

Mary Bradish's Letter, 1742
Transcribed by Prof. Ross W. Beales, Jr.

A Letter of a young woman after her passing through
Some Singular Spiritual Conflicts and Trials.

Having lately been concerned about my Spiritual State and desiring to know whether or no I were really regenerated, lest I Should on the one Hand delude and deceive my Self with vain hopes, or on the other hand deny what is the work of God, Either of which I apprehend would be Evil and Dangerous, after Strict Examination and tryal of my State and Seeking for Assistance therein, I have wrote this Letter which is as followeth.

I have been Illuminated; for I have been brought to a Sight and feeling Sense of my own Vileness and Impotency and Miserable Condition by Nature and deeply humbled on that Account. I have been enabled in some Measure to understand the Scriptures, and to see the Glory and Wisdom and Mercy of God in Christ, and how that he being God and Man is every way Qualified and Suitable to reconcile God and Man. But yet I am far from thinking that I know every Thing in the Mystery of Godliness. <crossed-out>

I hope that I have Saving Faith, because 1.) It is founded upon the Grace of God in Christ. 2.) It is Such as makes me desire and strive to be like God in Holiness and Heart Purity and all His Inimitable perfections. 3) It is Such as Supports my Heart under all Afflictions whatsoever. 4) It takes my Affections off

from the world and Setts them upon Spiritual Things: and altho I remember that before I had this Faith I always desired to live long in this world, to enjoy much worldly Good and Pleasure, I believe there has been no Time since but that I could find in my Heart to choose to go to Christ, were it Gods will, rather than to Stay here one Day might I have the best Good which this world affords.

5.) My Faith is Such as makes me look to Christ for my Souls Food and Physick and all Things that it needs. 6.) It makes Things Unseen and yet to come influence my Heart as if they were present or nigh at Hand. 7.) I am Sensible it is not a Faith of any own making or framing, but one that was wrought in me immediately by the word and Spirit of God.

I hope my Repentence is unto Life: for I hate Sin because it casts Contempt upon the ways of God and wounds my dear Redeemer, and makes a Soul so unlike God and at Such a Distance from Him. I mourn for Sin both in my Self and Others, but am most filled with Illumination and Regret when I reflect upon my own presumptuous Impiety and the Plague of my own Heart which is Enmity against God, and much interrupts my Communion with him. I lament that my Heart is no more pierced and broken for sin Seeing it is Such a great Evil as plainly appears by the bitter sufferings which it has cost my Saviour.

I desire and labour to yield a Sincere and perfect Ob

edience to the Revealed will of God.

I hope that I am Reconciled to God, for I am reconciled to His pp. [people?] His Laws and His Providences; for I am in Charity with God Covenant pp. [people?] and delight most in the Society of those which appear to me to bear most of the Image of God and the Fruit of his Spirit: I esteem all Gods Precepts Concerning all things to be right: I acquiesce in Providences because God in them aims at his own Glory which I desire above all Things may be promoted, and I believe he aims at my Good in all his dealings with me: though I confess I meet with many Things that are disagreeable to the Flesh: But God is pleased always to enable me to See a Reason for his so doing and makes it a Means either to discover or Mor tify Some Lust or to quicken me to the Exercise of Some Grace, or Something of the like [in me?].

I hope that I Love God and have Communion with him. I have desired to enjoy God in his Ordinances and have Sometimes been favoured with that which has been much to my Satisfaction: At other Times I have bin much straitened and disappointed of what I hope for. Sometimes by Conversing with ~~<crossed-out>~~ persons as I suppose to be full of the Spirit of God and filled with the Love of Christ, I have bin mightily animated and found it a happy means to raise my Affections heavenward. I have Sometimes enjoyed great Con solation when I were alone with my God and Saviour: at other Times I have greatly wanted Quickening although I have earnestly longed to be rid of all that Vileness and unbelief and Dullness which hinders

my Intimacy with Heaven; So I find that my Communion is very imperfect which makes me long to be in a state of Perfection, where I hope the Facultys of Soul will be enlarged and Spiritualized and made Capable of the full Enjoyment of God. But yet the greatest Delight and Happiness which I have now is in the internal Communion which as I apprehend is maintained between God and my Soul; which Intercourse consists in Gods Communicating of Himself to my soul by his Spirit; his admitting and enabling me to have access to Him and his raising my Mind to the Contemplation of his own glorious Excellency; and ascribing every Thing that is Praiseworthy to Him. And my sense of being always in His Presence and Favour.

God has of late for a Time Seemed to hide his Face from my Soul, which was a Sore Trial to see. For my Affections had Seemed to be placed more Strongly upon God than even: and Consequently my Grief was the Greater when He was withdrawn. But after Consideration I thought I dare not deny but that there were signs of Grace in my Soul; and I strove to cast off all despairing Thoughts and followed hard after God, desiring that He would lift up the Light of his Countenance upon Me again; and I hope He has; But I can See the Wisdom of God in this Dispensation, For He does thereby subdue the Spiritual Pride which abounds in me, and quickens

me to exercise Humility and Repentance and instructs me to walk humbly with my God. Besides it has been a Time wherein I have seemed to see Several Graces in my Soul more clearly than ever I did before. At other Times I have been in Trouble about my state so that I have seemed to be hedged about so that I could not get out and God has seemed to discover himself in such a manner to my Soul by his word and Spirit that I have thought He has made my wilderness like Eden and my Desert like the Garden of the Lord. I have sometimes felt great Joy and peace in my Soul by which the Spirit of Bondage has been cast out. I have often observed when I have read the Scriptures, particularly the Psalms, I have as it were heard the same Language in my own Soul. Also when I have read or heard the Experiences of the Saints in latter ages they have not appeared to me like Strange Historys, but have Seemed to be a lively description of my own Heart.

I hope God has a Favour for me because he has answered my Petitions for the mortification of many Lusts, and other Spiritual Mercys which I have requested. The Life which I desire and strive to live, and I hope in some Measure do live is, always denying my Self: warring against sin, both within and without, living to God: diligently improving every Talent that He has committed to me, in prosecuting the great Work which he has assigned Me: living in the lively Exercise

of every Grace: patiently bearing all Crosses and Troubles as the faithfull Corrections of my heavenly Father; receiving Mercys with Thankfulness as the undeserved Gifts of God: always in humility and Sincerity lifting up my Heart to God in prayer and praises: always maintaining Communion with God and Christ; Constantly waiting upon Him in the use of the outward and ordinary Means whereby he Communicated to his people the Benefits of Redemption: Never undertaking to determine any Thing that is beyond my understanding; always maintaining a deep Sense of my own Ignorance Vileness and Impotency, looking to Christ for Instruction in all Things not depending upon my own Understanding; hiding my guilty soul under my Redeemers Wings for shelter from the wrath of God: always leaning upon my Beloved whilst I am in this Wilderness, lest I should become a prey to some or other of my Souls adversaries yielding a perfect Resignation to the will of God in all Things; freely consenting to do or be any Thing that He pleases; So that I may be glorified with him.

There are many Things more that I could write, which I shall not at present. But Still I have remaining Fears lest after all I should prove but an Hypocrite.

Westboro 1742

M.B.

Source: Ebenezer Parkman, *Commonplace Book* (Massachusetts Historical Society), 92-95.

