

LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT

by William Tiptaft

A collection of letters by William Tiptaft documenting his bold doctrinal preaching, spiritual experiences, and the responses of both believers and opponents to his Reformed ministry.

8 Chapters

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LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1830) January 30th, 1830

Dear Brother,

Since I last wrote, I have preached in Abingdon Great Church, on Christmas evening, the only night in the year that it is lighted. I preached the truth, I trust, to a very crowded congregation, supposed to be (sitting and standing, who were able to get in) about 5,000 people. I pleased the believers, but very much displeased the carnally-minded, who were never so puzzled and confounded in their lives before. But even those who hate me and the truth acknowledge that the Bible has never before been so much read in Abingdon, or the Articles of our Church so much examined. I spoke the truth faithfully, and so as all could hear; but I had no idea that the gospel would have given so much offence. They have done nothing else since but talk about it. I allow there was much strong doctrinal matter in it, but I said no more than I fully believe. On the Sunday after, a clergyman preached very much against me and the doctrines which I profess. Last week he published his sermon. He misrepresents my sermon so very much that, in my own defense, I am obliged to publish it, for which there is already a great demand. It is a very long sermon, from Mat 1:21. The clergyman who preached against me is a wine-bibber, a great card-player, and a fox-hunter. They all acknowledge if I am not right, they are sure he is not. The Lord is with me, for I really believe many are brought out of darkness through my preaching, and their lives manifest their faith as that which works by love and purifies the heart.

It is the truth that offends and disturbs Satan's kingdom. The neighboring clergymen, who are in the dark, say of me, "Away with such a fellow from the earth; it is not fit that he should live." Many hate, but some love me, and bless the day they first heard me. Some of the worst characters here have become decided Christians. They bring no charge against me except my views of religion; but they cannot gainsay them. Some say the Articles of our Church were buried until I brought them forth. My mind is not moved by the persecution, for I have every testimony that I am a minister of Christ, and I believe if He has a work for me to do, I shall do it, in spite of the devil and all his children. It is not coming near to the truth, it is not the letter of the gospel, that will convert men, but the Spirit.

Make the Word of God your study. Pin your faith to no man's views. I scarcely read any other book. The people of Abingdon come over in large parties to hear what this troubler of Israel has to say. Though they say all manner of evil against me falsely, they find what I say "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." Nature is not changed, the gospel is not changed, and Christ is not changed. What reason is there why they should not hate the truth now as much as in the time of the apostles? I never saw any fruits of my labors until I roused and disturbed the roaring lion. When, through the grace of God, I began to disturb his kingdom, I soon found that his children began to hiss; they want to know what has become of their forefathers. I came not here to judge them, but to preach the gospel. Beware of those who want to exalt man in any manner. The world and Satan hate believers. Read Paul's Epistles; they beautifully throw light

upon the other Scriptures. Listen to no one who wants to mix free will and free grace, the law and the gospel; for free will is a very stronghold of Satan's. Listen to no one who talks about universal redemption. Remember Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and his ministers into ministers of righteousness. The Pharisees hate me the most. I cut off all their rotten props, and all their fleshly devotion.

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

March 16, 1830 My dear Brother,

I am happy to say that the sermon has been blessed by God in this neighborhood, and consequently has made a very great stir. I received a letter from a poor man at some distance, thanking me for printing the sermon, as it has been a comfort to his soul and to others. Of course I shall have neither the praise of the unbelievers, nor their good wishes. The gospel is a fan that will separate the chaff from the wheat. The Pharisees and philosophers get but little hope from me, and will, therefore, seek more flattering preaching elsewhere. I am thankful to say the Lord enables me to be faithful; but it will avail nothing to assent to this or that doctrine, unless the Lord writes it on the heart. What is received in the flesh is all nothing, for the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, nor can he know them; consequently a man must be born again of the Spirit to understand them. By nature there is no difference among us; we are all sprung from Adam, and Christ says, "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." The Scriptures make no distinction in us; we are all vile sinners. "What then? are we better than they? no, in nowise." The more you know of the truth in a spiritual way, the humbler you will be. To know the mysteries of the gospel it is necessary that you be taught of the Spirit, so as to divide the law and the gospel, and the flesh and the Spirit. Then you will understand the two covenants. Read your Bible frequently. The whole work of salvation is Christ's, and Christ's alone. It is to Him we owe all blessing, in Him all fullness dwells, and we are complete in Him. If you can understand and realize that, happy are you. Faith will not profit you without love to Christ and His people. He will then be precious to your soul, and you will rejoice in Him. You will see when the true light shines into your heart, that you are vile and sinful. You will say with the Bride, "I am black, because the sun has looked upon me." We must be taught of God, that we are not even able to think a good thought. We shall then give all the glory to God, and shall not then think that we can choose between good and evil. A child must be born before it receives milk, and so must man be born again before he can receive the sincere milk of the word.

Praying that grace, peace, and love may be multiplied,

I am yours most affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

April 30, 1830 My dear Brother,

My sermon seems to be received among you much in the same manner as I expected. Nature is the same in Rutland as in Berks. I rejoice to say that the doctrines which I preach receive the very testimony which the gospel always did, and always will. You will find that scarcely three respectable people will speak well of it, and very few of the poor. But there shall be a remnant to

say, "It is the truth." When I read the Scriptures, I daily discover that the little I know of the word of God is as a drop in a bucket compared to the whole. The Bible to most is a sealed book.

What Ahab said to Elijah, "Are you he who troubles Israel?" may be said of me at Sutton. The Lord has been pleased to enable me to speak such things that I have troubled Sutton and the neighboring villages. Some have learned that they are wrong; whether I am or not, they are sure they are. The Lord is making me useful, by bringing many to a knowledge of the truth. But I caused none to cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" until I preached election, &c., boldly. My old nature fought against the truths for a long time, but when the Lord teaches, we must learn. Read your Bible; get well acquainted with it.

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

June 9, 1830 My dear Brother,

I rejoice to say that the Lord still continues to bless the word preached by me. As He is pleased to lead me into deeper mysteries of His blessed gospel, I can more fully show forth the errors of false authors and ministers, which consequently causes me to be more hated and despised by a false professing world. There has been a book published called "The Calm Observer," in answer to my sermon. The Christian Remembrancer, of the month of April, reviewed it, and has borne a strong testimony in favor of it, by not answering any of its arguments, but by heaping upon me sordid abuse. But even the enemies of the gospel are sorry it has been so reviewed, as abuse is well known to be generally bestowed when arguments to prove the truths of the gospel erroneous are lacking. As you have, perhaps, not seen the work, I will give you two or three extracts—"The harangue which Mr. Tiptaft has published, under the title of a sermon, is the veriest trash, and most bombastic nonsense which ever proceeded from the lips of one who hopes to escape Bedlam; nevertheless it has excited a considerable sensation in the University of Oxford," etc. (Page 211.) "We really have no patience to proceed further with such perversions of the Scripture. None but those who are as bad as himself will be easily led to adopt his notions. It is but justice to Mr. Parker, the Oxford bookseller, to state that his name was inserted in the title page without his permission, and that he would never have sanctioned the publication, directly or indirectly, of such profane blasphemy." This will enable you to form a judgment of the review, which does not attempt to refute the doctrines. It is very remarkable that such a fool as they say I am should excite a considerable sensation in the great and learned University of Oxford.

I am called mad; so was Christ. I am called a blasphemer; so was Christ; and Christ says, "The servant is no greater than his master." Bulteel has gone to see his friends. I preached for him at Oxford to a very crowded church. Many came to hear what 'the babbler' had to say. There were present to hear me from this place and the neighborhood not less than 60 or 70 of my regular hearers. Of course they were considered fools for going so far to hear such a fool, whom they can hear three times every week. I preached from Col 2:19, extempore, without any premeditation. I looked to the Lord, and He gave me words, and I was enabled to utter 'foolish things' to confound the wise. I cut down false religion, and exalted Christ, to the great offence of the pious Pharisees. If the learned gowmsmen could not digest what I said (there were many present), I was enabled by the grace of God to feed "the poor of the flock, who knew that it was the word of the Lord." Flesh

and blood are not changed, and where the gospel is faithfully preached there will be the same consequences as in the time of our Savior and the apostles.

I am to preach for Bulteel next Sunday also. I am more offensive in my preaching than he is; I do not try to smooth it and make it palatable. I speak, as Mr. Hewlett says, "in plain and unvarnished language," and not with enticing words of man's wisdom. I like your last letter better than the former one. My advice to you is to keep close to the Bible. Let no one set up a standard for you; and if you are a child of God you will be taught by the Spirit. Do not cavil and reason with the carnal-minded. What advantage will it be if you persuade them to adopt your sentiments? If they are not born again of the Spirit of God, they will receive the doctrines carnally and not spiritually, which will only make them proud and licentious.

I wish you sat under the sound of the blessed gospel. You will find 'free-will' texts to harass and trouble the minds both of you and your wife. Don't be distressed on that account; difficulties will vanish as the Lord teaches. You cannot expect to reconcile all the Bible at once; the devil and his children will try to confound you. If you are children of God, the grace of God will teach you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Yours affectionately in the bonds of the gospel,

William Tiptaft.

June 9, 1830 My dear Deborah,

I am rejoiced to think that you are so far humbled as to look to Christ alone for the salvation of your soul. You will find if you possess the Spirit of Christ that you will be despised and condemned by all in whose heart Satan reigns. But what does the Scripture say for your consolation? "Rejoice, and leap for joy." "For the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." You will doubtless try to justify yourself in holding such offensive doctrines, by appealing to the Bible, Litany, and Articles, but you cannot convince the natural man. Do not be anxious to justify yourself, for it is a very small matter to be judged by man's judgment; and a time will come when you will be justified before all, when millions must fall down, and you shall be able to stand in the perfect righteousness of Christ. You will find one or two only in the same rank of life holding these doctrines, and also a few despised poor people, who are derided and counted fools. My congregation is made up of several parishes, and some come very long distances occasionally. Of course I come off with a good share of abuse as a fool, a madman, a deceiver. But Paul says, "As deceivers, and yet true."

It is a great privation to you not hearing the gospel, but the Lord will take care of His sheep and feed them. You had much better read the Bible than any other book; you can expect God's blessing in reading it when it cannot be expected with any other. You will find some to consent with you, and then afterwards fly back to free-will and the power of man to begin the work. Grace has nothing to do with the flesh in carrying on the work. We are born again of the Holy Spirit, and consequently have a new principle within us, which is wrought upon by the word of God—"As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby," etc. This new principle is of Christ, and will mortify the old man and reign in us; consequently we are led by the Spirit of God, and He bears witness with our spirit that we are His children, for by it we cry, Abba, Father. The old man is never made better, the new man cannot sin. He cannot sin because he is

"born of God"; that is, the new man; the old man is not born of God. It is the opposition of the two principles which causes the warfare. When you are brought to see the two distinct natures, it will afford you a clearer view of the spiritual life. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live," etc. You will meet with much opposition, but if you lose everything, you will count it gain for Christ's sake.

