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AUTOBIOGRAPHY WRITTEN FOR TERESA  
(By her Father Johathan Swain)

Some apology may not be out of place for attempting to sketch some of the incidents that have marked my career through life from infancy or the period of my earliest recollection to the present day. It may be thought that since my life has been one of the commonest the pall of oblivion should have quietly enshrouded my name and my history when my earthly career shall be closed. If a thirst for posthumous fame were the sole cause of these pencillings there would be ample reasons for these reflections. But when we consider that we all enjoy reminiscences of early life, that by such reflections we are enabled to detect and rectify those blemishes in our characters which few can boast of having entirely escaped, and that even the humblest have dear friends and near relations to whom their history derives a consequence from this relationship, the subject may be viewed in a very different light.

How often the minds of children recur to the family circle when the hearthstone was surrounded by the yet unbroken band with fondest recollections after their parents have passed to higher spheres. While indulging in this natural and pleasing meditation how gladly would they see some moments of the affection and enduring concern of those upon whose knee they have daudled, to whose early training they are indebted for many of their virtues, and to whom they owe their existence. How often on such occasions would a kindly word of comfort, or a tender exhortation to unwavering firmness in discharging the manifold duties of life make an enduring impression on hearts already softened by such tender reflections? These reflections may serve to rescue this attempt from any sordid motive, and serve as an apology for what might otherwise be deemed supererogatory or egotistic.

I was born in North Carolina, Guilford County on the 13 of 7 m (July 13) 1798. My father was descended from a family by the name of Swain who emigrated to that State from the Island of Nantucket in the early settling of the county. My mother's name was Gardner. She was from the same place. They were both members of the Friends Society and consequently my early education was such as was generally given to children of the poorer sort in this connection. I had six brothers and two sisters that lived to grow up. My father was lame in his feet, and inherited from his parents in the male line a pulmonary weakness, and was afflicted in his younger years after he had the care of a family with bleeding at the lungs. This disease was partially cured in after life, but I have no recollection of his having sufficient strength and firmness to perform a good days work on the farm since my first acquaintance with him. And having a large family to support and educate, he spent much of his time in selling bread at the gatherings of a public nature, and by this means he was enabled to provide for and educate his large

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family (though in a moderate way) as well as was common in that age and country. My mother felt a strong wish to see us all respectably educated, and we owe much of the little we have acquired to her assiduity. I recollect when I was a very child of having it said that all the trees on the surface of the globe that stand upright point towards the center of the earth. This to my mind was an incomprehensible problem. I labored a long time to solve it in vain. Discouraged by my failure I went to my mother and enquired of her whether she could remove the difficulty. She took a cushion and a few pins, made the pins represent the trees and by planting them in different parts of the cushion showed me at once that as all the pins were pointing towards the center of the cushion so all the trees standing on the surface of the globe must point towards its center. The effect of this little demonstration on my mind was magical. I felt that I had conquered a great obstacle in my research after truth; and that by the acquisition of this new idea I was made a more exalted being than I was when laboring in vain to acquire it. I mention this to show the importance of watching the workings of the youthful mind and directing it into proper channels in its researches after truth. Had my mother, instead of spreading this intellectual feast before me, thoughtlessly driven me away, how would the arrows of disappointment have pierced my sensitive mind instead of being fed with the food so suitable to it, and for which it has so strong an appetite.

"My Son", said Nathan Hunt, "these are things into which thou hast no business to enquire", when his son desired him to elucidate some theological difficulty. What a damper! Would it not have been better had he said, "My son, the ability rightly to ask a question presupposes the ability rightly to answer it." "And though my state of progress may not enable me to solve thy interrogatory, I hail with joy the workings of thy budding intellect, and behold in the depth and profundity of thy question, sparkling signs of future progress. Keep thine eye steady on the polar star of truth, let thy tackings and veerings be ordered by the compass of reason and intuitive wisdom and thou shalt successfully navigate the sea of knowledge, and be preserved from stranding on the sand-bars of error, and when thou hast spent a useful and joyous lifetime a new and higher existence will beam upon thee in which thou wilt be enabled to pursue thy investigations with more success and greater satisfaction through endless ages. The most obstruse, difficult and intricate question that thou canst possibly conceive, will then be as plain and as easily understood as the proposition now is, that all the trees standing perpendicular on the surface of the globe must point to its center."

