

Mary A's Testimony

(Died of the Plague at age 12)

Mary A. when she was between four and five years old, was greatly affected in hearing the Word of God, and became very solicitous about her soul, weeping bitterly, to think what would become of her in another world, asking strange questions concerning God and Christ, and her own soul. So that before she was full five years old, she minded the one thing needful, and chose the better part. She was wont to be much in secret prayer, and many times came off from her knees with tears. She would chose such times and places for secret prayer, as might render her less observed by others: and endeavored to conceal what she was doing, when she was engaged therein.

Her mother being full of sorrow after the death of her husband, this child came to her and asked her why she wept so exceedingly? Her mother answered that she had cause enough to weep, because her father is dead: "No, dear mother, " said the child, "you have no cause to weep so much, for God is a good God still." She was a dear lover of faithful ministers. One time after she had been hearing of Mr. Whitaker, she said, "I love that man dearly for the sweet words he speaks concerning Christ."

Her book was her delight; and many times she was so strangely affected in reading the scriptures, that she burst out into tears, and would hardly be pacified: so greatly was she taken with Christ's sufferings, the zeal of God's servants, and the danger of a natural state. She often complained of the corruption of her nature, of the hardness of her heart, that she could repent no more, and be no more humble and grieved for her sins against a good God; and when she thus complained, it was with abundance of tears. She was very conscientious in keeping the Sabbath, spending the whole time in reading or praying, learning her catechism, or teaching her brothers and sisters. One time when she was left at home on the Lord's day, she got some other little children together, with her brothers and sisters, and told them, that it was the Lord's day, and they ought to remember to keep it holy. She then told them it was to be spent in religious exercises all the day, except so much as was taken up in the works of necessity and mercy: then she prayed with them, and among other things begged that the Lord would give grace and wisdom to them, (little children,) that they might know how to serve him.

At another time a near relation of hers, being in some straits, made some complaint, to whom she said, "I have heard Mr. Garter say, "A man may go to heaven without a penny in his purse, but not without grace in his heart." She had an extraordinary love to the people of God: and when she saw any who, she thought, feared the Lord, her heart would even leap for joy.

When she was between eleven and twelve years old, she sickened of the plague, in which she behaved with admirable patience and sweetness, and did what she could with scripture-arguments to support and encourage her relations to part with her, who was going to glory, and to prepare themselves

to meet her in a blessed eternity. She was not many days sick before she was marked, which she first saw herself, and was greatly rejoiced to think that she was marked out for the Lord, and was now going apace to Christ. She called to her friends, and said, "I am marked, but be not troubled, for I know I am marked for one of the Lord's own." One asked her, how she knew that? She answered, "The Lord hath told me, that I am one of his dear children." And this she spoke with a holy confidence in the Lord's love, and was not in the least daunted at her death; but seemed greatly delighted in the apprehension of her nearness to her Father's house. And it was not long before she was filled with joy unspeakable in believing.

When she lay dying, her mother came to her, and told her, she was sorry she had so frequently reprov'd and corrected so good a child. "O mother, " said she, "speak not thus: I bless God, now I am dying, for your reproofs and corrections too; for, it may be, I might have gone to hell, if it had not been for your reproofs and corrections." Some of the neighbors came to visit her, and asked her if she could leave them? She answered, "If you serve the Lord, you will come after me to glory." A little before she died, she had a great conflict with Satan, and cried out, "I am none of his." Her mother seeing her troubled, asked her what was the matter? She answered, "Satan did trouble me, but now, I thank God, all is well. I know I am none of his, but Christ's." After this she had a great sense of God's love, and a glorious sight, as if she had seen the very heavens open, and the angels coming to receive her; by which her heart was filled with joy, and her tongue with praise.

Being desired by the bystanders to give them a particular account of what she saw, she answered, "You shall know hereafter:" and so in an ecstasy of joy and triumph, she went to God, when she was about twelve years old.