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

July 12, 1830 My dear Sister,

I am truly rejoiced that the Lord has given you an inquiring mind. You will not be distressed when I say that I have discovered that your views of salvation by free grace are by no means clear, as your letter plainly evinces; for in speaking of some of your relations you say, "I wish they would fix their minds above this world." This expression shows that you do not believe "there is no health in us." We could as soon make a new world as begin a spiritual work in our souls. It is this doctrine that lays man so low in the dust.

You have expressed a great wish to see me, and that others anticipate my arrival in Oakham. I can assure you that you will not very much like to hear the truths the Lord has taught me. I have given you nothing but milk, either by letters or by the sermon as yet, which is plainly seen by the little dislike with which my sermon has been received by you. I have things to say, "hard to be uttered," because you are "dull of hearing." The greatest offence is given when you pull down the strongholds of Satan, when you expose false religion; but remember that no one is to be heard any further than the Scriptures bear him out. I have given great offence in speaking upon prayer as wholly a spiritual work; for God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. It troubles exceedingly the Pharisees; they are very unwilling to cast away their false idols. But it matters not to me whom I offend. Is it scriptural? Whatever is scriptural I hope God will enable me to speak boldly and faithfully.

It seems very cutting to parents when I warn them against making children Pharisees and hypocrites; but the truth is cutting to flesh and blood, for it is sharper than any two-edged sword. When I talk of the holiness of Satan as an angel of light, and his ministers as ministers of righteousness, they look upon me as they did upon my great Master, with hatred and contempt, and cry out, like the very pious in His day of humiliation, "He has a devil and is mad; why listen to him?" But the servant is not greater than his master, and if they call the Master of the house Beelzebub, what will they say of His household? We must be looked upon as deceivers, and strong opposers of what the professing world calls true religion; "as deceivers and yet true."

I begin to meet with much hatred and contempt, but my good Master met with much more. The more they revile me falsely, the stronger testimony I have that I am doing the work of the Lord. Who am I that I should disturb a neighborhood? It is not I. What do they care what opinions I hold? It is the work of God that troubles them; it condemns them, as the Lord enables me to take it out of the 'letter' and set it forth in the Spirit. So I become a troubler of Israel. Nevertheless, my church is crowded in spite of all their hatred, lies, and contempt. Some who show the greatest hatred to the children of God and the truths I declare, cannot help coming. The Lord, I rejoice to say, speaks by me. I believe that many are brought to the light through my ministry, and others are comforted and

built up, being brought out of bondage.

I am very glad to find you have sufficient light to discover the darkness of the neighborhood. Very few preach the gospel, and a blind guide ought not to be followed, for we know what the consequence will be. I cannot in this letter enter upon any mysteries of the gospel. But I recommend you to read your Bible alone. Observe, that all the Epistles are addressed to saints. Observe, that none are exhorted to do good works but those who are heirs of salvation. The dead have no ears; but when the gospel is preached, ears are given by the Spirit to vessels of mercy lying buried in the ruins of the fall, that they may hear the sound and be taught of God. It is an offensive truth, that none are exhorted to good works but those who have the promises. I will give you two or three scriptural proofs—1Co 15:57-58; 2Co 7:1; Col 3:1-5, Col 3:12; Tit 3:8.

Christ has no concord with Belial. There are two principles in a believer; one can do nothing but sin, the other cannot sin, because it is born of God. (Song of Solomon 6:13.) This causes a warfare between these two spirits, the good and the bad; but the good reigns, which enables us to mortify and keep under the flesh, and causes us by the word to bring forth fruit acceptable unto God—for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. In a few words, this is the gospel; Christ lived and died for us; all He did was for us, and all we do ought to be for Him. Our warfare is accomplished and our iniquity is pardoned. This is the gospel, this is glad tidings. The world says we are against good works, but in fact we are the only people that advocate good works, acceptable to God through Christ Jesus. Do not take nor any other man for your guide; read your Bible, and call no man Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ.

Yours affectionately in the bonds of the everlasting gospel,

William Tiptaft.

September 3, 1830 My dear Brother,

I intend (D.V.) to be at Oakham on the 14th or 15th, but I hope to be with you on the 14th by the Leicester coach, as I intend to return that way the following week, for I cannot conveniently be absent from so large a parish any longer. But you will be quite willing to part from a troubler of Israel in a few days. I shall give the greatest offence, I have no doubt, in speaking against much of the religion of the present day, which is nothing but the work of Satan, but is very near and dear to the flesh, and you will feel very loath to give it up—as unwilling as the Jews were to leave theirs for Christ. "Behold, I, Paul, say unto you that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

I had no idea that the gospel of Jesus Christ would give so much offence, but the Scriptures plainly declare it must be so; the wicked must bear their testimony to the truth. "The preaching of the Cross is to those who perish foolishness." If what I preach is not foolishness to the natural man, know assuredly that I preach not the gospel. I trust that you can find several to bear testimony to my Christmas sermon, by saying that it contains contradictions and is foolishness. With respect to you and your wife, I have a good hope that the work is begun. You both know but little; but, "how can you hear without a preacher?" You seem to differ from others, and begin to be looked upon with a jealous eye by old acquaintance, as holding certain strange doctrines. All this promises well. You are, I trust, now considered very strange and peculiar people, and I hope that you differ not only in doctrine, but also in life and conversation. Remember this, "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of heaven." Satan will frequently magnify the difficulties which you must

encounter as children of God.

Christ makes a variance wherever He is preached; and the Pharisees of our day, who have the most natural religion, will be in craftiness your greatest enemies. They will trouble you with various questions, and endeavor to shake your confidence; but "nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are His." Listen not to what any one says unless he bring the testimony of the word. Do not let their piety and great zeal for righteousness have any effect without the word of God. If you receive it, it is after all but the word of man, for you cannot say, "It is written." At the end of your last letter, you beg to know "whether you are not to be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord?" Certainly; the word of God expressly declares so. But remember, your zeal must be in the strength of the Lord. I can speak more fully on the subject than I can write; but remember, "our ways are not the Lord's ways." The Pharisees had more zeal than the missionaries in our days, for they would compass sea and land to make one proselyte. I tell you candidly that you will be ready to say, "You bring certain strange things to our ears." Remember, when you are bold for the religion of Jesus Christ, you will not be considered a pious and good man, but a very bad man, no, very wicked, a blasphemer, and a deceiver. They called the Master of the household Beelzebub; what, then, will they say of His servants? Are you His servant? This is hard to flesh and blood; but it is nevertheless true. The Lord is still pleased to make me a troubler of Israel at Sutton. As truth is preached, so error is made visible.

I must now conclude, with my best love to your wife and children, and all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

October 28th, 1830 My dear Brother,

I arrived safely at Sutton on the Saturday afternoon. I saw Mr. de Merveilleux, and had a little conversation with him. I believe him to be a lover of gospel truth, and I hope that you will call upon him when you go to Stamford. I met a few friends at his house, and spoke a few words to them. They seemed very desirous to hear, and, I trust, are spiritually hungering after the bread of life. My friend Philpot is ill, and not able to preach. He is coming to see me next week. He is a dear child of God.

I shall be glad to hear in your next letter what advances you are making in religion. I hope that you read your Bible much, and talk with those who fear the Lord. You will find much opposition, both within and without, against a spiritual work; but if it is the Lord's work, it will surely be carried on. You will be surprised to find so much enmity against the gospel; but the word of God shows clearly it must be so. The learned and great find the doctrines of grace great foolishness, and they are constrained to bear a testimony to the truth by saying so. If I found many, of any description, speaking in favor of the doctrines I maintain, it would excite a doubt in my mind whether they were true. You will be perplexed with many favorite texts of the Arminians; but the Lord in due time will make them plain to you and consistent with the doctrines of grace. Do not be disturbed because you have not much knowledge of divine things. Knowledge profits not unless it is given by God the Holy Spirit. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." All knowledge avails but little, if

there be not a knowledge of Christ Jesus. It is not receiving the gospel in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance which saves. You will find that the grace of God which brings salvation will teach you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world. You will appear to yourself and others a new creature. Many have a single eye, but it is not to God, but to money. But as a child of God you will be constrained by the love of Christ, to give up everything for His sake, who died that you might live. Do not imagine that a mere knowledge of the plan of salvation is salvation. If rightly taught, you will be led to rejoice in Christ as the pearl of great price, to love the brethren, and to do many things which the world hates and condemns. As a child of God, you are not of the world, but are chosen out of it. You are only a stranger and a pilgrim here. You are looking to the glorious moment when you are to be delivered from the bondage of corruption; for to die, and be with Christ, is far better than to live in this vain world. Remember that all that you suffer and lose in the cause of Christ, you are to consider gain. Rejoice to think that you are counted not only worthy to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. Light has no communion with darkness, and the believer has no part with the infidel. Having a saving interest in Christ, and knowing it, you are rich indeed; you are a son of God; you have a glorious mansion prepared for you; and you are sure to have it, for Christ can no more do without you, than you can without Christ. Your security is in Him. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Because He lives, you shall live also. In one sense, you are saved by good works, because Christ's good works are your good works, because you are one with Him. It is this glorious union between Christ and His church which gives such consolation and joy to the members of His body. "As Christ is, so are we in this world." "For we are made to sit together in heavenly places" with Christ Jesus, and are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him." May we go on in the narrow way rejoicing in our great Captain, who will see us safely landed on the heavenly shore. "He is faithful who has promised," and He will never leave the work of His own hands. Blessed be His name forever!

There is but little salt anywhere, and it is much scattered. You will find it difficult to give up your own religion. May the God of peace and love be with all His dear sheep in Oakham; and that you may abound in faith and love, is the sincere prayer of Your affectionate Brother,

William Tiptaft.

December, 1830 My dear Brother,

I was pleased with your remarks upon religion in your last letter. As the Lord has been pleased to reveal to you a little of the light of the glorious gospel, a corresponding practice will necessarily follow, for a lively faith is known, as a good tree is known—by its fruit. It is an inestimable blessing to be taught the value of God's word, so as to prize it, and to give much time to reading and meditating upon it. Let no one deceive you with vain words, and cause you to think, because you understand the plan of salvation, that you are sure of eternal glory. To receive the gospel in word is one thing, but to receive it with power, and the Holy Spirit, and much assurance is another. I hope and trust that you have received it that way.

