

**MEMORANDA AND
CORRESPONDENCE
OF MILDRED RATCLIFF**

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Memoranda and Correspondence of Mildred Ratcliff by Mildred Ratcliff & Ann Branson

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MILDRED RATCLIFF & ANN BRANSON

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M E M O R A N D A

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MILDRED RATCLIFF.

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Ann Branson's Testimony Concerning Mildred Ratcliff, Deceased.

WHILST it may be said that all those with whom Mildred Ratcliff was most intimately associated in the faithful support of the ancient doctrines and testimonies of the religious society of Friends, have passed from works to rewards; yet, there are those still living who remember Mildred Ratcliff with feelings of deep interest. They remember her bright and shining example. They have not forgotten the straightforward uncompromising course she was enabled to pursue by keeping her eye single to the Head of the Church; whilst many with whom she had taken sweet counsel and labored in the unity and fellowship of the Gospel, for want of keeping on the watch tower, were led astray into by-ways and crooked paths by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; the words of these, though smoother than oil, were as drawn swords against the truth, and the faithful supporters thereof. Thus have we seen the following declaration of George Fox verified in our religious Society within the last century.

"The Lord opened to me (says George Fox) who the greatest deceivers were, and how far they might come, such as come as far as Balaam who could speak the word of the Lord, who heard his voice and knew it; and knew his spirit, and could see the Star of Jacob and the goodliness of Israel's Tent, the second birth which no enchantment could prevail against. These who could speak so much of their experiences of God and yet turned from the spirit and the word, and went into the gainsaying. These were and would be the greatest deceivers far beyond the Priests." [Geo. Fox's Journal, p. 70.]

I will now speak more particularly concerning our departed

friend, Mildred Ratcliff. Her parents were members of the Baptist Society, and she was brought up in strict conformity with the principles of that profession. After her marriage, she joined the Society of Friends through conviction. What it cost her thus openly to espouse their religious principles and testimonies, and the estimation in which she held those principles and testimonies through the rest of her life, may be inferred from her own language not long before her death, "I have seen the time (said she) that I would rather have given my head to the block than to have been called a Quaker, but now I would rather give my head to the block than to be anything else."

In person Mildred Ratcliff was tall and slender, having a keen and penetrating eye, emblematic of her spiritual vision, for she was a prophetess and discerner of spirits. Her countenance was remarkably grave and serious, and her whole deportment, public and private, evinced a careful attention to this Scripture injunction "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread."

In conversation she was interesting and instructive to both old and young, making remarks and relating incidents worthy to be remembered, and not easily forgotten. Her ministry was sound and weighty, giving unmistakable evidence that she was one of those who could adopt the language of the Apostle concerning himself and his fellow Apostles, "That which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life declare we unto you," bringing out of the treasury things both new and old. Although of a frail and delicate constitution yet in her public communications she could be distinctly heard by a large assembly, her articulation was clear and distinct, her speech deliberate, her voice audible, solemn and impressive, and her whole deportment grave and dignified, free from any affectation or those gestures which do not comport with Christian gravity.

I have said that Mildred Ratcliff was a prophetess and a discerner of spirits. Many instances might be given to illustrate