

**A BRIEF NOTICE OF THE
LIFE AND LAST ILLNESS
OF THOMAS FREEMAN**

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A Brief Notice of the Life and Last Illness of Thomas Freeman by Thomas Freeman

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BRIEF NOTICE

OF THE

Life and Last Illness

OF

THOMAS FREEMAN.

“ Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example
of the believers,” &c. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

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FROM THE

ANDREW FROSTON PEABODY

FUND

February 3, 1942

A BRIEF NOTICE, &c.

The young man who is the subject of the following pages, was brought up by his parents in the communion of the Church of England; but, yielding to the impressions of Divine Truth revealed in the secret of the soul, he became dissatisfied with the mode and forms of worship in which he had been educated. Being induced by the example of an elder brother, to attend the meetings of the Society of Friends, he found a satisfaction to his seeking mind, in the religious principles which they profess; and received confirmation in the belief that nothing short of the mediation and the operation of the gift of Infinite Mercy to fallen man, could give him access to the Fountain of living water; so that it might become in him, "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The progress of this work of sanctification, being exhibited by some of his letters, will be introduced in his own words, with such

trifling verbal corrections as may be needful to render *extracts* intelligible to the reader. The first of these letters contains also some remarks respecting an individual, who had been, under the divine blessing, an instrument of good to him, and whose care and solicitude for him, he viewed as maternal.

LETTER I.

Frome, Sept. 13th, 1822.

DEAR ———

Having received the parcel of books, which I was pleased to find you took an active and affectionate part in preparing for me, as well as in handing me all the information you could respecting our dear friend, who, I was sorry to hear, had been dangerously ill, and whose request I am following by my present reply; I cannot but express my gratitude that her stage of illness was so far advanced, as to warrant an expression of no fear of danger. I should have been glad to have returned an earlier reply; but you know a convenient opportunity cannot be procured to sit down to write, except on a Sunday. *I can join with you in the anticipation of*

spending a *few more* pleasant seasons together, ere *that change* takes place which *must* separate us. Should an alteration take place for the worst, you will not, of course, fail of letting me know it.

You will, I expect, be desirous of hearing how I received, or whether I have commenced reading, and do like Clarkson; or, in other words, how I may be advancing in that progress of religious views, after which every *true believer* is hungering and thirsting. You have, I find, partly if not wholly read it through yourself, and could, I doubt not, have handed me many a useful lesson worthy my attention. But far am I from extolling or depending on these outward means. They may all be very well in their places; but Clarkson, in the volume alluded to by you, says, "We cannot call the Scriptures the fountain of all truth and goodness, &c.—because the principal Fountain of truth must be the *Truth itself*." You will unite with me, I know, in believing, that useful lessons may be learned from Clarkson, by beholding as it were in a glass the reflection of our own images. Hence our dear friend says, "fresh beauties will be unfolded to thy views, and oftentimes be permitted to speak

home to thy state; but the work must first begin in the heart. It would be useless to the admirer of loftiness of language, although there may be beautiful passages, to look for beauties in Clarkson. The mind must have something greater in view." And yet I cannot but think that in the work there are some of the most beautiful feelings displayed.

I should like for you to have been at Frome a Sunday or two ago, there being a Friend here, in the ministry, who held a meeting here twice in the course of the day, and supped at our house in the evening. I think he manifested the greatest sweetness of disposition. A passage or two of his, I mentioned to my brother in a note, relating to too great an attachment to this world; which he endeavoured to explain by referring to the circumstance of Jesus casting out of the temple those that sold doves—things that were in themselves innocent.

I have commenced the reading of Clarkson; and as my time is mostly pretty well filled up, I shall not get much time for reading it but on Sundays; so that it will take me some time to go through the whole. But so different do all other religious views appear *on directing my attention closely to these,*

that I cannot of course think of any other than our place of worship; although, as you perhaps may have felt, we frequently feel a blushing—a suffering of ourselves to be cheated. O! may we be made faithful in little matters, until strength be vouchsafed for greater sacrifices. You will, I suppose, spend all your winter evenings at ——, as it seems requisite. I should be glad to spend the Sunday with you, as I know it is directed to the most pleasant improvement; but an opportunity seems to offer of my spending the afternoon and evening by myself; and *by* *you* *alone*, what does there seem to be *wanting more*.

I have latterly read a great deal in William Thompson's letters; and have greatly admired his cultivation of the mind. Such a lively instance of it we shall scarcely find again. How independent he must have felt himself of all outward forms of religion! and what an exalted view he had of his fellow-creatures! There seems, in general, not to be so much experience in any other books as in Friends' writings.

15th. Being about to send off my letter this morning, I seem disposed to make a little addition. Amongst other things I have