If you have, my dear brother, be assured that a great change will be visible in your life and conversation; for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature—old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." "The grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

You will meet with many professing to love the true doctrines of the gospel; but, alas! they at the same time love their sins, and too evidently show themselves to be boasters, proud, covetous, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Remember, Satan has millions of devices, of which a young convert knows but little, and he is as well pleased to lead his people captive with a knowledge of the word as in any other way. Satan fears nothing but the power and spirit of the gospel, which changes God's dear people from glory to glory, and conforms them to the image of His dear Son. You must not infer from what I have said that I am against the blessed doctrines of grace; I only would have you not prize that knowledge that puffs up. The true knowledge of the gospel is a great blessing, and may you abound in it more and more, so that you may prove things that are excellent. There is no other knowledge worth having compared with it; and I pray that the Lord may by His Spirit lead you to count all things but rubbish for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

All knowledge without the knowledge of Jesus will avail nothing. You are a poor dark, miserable, bewildered, deluded creature, if you know not Christ Jesus. It is the Spirit's work to take of the things of Jesus and to show them to the Church. It is only the Spirit's teaching that will afford lasting comfort and consolation; and when we are truly taught, we learn to be humble, meek, and lowly of heart; we see our helpless and lost state by nature, and are surprised to find our hearts so unclean and sinful. We are taught to see that Jesus is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and that there is no hope of entering into glory but through Him. Seeing yourself lost and helpless will lead you to pray to God frequently and fervently to keep you from falling. You will feel troubled and distressed at your cold and lukewarm state, and be grieved that covetousness, pride, and diverse lusts are waging such strong war against your soul. But do not forget that we are soldiers, and have a continual warfare.

Read an account of the Christian armor in Eph. 6, and you may be sure all that would not be supplied for the Christian unless he fully stood in need of it. After an account of the armor, the apostle exhorts strongly to watchfulness, prayer, and perseverance. Blessed be God that we need not be alarmed as to the great warfare, for we have a sure promise that we shall be conquerors, yes, even "more than conquerors through Him who loved us." God has given us His dear Son, and will He not with Him also freely give us all things? I pray the Lord to lead you to rest more entirely upon Jesus Christ, and that you may see Him to be your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. I hope that your faith will work by love and purify your heart, so that you may daily become more dead to this world, more fervent and frequent in prayer, and more earnest in pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The true Christian has a single eye. Have you one? The Lord's work will be continued, if begun. I hope, when you write again, you will be enabled to tell me more of the Lord's mighty power working in your soul, and causing you to abound in fruit, to the praise and glory of His holy name.

I am going on here much as usual; my congregation continues still very large, and many profess to know the truth, but the chaff is mixed with the wheat. Some have a clear knowledge of the doctrines, but are evidently void of grace, which has led me to use the exhortations more earnestly. We find doctrines first in the Epistles, and then exhortations. Christ says, "Herein is My Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit."

I have had a clerical friend visiting with me, with whom I can see eye to eye. His name is Philpot, a Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, and he has a curacy in the neighborhood. He is rather delicate in health, and cannot just now serve his church. He has been with me more than a month. He is a very valuable friend, and I trust the Lord will make his visit very profitable to me. He took a First Class in classics at Oxford in 1824. His company makes the dreary evenings pass away very pleasantly.

Give my best love to Deborah, and tell her I would be very pleased to have a letter from her.

Believe me, my dear Brother,

Yours in Christ,

W. Tiptaft.

LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1831)

January 8, 1831 My dear Brother,

I am very anxious to hear how the work of grace is going on in your hearts, whether you prove all things and hold fast that which is good. The way to heaven is strait and narrow, and Satan is an unwearied adversary, in disputing every inch of the way. You will be much despised and cast out for Christ's sake, and nothing will offend more than separating yourselves as much as possible from carnal people. It is the life which condemns the professing world. When the world sees you unmoved by the riches and the pleasures which it so much adores; when you are led by the Spirit "to count all things but rubbish for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord"; when you prove the light which you have to be from above, by giving you a single eye to God's glory, you must expect then to bear reproaches from the Hagar race.

I hope and trust you study much the word of God. When you read that, you know that you are on safe ground, and you can say to Satan and his allies, "It is written." There is but very little true religion anywhere. Our hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and the Scripture, which cannot be broken, tells us that the righteous scarcely are saved. It is a very narrow way to heaven, and if we enter in, it will be entirely by the grace of God. You will be led to see how vain the doctrines of the Arminians are.

It is very plain that the world is too much in the hearts of Christians, and Satan covers over covetousness under the name of prudence. How Christians compare themselves one with another, instead of with the word of God; but God has a people, whom He will separate from the world. He will show them, by His blessed Spirit, what He has done for them through our Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Happy and blessed are they who have not the spirit of the world ruling in their hearts, but the Spirit of God, so that they may understand the things which are freely given to them, such as justification through the blood of Christ, pardon of our every sin, promises of help, support, and strength to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, and a certainty of our being more than conquerors through him who died that we might live, who was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

I am very anxious to hear from you, and to know whether the word comes to you with power, and with the Holy Spirit, and with much assurance. It must be a great source of joy and delight that you and your wife think alike, that you are both agreed that salvation is of grace, and grace alone, that you can provoke one another unto love and good works, and cheer one another under the temptations of Satan and the persecution of a wicked world. You must be partakers of the sufferings of your great Master, so shall you also of His consolations, and He will never leave you nor forsake you.

I have spent this winter very pleasantly, being blessed with such a valuable friend as Philpot for my companion. He is a very highly gifted man, but he desires to present his body a living sacrifice unto Christ. He is delicate in health, and is affected with a pain in his chest. He will continue with me during the winter, I hope, for his conversations are very profitable to me, and we see eye to eye in almost every point; so there is no jarring and arguments.

I have had as yet this winter my church very crowded. Some leave, and fresh ones come; some say I am a good man, and others say I deceive the people.

I am not heaping up treasures upon earth for moth and rust to corrupt. I feel thankful to the Lord I am so provided with every comfort in this world. I hope that He will teach me self-denial, that I may more liberally assist others who lack even the necessaries of life—poor and afflicted brethren in Christ. It is more blessed to give than to receive. It is a hard saying, "Sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasures in heaven." When great grace was upon the primitive Christians, they had all things common. As a Christian, your mind will be much more easy the less you have to do with the world. Having food and clothing, be therewith content. Riches and cares choke the seed, and keep you from communion with God through Christ. Those who will be rich fall into many snares, etc. (1Ti 6:9.) Your kingdom is not of this world.

Believe me, yours affectionately,

W. Tiptaft.

March 14th, 1831 My dear Brother,

I feel much obliged to you for your last letter, and am rejoiced to find that you are desirous of knowing more of Christ. You have much to contend with in various ways from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Satan is a very subtle enemy, and never spreads his snare in your sight. I hope you will not be induced to value any knowledge which does not cause you to love Christ more, and to live more decidedly as a member of His kingdom. Satan does not care how much knowledge you have in your head, so long as he can keep possession of the citadel of your heart. Consequently, he will change his position a thousand times, before he will surrender his hold. But God's grace must and will dethrone him, and set up the kingdom of Christ in your heart, so that you will serve a new Master, and for very different wages. All that Satan can boast of, or tempt us with, are perishable things of time, that will soon vanish away. But though we profess to despise the riches and honors of this life, none but those who have the light of God's countenance shining upon them will view them in their proper light. Satan is the god of this world, and he blinds the minds of those who believe not. If one device will not succeed, he will try another; and every unregenerate man will be led captive by him, in some way or other. Many may think they have outwitted him by a knowledge of great truths in the head, while their heart is devoid of grace.

You may, perhaps, think these remarks may not be profitable to you; but I believe we think and speak a great deal too seldom of the greatest of all enemies, and I feel this is his most subtle device. Old disciples of Christ can say, "We are not ignorant of his devices." But young converts will be entangled, more or less. Consequently, it becomes ministers of Christ to show forth particularly what little they may know of them, so that the word of God "may be a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths." Though we are not of his kingdom, we live in his kingdom; and we must pass through it to our eternal rest. We must, therefore, watch and pray that we enter not into

temptation. You will find "take heed" very frequently in the Bible, and as such words are there we may be sure they are necessary. "Exhort one another while it is called To-day"; "Take heed, lest your heart be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Now, no Christian will grow in grace who has not a single eye to God's glory; for if the eye be not single, the body is full of darkness.

It matters little what a man knows, if Christ be not to him the pearl of great price. Is Jesus Christ precious to you? Do you love Him so that you would die for Him? Do you count all you lose for His sake gain? Are you willing to make great sacrifices sooner than deny Him? Untried faith is uncertain faith. When you are cast out, and have many trials and difficulties to contend with, you will rejoice, I trust, that you are counted not only worthy to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

You will not be persecuted for holding gospel truths in the head, but for having grace in your heart; for the former will not cause you to differ from the world. When the fruits of the Spirit manifest themselves in your life; when you are blind to your own interest in this world; when you are deaf to the advice of the worldly-wise, then it will be said of you, "He is a changed man; he is a fool!" Now, my dear brother, be assured of this, as God works in your dark soul, such changes as these will be caused; so that instead of panting after the riches of this world, you will pant after the unsearchable riches of Christ.

'Human nature' cannot and will not make great sacrifices; but as you have a knowledge given to you by the Spirit of the exceeding great and precious promises laid up in Christ for God's chosen few, you will be led to see the nothingness and vanity of all things here below, and you will with joy cry out, "We have a kingdom which cannot be moved!" God, by His Spirit, quickens, and He alone can enable you to separate from your old companions and the world, and so make great sacrifices for Christ's sake, who has died that you might live; who became poor that you through His poverty might be made rich. Your conscience will become more tender, and you will be better able to discern between good and evil. At this present time my conscience is not very easy about the Church Establishment. I neither like the system, nor the forms and ceremonies, particularly the baptismal service and catechism. God forbid that my conscience should be hardened through a strong inclination of the flesh to cleave to its respectability and riches. I am not fully satisfied what I shall do; but I pray that God may guide me, and that I may not take such an important step hastily and unadvisedly.

You will, perhaps, be surprised to hear these objections against an Establishment which is admired so much by the world at large, especially by the rich and great. I was perfectly satisfied with it, until the Lord was pleased to open my eyes to discern its inconsistencies. A letter would not, if entirely on the subject, afford me room to say all I could say. In the baptismal service we thank God for 'regenerating children', and then put on the black gown, go into the pulpit, and tell them in plain terms that they were not born again. Our Liturgy makes every baptized person a member of the true Church, and we have to address them as such, when we know to the contrary by their fruits. And the catechism is so full of errors that I am sure no one with a glimmering of spiritual light will teach it to children.

Philpot is still with me, and a very sincere Christian he is; he will leave shortly. He thinks about leaving the Church, though he would give up his Fellowship, and would not be worth a groat. Would not the world call him a great fool? You and I have much to learn. We are very carnal and

worldly-minded; we have but little grace. What have we sacrificed for Christ?