At a very early period of my existence, I became very deeply impressed with an awful sensation when the occurrence of a death took place in our vicinity. A good old woman, one of our nearest neighbors, and one of my fathers aunts died when I was quite young. When my father returned from witnessing her departure his solemn aspect and the news that he brought were truly impressive to me. For a long time after this the sight of the

very road along which her corpse was taken to the burying place struck me with awe. I have frequently thought, when I have reflected on the needless suffering to which I was subjected from this source, that it might, in a great measure, have been prevented had cheerful views of the nature and use of death been presented to my view. It might also have a good effect on children for each little settlement to have its own burying place properly inclosed and supplied with plenty of neat white stones, so as to give it a cheerful aspect, and inure the rising generation to the sight of the final resting place of all flesh, connected with beauty and cheerful inspiring scenes.

There was an old man living near whom my father often hired to assist us on the farm who indulged in relating ghost stories and designating haunted places of which he said there were many in the neighborhood. This had such an influence on my mind that I could not pass one of these places even in open daylight without some emotions of horror, and especially after night did I suffer extremely, if I was obliged to pass one of them. Little did he think while diverting himself with telling these stories, that he was laying the foundation of so much misery in the gaping group around him. How careful should everyone demean himself when in the presence of children lest he should do or say something that may possibly have a controlling evil tendency on their characters. For young children are very imitative and very impressible, and the earliest impressions are the most enduring and hence the most important of any that we ever receive.

Let the child never see any undue emotions of passion in its parents or those with whom it is associated, and it will be much more likely to acquire habits of self-control than it would if exposed to examples of a contrary nature. It seems to me that the reformation of the world is in a great measure dependent on the early training of children. A proper attention to this, where there is no hereditary propensity transmitted from parents will almost certainly ensure success. What can be hoped from the preaching of temperance to an audience who have inherited the love of rum from their parents and whose early training has been in the       ?      . And what may we not hope for if temperate habits have been inherited and a corresponding example always set before them? Everyone is deeply interested in cultivating the purest germ of internal character; so as to become in reality good and noble, loving and benevolent; and then they will transmit these qualities to their children; and in their intercourse with them and their daily walks before them they will give a healthy impetus to these qualities by the force of their example.

The schools to which I was sent in my minority were rather of inferior quality. Some vacated cabin or outhouse was commonly selected for a school room with a board fastened up to one side for a writing desk, and a log cut out for the admission of light, without sash or glass to exclude the wind, with sometimes a rude chimney and at other times only a hole for the egress of the smoke.

Add to this fifteen or twenty lads and lasses presided over by a man or a woman whom lameness or debility or disinclination disqualified for getting a living by labor, and you have a pretty good picture of a North Carolina school at the time of my receiving literary instruction in that state. It is true there were some schools of a higher order in that land, but the above description does very little injustice to any that I enjoyed the benefits of, and even these I enjoyed for a very limited period. I cannot now recollect of going to school more than about nine months during my minority; three months to Thomas Fakes, three months to David Frazier, and three months to William (P)arker. Besides this I went some to my aunt Sarah J/Gessop, perhaps enough to make up the time I lost at the other schools. The time was all occupied in spelling, reading and writing. I do not recollect of ever taking a slate to any of these schools. The opportunity for improvement was none of the best, and had it not been for a taste I imbibed for reading, my education would have been meager indeed. I had the opportunity of reading Hervey's meditations. I thought it excellent. I enjoyed his quotations from the poets Milton, Young(?) Thompson which induced me to procure and read the works of some of those poets.

