

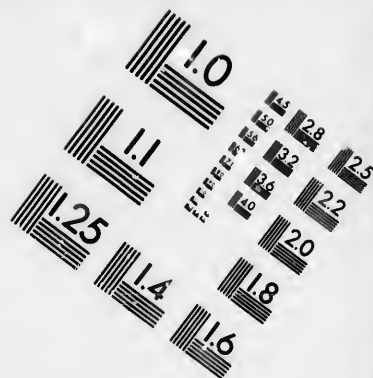
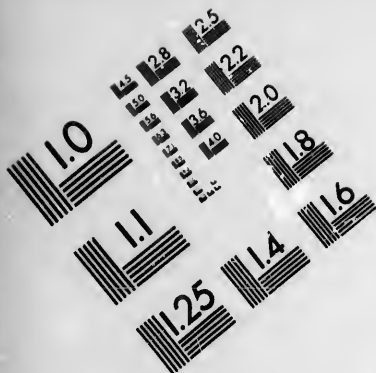
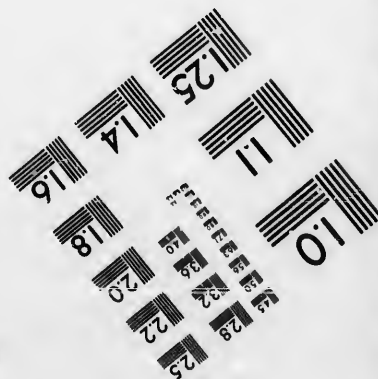
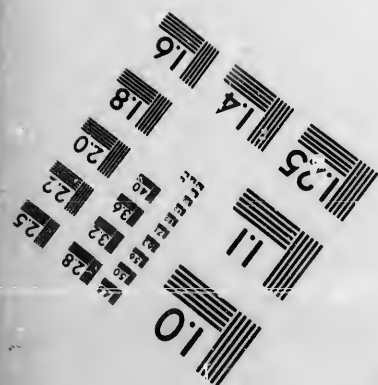
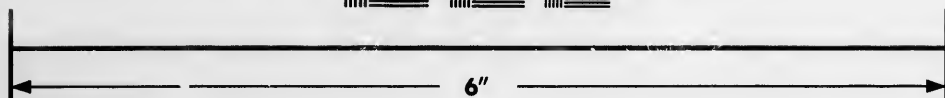
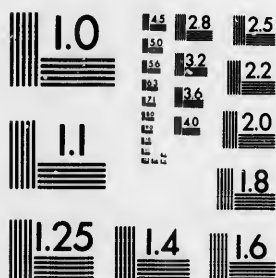


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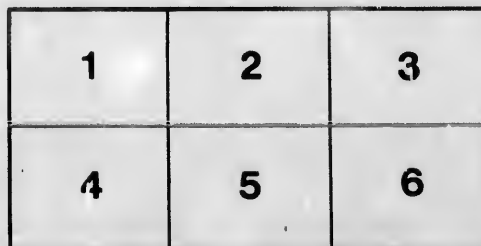
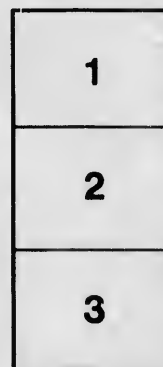
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A COLLECTION
OF
ITEMS
OF THE LIFE OF
DAVID WILLSON,

FROM THE YEAR 1801 TO 1852, BY HIS OWN HAND,

FOR THE PEOPLE OF SHARON,

EAST GWILLIMBURY, COUNTY OF YORK, C. B.

PRINTED BY G. S. PORTER,
NEWMARKET.
1852.

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ITEMS, &c.

OBSERVATIONS ON PREPARATORY PREPARATIONS FOR FUTURE SERVICE.

Stillness of the tongue and a retired life hath been my schoolmaster, and the impressions of my own soul my education. I have been separated from all flesh, religious and profane, by the moving of a spirit to me then unknown, but the impression was with belief that it was good; and I obeyed the vision; and my action became according to the law of my heart. Although I hungered for communion, I could not comply without transgressing my inward law. Thus I passed seven years in retired life, beginning in the year 1801; often seeking lonely places wherein to retire and worship the spirit that had received my soul in trust, to which I gave full credence and did obey. I was comforted with many visions of light which gave understanding to my soul. I sealed up the thoughts of my heart as a miser doth his gold, and had no communion with any. I had precious seasons of mind like rain upon thirsty ground, or dew from Heaven upon a withering herb, for I was indeed solitary and a stranger to that which was to come. Nevertheless, my silent worship was oftener than the morning, and my retirement as often as my food, and communication on religious subjects was silent with the world.

