

ner then was at all societies,) after using a Collect or two and the Lord's Prayer, I expounded a chapter in the New Testament, and concluded with three or four more Collects and a psalm.

*Mon. 27.*—Mr. Kinchin went with me to the Castle, where, after reading prayers, and preaching on, "It is appointed unto men once to die," we prayed with the condemned man, first in several forms of prayer, and then in such words as were given us in that hour. He kneeled down in much heaviness and confusion, having "no rest in" his "bones, by reason of" his "sins." After a space he rose up, and eagerly said, "I am now ready to die. I know Christ has taken away my sins; and there is no more condemnation for me." The same composed cheerfulness he showed, when he was carried to execution: And in his last moments he was the same, enjoying a perfect peace, in confidence that he was "accepted in the Beloved."

*Sat. APRIL 1.*—Being at Mr. Fox's society, my heart was so full that I could not confine myself to the forms of prayer which we were accustomed to use there. Neither do I purpose to be confined to them any more; but to pray indifferently, with a form or without, as I may find suitable to particular occasions.

*Sun. 2.*—Being Easter Day, I preached in our College chapel, on, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." I preached in the afternoon, first at the Castle, and then at Carfax, on the same words. I see the promise; but it is afar off.

Believing it would be better for me to wait for the accomplishment of it in silence and retirement, on *Monday, 3*, I complied with Mr. Kinchin's desire, and went to him at Dummer, in Hampshire. But I was not suffered to stay here long; being earnestly pressed to come up to London, if it were only for a few days. Thither, therefore, I returned, on *Tuesday, 18th*.

*Sat. 22.*—I met Peter Böhler once more. I had now no objection to what he said of the nature of faith; namely, that it is (to use the words of our Church) "a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God." Neither could I deny either the happiness or holiness which he described, as fruits of this living faith. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God:" And, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself," fully convinced me of the former: As, "Whatsoever is born of

God, doth not commit sin ;” and, “ Whosoever believeth is born of God,” did of the latter. But I could not comprehend what he spoke of an *instantaneous work*. I could not understand how this faith should be given in a moment : How a man could *at once* be thus turned from darkness to light, from sin and misery to righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost. I searched the Scriptures again, touching this very thing, particularly the Acts of the Apostles : But, to my utter astonishment, found scarce any instances there of other than *instantaneous conversions* ; scarce any so slow as that of St. Paul, who was three days in the pangs of the new birth. I had but one retreat left ; namely, “ Thus, I grant, God wrought in the *first* ages of Christianity ; but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe he works in the same manner now ?”

But on *Sunday, 23*, I was beat out of this retreat too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses ; who testified, God had thus wrought in themselves ; giving them in a moment such a faith in the blood of his Son, as translated them out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, “ Lord, help thou my unbelief !”

I asked P. Böhler again, whether I ought not to refrain from teaching others. He said, “ No ; do not hide in the earth the talent God hath given you.” Accordingly, on *Tuesday, 25*, I spoke clearly and fully at Blendon to Mr. Delamotte’s family, of the nature and fruits of faith. Mr. Broughton and my brother were there. Mr. Broughton’s great objection was, he could never think that I had not faith, who had done and suffered such things. My brother was very angry, and told me, I did not know what mischief I had done by talking thus. And, indeed, it did please God then to kindle a fire, which I trust shall never be extinguished.

On *Wednesday, 26*, the day fixed for my return to Oxford, I once more waited on the Trustees for Georgia : But, being straitened for time, was obliged to leave the papers for them, which I had designed to give into their own hands. One of these was the instrument whereby they had appointed me Minister of Savannah ; which, having no more place in those parts, I thought it not right to keep any longer.

P. Böhler walked with me a few miles, and exhorted me not to stop short of the grace of God. At Gerard’s Cross I plainly

declared to those whom God gave into my hands, the faith as it is in Jesus: As I did next day to a young man I overtook on the road, and in the evening to our friends at Oxford. A strange doctrine, which some, who did not care to contradict, yet knew not what to make of; but one or two, who were thoroughly bruised by sin, willingly heard, and received it gladly.