From my earliest reflections on theology I was beset with difficulties. When I took it into consideration that God foreknew every event from the beginning of creation; that among other things he must know whether I should land in perdition or not; and if He did know that I should do so, any effort on my part would never prevent it; and as I was rather a wayward child, I often almost despaired of ever achieving my salvation, which I was often told by the preachers, that I must work out with fear and trembling before the Lord! In this dilemma the only relief I obtained was from that text in the Christian Scriptures which says: " Nothing is impossible with God". Of this text I made the following unreasonable application: if nothing is impossible with God, then it may be possible with Him to know that I shall be lost and yet I may be saved! This looks like a very childish conclusion, but I should greatly rejoice even at my present advanced age to hear a more reasonable application of this text by someone who believes in eternal punishment. If sixty nine out of every seventy are eternally lost, and God foreknew to an absolute certainty which one will be saved and which sixty nine will be lost, how is it possible for any of the sixty nine to be saved unless it is possible for God to foreknow that they will be lost and yet they may be saved?

When I was about fourteen years of age I acquired a habit that has cost me much inconvenience besides the bad effect it produced on my health and morals: I refer to the indecent practice of using tobacco: a practice that makes those addicted to it unsuitable companions for any sensitive person not inured to the same intemperance; a practice which in a greater degree than is generally supposed induces disease, suffering and premature death; a practice that robs the poor family to a consid-

erable extent of the means of subsistence and education and subjects them to that which nulefies (?) and debases them. It is astonishing that this weed so nauseous to the taste, so sickening in its effects should ever have gained such an absolute supremacy over the masses. When we reflect that hundreds of acres of the most fertile soil is annually impoverished by its culture; that those who cultivate and manufacture it are exposed to disease and intense suffering from its deleterious affluvia; that the real substantial food and clothing of the race are by this means diminished so that many suffer for the necessaries of life, the cultivation and consumption of tobacco assumes an importance little understood by those who do not take these items into the account when reflecting on this subject. Compare the consequence of devoting the immense amount of money spent annually for tobacco to the purpose of providing the necessities and comforts of life for the suffering millions; to the purpose of securing the means of literary and religious instruction for the poorer classes; to the purpose of establishing social libraries, and building public Halls for free discussion; Compare all this with the consequence of the same amount of money spent as it annually is, in scattering the seeds of disease and premature death, of moral polution and intellectual stulefication throughout the entrie ranks of the consumers, and you can scarcely entertain any feeling than that of abhorrence towards the whole system of tobacco growing and consumption.

Stultification

It was common amongst those of my age and situation to chew this nauseous weed and I felt a wish to be like them, and so I went on in my attempts to conquer my naturally strong aversion to its taste, until I had so corrupted the pure promptings of my natural appetite, that instead of the most unequalled loathing, I acquired an insatiable appetite for this unwholesome and most abominable stimulus. And when the habit was fairly contracted, I found in after years that it had fastened its fangs upon me with a giant grasp, that nothing short of the most determined resolution could possibly relax. And so I continued my state of slavery through a long course of years consuming immedise quantities of this vile weed; suffering frequently from its exhausting effects; and appropriating many a dollar of my hard earned substance to the supply of this worse than foolish practice. If those who are expanding in the beautiful bloom of youth while the rosy tints decorate their cheeks, and their balmy breath is adding fresh fragrance to the purest gales of the morning, could only realize the sallow cadaverous skin, the nauseous repulsive affluvia, the constant companions of the slaves of tobacco, surely they would not so slightly slide into this state of bondage as is often the case with the gay and thoughtless. Nothing is more common as we pass the villages of America (?) than to see the youths of those places those who are or ought to be preparing themselves to become heads of families and useful citizens, congregating in

idle groups, and loading the otherwise odorous zephyrs with clouds of smoke from their volcanic craters. The close observer will be enabled by this appearance to judge of the moral and mental development of any location, for if any community be far advanced in knowledge and virtue, the cigar and tobacco box will be banished from their midst; but when crime and ignorance abound, the disgusting exhibition of tobacco in its various forms may commonly be seen also.

That portion of North Carolina in which I received my early training was distinguished by the sterility of the soil, insomuch that my parents often talked of emigrating to the west in order to settle their numerous family on the fertile plains of Indiana and procuring a quarter section of land in that region. In the year 1816 it was resolved that I should make a tour to Indiana in order to labor for wages in that country. So in the autumn of that year arrangements were made with Isaac and Eunice Gardner who were coming to this state on a visit, for me to come with them.