I gained admittance according to my choice into the society of the people called Quakers, after many years of tribulation and a rising and falling of the mind; I served them according to their laws and discipline for seven years, in all good faith and open communion with them concerning the faith and practice of the society; still retaining my secret impressions as sacred from the ears of all flesh. I had understood by their profession that they were a people acting by the spirit of God, and the impressions of the mind by the Holy Ghost, in their practice, ministry, and

discipline ; and I had thought they were as I knew I was, feeling the movings of a spirit on the mind. I continued with them seven years in obedience, fulfilling many appointments conferred upon me in support of their system ; in which period of time I was greatly straitened with my own concerns and the impressions of my mind. My soul was not only separated from all flesh as to my inward feelings, but from all religious records, even to the bible, and I was constrained to live by my own knowledge of the word of God, operating upon my mind. My lonesome and solitary life was beyond expression to convey to another, but is known this day to the Giver of gifts, and the purpose for which they are given. My natural food left me in despair ; I became a stranger to myself ; and there was none to comfort me but God alone. Although I never saw a vision, or spirit with my natural eyes, yet they gave light to my soul, and understanding to my mind. I had many visitations, that in time I should speak of the Lord in assemblies, but the want of preparation for such a work bore heavy upon my mind ; still keeping hope alive in me that those thoughts of my heart were truth and would come to pass. And before I thought myself ready, I found the sentence written in the law of my heart, to arise and speak of the Lord in the society of Quakers, of which I was then a member in good esteem, by elders and ministers and the keepers of the fold. I travelled far abroad and near at home to support their profession, to which I did belong. But Oh, the disappointment that followed my few words of utterance cannot be conceived within the bounds of human skill. The pillars of the house apparently removed from their standing, their love to me became hatred, and condemnation rose where justification had been, and I was set at nought by my brethren.

I refused controversy, fled from argument, and was again alone in the world. Through confidence in my integrity of purpose, four or five brothers and sisters did forsake the society of Friends, so called, and joined themselves with me. I continued to follow the guide of my soul, and parted with all on Earth for my Redeemer's sake ; and

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who demanded my heart at my hands as a sacrifice for sin, and the salvation of my life. We instituted a form of worship, with our number being six, and no more in the beginning of the system, which until now we strictly attend. But lest I had not done justice to my former friends, I stated my case to superior meetings, for we were in Upper Canada, and far from the Throne of Judgement in that Society. My long travels and distant visits were like attending at the tombs, all were silent, though error was the sentiment abroad and at home. Then I thought myself honourably clear of my vows to the society, and my pledge redeemed from being a member any more. My own small cot became our house of worship : I continued utterance. Our numbers increased ; censurers did abound ; scoffing was without limitation ; the religious and profane both joined in one song, and we became the sport of all that passed us by. We were as the dead by the way side, no invitation was seen in us why others should look upon our infirmities. We were numbered with the incurables, and forsaken by every kind and class of people. We offered friendship to the people called Methodists on equal grounds and privileges, in speaking of the things of God, and a religious life ; but we found their doors closed ; our condemnation had entered there, and there was no room for us in their dwelling-place.

In this condition of life have I continued in the little Village of Sharon, which is now, a resting place for all kinds of people, for they come unto us without invitation, as the arm of Heaven has brought them ; as the flock to the watering place, so they partake of our drop and receive our crumb, and we are at peace with all the families of the land. I have written much and have been speaking for a long time,—from 1811 till 1852,—in this place.

I have written many volumes, and published but few. But I have thought it to be my duty, though much I must leave behind, to express before I die, the lines of our system, the tenets of our faith, and the doctrines of life.

Although, we number hundreds—we are without dis-

tion, or excommunication, or reception by articles of faith. We are a mixture of Jew and Gentile; and our communion bounds the whole.

INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH SYSTEM.

As I have experimentally known the Lord to be merciful to me a sinner, on this mercy have I built his church in Sharon, and it is the bottom stone of our system; which was squared by a preparation in my soul for future service. The bread that my Heavenly Father has given I find to be good for others, and not to be thrown away. Although I have not been a gross sinner by the measures of men from my youth upward, yet have I transgressed my inward law, and wept like a child; partaking my bitter cup before the Lord; remembered be his love to my soul, his chastisements proved to me sweeter than honey, for he received my bitter atonement for the sins of my soul. We cast none away, but direct all kinds to the mercy of God, and to repentance for the forgiveness of sins. We own no Lord over us but one God; and his Son, or gift that he has given, to improve for the salvation of the soul and peace with God. We believe in the resurrection of the spirit of the deceased, but are not confirmed as to the return of the person; but believing the resurrection to arise by the word of God, is calling us to arise from the death of our sins to a life unto God in which he hath full power over us; and that the sinner shall rise to conviction we entertain no doubt, but that regeneration will bring the sinner and saint into one communion through the baptism of the spirit; and they that did not know the Lord by experience to declare the glory of his name. We believe in the restoration of Israel to the Lord, and his spirit to the world. We believe the mind of the saints liveth with the prophets in Israel, we believe their spirits will return; that they will appear in the mind, and their spirits speak again to the souls of men.