In the day or two following, I was much confirmed in the "truth that is after godliness," by hearing the experiences of Mr. Hutchins, of Pembroke College, and Mrs. Fox: Two living witnesses that God *can* (at least, if he *does* not always) give that faith whereof cometh salvation in a moment, as lightning falling from heaven.

*Mon. MAY 1.*—The return of my brother's illness obliged me again to hasten to London. In the evening I found him at James Hutton's, better as to his health than I expected; but strongly averse from what he called "the new faith."

This evening our little society began, which afterwards met in Fetter-Lane. Our fundamental rules were as follow:—

In obedience to the command of God by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Böhler, it is agreed by us,

1. That we will meet together once a week to "confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another, that we may be healed."

2. That the persons so meeting be divided into several *bands*, or little companies, none of them consisting of fewer than five, or more than ten persons.

3. That every one in order speak as freely, plainly, and concisely as he can, the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances, since the last time of meeting.

4. That all the bands have a conference at eight every Wednesday evening, begun and ended with singing and prayer.

5. That any who desire to be admitted into this society be asked, "What are your reasons for desiring this? Will you be entirely open; using no kind of reserve? Have you any objection to any of our orders?" (which may then be read.)

6. That when any new member is proposed, every one present speak clearly and freely whatever objection he has to him.

7. That those against whom no reasonable objection appears, he, in order for their trial, formed into one or more distinct bands, and some person agreed on to assist them.

8. That after two months' trial, if no objection then appear they may be admitted into the society.

9. That every fourth Saturday be observed as a day of general intercession.

10. That on the Sunday seven-night following be a general love-feast, from seven till ten in the evening.

11. That no particular member be allowed to act in any thing contrary to any order of the society : And that if any persons, after being thrice admonished, do not conform thereto, they be not any longer esteemed as members.

*Wed. 3.*—My brother had a long and particular conversation with Peter Böhler. And it now pleased God to open his eyes ; so that he also saw clearly what was the nature of that one true living faith, whereby alone, “ through grace, we are saved.”

*Thur. 4.*—Peter Böhler left London, in order to embark for Carolina. O what a work hath God begun, since his coming into England ! Such an one as shall never come to an end, till heaven and earth pass away.

*Friday* and *Saturday* I was at Blendon. They now “ believed our report.” O may “ the arm of the Lord” be speedily “ revealed unto them !”

*Sun. 7.*—I preached at St Lawrence's in the morning ; and afterwards at St. Katherine Cree's church. I was enabled to speak strong words at both ; and was, therefore, the less surprised at being informed, I was not to preach any more in either of those churches.

*Tues. 9.*—I preached at Great St. Helen's, to a very numerous congregation, on, “ He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ?” My heart was now so enlarged, to declare the love of God, to all that were oppressed by the devil, that I did not wonder in the least, when I was afterwards told, “ Sir, you must preach here no more.”

*Wed. 10.*—Mr. Stonehouse, Vicar of Islington, was convinced of “ the truth as it is in Jesus.” From this time till Saturday, 13, I was sorrowful and very heavy ; being neither able to read, nor meditate, nor sing, nor pray, nor do any thing. Yet I was a little refreshed by Peter Böhler's letter, which I insert in his own words :—