This was an eventful period of my existence. I had hitherto spent much of my time at home laboring on the farm; had never been out of the state; and never more than about an hundred miles from home. I had been several times to Fayetteville about an hundred miles from my fathers residence and often to the Narrows of the Yadkin, a fishery about fifty miles distant; but now I was about to traverse a region of near six hundred miles, through mountainous regions and picturesque scene as well as fertile plains and beautiful green pastures. This was very interesting, thus to be introduced to such new scenes of such exquisite beauty and such sublime grandeur.

I passed the journey very pleasantly in very near affectionate relations with those who accompanied me. It was getting late in the season when we started, and before we arrived the weather was cold and rainy. The roads were new and very muddy, and traveling was extremely tedious. We camped three or four times after passing Cincinnati in traveling a distance of about fifty miles. Our last encampment was at Oxford about ten miles distant, and when we left there in the morning we fully expected to be out another night. But our horses having traveled the road before and though worn down by a long journey and bad roads they spurred up and put forth what energy they well could so that we got through a while before night. Those who travel this road at this time on the beautifully graveled pike can scarcely imagine what a road we passed over. There were two of us who drove the wagon by turns while the other walked; and such was the state of the roads, that it was impossible for the one that walked to keep his feet dry. I remember that I had occasion to go back on the things in the wagon and my feet were so muddy that I had to go in my stocking feet and when reclining on my knees to do the service for which I went back, the water run off the toes of my stockings quite fast.

Some of the scenery on the Cumberland River is magnificent and grand beyond description. High projecting cliffs on the very borders of the stream give a dizzy feeling to the gazer, while the romantic scenery rivets his eyes on their lofty summit. Cumberland mountain over which the highway passes presents some bold and startling prominences. At the foot of this mountain a cottage is secured from the danger of being crushed to pieces by the descent of a large rock on the top of the mountain which has given signs of leaving its bed in which it has rested for ages, by a chain which fastens it to its neighbor which is more firmly planted and shows no signs of seeking a resting place in the valley below. Should the inclination of this rock become so great as to overcome the strength of the chain, its passage down the mountain would be sublimely irresistible, and should it strike the cottage of which there is a strong probability, the inmates would experience a shock, no less terrible and destructive to them than would be the total destruction of the entire solar system. Near the top of this mountain where the road crosses it is a beautiful spring of water situated on a spot of partially level ground, affording an opportunity to travelers of refreshing themselves and their horses after their toilsome ascent. Little do those know, who have been confined to the fertile plains of the western country, of the wonderful prospects that burst upon the view of the traveler as he traverses those regions in his passage to "the far west". Clinch mountain, over which the road passes, is a rocky barren prospect. On rising its southern acclivity the tortuosity of the passage is so great that in some places some of the waggoners are wont to back their wagons, that they may be enabled to make the turn without locking and stalling their wagons. After the top is gained the descent on the north side is nearly straight and so steep that less than both hind wheels securely locked would not suffice to check the velocity of the descending car. And should any of the property chance to be above the upper margin of the wagon body, it would be in danger of sliding off, such is the abrupt declivity of this mountain. The State of Kentucky is generally tolerably level and fertile where we passed through it; but on Kentucky river there is some startling scenery. In ascending the hill or mountain on this side of the river we made a passage round a point of rocks where the road was built with wood. Should it give way which its perishable nature renders at least possible, the eye can scarcely see the termination of the descent to which those who should be on it would be exposed.

The country about Lexington and Georgetown is very rich and beautiful, and were it not cursed with the institution of slavery would be one of the most desirable abodes that I have ever seen on earth. And slavery blights the most fertile region, and prevents the most delightful country from being properly