Yours in the bonds of the everlasting gospel,

W. Tiptaft. May 2nd, 1831 My dear Brother,

I was very glad to hear by your last letter that your wife has safely delivered another son; and I hope that he will prove a blessing to you both. God's mercies have been great and manifold towards you in this life, and I pray that they may not prove snares. The children of God almost always flourish more in trials and difficulties than in the sunshine of health and prosperity. The promise is, "As your days, so shall your strength be"; consequently, if there are not trials within from Satan's temptations, or afflictions and persecutions from without, we would not call upon God heartily for help. So when we pray for grace, we at the same time ask for trials. In the case when Paul prayed that the messenger of Satan might depart from him, the Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." "Most gladly, therefore," he adds, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." So the Lord answered his prayer, not as Paul asked; but he was content that it should be so, that he might enjoy more of the power of Christ in his own soul. Your last letter was very short, and you never gave your opinion respecting the important change I contemplate about leaving the Establishment. My mind is perplexed upon the subject, which I believe will end in my leaving. "But he who believes shall not make haste." I trust that God will direct me. I can assure you that the more I reflect upon the state of our Establishment, the more I am persuaded it becomes me, as a consistent minister of God's word, to leave it. I consider the riches of the national Church are a great cause of her corruptions. Take them away, and then who would belong to her? Would the 'blind guides' work for nothing? Would the spiritually minded go through forms which they must condemn in their own consciences?

Pride and covetousness cleave very close to us, and they influence us more than we imagine. How very different are the ministers of the present day from those in Paul's day! He says, "We are the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things"; "Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that are with me." Ministers of Christ are now called gentlemen—"Reverend", "Right Reverend", "Most Reverend Father in God." They are bowed down to and worshiped. Will God be mocked? Will He not be avenged on such a professing Church? "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and the people love to have it so. But what will they do in the end thereof?" What does Christ say? "He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger" (Luk 22:26). It is plain they differ widely in these respects, but by no means less in their doctrine. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant (slave)." The power of godliness is but little known.

What is the Church of England? Of what characters does it consist? Is the system altogether pleasing in God's sight, or is it hateful? I will not say any more on the subject; for perhaps you may think I am prejudiced, and do not state things fairly.

Bulteel and myself intend to go for two months to preach the gospel in the dark parts of the West of England. We shall go the middle of this month (D.V.). We shall preach in churches, chapels, barns, rooms, or in the open air. We shall, if the Lord strengthens us for the work, give great

offence. But it is a glorious work to preach the everlasting gospel. It is the very purpose for which I was ordained. Christ will not turn us out of His Church for following His steps in preaching the gospel in every city and village. I would not be surprised if the Bishop withdraw Bulteel's licence, as he is only a curate. My vicarage is a freehold, and I know not what authority the Bishop has over me. He would not turn me out if I went to Melton to 'hunt and gamble'. But preaching the gospel in dark villages is a 'dire and heinous offence', being so very contrary to the word of God. Such a charge, that even the very apostles never heard of, and whoever commits it is worthy of bonds and imprisonment, or even death itself!

I am anxious to hear how you are going on in spiritual things at Oakham. You must remember that everything is opposed to the work of Christ; but in this respect His power is made more fully manifest. God's grace is visible when we see it affect the hearts of the most determined sinners, and cause them to stand up boldly for His worthy name, which they formerly used to blaspheme. You will find great difficulties to walk and act like a Christian in your profession. Even the very beginnings of a Christian life in such a dark place as Oakham will be hated. If you have but little light, you cannot sit under such dark ministers. You would rather dig for your bread, than act so contrary to Christ's express commands—"Take heed what you hear"; "Beware of false prophets." You will cause the weak brethren to stumble by inconsistency. If you sit under a blind guide, you confirm him in his ministry, and bolster up his pride. You may profess what you please if you will hold with the world, and sit under the same minister, however dark, with the world. You may boast of your knowledge, for that is all you can boast of; for living sheep must have living shepherds, and dead people dead shepherds.

You will find the most spiritual of God's people among the poor. I observe so much pride and conformity to the world among the rich, that I stand in doubt of many who are considered to be spiritual people. James 2 condemns most of them.

They have a fear of God, but it is to be feared it "is taught by the precept of men" (Isa 29:13). That you may differ widely from such professing Christians among those of your rank and condition is the sincere prayer of, Yours in the bonds of the everlasting gospel,

William Tiptaft.

June 11th, 1831 My dear Brother, You will not be surprised at the proceedings of Bulteel and myself, as I informed you in my last what our intentions were. We arrived in Somerset on the 16th of May, and have almost every evening since been preaching, one or both of us, in church, chapel, or the open air. We have, almost in every instance, asked for the church, and if refused, preached in the chapel or open air. We have preached in dissenting chapels, in Wells, Glastonbury, Somerton, Langport, Castle Cary, Bruton, Wincanton, &c., sometimes in a church and sometimes in a chapel. We last Sunday had four churches, near Hindon, in Wilts. We are now visiting Mr. Dampier, near Bruton. We are to preach each once in both the churches tomorrow, and, between the two services, I am to preach in Wincanton large Independent chapel. Mr. Rogers, of Yarlinton, came here yesterday, to offer me his church for Tuesday evening. He is a man of large fortune, and went last evening, with Mr. Dampier and family, to hear Bulteel preach at Bruton, in the Dissenters' chapel; and I preached at Wanstrow, near Frome.

I need not say that our conduct excited surprise. We have many hearers. The places of worship are generally much crowded; people come from far to hear us, and invite us to come and preach to them; so we may truly say, "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few." Many think we have no right to preach in dissenting chapels; but it is not forbidden, either by the canons or the word of God, for the latter is altogether in our favor. I believe the Lord is with us, and makes us instruments in exciting a great inquiry into spiritual things. Mr. Dampier has a wife and nine children, and a large estate; his house and establishment on a superior scale. I expounded to the family this morning. His family, domestics, and friends formed by no means a small congregation. Mr. D. is much reviled and hated; he preaches faithfully, and gives us the right hand of fellowship with cordiality and with great pleasure; assists us in our proceedings, in lending us his carriages, horses, and servants. Of course, the orthodox clergy are very angry with him, and us, and all that lend us their churches, or come to hear us.

We have preached to some thousands in the various places, and not without profit; for I believe the Lord is with us. We bring, I am glad to say, a reproach upon all who receive us, particularly those who open their churches to us after having preached in the chapels in the neighborhood. Some say we are mad; some, that we are beside ourselves; some cry out, "My Lord Bishop, restrain them," and some wish us God speed; but the generality wonder at our conduct. We are both willing to be turned out of the Establishment for preaching the gospel. One of our Articles says, "Whatever is not read in the Scriptures, nor can be proved thereby, is not required of any man." Many seemed opposed to us at first, who afterwards support us, acknowledging they cannot say a word against us, for the work may be of God.

I now call to mind a remark which Deborah made to me, about three years ago, coming out of Oakham church—"You will soon be like Rowland Hill, and preach here and there." Little did I think then those words would prove true. I hope that God will daily give me a greater desire to glorify Him, so that I may serve Him more truly with a single eye. Mrs. Bulteel and son have joined us this week and we are going, the latter end of next week, to Plymouth. We hope to be there about the 18th. Bulteel's friends live at Plymouth, and there are several in that neighborhood anxious to see us. Bulteel's name is extremely well known, on account of his sermon; so, whoever opens their pulpit doors is aware of what doctrines we preach.

I cannot enter into particulars about the opposition we met with, and the various effects caused by our preaching. But I can assure you there is no small stir and they are almost ready to say, "These men, who have turned the world upside down, have come here also." We must remember, Satan is not dead; we may expect that he is laying snares for us in every way. It is easy for him to flatter and puff us up with pride, and make us believe we are doing a great work. He is an old deceiver, and we are young Christians. I hope and pray that God will humble us, and show us more of our nothingness, that we may glory in Christ and in Christ alone. Why we give so much offence is, because so many follow us, and some ministers of the Establishment support us and encourage us; and, by going into dark villages, we expose the ignorance of blind guides.

All these circumstances, you may imagine, give much offence to the 'chief priests and Pharisees'. The world is not changed, nor the gospel. As it was in former days, so it is now. I am grieved to say, I meet with very little of the power of godliness. I have great opportunities of seeing the state of religion, and find my journey very profitable in that respect. We meet with professors of all

denominations, but a different name does not make a different man. It is only the grace of God in the heart that makes men manifestly new creatures in Christ Jesus. The world, in its various shapes, is Christ's great enemy; and Satan is very busy in blinding the eyes of men, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." I would think that you find it difficult to overcome the world. Worldly wisdom reigns much. We act much like the Gentiles in making provision for the flesh. When the world sees you so taken up with Christ, from the beauty and glory you see in Him, that you become crucified to the world and the world to you, they will hate you the more.

Thank Deborah for her very kind letter; and, I can assure you, I am pleased to hear that _____ is persecuted for Christ's sake; I hope to hear of his suffering much more. We have much cause to leap for joy on such occasions, if we be assured it is for righteousness' sake that we suffer. If he is faithful, they will treat him as they treated his great Master. If we were of the world, the world would speak well of us. Tell me, in your next, what you have suffered for Christ. Satan is well pleased with the state of religion in our day, or he would roar a little more loudly.

We are now at Colinshays, near Bruton, where we have engagements until Wednesday; we shall then go to Kingweston, near Glastonbury, until Tuesday, D.V. We hope to reach Plymouth that evening; we may remain there a fortnight, or longer. Give me a full account of spiritual things in your neighborhood, and give my love to all who love the Lord Christ in sincerity.

Yours affectionately, in the best of bonds,

W. Tiptaft.

July 27th, 1831 My dear Brother,

Through the mercy and goodness of God, I am again quietly settled at Sutton after my two months' tour in the West of England. I arrived on Friday, July 15th, and left Bulteel with his wife and child in Devon, for I could not conscientiously leave my own flock any longer; for during my absence they were left almost without food, as I could not get a minister of Christ for love or money.

Soon after I wrote to you we left Somerset for Bellevue, near Plymouth, and began to preach in that neighborhood. We stopped about ten days in the vicinity of Plymouth. Bulteel preached in the large church at Plymouth, which was also offered to me; and I would have accepted it, had I remained another Sunday. When Bulteel preached there, it was crowded to excess. We preached also in the open air, and in what churches we could obtain, to the great annoyance of the Church clergy. They consulted together whether they could not put us into the stocks. Of course they called upon my Lord Bishop to restrain us. We were the more offensive to them, because multitudes would flock together to hear us.

