

Eli Forbush, September 11, 1744
Transcribed by Prof. Ross W. Beales, Jr.

Reverend and Most Dear Sir:

I am about to declare to you My beloved Teacher what (I hope) God has done for my Soul. -- When I was Eight years old, or younger, God was pleased by a Sermon delivered from your Mouth, greatly to affect my Heart[.]I am not able to relate the text, but I remember much was Said of Obediah[,] Josiah[,] and Timothy; Showing how young they were when they began to Serve the Lord their God. By which I was put in mind of a God I had to Serve and a Soul to Save. And being ignorant of the Righteousness of Christ, went about to establish a Righteousness of my own: And did intend as much as in me lay to keep all God's Commandments, and So went on my way rejoicing, hoping to be like young Josiah. But after a while I grew cold and my Duty became a burden to me; but my awakened Conscience would not let them fall. And as my mind was taken up much about these things I remember I was musing on Eternity and was intirely Swallowed in this Ocean and Seem'd to have lost my Self: and when (as I may Say) I had come to my Self I was much Surprized; and knowing not what to do but to apply my Self to my Duties with more life and Zeal, and So Continued for may [*sic*] years more calm; but had my ups and downs (if I may So Speak) untell I heard Mr. Whitfield preach Concerning the Self-righteous *Pharisee* and the Self-condemning *Publican* which Shook the foundation of my hopes very much but even this wore [out?]. But Some time after it happened at a private Meeting, that I heard Mr. Stephen Prentice and Benja. Warrin talk very Zealously of religion, and Setting forth the Beauties and Excellencies of Christ and Shewing how absolutely necessary it was to behold the Excellencies of Christ in order to a Safe Closing with him. And these were Strang things to me and filled my mind with grief and horror; for I believed as yet I knew nothing as I ought to know.

And I Spent all that night in lamenting my dolfull State after I came from the Meeting. And being Sunk into the Debths of Sorrow and was almost ready to give out ever trying to get to Heaven; but I knew that if I did not try I Should never obtain and I thought it was possible if I did trie. And So I resolved again to amend my life, and So I bid adue to all my youthfull Delights and Pleasures; and was resolute that now I would endure to the end that (if possible) I might be Saved. But at length I grew more Careless and lifeless in a Stedy form of Duties: but very full of thoughts at times. And at last I thought I would Sit down and Seriously weigh my past life with my present; And in Comparing I found So much Sin and So Strong an inclination thereto my Soul was overwhelmed. for I thought I had made no progress at all and has as much to do to obtain Happiness as I had before I began to Seek after it -- This made me intirely discouraged for I did not want to do more for I wholly dispaired of ever gitting to Heaven of my Self. And So I was obliged to give up my-Self into the hands of God my maker, and Christ the Judge of all to do with me as it Should Seem good in the Divine mind. But this giving up my-Self Seemed partly against will and therefore afforded but little Comfort. And So I remained in deep Sorrow lamenting how I was in a way of losing all the pleasures of this life: and likely to Suffer inexpressable Miseries of the future And thus thought on my dolfull Case till I begun to Question the Supreme Being, and my future State Saying who knows but man doth die as the Beast and has no God to call him to an account. And why Should I loose all my Sports, and Pleasures, and know not that I Should fare the better for this denial or the worse for any indulgence And this thought got root in my heart and I began to raise arguments to maintain it, but was Somthing fearfull knowing it was of the last importance. And upon this I was taken Sick with a fever which at times disordered my reason; but when I was my-Self I Could but dwell continually on the tremond[ous?] thought how I had been denying the great God And now he was Come out

