

Susannah Bicks' Testimony

(Born in 1650, Died of the Plague in 1664 at age 14)

Susannah Bicks, was born at Leyden, in Holland, Jan. 24, 1650, of religious parents. They took great care as to instruct their child, and to present her to the ministers of the place to be publicly instructed. It pleased God to bless this to her soul, so that she had soon a true relish of what she was taught, and made an admirable use of it in time of need. She was a child of great dutifulness to her parents, and of a very sweet, humble nature. Not only the truth, but the power and eminency of religion shone in her. In August, 1664, when the pestilence raged in Holland, as she felt herself very ill, she broke forth into these words. "If thy law were not my delight, I should perish in my affliction." Her father coming to her, said, "Be of good comfort, my child, for the Lord will be near to you and us. He will not forsake us, though he chastens." "Yea, father," said she, "our heavenly Father does chasten us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. No chastisement seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous. But afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which are exercised by it."

After this, with her eyes lifted towards heaven, she said, "Be merciful to me a sinner, according to thy word." She greatly abhorred sin, and with much grief and self-detestation, reflected upon it; but that which lay the closest to her heart, was the depravity of her nature. She often cried out in the words of the psalmist, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalms 51:5) She could humble herself enough under a sense of that sin which she brought with her into the world. That scripture was much on her tongue. "The sacrifices of God are a broken heart; a broken and contrite spirit, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Psalms 51:17) "O for that brokenness of heart," said she, "which flows from faith, and for that faith which is built upon Christ, who is the alone and proper sacrifice for sin."

Then she discoursed of the nature of faith and desired that the 11th of the Hebrews should be read unto her. When this was read she cried out, "O what a steadfast faith was Abraham's, which made him willing to offer up his one and only son! Faith is indeed the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." When her father and mother heard her burst into tears, she pleaded with them to be patient with, under the hand of God. "O," she said, "why do you weep over me seeing you have no reason to question but if the Lord take me, it shall be well with me to all eternity? You ought to be well satisfied, seeing it is said, God is in heaven, and doth whatever pleaseth him.' And do you not pray every day, that the will of God may be done upon earth, as it is done in heaven? Now, father, this is God's will, that I should lie upon this sick bed, and die of this disease. Shall we not be content when our prayers are answered? I will, as long as I live, pray that God's will be done, not mine." "Does not," she said, "the pestilence come from God? Why else doth the scripture say, shall there be evil in the city which I have not sent?' Does it come from the air? Is not the Lord the creator and ruler of the air? Or if they say, it comes from the earth, has he not the same power and influence

upon that too? What talk they of a ship that came from Africa? Have you not heard long ago, I will bring a sword upon you and avenge the quarrel of my covenant, and when you are assembled in the cities, then I will bring the pestilence into the midst of you?"

After this when she had rested a little, she said, "Whether in death or life, a believer is Christ's, who hath redeemed us by his own precious blood from the power of the devil. Then, whether I live or die, I am the Lord's. O why do you afflict yourselves thus! But what shall I say? With weeping I came into the world, and with weeping I must go out again. O my dear parents, better is the day of my death, than the day of my birth." She then desired her father to pray with her, and to request of the Lord, that she might have a quiet passage into another world. Her father observing her to grow very weak said, "I perceive, child, thou art very weak." "It is true, sir," said she, "I feel my weakness increasing, and I see your sorrow increasing too, which is a piece of my affliction. Be content, I pray you, it is the Lord who does it. Let you and I say with David, Let us fall into the Lord's hands, for his mercies are great."

(2Samuel 24:14)

She laid a great charge upon her parents not to grieve for her after her death, urging upon them the example of David. While the child was sick, he fasted and wept. When he died, he washed his face, and sat up, and ate saying, Can I bring him back from death? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." When very feeble, she said, "O that I might quietly sleep in the bosom of Jesus! And that till then he would strengthen me! O that he would take me in his arms, as he did those little ones, where he said, Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven; and he took them in his arms, and he laid his hands on them, and blessed them.' (Mark 10:14) I lie here as a child. O Lord, I am your child, receive me into thy gracious arms. O Lord, grace! Grace! And not justice! For if you should enter into judgment with me, I cannot stand: yea, none living would be just in thy sight." Then she said, "O what is the life of man! The days of man upon the earth are as grass, and as the flower of the field, so he flourisheth. The wind passeth over it, and is gone, and his place knows him no more." (Psalms 103:15) She added, "My life shall not continue long. I feel much weakness. O Lord, look upon me graciously, have pity upon my weak distressed heart. I am oppressed, undertake for me, that I may stand fast, and overcome."