enjoyed. Wythe County in the state of Virginia is another excellent location, with a rich soil, excellent timber, superb springs of water, a plenty of good limestone; in short almost everything that can enhance the comforts and supply the necessities of life; and yet the baleful influence of slavery throws a pall over all these charms, and greatly detracts from the enjoyments of this delightful land. Could these southern districts only appreciate the comparative advantages of freedom over slavery even in a pecuniary point of view they would be constrained to abolish slavery from motives of interest as well as of justice and humanity. But the difficulty is that a few nabobs monopolize not only the wealth but also the learning and consequent talent of the country and triumph over the masses who are comparatively ignorant, and unable to discover what is for their real interest. The splendor and equipage of wealth and distinction dazzle the vision and dupe them into a course calculated to perpetuate their own degradation. Could they be disenthralled from this species of insane delusion, so as to see things as they really are, they would be surprised, that mere names and empty baubles, should ever have been able to wield such a controlling influence over them. Nor is this species of insanity confined to the illiterate and ignorant. Some minds that have made prodigious achievements in the realms of science; which have traveled with surprising speed and correct and lucid analysis; have scanned the vast field of mind and matter with almost unequalled penetration and genius; but have entirely failed to penetrate the dark cloud thrown by the prejudice of the age on the subject of slavery, and have discovered a childlike imbecility in treating this question; have risked the absurdity, apparent to the veriest tyro of pronouncing slavery the cornerstone of Republican institutions and the grand bulwark of American Independence and prosperity! And this they have done with the prosperity and happiness of the free states in a manifold ratio compared with the slave states staring them in the face. This problem admits only of a monomaniacal solution:

When I arrived in Indiana I engaged to work by the month for my cousin Wm. Gardner at eight and a third dollars per month. The time passed away very pleasantly. There was a time of good sleighing and we often spent the pleasant moonlight evenings in social visits to the neighbors who had just settled in this fertile region and were glad to receive and reciprocate social visits. I continued my labor as a hireling for about three years without much intermission; engaged much of the time in clearing the dense forest, and assisting in making those beautiful farms that now afforded so lovely a prospect in Salem neighborhood. I was separated from all my brothers and sisters and become somewhat discontented with my condition and in the fall of 1819 I made arrangements with Robert Macy, who had come to this country to move his parents, to return to North Carolina. We arrived with safety; and the



renewal of congenial relations with those from whom I had been temporarily separated was one of the most pleasant occurrences of my life. When I arrived at the old Homestead all the family were gone to meeting, so that I had some time to spend by myself in reflections in the homely cottage where I had commenced my earthly career, and spent the most of my lifetime. At length I saw some person galloping down the lane who proved to be cousin Jethro Swain. The news of my arrival by some means had reached the meeting, and he hurried on in advance of the others to be the first to salute me. Soon the whole train of parents, brothers and sisters arrived, and a general interchanging of the friendly greeting ensued. I was astonished at the wonderful change that three years had wrought in the appearance of my younger brothers. Several of them were in the transition period from striplings to opening manhood, and presented very marked changes considering the time I had been separated from them. Scarcely had I recovered from the excitement of this scene, when I heard the well known voice of my uncle Joseph Swain, pronouncing in a forcible and manly tone peculiar to himself, "Where is that Indian"? Having heard of my arrival he came over to renew our friendly relations, and he pronounced these words before he came in sight of me. He commenced in his familiar way to interrogate me about the history and geography of Indiana. He asked me if it was not difficult to see the sun until near the middle of the day? I told him it was sometimes the case in cloudy weather.

I spent about one year in the old State and then in company with my father's family returned to Indiana. During my stay in North Carolina, I spent three months working for William Worth at the carpenter's trade very pleasantly. The labor was rather severe for me and it was many years that the effects of this labor was preying upon my constitution. When I returned to Indiana I concluded that I would renounce my laborious habits and endeavor to procure a better education and gain a livelihood by teaching school. I was not passed 21 years old; but notwithstanding this discouraging reality I commenced going to school to Joshua Williams to study English grammar. I was so unaccustomed to studying that at first I could make but little impression; but by dint of application I succeeded in gaining a tolerably good idea of this science. I spent 5 or 6 years in studying and teaching when I assumed the responsibility of a family and settled in a very marshy district in the eastern portion of the county, which I inherited as my portion of my father's real estate. Just before this occurrence my father left the farm. He had been in this State several years; had got his little farm sufficiently opened to afford a good supply of the necessaries and comforts of life; had got his buildings around him so that all his needs in this respect were well supplied, when by spending some time in his barn husking corn he took a deep cold which terminated in an inflammatory attack located in his side which in a short time put a period to his earthly