After we left Plymouth, we traveled along the southern coast of Devon, and preached in several of the principal towns. We both preached. Consequently we kept our hearers standing nearly two hours, and sometimes longer. We preached fifteen nights out of eighteen in the open air, and the numbers that gathered together surprised us; but the novelty of it, and the size of the towns were much the cause. I will mention a few of the towns—Modbury, Kingsbridge, Dartmouth, Brixham, Torquay, Teignmouth, Totnes, Exmouth, &c., etc. We had generally a table to stand upon. I preached upon the docks, as many of the places were by the sea, or had a large river running by

them. We were not much molested, considering the offensive truths we preached, and the numbers of the vilest characters among our hearers. But we were called every name that was applied to Christ and the first preachers of the gospel, and we were pelted with a few stones and dirt, etc. But, upon the whole, we had but little to bear for our great and gracious Master. We preached twice at Teignmouth, and twice at Exeter, in the open air. A constable and a magistrate came the second night at Exeter, but we regarded them not, and they dared not touch us, nor could they prevent us, for we had a message for thousands. Our flesh rebelled much against the work; but I am sure nothing would excite a neighborhood more than faithful preachers standing up in that way. But they must preach the finished work of Christ, or little effect in any way will be manifested. We were followed from place to place by several, and they who were taught of God knew 'the sound'. We were much refreshed by conversations with God's dear people, who were chiefly among the poor, and they, alas! poor creatures, were almost without shepherds. Great darkness prevails, and very few preach the fullness of the gospel. That part of Devon in which we were, is as dark as Rutland, and almost as void of true ministers. Many of God's dear people showed us great kindness, and those who received us we called Jasons; for they certainly had to bear a cross. Mr. Synge, of Buckeridge House, near Teignmouth, was very kind to us. He stood by us twice in the open air at Teignmouth. We took up our abode with him, and he sent us in his carriage to Totnes, and met us again at Exeter, and stood by us again. May the Lord reward him! He is a man of property, and cousin to your curate.

I could not, in one or two letters, say all that you might desire to know about our journey. But the great question is, Who were converted; and who were comforted? We heard of convictions which were very striking. If no blossom there will be no fruit, but of course we knew but little of the effect of our preaching, as we left immediately, and went immediately to another place. But many could testify of our preaching, that it was good for them to be there. We had a very great number of ministers of all sorts to hear us. Some said we were mad, some said that we were good men, some said that we deceived the people, some mocked, and others said that they would like to hear us again. Very many, both rich and poor, wondered how we dared preach everywhere and anywhere, and they wanted to know what our bishops will say. I have heard nothing from mine, although I am sure he knows of it. Bulteel is to return for Sunday next. I do not think that he has heard from his bishop. We are both indifferent how they will act. If they turn us out of the Church of England, we shall see our way clear; for we both think, that if a mother ever had a daughter, our Established Church is one of Rome's. Bulteel can easily be removed, but they will find difficulty in removing me, as I am an incumbent. I think they will be afraid of interfering with Bulteel, as his name is so well known, and the poor Establishment is tottering to its very basis. As I mentioned before, the canons cannot prove us guilty, and the Scriptures are on our side. My desire is to do the Lord's work, and I shall not stop (D.V.) in bearing a testimony for Jesus, concerning those precious truths I know for my own comfort, whenever I have an opportunity.

O, my dear brother, may God open your eyes. I trust the Lord has begun the work in you and your wife, but it is a day of small things. To have the least spark of grace in our souls is a cause of unutterable thankfulness. It is a mercy beyond expression. Your views are changed; you like to talk with God's people; you stand and plead the cause of such; you believe in the truth. All this is promising; but remember, it is through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven. There is a daily cross, and you must bear it, or there will be no crown. Be pleased to let me know

whether I can have £20 or £30 soon, as my conscience is not comfortable to have so many hundreds, and poor brethren in Christ lacking bread. I do not like to give money away to support pride and idleness; nor do I like to keep it in store when Christ's dear friends and people need it. We are told not to lay up treasures upon earth. I can say—the Lord be praised—I care less about money, and could live in a plain way. A little plain food and plain clothing are quite good enough for our vile bodies. We visited an admiral who has not even a silver teaspoon, and he gives all away (nearly) to the poor for Christ's sake. We dined with him, and he showed us the power of Christianity, while we preached it. What is this vain world? "And this world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever."

Write me a very long letter, and give me a full account of the Lord's work in your neighborhood. With every good wish, believe me to be Yours affectionately, in the best of bonds,

W. Tiptaft.

September 5th, 1831 My dear Brother,

I was delighted with your letter which I received last Saturday, as it gave me good reason to believe the Lord has begun a good work in another of our relatives. Time will make it manifest. I would be sorry to discourage it in the least, "but by their fruits you shall know them."

Though it is not convenient for me to visit Rutland this autumn, nevertheless, as I am anxious to see you, I intend, God willing, to be with you next month. Bulteel is kind enough to say that he will serve my church; but he will not perform any of the 'stated ceremonies'; and, as my parish is large, it is rather inconvenient. He slept at my house on Saturday night, and preached in Abingdon market-place on Sunday morning to two or three thousand people, and on next Sunday he will preach in my church, and after the sermon a collection will be made towards building a chapel for him at Oxford. He has bought a piece of ground at Oxford, and hopes to raise subscriptions sufficient to build a chapel. His hearers, of course, are chiefly poor; consequently, the chief part of the money must be raised elsewhere.

Since his dismissal from St. Ebbe's, he has preached once a Lord's day in his own garden to a very large congregation. I have not heard from my bishop directly or indirectly; so when I come to see you I shall not be particular about 'Gothic arches', for the people form the church, and not mud and stone. If the Lord is with me I must give offence, for many of the sleepy orthodox cannot cordially bid me God speed in breaking down their walls of bigotry and prejudice.

We have very pleasing accounts of the usefulness of our labors during our travels. Some, I trust, will prove seals to our ministry. They are living testimonies that we were not acting contrary to the will of God, however man might scoff at and condemn us. I go on here much as usual, but not so comfortable in my mind, as my objections against the Church of England grow stronger and stronger, so that if I am not turned out, I must resign. I believe it is pride and covetousness that keep me in. My church is still crowded. Some professors fall away, and others rise up; and so in one respect I am discouraged, and in the other encouraged. But things go on here much as they do where there are other preachers of the gospel. As it was in the early days, so it is now. I feel assured that if you and Deborah are faithful, you must bear a heavy cross in such a place as Oakham. He is not a Christian who differs only in 'sentiment' from the world, but in 'practice'. Faith without works is dead. You compare yourselves with others, therefore you are not wise. People in

your rich circumstances will find it next to an impossibility to enter into heaven; and I feel more assured daily that God's people are very scattered in the present day.

Many are deceived and deceiving others, but God is not deceived. I shall rejoice to find you in a very spiritual state, for I need rousing and stirring up, for I am very carnal and dead; my heart is too much cleaving to the dust. Make no engagements for me in a worldly way; for I trust, through the grace of God, I shall be more decided than I was when I was with you last time. I hope that Christ will be exalted, and we shall experience more of His Spirit in our hearts. Satan is an astonishing enemy, and is endeavoring to rob us of all comfort, if he cannot keep us under his dominion.

I shall hope to find you all rejoicing in Christ Jesus, fighting bravely in His name; and that the Lord may direct you to act to His glory and praise is the sincere prayer of Yours most affectionately in Christ,

W. Tiptaft.

October 25th, 1831 My dear Brother,

I am very much obliged to you and Deborah for your joint letter; it rejoiced my heart to hear that some found it good to their souls to hear me; and those poor creatures that rebelled against it were also confirming the truth; for though Christ is precious to some, He is a stone of stumbling unto others. It is a very high honor to be an ambassador for Christ, when we can truly say, "For we speak as messengers who have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He is the one who examines the motives of our hearts. Never once did we try to win you with flattery, as you very well know. And God is our witness that we were not just pretending to be your friends so you would give us money!" 1Th 2:4-5

Faithfulness is much needed in the present day. We are too inclined to prophesy smooth things, and we are constrained to do so in some measure, for we would otherwise too glaringly condemn ourselves. Before a man can preach the spirit of the gospel, his life and conduct must be according to it; and most gospel preachers fall short in this respect. It is the cross we are inclined to shun. But we shall bear it, if we are Christ's ministers, and then our walk will be quite contrary to the world. The professing church is too much like the Gentiles of old, saying, "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we be clothed?" While we honor the 'god of this world' in such a manner we expect little opposition from him, for he cares not about 'head-notions', as they make little or no encroachments upon his territories. I feel assured that neither you, your wife, nor myself have sacrificed much for the Lord yet, and our evil nature will contend most strongly that there is no need. But I trust that the Holy Spirit has taught us the contrary; for, if not, I may truly say, "We do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

I must now tell you that I am harassed in my mind about leaving the Church of England, for I find that I cannot hold my living and a good conscience too. Every reason which is urged on me to continue, savors of the things which are of man, and not of God. I believe it to be an unholy system, from an undergraduate in preparation at Cambridge, to the Archbishop of Canterbury. I cannot read the Baptismal and Burial Services; and I am inclined to think that pride and covetousness have caused me to continue in it to the present moment. What I shall do if I leave it, I know not. God will direct me. I am willing to labor in His service, and I shall rejoice to be free from such shackles as I now labor in. I find that all who recommend me to keep my living have no grace

in their hearts, or so little that I can scarcely perceive it. Out of the camp there is reproach; but, by the grace of God, I have learned to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than my living.

We know but little of the deceit and wickedness of our own hearts; and that detestable pride is interwoven with every fiber of them. We must suffer with Christ before we reign with Him; and if grace enters the heart, the world must be turned out, and then a man will act in a manner which surprises the world. "No man can serve two masters." "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

I consider the 'genteel Christians of the present day' very much like Gentile Christians. When the Lord opens your eyes wider, you will see how much worldly-mindedness there is, in one shape or other, among the professors around you; and when you reprove them for it they are almost ready to turn back and say, "I desire not the knowledge of your ways." True knowledge of Christ alone will avail; they must be taught of God what riches they have in Christ, to make them despise the world and all its wealth and honors.

I am convinced that with most, grace is only in the bud, and will not grow if a person acts contrary to the word of God. There is a cross to bear; and if a person does not take it up, what will be the consequence? The conscience will be hardened, and Satan prevail. When people profess to have received the truth, by their life and conversation they influence others; and consequently, by doing that which is wrong, they cause the weak to stumble. You will find many who will talk to you upon the Calvinistic points, who know nothing of the vital power of them in their souls. "The kingdom of God is within you;" it is "not in word, but in power." We must know ourselves sinners before we shall value the blood and righteousness of Christ. We must be under the teachings and operations of the Spirit for some time before the heart is fully established with grace, which is a good thing. The more tried and tempted we are, the nearer we shall be brought to God, and see the suitability of Christ in all His glorious characters. Few have the true light in their heart; so that they can see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ but as we receive the power of religion, it will be made manifest in our lives.

