

**SOME ACCOUNT OF  
CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE LIFE OF  
MARY PENNINGTON FROM HER  
MANUSCRIPT, LEFT FOR HER  
FAMILY**

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Some Account of Circumstances in the Life of Mary Pennington from Her Manuscript, Left for Her Family by Mary Pennington

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**MARY PENINGTON**

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ACCOUNT  
OF  
CIRCUMSTANCES  
IN THE  
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FROM HER  
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1821.

## ACCOUNT, &c.

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*A brief account of some of my exercises,  
from my childhood, left with my dear  
daughter, Gulielma Maria Penn.*

*Mary Pennington.*

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THE first scripture I remember to have taken notice of was, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." This I heard taken for a text when I was about eight years of age, and under the care of people who were a kind of loose Protestants, that minded no more about religion than to go to their worship-house on first days, to hear a canonical priest preach in the morning, and read common prayers in the af-

ternoon. They used common prayers in the family, and observed superstitious customs and times, days of feasting and fasting, Christmas, (so called,) Good Friday, Lent, &c. About this time I was afraid, in the night, of such things as run in my mind by day, of spirits, thieves, &c. When alone in the fields, and possessed with fears, I accounted prayers my help and safety; so would often say (as I had been taught) the Lord's Prayer, hoping thereby to be delivered from the things I feared.

After some time I went to live with some that appeared to be more religious. They would not admit of sports on first days, calling first day the sabbath. They went to hear two sermons a-day, from a priest that was not loose in his conversation: he used a form of prayer before his sermon, and read the common prayer after it. I was now about ten or eleven years of age. A maid-servant that waited on me and the rest of the children, was very zealous in their way: she used to read Smith's and Preston's sermons on first days, between

the sermon times. I diligently heard her read, and at length liked not to use the Lord's Prayer alone, but got a prayer-book, and read prayers mornings and evenings; and that scripture of "howling on their beds," was much on my mind: by it I was checked from saying prayers in my bed.

About this time I began to be very serious about religion. One day, after we came from the place of public worship, the maid before mentioned read one of Preston's sermons, the text was: "Pray continually." In this sermon much was said respecting prayer: amongst other things, of the excellency of prayer, that it distinguished a saint from a sinner; that in many things the hypocrite could imitate the saint, but in this he could not. This thing wrought much on my mind. I found that I knew not what true prayer was; for what I used for prayer, an ungodly person could use as well as I, which was to read one out of a book; and this could not be the



prayer he meant, which distinguished a saint from a wicked one. My mind was deeply exercised about this thing. When she had done reading, and all were gone out of the chamber, I shut the door, and in great distress I flung myself on the bed, and oppressedly cried out: "Lord, what is prayer!"

This exercise continued so on my mind, that at night, when I used to read a prayer out of a book, I could only weep, and remain in trouble. At this time I had never heard of any people that prayed any other way than by reading prayers out of a book, or composing themselves. I remember one morning it came into my mind that I would write a prayer of my own composing, and use it in the morning as soon as I was out of bed; which I did, though I could then scarcely join my letters, I had learnt so little a time to write. The prayer I wrote was something after this manner: "Lord, thou commandest the Israelites to offer a morning sacrifice, so I offer up the sacrifice of prayer, and de-

sire to be preserved this day." The use of this prayer for a little while gave me some ease. I soon quite left my prayer-books, and used to write prayers according to my several occasions. The second that I wrote was for the assurance of the pardon of my sins. I had heard one preach, "that God of his free grace pardoned David's sins." I was much affected by it, and, as I came from the worship place, I thought it would be a happy thing to be assured that one's past sins were pardoned. I wrote a pretty long prayer on that subject, and felt, that as pardon came through grace, I might receive it, though very unworthy of it. In said prayer I used many earnest expressions.

A little time after this, several persons spoke to me about the greatness of my memory, and praised me for it. I felt a fear of being puffed up, and wrote a prayer of thanks for that gift, and desired to be enabled to use it for the Lord, and that it might be sanctified to me.

These three prayers I used with some

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ease of mind, but not long, for I began again to question whether I prayed aright or not. I was much troubled about it, not knowing that any did pray extempore ; but it sprung up in my mind, that to use words descriptive of the state I was in, was prayer, which I attempted to do, but could not. Sometimes I kneeled down a long time, and had not a word to say, which wrought great trouble in me. I had none to reveal my distress unto, or advise with ; so, secretly bore a great burden a long time.

One day as I was sitting at work in the parlour, one called a gentleman (who was against the superstitions of the times) came in, and looking sadly, said "it was a sad day: that Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, were sentenced to have their ears cut, and to be banished." This news sunk deep into my mind, and strong cries were raised in me for them, and the rest of the innocent people in the nation. I was unable to sit at my work, but was strongly inclined to go into a private room, which I