CHARISSIME ET SUAVISSIME FRATER,

*INTENTISSIMO amore te diligo, multum tui recordans in itinere meo, optando et precando ut quamprimum viscera misericordiæ crucifixi Jesu Christi, tui gratiâ jam ante sex mille annos commota, menti tuæ appareant: Ut gustare et tunc videre possis, quàm vehementer te Filius Dei amaverit et hucusque amet, et ut sic confidere possis in eo omni tempore, vitamque ejus in te et in carne tua sentire. Cave tibi a peccato incredulitatis, et si nondum vicisti illud, fac ut proximo die illud vincas, per sanguinem Jesu Christi. Ne differ, quæso, credere tuum in Jesum Christum; sed potius promissionum ejus quæ pertinent ad miserandos peccatores, coram facie ejus benignâ sic mentionem fac, ut non aliter possit quàm præstare tibi, quod multis aliis præstitit. O quàm multus, quàm magnus, quàm ineffabilis, quàm inexhaustus, est illius amor! Ille certè jamjam paratus est ad auxilium; et nihil potest illum offendere nisi incredulitas nostra. Crede igitur. Fratrem tuum Carolum et Hall, nomine meo saluta multum; et admonete vos invicem ad credendum, et tunc ad ambulandum coram facie Domini ἀκριβως, et ad pugnandum contra diabolum et mundum νομιμως, et ad crucifigendum et conculcandum peccatum omne sub pedibus nostris, quantum nobis datum est per gratiam secundi Adami, cujus vita excedit mortem prioris Adami, et cujus gratia antecellit corruptionem et damnationem prioris Adami.*

*Dominus tibi benedicat. Permane in fide, amore, doctrinâ, communionem sanctorum; et breviter, in omni quod habemus in Novo Fœdere. Ego sum et maneo,*

*Tuus indignus Frater,*

*PETRUS BÖHLER.*

*In Agris Southamptonianis,  
Die 8vo Maii, 1788.*

“I LOVE you greatly, and think much of you in my journey, wishing and praying that the tender mercies of Jesus Christ the Crucified, whose bowels were moved towards you more than six thousand years ago, may be manifested to your soul: That you may taste and then see, how exceedingly the Son of God has loved you, and loves you still; and that so you may continually trust in Him, and feel his life in yourself. Beware of the sin of unbelief; and if you have not conquered it yet, see

that you conquer it this very day, through the blood of Jesus Christ. Delay not, I beseech you, to believe in *your* Jesus Christ; but so put Him in mind of his promises to poor sinners, that He may not be able to refrain from doing for you, what He hath done for so many others. O how great, how inexpressible, how unexhausted is his love! Surely he is now ready to help; and nothing can offend Him but our unbelief.\*

“The Lord bless you! Abide in faith, love, teaching, the communion of saints; and briefly, in all which we have in the New Testament. I am,

“Your unworthy Brother,

“PETER BÖHLER.”

*Sun. 14.*—I preached in the morning at St. Ann’s, Aldersgate; and in the afternoon at the Savoy chapel, free salvation by faith in the blood of Christ. I was quickly apprized, that at St. Ann’s, likewise, I am to preach no more.

So true did I find the words of a friend, wrote to my brother about this time:—

“I have seen upon this occasion, more than ever I could have imagined, how intolerable the doctrine of faith is to the mind of man; and how peculiarly intolerable to *religious* men. One may say the most unchristian things, even down to Deism; the most enthusiastic things, so they proceed but upon mental raptures, lights, and unions; the most severe things, even the whole rigour of ascetic mortification; and all this will be forgiven. But if you speak of faith in such a manner as makes Christ a Saviour to the utmost, a most universal help and refuge;—in such a manner as takes away glorying, but adds happiness to wretched man;—as discovers a greater pollution in the best of us than we could before acknowledge, but brings a greater deliverance from it than we could before expect: If any one offers to talk at this rate, he shall be heard with the same abhorrence as if he was going to rob mankind of their salvation,

\* The remainder of the paragraph, which is left untranslated in the text, may be rendered in the following manner.

“Believe, therefore. Greet in my name your brother Charles and Hall; and admonish one another to believe, and then to walk *circumspectly* in the sight of God, to fight *lawfully* against the devil and the world, and to crucify and to tread all sin under your feet, as far as you are permitted through the grace of the Second Adam, whose life exceeds the death of the first Adam, and whose grace far surpasses the corruption and damnation of the first Adam.”—EDRR.