It is surprising how Satan helps many to reconcile difficult passages in Scripture with their manner of life. But why are they difficult? Because our eye is not single. Christ made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant. Let this mind be in you. Ask each of the professors around you what they have suffered for Christ.

Remember, the children of God are soldiers, chosen by Christ to endure hardness. Satan is not much opposed in the present day; it seems that we are in the Laodicean state, for many talk about schools, and societies, and evangelical preachers; but let them read, "You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." Rev 3:17

I hope the Lord will give you a spirit of prayer at Oakham, that the true work of the Lord may be revived among you. The power of the gospel is sure to be followed by the cross. We are too much liked by the world, and too well spoken of; it would not be so, if we lived godly in Christ Jesus. God forbid that we should rest in a form of godliness. I hope God will search and prove us, and empty us from vessel to vessel, so that we may not be at ease in Zion. I hope and trust that the Lord's people will remember me at Oakham in their prayers. I much need them, for I begin to be more

harassed; for, as yet, I believe I have been borne upon the sides and dandled upon the knees of Zion. But it is a blessed promise, that my strength shall be according to my day; and again, the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for you." That the Lord may establish your heart with grace, is the sincere prayer of Yours affectionately in the Lord,

William Tiptaft.

November 16th, 1831 My dear Brother,

I am rather disappointed at not having received a letter in answer to my last. As I have now been led to act in that which I have long talked about, I feel assured you will be glad to hear some of the particulars. My former letter, however, will prevent any surprise at the important step I have taken.

After frequent prayer to God and deep consideration, I sent a long Letter to the bishop of Sarum, declaring my intention of resigning my living last Thursday, and received an answer yesterday, saying he accepted it. You are aware that flesh is not favored in this transaction, but a burdened conscience. The performance of the 'ministerial services' constrained me to resign my living. I feel assured that only pride and covetousness have caused me to continue in it so long. I shall not enter into any particular reasons for resigning, as I intend to publish them, and then you can consider them at your leisure.

I do not expect to escape difficulties by giving up my living. They may be said now to begin; but the grace of God is sufficient for me. The great question is, What shall I do? If I am the Lord's laborer, which I trust I am, He will find me work in His large vineyard. The most of my hearers are poor people, and they are very desirous for me to continue among them. They who are enlightened rejoice at the thought of my leaving the Church of England, for I have not a single hearer who is evidently a child of God that does not testify against the National Establishment.

I have been induced, from various reasons, to think about settling at Abingdon. Some poor friends thought a small piece of ground might be purchased to build a chapel on, and there was a probability of my having it; but last night I had an answer sent me in the negative. Though Abingdon contains 5,000 or 6,000 people, I scarcely think it possible to get a piece of ground to build a chapel upon. Abingdon is by far the most suitable situation, and very many of my present hearers could go there as conveniently, or more so, than come to Sutton. The chapel would be the very plainest building, with all open seats; and as those who desire the gospel in these parts are obliged to eat their bread by the sweat of their brow, of course I could not ask them for sixpence, while I have so much of my own. But our souls are so wrapped up in thick clay, and earthbound, that when an opportunity offers of making a little sacrifice of our abundance for Christ's sake, we are almost ready to make an excuse. If we were called upon to sell our houses and lands, and share them with the poor children of God, we would have something of the spirit of Ananias and Sapphira, in desiring to keep back part of the price. But as God opens our eyes by His blessed Spirit, to see more of the wondrous sacrifice that has been made for us, we shall more willingly offer body, soul and estate to His service. "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." How awful! The generality of professors are endeavoring to serve two masters; for when they have an opportunity of serving Christ, they are inclined to count their money, for fear they shall give too much. "Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also."

If a chapel be built at Abingdon, or elsewhere, a few will contribute who have the means, if not resident in this neighborhood; but, if not, I trust my heart will not prove so devoid of grace as not willingly to build it myself. A day will soon arrive when it will be made known how much we have spent in the gratification of our own lusts, and how little for Christ. When He lived in this world self was out of the question. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant."

Pray for me that I may have more grace and be more spiritually minded, and manifest more of a single eye to God's glory. Religion is not in word but in power. We are so inclined "to walk according to the course of this world." My flesh does not like giving up a very comfortable home, and a living altogether worth £140. My flesh would make excuses, and has done so. But neither you, nor I, nor any other interested person, as a member of the Church of England, can give an opinion on the subject. "A gift even blinds the eyes of the wise." I think many are harassed about continuing in her, but it is the Lord's time when they shall come out, so that they may not "be partakers of her plagues."

I intend to go to London next week to resign, it being necessary to go before a notary; consequently, next Sunday will be my last. I do not at present see what I shall do, but I think of continuing in my vicarage a few weeks longer, and then I think of taking lodgings in Abingdon. My congregations do not diminish, for last Sunday I think I scarcely ever saw more in my church. Several chapels will be open to me occasionally; but, of course, my chief interest is with those whom the Lord has called by my ministry, and those who are spiritual among my hearers. As my 'letter of resignation' will be printed in London, I shall order about 200 to be sent to you from thence, and I will thank you to send Markham fifty, and tell him he is welcome to them, to sell them and keep the money, for he sent me as a present twenty-five of my sermons. You may give all my relatives two each; that is, to a family; and what you have left out of fifty, you may give to poor people, or whomsoever you please; and then there will be a hundred left to sell. The price will be about threepence each. As many will wonder why I have left the Church, I think it well to let them know my reasons. The times seem very momentous, considering the very disturbed state of the country, and a daily expectation of the spreading of the cholera. Men's hearts may be said to be failing them, for fear of what is coming upon the earth. But God's people are safe; I trust that through the grace of God we shall find many led by the Spirit to seek the Lord.

I am anxious to know how you are going on at Oakham in religion. It is up-hill work to contend against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

How is the Lord dealing with your soul? Is He letting His light shine more fully into your heart? Are you more dead to the world? Do you heartily desire to have more of a work of grace upon your heart? The head travels much faster than the heart. Self-denial, taking up a daily cross, and following of Christ, are but little understood in the present day. But we are to walk in His steps. We have so much pride; until grace brings that down, we shall not suffer much for Christ. Have you ever felt a deep sense of your sinfulness, and a powerful testimony of God's Spirit showing you your completeness through the righteousness of Jesus Christ? Does your Father purge you, that you should bring forth more fruit? You will find the way to heaven is through much tribulation. Do you read your Bible much? Can you say that you do not walk according to the course of this world? Many such-like questions, if applied with power, might be profitable in humbling us, which

we much need.

Yours in the bonds of the everlasting covenant,

William Tiptaft.

November 29th, 1831 My dear Brother,

I went to London last week, and resigned my living; and I hope that my 'letter of resignation' containing my reasons will be published tomorrow.

I have bought a small piece of land at Abingdon to build a chapel on, for I feel constrained to remain in this neighborhood, as nearly all my hearers are very poor, and would not be able to pay a minister if one could be had for money. So you may send word to Mr. W., that I cannot accept his kind offer and invitation to go to N., as I am about building a chapel at Abingdon, in this neighborhood, where but very little knowledge of Christ is manifested. I have a chapel lent to me, until mine is built, where I preached last Sunday. It will hold, when full, about three or four hundred; but it will not at present contain all my hearers. On next Sunday I am to preach twice at Wallingford, to an established church, which invited me to become their pastor.

It has made rather a sensation in this neighborhood, particularly as I am about to remain. Many were hoping that I should no longer be a troubler of Israel in these parts; and on last Saturday a paragraph was in the Oxford paper about me. I feel much comfort in my mind now that I am free from the Church of England, and I think that the Lord never gave me so much liberty and power as He did last Sunday evening. But already I perceive that I and my hearers will be more hated and persecuted.

I had much difficulty in obtaining a piece of freehold land in Abingdon; but now I have succeeded in obtaining a piece, in frontage 30 feet, and 48 feet 8 in. deep, for which I am to give £105, which is £3 10s. a foot. It is about the same price as Bulteel gave for his. There are 20,000 bricks to be taken up on the land, at £2 per 1,000, which the vendor intended to build with. I have no money to pay for them, and so must consult with you what I am to do. As I said in my last, my hearers could not build the chapel, if they were sold up; and Paul says, "Let not one be eased and another burdened," therefore I shall have the pleasure to make the sacrifice in Christ's cause. I have the part, and best part, of my furniture to sell, if not all; for, perhaps, I may take lodgings at Abingdon, unfurnished. My chapel is to be 48 feet long, and 30 feet wide. It will at first, I think, be built without a gallery, and will hold about 400 to sit down in, and galleries might be made, to hold 200 more. Now I know not who will give me a few pounds towards it.

If we are brought to consider what Christ sacrificed for us, and how little we sacrifice for Him, we might blush. And how soon persecution may arise to strip us of every farthing, so that we might be obliged to wander, "destitute, afflicted, and tormented," or how soon a revolution or famine might sweep us away. If I love my money more than Christ, woe is me!

Conscience tells me I ought rather to stay here than go to where they are so well able to pay a minister. I cannot think my plain kind of preaching would long be received among them, for they are too much of this world.

I dare say I shall be accounted a fool for spending my money and time for nothing. The worldlings around here begin to think there is something particular in my religion that induces me to give up my comfortable house and living, and share the burdens of the poor. Religion is worth nothing, if there be not a power in it.

I shall send you the 'letters of resignation' according to promise, but I dare not wait to send this letter with them on account of the delay, as two important things are at stake. I know not when a vicar will be appointed. Some one is coming tomorrow to look at the house. I probably may continue two or three weeks longer there. I shall go to Abingdon to live.

Yours most affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

P.S.—Give my love to all God's people. I rejoice exceedingly that more seem to be seeking. I trust that it will prove to be the Lord's work.

December 30th, 1831 My dear Brother,

I trust that I shall not covet a single farthing from a poor laborer, so that his children would be deprived of bread. Much covetousness lurks in our evil nature. From the prophet to the priest they all went after it in former days; and as it was then, so it is now.

I have taken possession of my lodgings. I slept there last night for the first time. They were unfurnished, and so I have brought part of my furniture with me. They are consistent with my preaching, and I trust Christ is saying to me—"Zaccheus, make haste and come down." If we were called upon to sell all that we have—houses, land, etc., to be one common stock, we would find how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. We have so little faith, we would rather trust to our funds, than to God's promises. If we make a little sacrifice, we are ready to say, "Come and see my zeal for the Lord." Pride must come down. I acknowledge that I have much to come down, and there is much to be brought down at Oakham before great grace will be manifest. We want things to go on well with both body and soul, but it never was so, and never will be so. Those who are seeking 'creature comforts' will not at the same time find 'spiritual consolations'.

I trust that the Lord will keep us from a desire of pleasing men. Remember, if any man loves the world, the love of God is not in him. The rich children of God can see only one side of God's countenance, and they have but an obscure view of that; precious faith they know little of. Now, suppose you were not called by grace to walk in a strait and narrow way, and to be a peculiar person, "zealous for good works," how would your mode of living differ from your present? Are you walking in tribulation's path? Do you understand self-denial, and enduring hardness for Christ's sake?