existence. He suffered considerably during the progress of the disease but near its termination, judging from what he said and from appearances, he had no other sensations than those of pleasure. Some time previous to his final departure he requested us to raise him up in bed. We did so, but he soon wished to be down again. As he was resuming his reclining position he said, "I shall not live long." We turned him on his right side in a position that looked as comfortable as that of one taking the most refreshing slumber; his breathing was entirely easy; his appearance was that of perfect repose and comfort. My friend Dr. Everts (?) who was his attending physician asked him if he felt any pain? to which he replied in the negative. We sent for the absent members of the family that were in reach who arrived before he breathed his last. His close was so gradual and harmonious that it was scarcely perceptible to those present.

I have witnessed the closing scene of several; but never have I seen one of such unmixed comfort and tranquillity.

My habits of daily labor were gradually resumed until I could perform the common business of a farm with pleasure. I look back to the time when I was opening a little farm in the woods and renting ground annually to sustain my family with much pleasure as an interesting period of my life. I supported my family and gradually accumulated some property, so that at one time during this period I had some money out at interest!

When I attempted to qualify myself for teaching school, I was considered a consistent member of the Society of Friends, and was promoted to the clerkship of all the different grades of their meetings of discipline except the yearly meeting; and at the time of the separation effected by the agency of Elias Hicks, I was clerk of Salem monthly meeting and contributed my influence in favor of orthodoxy. Previous to this occurrence I had been often reflecting on the subject of the atonement and was inclined to consider it as of exclusive interior (?) application; and was inclined to ignore all external agencies as being too materialistic, to have any place in an operation so strictly spiritual. This was before the Hicksite "defection" (?) had taken place; and when it came about finding that it partook of a nature of my previous reflections, and that it was denounced as infidelic and heretical by those in profession with me, in whom I had the most confidence, I came to the deliberate conclusion that my previous reflections were suggestions of Satan? calculated to draw me off from the only orthodox Standard. I now regard those reflections as suggestions of genuine untrammelled reason and common sense. If one half of the energy had been exerted to promote the principles of common honesty sobriety and temperance that was expended in endeavoring to check the progress of the doctrines of Elias Hicks, the Society and the world (would) have been greatly benefited by the change.

But I suppose that many of the opposers of Elias Hicks were conscientiously engaged, as they supposed, in defence of the doctrine once delivered to the Saints; while his defenders were equally conscientious on the same grounds. "When doctors disagree who shall decide?" But the separation was effected and I was safely landed on the Orthodox side.

My situation on our marshy lot became somewhat unpleasant not only on account of the deep mud inseparable from the marshy situation, but also on account of the distance to school and difficulty of sending, in our then situation. We had three children the oldest of whom was big enough to begin to go to school. I was attracted to the Salem neighborhood on account of the rolling surface of the land and the fact that good institutions of learning were generally in session at that place. So about the year 1833 I bought sixty-four acres of land of cousin William Gardner; moved the log house that I had erected in the swamps, and got our family into it, in the autumn of that year. We could now avail ourselves of the opportunity of schooling our children, an object of primary importance in our estimation. Rufus was making commendable progress in his studies by attending school regularly each winter, when he conceived the idea of completing his education by passing through a course of instruction at College Hill. He undertook to do a job of hauling gravel on the turnpike in order to get means to defray his expenses at the College. Either by over exertion at this exercise or some other cause he was taken with a severe attack of dysentery. He was so reduced by this disease that his recovery was seriously doubted. While in this condition he enquired if he might<sup>go</sup> to college notwithstanding he had failed (to) get the means by hauling gravel? Fearing the influence of a denial on his low state, and wishing his education to be as ample as our situation in life would warrant, I granted his request. Whether his recovery was in any degree dependent on this indulgence or not it is impossible to tell; but he soon began to get better; and whether it bespeaks his pleasant agreeable disposition, or the great care and attention paid to him during his convalescence, I never saw him manifest the least impatience during his tedious recovery. When he was sufficiently confirmed in his health he entered the college and continued one session after another until he graduated. Theron has attended the same college for nearly the same amount of time though he did not graduate owing in part to a change in the course of study. Aurelia spent some time at Beech Grove seminary under the tuition of William Haughton. Musidora attended the Female College at Oxford for some time. Teresa is going to the high school at Liberty, and Remus and Jerusha will I trust, have their turn whenever a suitable opportunity presents.

