a trifle which I gave, was thankfully received. Farewell, my dear friend; may thy soul prosper, and be in peace, prays thy friend,

MARY CAPPER."

*7th mo. 2nd.* I came to Warwick, from our Quarterly Meeting at Leicester. My strength being unequal to much travelling, I have written to my Monthly Meeting, to inform my friends of a concern, which I have long felt, to hold some meetings among various religious professors in this county, Worcestershire, &c. as way may open for it.

*4th.* I attended the Monthly Meeting here, and H. Evans was liberated to accompany me, should my own meeting concur in my view. Thus it is comely to move in good order.

*8th. First day.* I accompanied William Whitehead and Hannah Evans to a meeting for worship, held annually at Berkswel; the house was well filled with country people, who behaved quietly. Tender counsel and serious exhortation were expressed among them.

*14th.* I received the document from my Monthly Meeting.

*15th. First day.* William Whitehead and Hannah Evans accompanied me to Harboro', a village where Friends have a meeting-house, but no meeting had been held there for several

years; it seems to be a populous neighbourhood. Many serious persons attended both meetings; some, I believe, were sensible of a secret feeling, which has no fellow, nor can the skill of man form anything like unto it.

We had taken some provisions with us, but a poor man's table was kindly spread for us with refreshments, of which we cheerfully partook; and before we separated, our spirits were refreshed with something better than outward bread. The father of this family is a serious man, in the meridian of life, but so nearly blind as to be incapable of doing anything for the support of a wife and numerous children. His mind appears to be favoured with submission; his eldest son, a steady, agreeable youth, who attends our religious meetings, is an apprentice, at Warwick.

*18th.* A suspension of vocal utterance, with much weakness, attends me. In unspeakable mercy, my mind is calm, and I hope to be quiet, in passive duties, or to be willing to do what may be required, and I may be enabled to do, from time to time.

*19th.* The coronation of George the Fourth. My heart, it may be with many others, breathed an early morning desire, that our present king may receive the anointing, not symbolically alone, but that grace and holiness may be poured into his heart. May his people thus pray for him, and may the King of Kings answer the prayer by a blessing upon us all! the choice blessing of an increase of true godliness, and of peace one with another!

*20th.* Health and vigour a little revived, with a quiet hope that some prospects may be fulfilled. My friends are very kind and helpful, for which I desire to be thankful. The highly respected mistress of the County Jail, Esther Tatnal, took tea with us.

*21st.* My heart was affected by the coming of an interesting old man from Harboro', to inform us, with much simplicity, that he had been solicited by many of the people, to come over and invite us to have another meeting among them, and that the people of the fields might be asked to attend; by which I