Since I published my Letter, a friend of mine has left the Church of England, by name Brenton, the only son of Sir Jahleel Brenton, Governor of Greenwich Hospital. I am blamed as the cause, he being intimate with me. His father, I trust, is a good man; for the sermon which Brenton preached on the occasion he sent to his father, and he returned an answer, saying that he would rather see him act in that conscientious manner than attain the highest preferment. His father could have soon procured a good living for him. The cause of his leaving so abruptly as he did was the objection to bury a very wicked man, who died without the slightest penitence. He has published

the sermon on the occasion, and advertised it in the "Record." I have a neighboring clergyman who cannot conscientiously go on in the present church system; and he is going to endeavor to leave; but he knows not the difficulties.

If the Lord separates the faithful ministers from the Establishment, it will then fall without doubt. Light makes darkness manifest. Before any one ought to condemn me, they ought to prove my objections to be of no weight.

Let me hear from you soon, and let me know how the work of the Lord is going on among you. We can spend everything upon that vile monster, self; but when we are called on to give anything for Christ, we hold our money back. A day of reckoning will come for all this. Christ has said, "Occupy until I come," and He will say, "Give an account of your stewardship." Pray for me that the Lord may open my covetous and selfish heart, and cause me to give freely for His sake; for "there is one who scatters, and yet increases." If we spent as much every year for Christ as we do to feed our pride, our light would shine more than it does.

If I had a wife, with a family, perhaps I would not so willingly build a chapel and preach for nothing. Take my advice and have as little to do with the world as you can help. Desire not to be a collector of 'thick clay'. I very likely may, if the Lord will, pay you a visit this spring, before my chapel is completed; but I have plenty of preaching. There is but little vital godliness anywhere, and very few ministers are led into the great mysteries of the gospel. So few know the power of godliness, or the preciousness of Christ's blood, or the love of God shed abroad in the heart. If there be no root to a man's religion, it soon withers and dies. None can keep alive his own soul. When you talk with professors upon the subject of religion, ask them what they know of these things experimentally.

Yours affectionately in the Lord,

William Tiptaft

LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1832)

February 25th, 1832 My dear Brother,

Since I last wrote to you I have been actively engaged in preaching God's word; but not without giving offence, for I find the cross has not ceased. I preached at Reading about a month ago in a large chapel, and it was very crowded; and, this last week I have been to see Mr. Hitchcock, of Devises, who seceded about six years ago from the Established Church, and is now a minister at a Baptist chapel there. I preached on Tuesday evening at Trowbridge, in the chapel of an old and faithful servant of the Lord, John Warburton, to several hundred people; and on Wednesday evening at Devises. On Thursday I was severely lampooned in the "Devises Gazette"; and the "Reading Chronicle" has a copy of it today. I sent you a specimen from Devises, having an old one given to me. The cross is not to be escaped, if we are to enter into glory. My 'letter of resignation' to the bishop is now rapidly selling. About 3,000 have been dispersed, and another edition is needed. Newspapers insert it; and a bookseller at Southampton has printed it without asking my permission. One 'reply' has been published at Reading, and another at Salisbury. I have not yet seen the latter; the former strengthens my arguments. There are truths contained in my Letter so supported by the word of God that they are not able to overthrow them. My chapel is nearly finished, and is to be opened on the 25th of March; Mr. Warburton and Mr. Hitchcock are expected to preach. Hundreds will crowd into the chapel and the two vestries; but it is supposed scarcely half will be able to enter.

I am looked upon with an eye of contempt, and am considered a troubler of Israel. Some say I am a good man; others say that I deceive the people. Though the Lord enables me to be bold and faithful, I by no means lack chapels to preach in, for I am engaged to preach in several that I have never yet entered. The more the Lord shows to me my darkness in spiritual things, the more clearly do I discern the real state of others. You know that profession is not possession; and when the religion of the bulk of professors is tried by the word of God, how awfully deficient it appears!

I am living in a very quiet part of Abingdon, in a small room, together with two bedrooms, all which I furnished myself. I have a man and his wife in the same house with me, who wait upon me. I live in a plain way, and find my expenses small. I have scarcely any one to visit me but poor people, whose company is the most profitable, and they do not feed my pride. All the best of my furniture has been sold by auction, and it sold remarkably well.

There is much excitement in this neighborhood, through the building of my chapel; but they know not what to do. I do hope and trust that it will be made manifest, that it is for the Lord's glory. The truth has been studiously kept out of the town, and I shall rejoice to find that the Lord has a few 'hidden ones' here, for gross darkness prevails. In this very town, though so large, I cannot find ten who can give a satisfactory account of the work of regeneration in the soul. My chapel has a plain appearance. It is partly pewed, for I bought the whole of an inside of a chapel at Reading for £25,

with pulpit, etc.

I still continue in the same mind about not taking the hard earned pence of the poor people, while I have so much of my own, and am clothed in fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. Let me not be eased, and another burdened. When the gospel was first preached, those who had land and houses sold them, and laid the money at the apostles' feet. The gospel has not that effect upon the rich professors of the present day. But I consider the love of money is the cause.

You will be soon "a speckled bird" in Oakham; but you have suffered very little in the Lord's cause at present, not many trials outward, and not many inward. You know little or nothing of 'the furnace' which is needful to take away our dross. If people are not opposed by Satan they know nothing of the power of godliness. Every Christian man must know the plague of his own heart. The Psalms and various parts of the Scriptures will not be understood unless we are brought to feel sensibly the same trials that the saints of old went through. Many think they are going to heaven when Satan makes no opposition, for they have nothing but head-notions. Consequently they make no encroachments upon Satan's dominions, and he will therefore show to them no opposition.

Sometimes Satan tempts me to think that I am making a great sacrifice; but I ought to blush for shame. What is the sacrifice? All I have, from whom does it come? If I built myself an expensive house, to gratify my flesh and pride, the professors could better understand it. We can spend hundreds upon our lusts, but we sparingly bestow a pittance for Christ's cause. If the love of money is the root of all evil, from it all evil must necessarily arise. May the Lord deliver us from it; may He give us more of the mind of Christ, who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant. Pride is a reigning principle. How very little we really need in this life! "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Vital godliness is but little known in the present day. When we are led to have a view of the Cross, how very different does everything appear! We are like dunces, for it takes us many years to learn such a truth. There are very few who can give a good account of their call by grace, and those who are really regenerate enjoy but little communion with God. When you talk upon the subject of religion, keep people close to the work of grace upon the heart. Let them know that they must learn their saving interest in Christ under the testimony of the Spirit. True religion is the life of God in the soul. Scores can speak of doctrines and the plan of salvation as clearly as possible, who know nothing of the kingdom of God within. Few contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and there are very few who are outcasts for their godliness. The present day is not a time of trial, therefore hypocrites abound. The 'heap of professing Christians' would be very small—if the chaff were sifted out. If a persecuting time were to arise, and God's children were imprisoned for their faith, it would change the present scene. We are going to heaven in silver slippers. We have the wind at our backs. We are little hated and despised, and know but little of sharp conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Affectionately yours in the best of bonds,

W. Tiptaft. May 4th, 1832 My dear Brother,

I am going on much as usual, giving offence to many, and pleasing a few. I have many invitations to preach; but I am not much inclined to leave Abingdon for the present. I have great numbers of

hearers, so that my chapel is not large enough, although it will seat 500, and many can stand in the aisles, but many cannot even enter the door, and they are nearly all poor people. I believe the Lord is with us, and will, I trust, continue to bless us. I am not a great favorite among professors and formalists, nor do I wish it, for if I yet pleased men, I, should not be the servant of Christ.

I am glad that you liked my 'letter of resignation' to the bishop. Some do not, but they scarcely know what to say against them. The truth is very powerful, and man cannot gainsay it. The Lord shows me more fully, that there is no more true religion than what is felt, known, and experienced in the soul. There must be the kingdom of God within; and if this work of the Spirit is not described in some measure by ministers, they cannot minister comfort to God's tried and afflicted family. Many hold a form of sound words, but they must know more, or they will never go to glory. They must be brought to see themselves in need of a Savior, or they will never speak of the preciousness of His blood, or sing His praises. Many talk about religion; but ask them about a work of grace upon the heart, and they will immediately change the subject. There is but very, very little vital godliness, and the more you know of your spiritual darkness, the more fully will you discover the darkness of all around you.

I have laid out more money in the Lord's cause than many are inclined to do; nevertheless, I have a very vile and covetous heart. How closely the disease cleaves to us! it is between the very joints. How little do we understand self-denial, and making sacrifices in the Lord's cause! But what a mockery is a mere profession of a religion which costs a man nothing! He wants creature comforts and spiritual consolations, the friendship of the world and the favor of God; and, if so, we desire what we shall never enjoy together.

I liked many things in your last letter, but I fear, from what you say, religion is very flat among you.

Yours affectionately in the Lord,

W. Tiptaft.

P.S.—The Lord has decidedly blessed my preaching lately, I am rejoiced to say. I am not much of a favorite among the clergy. Philpot has paid me a visit this week, and heard Warburton in my chapel.

July 6th, 1832 My dear Brother,

Since I last wrote to you, I have been preaching in various places, many of considerable size, and to large concourses of people. One of the effects of the bishop's threatened interference has been that he has been an excellent 'trumpeter' for me; and the newspapers, still continuing to make their remarks upon me, cause many to come and hear 'the babbler' out of curiosity.

What you say about religion in your parts is very unsatisfactory. It seems that you are without bold and faithful witnesses for the Lord. You do not tell me about men who take forth the precious from the vile. Real religion still seems to me very rare. Very few can give a good account of the Lord's gracious dealings with their souls. Few understand the truth as it is in Jesus. I think there is but little religion in Abingdon and its vicinity, but I find very few places where there is more. True and vital godliness will ever meet with much opposition. The world ever did and ever will hate the truth; and why professors meet with little or no opposition, and even the children of God, is because they differ so little from the world. Their life and conversation give no offence, because they not only

mix with formalists, but even with those who have no religion at all. The children of God are in such a weak state that they are not seen and known, and the religion of the rich and respectable is more doubtful to me from day to day. If they enter heaven, they must indeed go through much tribulation, and they, at present, seem to have little or none. I feel assured that my preaching would not be so well received as it is, if it were more consistent with God's word, in plainness and faithfulness, saying to each individual, "You are the man!" The Spirit's great work in teaching, is to show us more what we are by nature, and what we are by grace; and if there be no deep discoveries of our vileness by nature, making known to us what hell-deserving sinners we are, we shall not be brought fully to understand the riches of God's grace.

