

hope I shall always be virtuous ; can I be really wicked ? I may be so, if I do not overcome my first weak inclinations. I wish I had more solidity and less fluidity in my disposition. I feel my own weakness and insufficiency to bear the evils and rubs of life. I must try by every stimulus in my power to strengthen myself both bodily and mentally ; it can only be done by activity and perseverance.

Elizabeth Fry, then in her 18th year, thus records the inner conflict which preceded her deliberate stepping forth into that life of religious dedication which was even then opening before her. One of her sisters describes the event which marked the full awakening of her life to its true mission :

"On that day (February 4, 1798) we seven sisters sat, as usual, in a row under the gallery at meeting ; I sat by Betsey. William Savery was there ; we liked having Yearly Meeting Friends come to preach ; it was a little change. Betsey was generally rather restless at meeting ; and on this day I remember her very smart boots were a great amusement to me ; they were purple, laced with scarlet. At last William Savery began to preach. His voice and manner were arresting, and we all liked the sound. Her attention became fixed. At last I saw her begin to weep, and she became a good deal agitated. As soon as meeting was over, I have a remembrance of her making her way to the men's side of the meeting, and having reached my father, she asked him if she might dine with Mr. Savery at the Grove (the residence of an uncle), to which he soon consented, though rather surprised by the request. We went home as usual, and, for a wonder, wished to go again in the afternoon. I have not the same clear remembrance of this meeting, but the next scene that has fastened itself on my memory is our return home in the carriage. Betsey sat in the middle and astonished us all by the feeling she showed. She wept most of the way

home. The next morning William Savery came to breakfast, prophesying of the high and important calling she would be led into. What she went through in her own mind I cannot say, but the results were most powerful, and most evident. From that day her love of pleasure and of the world seemed gone."

Her own record of the same circumstances is as follows : "This morning I went to meeting, though but poorly, because I wished to hear an American Friend named Savery. Much passed there of a very interesting nature. I have had a faint light spread over my mind, at least I think it is something of that kind, owing to having been much with, and heard much excellence from one who appears to me a true Christian. It has caused me to feel a little religion. My imagination has been worked upon and I fear all that I felt will go off. I *fear* it now, though at first I was frightened that a plain Quaker should have made so deep an impression on me ; but how truly prejudiced in one to think that because good came from a Quaker I should be led away by enthusiasm and folly. But I hope I am now free from such fears. I wish the state of enthusiasm I am in may last, for to-day I have felt *that there is a God* ; I have been devotional, and my mind has been led away from the follies that it is mostly wrapped up in. We had much serious conversation ; in short what he said and what I felt was like a refreshing shower falling upon earth that had been dried up for ages. It has not made me unhappy ; I have felt ever since humble. I have longed for virtue I hope to be truly virtuous ; to let sophistry fly from my mind ; not to be enthusiastic and foolish, but only to be so far religious as will lead to virtue."

The next month Elizabeth visited London, and spent several weeks in the gaieties of that great capital, enduring a crucial test of the rival claims of the World and Religion. It is to be