She was very frequent in spiritual outpourings, I was of great comfort to her, that the Lord Christ prayed for her, and promised to send his Spirit to comfort her. "It is said," (continued she) "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter. O let him not leave me! O Lord stay with me till my battle and work is finished!" Soon after, she said, "None but Christ; without thee I can do nothing! Christ is the true Vine! O let me be a branch of that vine! What poor worms are we! O dear father, how lame and halting do we go on in the ways of God and salvation! We know but in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect shall be done away. O that I had attained to that now! But what are we ourselves? Not only weakness and nothingness, but wickedness. For the thoughts and imaginations of a man's

heart, are only evil, and that continually. We are by nature children of wrath, and are conceived in sin, and born in unrighteousness! O! This wretched and vile thing, sin! But thanks be to God who hath redeemed me from it. O Lord, take me to thyself. Behold, dear mother, he has prepared a place for me."

"Yea, my dear child," (said her mother) "he shall strengthen you with his Holy Spirit, until he hath fitted and prepared you fully for that place which he has prepared for you." "Yea, mother," replied she, "it is said in the 84th Psalm, How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul doth thirst, and long for the courts of the Lord; (Psalms 84:1) one day in thy courts is better than a thousand: yea, I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of the wicked.' Read the Psalm, dear mother, whereby we may comfort each other. As for me, I am more and more spent, and draw near to my last hour." Then she quoted Job's words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." (Job 19:25)

Then she said, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; those that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." See, father, I shall rise in that day, and than I shall behold my Redeemer: then will he say, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.' Behold, now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I am saved, and that not of myself, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8)

"My dear parents, now we must part. My speech fails me. Pray to the Lord for a quiet close to my combat." Her parents replied, "Ah dear child! How sad is that to us, that we must part?" She answered, "I go to heaven, and there we shall find one another again. I go to Jesus Christ." Then she comforted herself to think of her precious brother and sister. "I go to my brother Jacob, who did so much cry and call upon God to the last moment of his breath: and to my little sister. She was but three years old when she died. When we asked her, whether she would die? Answered, yes, if it be the Lord's will. I will go to my little brother, if it be the Lord's will, or I will stay with my mother, if it be his will. But I know that I shall die and go to heaven."

After this, her spirit was refreshed with the sense of the pardon of her sins, which made her to cry out, "Behold, God hath washed away my sins, O how do I long to die! The Lord is my shepherd. Although I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear, for thou art with me. (Psalms 23:4) Shall I not suffer, seeing my glorious Redeemer was pleased to suffer so much for me? O how was he mocked and crowned with thorns that he might purchase a crown of righteousness for us! Must I not exalt and bless him while I have am alive, who has bought me even with his blood? Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world! (John 1:29) That Lamb is Jesus Christ, who has made satisfaction for my sins."

"My end is now very near. Now I shall put on the white raiment and be clothed before the Lamb, that spotless Lamb, and with his spotless righteousness. Now are the angels making ready to carry my soul before the throne of God. These are they who have come out of great tribulation, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." She spoke this with a dying voice, but full of spirit and of the power of faith. Her lively assurance she further uttered in the words of the apostle, "We know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, which is eternal in the heavens; for in this we sigh for our house, which is in heaven; that we may be clothed therewith." "There, father, you see that my body is this tabernacle, which now shall be broken down. My soul shall now part from it, and shall be taken up into paradise, into that heavenly Jerusalem. There shall I dwell and go no more out, but sit and sing, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts, the Lord of Sabaoth!" Her last words were, "O Lord God, into thy hands I commit my spirit. O Lord, be gracious, be merciful to me a poor sinner."

She died the first of September, 1664, between seven and eight in the evening, at the age of fourteen.