In 1843, a general antislavery feeling pervaded a portion of the Society of Friends, engendered by the influence of the antislavery societies of the eastern states gotten up in opposition to the colonization scheme which preceded it. Another portion manifested no sympathy with this feeling, but did all they could to dissuade their friends from participating in the movement of the abolitionists. The antislavery portion could not be dissuaded from pursuing the course that their antislavery and benevolent feelings so strongly dictated. Finally the contention became so strong between these parties that eight members of the meeting for sufferings of Indiana Yearly meeting were declared disqualified to hold their stations in that meeting on account of their adherence to the antislavery cause, including some of the most eminent ministers and elders. This high handed movement created general dissatisfaction in the antislavery ranks, and they remonstrated against it but in vain; they could get no redress, but were finally driven by their conscientious scruples to separate from the body and set up a yearly meeting of their own. In this movement I sympathized entirely and strongly with the antislavery party, and became identified with them in the separation.

This movement was of great importance to me; as it had a tendency to diminish my confidence in churches and church members, and inclined me to look upon all sentiments and opinions as valuable for me only in proportion as they chime(?) with my highest sense of right internally manifested. I gradually imbibed the sentiment that even the testimony of Scripture must be subordinate to the internal sense of righteousness and truth in the heart; that no man or set of men had a right to treat the conscientious decisions of any person whomsoever with the least disrespect; that all are equally entitled to a candid hearing and a friendly and cheerful consideration of their opinions; and if our positions cannot be successfully controverted (?) so as to convince us of our error, we are always entitled to the sympathy and cordial friendship of any and all who may differ with us in opinion. This lack of toleration in the members of the different orthodox churches has more than any other circumstance convinced me, that however high their profession might be, there was an inward root of bitterness, with many of them perfectly incongruous with the precepts and example of Jesus. I hoped that antislavery Friends would gradually deposite (?) the errors (?) that had crept into the friends society and would become a bright shining light; a living example of truth and purity; "a city set on a hill that could not be hid". I saw that the most liberal conscientious portion of the society were the antislavery friends. That the grandeur and wealth were principally on the proslavery wing. And these circumstances led me to hope that a higher standard of purity would

be raised and supported than had heretofore been sustained. The honest hearted were comforted together under this view of the subject; and many joyful times they experienced. Several of the most prominent ministers were on the antislavery side, and their labors were zealous and effective. I look back to these bygone days with much pleasure; and regard them as necessary as stepping stones, for myself and many others, out of the trammels of sectarian bondage into the glorious condition of universal love and liberty. For myself I can truly say that while I claim no exemption from the common frailties of the race, I have conscientiously and carefully pursued the highest promptings of my interior being, until the last shackle of sectarianism is torn asunder and I now stand upon a universal platform of a common humanity "disenthralled, emancipate and loosed (?). And this desirable state of mental freedom is absolutely necessary in order that the race may experience the ushering in of that glorious era when none shall say to his brethren: Know ye the Lord but all shall know him from the least to the greatest. For how is it possible to positively know the Lord for ourselves, while we are groping in mental bondage to any man or any society? This knowledge of the Lord must of course be taken in a limited sense, corresponding with the absolute finite capacity of the human mind.

About this time when antislavery friends were striving to maintain a separate organization A.J. Davis published his "Nature's Divine Revelations". Rufus procured the work and was reading it. A minister advised me to read it, that I might be prepared to expose the inconsistencies of the work, and thus prevent Rufus from imbibing any pernicious principles by the perusal of the book. Accordingly I commenced reading it with an eye single to the detection of inconsistencies; expecting from what I had heard that they abounded throughout the entire volume. But what was my surprise to find it generally consistent with itself; written in a spirit of candor and unaffected simplicity that would do honor to any theological work extant; and containing a system of theology or religion far in advance of the common orthodox standards of the day. The astounding doctrine of an angry God and an eternal Hell was successfully controverted; and the more rational and more merciful view, that all will enter the spirit land exactly, in a moral point of view, as they leave this sphere, was advocated. Also that in the spirit-land the surroundings of the spirit will be such that progress in purity and truth will be inevitable; that all will be eternally approximating the glorious perfections and ineffable delights of the Deity. This beautiful happyfying system when compared with the doleful and horrifying orthodox ? theology, presented attractions to my mind altogether irresistible. Finding my innate sense of justice and mercy and wisdom to chime in accordance with these teachings, and that the orthodox? system had from my earliest