against me in wrath to punish me for my Rebellion and to make me fell [*sic*] and know that there was a God that Judgeth in the earth. And I Saw how unable I was to Stand before his anger for I found I was without Strength and wondering even to amazment that God Could Suffer So vile a Creature to Live on moment. And I had very Sublime thoughts of God So that I thought my-Self Some Small Mote Swiming in the Ocean of his Greatness and Goodness and kept up by his almighty Power. [But?] And his Power Seemed to be armed with Mercy and God appeared to me as a reconcilable Father thorough and not an Angry Judg[e]. Now I was willing to take this God for my God on his own Tirmes or on any tirmes Looking on God as the only fit object of my Love; who was able to heal deliver and Save me. Now this gave me Some Satisfaction but was earness for Some Clear manifestation of Gods Love to me. -- Soon after this one Sabbath I remember I went to publick worship in a very dull lifeless frame, and the word of God Seem'd to make no impression on my Heart, or affections. And Came home in the Same frame of Heart and remained So in the evening: which made more Some Concerned and So I went away and Sat me down for Meditation and Examination, but I found my thoughts were as the Fools Eyes unto the ends of the Earth. Then I thought I would go and humble my-self before God, and Confess my Sin in my [*illegible*] thus departing from him. -- But my Heart I found was wholly Shut up; I could not mourn for Sin, nor be affected with it nor with my Sad Case under the load and Guilt of it. And while my Heart appeared thus Burdened with Sin in [*illegible*] Pride and unbelief in perticular rose like Mountains insomuch that I was now very much Concern'd and in the Multitude of my thoughts that place of Scripture came to my mind in Eze. Cast away all your Transgressions whereby you have transgressed against me Saith Lord and Make ye a New Heart and a new-Spirit etc. remembering at the Same time how God notwithstanding had Commanded his People to make them a new Heart Manifested his Mind to be inquired of by his People to do

it for them, whence it appeared very [plainly?] the willingness of God to do all things for me through Christ. And now I Could (as I thought) apprehend Christ as an Alsufficient Saviour every way fitted for my Necessity, and could Say I have found the [pearl?] of great price, and Could part with all for him. And was resolved to take up with nothing less than a whole Christ in all his offices and who Should be my *All* in All. And I Looked on all things but Dung and Dross in Comparison of the Excellency of the knowledge of *Christ Jesus*, whome I was enabled to Call *my Lord*. Now this apprehension of Christ gave me great Satisfaction and was filled with Joy and Thankfulness and wondred that Christ would thus offer him-Self to me. But alas! afterward I was more relax and unbelieving and Saw great remains of Sin and Corruption in me; but yet had a very great Desire to be free from the Power and reign or even from the being of Sin for I had an utter aversion to it; not because they So much Exposed me to Eternal wrath, but because they So Dishonourd God wounded Religion and grieved the Spirit of Christ and proved So destructive to my Comfort and Satisfaction in him.

And now I have (Dear Sir) declared to you my ever faithfull and most beloved *Teacher* Some of Gods dealings with my Soul from Eight years old to this Time I being now in my Eighteenth year. And Sir please to Search these Things and try *Them* by the Sacred Balances of Gods word and See if there is a Delusion in them and (under God and by his Blessing) endeavour to discover it to me and deliver me from it And Lead me in the way everlasting –

Dear Sir

I have here transcribed that paper I not long Since received from you and I have done it without any Variation in Matter and with as little as I could in Manner for I thought it might be more agreeable to you to have it the Same with the former paper from which this was transcribed not

that I have any desire to alter anything, only by adding a few things by which the whole may be better Connected and appear more Intelligible.--

I could have added many more of Gods wonderfull Dealings with my Soul (Since I wrote my former paper) which I dont think proper at present to add. -- And pray Sir let me never fail of an interest in your Most earnest and fervent Prayers, that I might not only never fail of the Saving grace of God but also that I might abound greatly therein, and as I intend (by Gods alsufficient Grace and leave of his Divine providence) to dedicate my Self to him and his Church That I might be enabled to enter into a greater Decency of Behavior that my Mind may never be vitiated by ill Habits, which will both hurt my Character and make Such impressions on me that may not Soon be worn out or easily defaced But above all that I might be possessed with high thoughts of the Christian Religion and of the truth and Excellency of it and of the Honour of God and Value of precious Souls and the Sacredness of holy Functions and the great trust that it Committed to those that are dedicated God [*sic*] and his Church[?] and that I may be broke to the Appetites of Pleasure or Ambition and that I may be endowed with a great purity of Heart, and Innocency of Manner and with Meekness and Gentleness, Humility and and [*sic*] Self-denial, with a holy Contempt of the World and Heavenly-mindedness, and that I may be patiently resigned to the will of God being ready to bear the Cross in hopes of the everlasting Reward. that So I may truly imitate the unblemished Pattern that the Glorious Author of His religion has Set for all that pretend to be his Followers. And that I may in due time arive to this Dignity and Holiness may I be directed in all my Studies as well as assisted therein (by God) which are [previus?] or Necessary thereto.

All from your Much favorred and Greatly dependent though very unworthy

Friend and Servant

Eli Forbush

Source: Parkman Family Papers (American Antiquarian Society), Box 3, Folder 1.

From Ebenezer Parkman's diary, 11 September 1744: "At Eve Eli Forbush here at my House having wrote the Dealings of god with his soul, he gave it to me."