We use no persuasions to others to believe in our theory, knowing that all things are the Lords, and he disposes of them according to his own mind; and that the human heart hath no right to move in the things of God, without a preparation thereunto. We practice no written ordinances, nor pattern after the theory of any other people; receiving the written ordinances as the signs of more substantial truths. We write our own praise, and form our own prayers, as we are taught of God in the soul; which we esteem as the house of the Lord, when his spirit doth inhabit there. - It hath appeared unto us that it is the will of God that we should live independent, and borrow not of the clergy or christian churches, but of him alone. And we have accordingly been furnished beyond our expectations and abundantly supplied with the measures we have received, and we know that hath given.

Now we sing the songs of

Hopeful, and oh peaceful
The church doth bear that once was barren,
Children in our fathers hand.

Removed from doubting, and from fearing,
Every trumpet's empty noise,
Like a mother dear appearing
Her breasts abound with flowing joys.

Often meeting, joined together,
Rejoicing when we do embrace,
Children of a loving father,
Constant feeding in this place.

For our loss there's no repining
For all that hath remov'd away,
Still the furnace is refining,
Preparing for a future day.

Tho' we rise from sighs and mourning
Unto none we can return,
God forbids to be returning,
Nor for others gifts to mourn.

Thanks, and praise, and celebration,
Is our offerings to the Lord ;
Faith and spirit, revelation,
Are the lines we do record.

REMARKS ON EDUCATION.

I was born in the year 1778, of poor, but pious Presbyterian parents, whose fortune in life left me far below the means of common school-learning. My occupation was hard labour in cultivating the soil, till I was left an orphan in a friendless world at the age of fourteen, without a father or a mother to assist me in life ; after which I inclined to mechanical business in joining timber one part unto another, by which I have erected in the Village of Sharon, memorials of the pattern the Lord hath given for the erection of his House. And with the pen I have drawn the lines of his spirit as to me they have been given. They are not the hand-writing of the scribe or eloquent in speech ; they originated in my mind, and I commit them to memory as a debt I owe to the Lord which I am unable to pay ; nevertheless, I trust they will remain to be a mark of a good design.

My education was bounded by one year, and a considerable part of that time almost in my infancy. I trust those that have had wealthy parents and the means of a popular education will excuse my infirmities, and look upon the intentions of my endeavours to serve the Lord. Those that are in a low station are more ready to look above themselves, than the high in education are to look down with an eye of pity on them that are almost beneath their feet. A thought hath sometimes glanced over my mind when I was in my silent school of reflection, that popular and literary education was arising above inward grace : I have therefore made some small use of the latter, as the former was quite out my reach. When I see the price that education is sold for to the poor and lower orders of life, it has almost weaned my confidence from a

trust, even in the educated clergy. There appears to be such a mixture of wealth with their religion, that I cannot discern which has the pre-eminence in the mind; but I know the educated have the highest station in the now Christian Church. To keep my theory and religion separated from temporal interest, I have given my crumb forty years without money or price, envying no man for his wages or station. I freely grant the labourer is worthy of his hire; I as freely acknowledge that a man's merits by preaching should provide for him food and raiment; but as for bargains and contracts, limitations and bounds to the servants of God, they are to me unknown. And as temptation consists in the honours of life, and the wealth of the world, I think it dangerous for a Gospel preacher to go in league with them. I do not hold education as a line of separation from the grace of God, neither do I undertake to reduce the measures of education, and the merits of the Godly-hearted, to my simple stage of ignorance. Therefore I have removed out of the way of the wise and the shield of the strong, lest I should be slain in my way of reasoning against this majestic power of education in the world. And, as I have not received from the hands of the educated, I am under no obligation to the to repay for the gift given at their hands. I have become confirmed through long experience that the simple may be wise unto their own salvation, and speak of the Lord from the lines of grace and impressions of the mind. And here I leave a mark of my faith for future practice.

The love of God's my theme of praise,
His hand directs the line;
So may the Lord direct my days,
So may I spend my time.

Altho' my mind and measure's small
As is to me well known,
I know my life's containing all,
And man may sing alone.

All that the vessel doth contain
Is all that we can do;

The Lord within doth write his name,
Our prayer and precepts too.

And there he draws the lines of praise
And there his spirit sings,
And there the poor can know his ways
And rise on eagle's wings.

The Lord's not bounded by a span
There's none directs his ways,
He still doth love his creature, man,
With blessings on his days.

We have built a habitation for the poor and ignorant of the land. It is found by many to be a place of rest, as far as theory is concerned, for the salvation of the soul. All kinds are welcome in, but there is no room for learning of a high degree; the vessel is too small to receive, and the mind is reduced below the conception of great things. *Peace* is our motto and *Union* our praise. Our bounds are limited and great things are far off; contentment crowns our offerings, and our time is spent in the praise of the Lord. The harp utters the sound of salvation; and our hymns speak peace to our souls. He that believeth not, may come and see the mercies of the Lord.

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