recollection, presented insuperable difficulties to my mind, I concluded it was my highest duty to no more rebel against the suggestions of my highest sense of righteousness and truth. I however felt attached to antislavery Friends and looked forward to a time when the principals of progression developed in the society might induce my fellow members to at least tolerate my views if they did not adopt them.

As time rolled on, I found that I had no reason to anticipate any such result. A rigid, though doubtless a well meant adherence to orthodoxy, distinguished some of the most prominent friends in this connection. I found that some who had previously manifested much sympathy with me, and had been very strongly attracted toward me, now began to look upon me with distrust and coolness. And it being understood that I indulged in reading A.J.Davis and some other works on modern spiritualism the sentiment was sometimes publicly expressed that any person thus demeaning himself ought to be treated with and disowned from the society of Antislavery Friends if labors to reclaim him should prove ineffectual! My situation as an elder in the church rendered it necessary for me at each quarterly meeting of ministers and elders, to answer the query, whether the ministers were "sound in word and doctrine". This introduced me into somewhat of a difficulty; as I knew they were engaged in disseminating the doctrine of eternal punishment, which I had deliberately concluded was unsound, I knew, however, that if I was to object to the soundness of this view that by reference to the standard works of the Society of Friends, they could convict me of that which I had charged upon them. But if I let the answer pass in silence, "that ministers were sound in word and doctrine" I was forced tacitly to sanction that which I firmly believed was untrue. This circumstance rendered my final withdrawal from the Society more desirable. This took place in 1854 or 5 and was immediately produced by a pecuniary difficulty with one of my neighbors in which my fellow members, as I thought, took a position against me on account of my tendency to a belief in Spiritualism. This opinion is rendered most probable from the fact that the difficulty has since been amicably settled with one of the heirs of this neighbor exactly in accordance with my proposition. I am now in my Sixty sixth year and since the settlement of this difficulty I do not know that any being has aught wherewith to accuse me except that my theological views are different from their own. On this question I suppose that many of my orthodox friends regard me as a dangerous associate; but for this opinion they can give no other reason than that I am pleased to differ from themselves. If this reason is legitimate, then am I justified in regarding them as dangerous associates, for they differ from me as far as I differ from them. And as all error is mortal and cannot live; and all truth immortal and cannot die;

the great question to be decided between us is, which of us is in error? And the only reliable mode of deciding this important question, in my opinion, is, to refer our doctrine respectively to the arbitration of our highest sense of righteousness and truth. In doing this, I am led to propose that an infinite offence cannot be perpetrated in the short space of man's existence on earth; that nothing short of an infinite offence can justly be visited(?) with infinite punishment; that our Heavenly Father is just and righteous in all his ways and hence the doctrine of eternal punishment is an absurdity not to be tolerated for a moment in the mind of any holding my views of justice and Deity. But if the highest sense of righteousness and truth conduct any to an opposite conclusion I feel no disposition to palm my views upon them while they retain their present standard of right. If they can conceive it possible for a God of love and mercy to create a finite creature absolutely knowing that eternal destruction from his presence will be it's doom; all I have to say is, that their conceptions of possibility are diametrically opposed to mine. I cannot possibly reconcile the idea of creating a being, knowing it's eternal damnation is absolutely certain, (which must be the case if eternal damnation be a reality) with the simplest principals of justice. And holding this opinion, I presume none will wish me to adopt a sentiment which inevitably conducts me to the astounding blasphemy of charging the Great Creator with injustice and cruelty. But if others can reconcile the doctrine of eternal punishment with their highest sense of love, of goodness, of truth, and righteousness, to them it may not be blasphemous and revolting to the utmost extent.