I hope that I shall find the Christian friends at Oakham more deeply established in the truth, more sensible of God's love towards them, more humbled under a deep sense of their unworthiness, and in a much greater degree separated from the mere professors around them. God's children need much humbling and stripping, much emptying from vessel to vessel; and a furnace, frequently, to take away the dross which gathers so very fast. You can find hundreds crying out, "Lord, Lord!" when you can scarcely find one who can tell you what the Lord has done for his soul.

I have as yet a very large congregation. There is a door open and effectual, and many adversaries. I am quite a "speckled bird" in these parts. My two most intimate friends, who visit me, and whom I visit, among the respectable, are Philpot and Husband, two ministers in the Church of England. There is scarcely another minister that I am intimate with; but these two are not ashamed of me.

Give my best love to Deborah, and tell her I shall be glad to hear from her own lips what the Lord is doing for her soul; what conflicts with, and victories over, Satan; what opposition from the world; what love-visits from Jesus; and what consolations, under all her tribulations for righteousness' sake.

Yours most affectionately, in the best bonds,

William Tiptaft.

August 15th, 1832 My dear Brother,

I shall be glad to hear how the Lord is pleased to manifest Himself among you at Oakham. Real religion is so contrary to a mere profession, that you must expect much reproach and scorn for contending for it. But there is much speculative religion in the present day. Many are well able to judge of the general and gross darkness which prevails, and contend for a form of sound words, but are very doubtful characters, and show they have never felt in their own souls, the power of the truths of which they speak. You and I have a very great deal to learn, and we need much purifying, when we consider these words, that those who are "after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit"; and "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

It is a great mercy that God's children are at first, dandled on the knee, and put into the bosom a little; for if they had a view of their difficulties, they would faint. But it is a sweet promise—"As your days, so shall your strength be." The children of Israel were not allowed to see at first the warlike sons of Anak, lest they should be alarmed. There is nothing very alarming in religion while little but outward things are known; but when the fountains of the great deep of human corruptions are

broken up, God's children then learn the root of sin, the "needs-be" for Christ's death and sufferings; are stripped, in a measure, from self-righteousness, and are astonished to find what Pharisees they have been, when they have all the time been renouncing it. It is very painful to the flesh to become nothing. But the more the Lord's Spirit operates upon our spirit, the more unintelligible will our language be to those who don't know God. Do you find many at Oakham, and in the neighborhood, who are anxious for a God-fearing minister to preach to them? If you begin to take the offensive part against Satan's kingdom, you must expect many wounds and strokes. He is a powerful enemy, and in our own strength we should not stand against him long. The great offence in religion is separating from professors, and those who deny the power. If you have no mountains for Christ to make plain, and no crooked paths for Him to make straight, you will know but little of real and true prayer to Him.

I shall be glad to hear of Deborah growing in grace. She has many fetters in her household, and with her children; nevertheless, the Lord will support her and strengthen her, as he has done hitherto.

William Tiptaft August 27th, 1832 My dear Brother,

My chapel, hitherto, continues to be very crowded. Yesterday it was particularly so both times. Today I have had Mr. M. and his wife to drink tea with me. He is the vicar of a large parish about seven miles from here. He asked me if I had ever been 'incarcerated with insanity'. He had been told it for a fact; and though he said he always defended me, he could not contradict it, though he had no reason to believe it. The great question is not whether we attend a church or chapel, but whether we hear the truth for ourselves, whether we receive it as the word of God in our hearts. Real religion will find its way to the heart, and its effect will be manifest in the life. The Spirit's work is so little understood in the present day. It is the work of God the Holy Spirit to convince of sin, to break the heart, and to plough up the fallow ground. If this work is not wrought in a measure in the soul none will stand the day of trial, for they have no root. The kingdom of God is within you; and when the Lord has taken a poor sinner in hand He will never leave him, but will surely purge away his dross and tin. He will slay his idols, and tear him from those things he so much loves. He will not be aware how many idols he has, until God shows him in a measure the deceitfulness of his heart. The more God's children are taught spiritually, the greater fools do they become in their own eyes; and the more they know of their own wicked and vile state by nature, the more are they astonished that God should show mercy to such poor worms of the earth.

Real religion is indeed foolishness to the world, and the feelings of God's children are indeed a puzzle to the mere professors. But you will find how vainly you have thought and talked when the Lord shows you greater abominations in your evil heart. Then you will understand how everything is opposed to the work of God in the soul of man. Then you will find that there are fightings without—and fears within. When God's children are brought into fiery trials, and persecutions from Satan's darts, the scoffings and mockings of the 'Hagar race' are no more to them than water upon a duck's back. But God sees fit to teach His children many afflicting lessons, that they may be partakers of His holiness. If your religion is of God, which I trust it is, you will have many difficulties to encounter from various quarters; and when you cannot realize any enjoyment in religion, and all things seem against you, you will think yourself very foolish for making a profession, and will be desirous of going back for leeks and onions to Egypt. But if you were losing your employment, and

poverty were staring you in the face, you could even then bless God if He gave you a comforting and reviving view of the work done upon the Cross for you. If Christ is in the boat, we can smile at the storm.

If you are kept faithful, and are enabled to adorn God's doctrine, you surely will be much opposed. Remember how closely you will be watched; how every remark will be weighed. You will not receive the least kindness in any respect, and many will wait for your halting. You will not be enabled to make a bargain with any one without their endeavoring to discover a secret love of gain in your heart. Your determination not to hear any minister at Oakham will give great offence, and bring with it a cross. The word of God fully justifies you—"Take heed what you hear"; and, "Beware of false prophets." If you cannot receive a man as a sent servant of God you are certainly right, and your conduct will powerfully affect the minds of others, who even do go, but not without pricks of conscience. The consistent life of a man of God is an epistle to be seen and read of all men, and he wonderfully influences others without his in any way being aware of it. He glorifies God, and lets his light shine. We need to be much in prayer, and very watchful, considering what wicked and deceitful hearts we have, and what an unruly member our tongue is. When God leads His children into a discovery of their fallen state there are many painful lessons to learn; but faith is not worth anything if it be not tried. God's children are frequently tempted to wish they had never made a profession—but if they attempt to return to the world, they cannot, for they are kept by the mighty power of God. I hope that the Lord will be with you and bless you, and make you willing to suffer all things for Christ's sake.

Yours most affectionately,

In the bonds of the everlasting gospel,

William Tiptaft.

September 8th, 1832 My dear Brother,

I, without a post's delay, send you an answer to your last kind letter. I am pleased with many things contained in it; but you and I have learned but little as yet in the school of Christ. I am glad to find you are still hopeful in the Lord's cause. You will, before long, have many difficulties and obstacles cast in your way. I hope that the Lord will pour out a spirit of prayer and supplication upon you, and that your prayers may be heard, and you may have a man among you after God's own heart. The ground for my chapel was very dear, as there is scarcely a piece of freehold land to be bought in Abingdon. My chapel and vestry nearly cover the ground. Of course land would not be so dear with you. I would not advise you to build a very large chapel, and let it be built in the plainest style. I have reason to rejoice that my preaching was not without effect among you. If the Lord will blesses my labors, I may say with David, "Let them curse, but You bless."

It seems that there is a shaking among the dry bones at Oakham. It is a very great mercy to have even the slightest real hope that we are made partakers of grace. What are all the riches and advantages of this world, compared to a good hope through grace? The world seems so closely to cleave to the flesh of many who we hope have the root of the matter in them, that they cannot rise. Their minds are clogged. It is very sweet to the soul to feel a deadness to all things here below; but we shall find, as long as we are in the body, that the world is a very great enemy. If you are bold in confessing Christ, you must expect many an adverse dart from Satan.

"One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off." You will most probably be led before long to find very great difficulties and crosses in the spiritual warfare. You will learn what it is to faint and be weary; but if God has begun the work He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. The Lord has not brought you yet to feel in a great degree the plague of your own heart; but you will know more of that before long.

I feel anxious that the Lord's work may be revived among you. Very few in the present day are experiencing much of the power of the gospel in their own hearts. A man does not like sinking in the world; but it is a blessed thing when our sinking is for the exaltation of Christ. We are but stewards; and "Occupy until I come" is stamped upon all that I possess. Nothing manifests more the power of religion to the world, than liberality in money matters, and when we seek not our own ends. But we are so desirous of making provision for the flesh, and seek our own so much more than the things of Christ. With Christian love to God's dear children, believe me,

Yours most affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

September 20th, 1832 My dear brother,

Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you abundantly through Christ Jesus our Lord. I rejoice to hear that you are counted worthy to suffer in some degree in the cause of Christ. It is a circumstance that so seldom occurs, that I have stronger reasons to believe that you are a partaker of the grace of God. The general religion of the present day is attended with so little power that even thousands who profess to love Christ, can scarcely give a single instance of suffering, either from the fiery darts of the wicked one, or the hatred and malice of a wicked world. Your trials, persecutions, and sufferings on account of your religion are too small to cause even a murmur at present, but they may increase and abound before long. Satan and his allies care about nothing but the power; for where that is, the man must act, and 'faithfulness and decision' will surely meet with 'frowns and opposition'. If you have all manner of evil said of you falsely, and lose your employment, and see poverty staring you in your face—if you at the same time have a conscience void of offence towards God and man, you will indeed be favored of the Lord. It seems to me not very likely that you are to be honored in this way at present. You have too little grace; the image of Christ is not sufficiently impressed upon your heart, and you know at present too little of the operations of the Spirit upon your soul. But the Lord is a sovereign, and can magnify His power in your weakness. If you have lost your employment and worldly advantages through your boldness in Christ's cause, you are pronounced blessed. It is a gift and much to be prized, for it is given to you not only to believe, but to suffer for His sake. Paul prayed to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; and offences must come, but woe to them by whom they come. Paul says, "To them it is an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God," for "on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." You have Christ and all the blessed promises on your side; but for them there is nothing but woes and judgments.

I believe that no sins are so quickly and so severely punished as those which are committed against the Lord's own family. It would be better for them "to have a millstone tied round their necks and to be cast into the middle of the sea;" and God says, "Whoever touches you, touches the apple of My eye" (Zec 2:8).

I hope that you will be kept from having unkind and uncharitable feelings against those who may attempt to injure you. They are fulfilling God's word as well as yourself. Nature is the same; consequently, let the power of the gospel be manifested, enmity will be quickly displayed. I hope that the Lord may honor you as he did good Nehemiah, by putting it into your heart to seek the good of God's dear children in Oakham, and you will find, as Nehemiah did, Sanballats and Tobiahs, who will be exceedingly grieved, who will mock and despise you (Neh 2:10-20). But as your day is so your strength will be. If you have deep trials, losses, and sufferings, you will have the consolations and the sweet promises applied; and when you read the latter part of Hebrews 11, you will scarcely be able to see how you are to suffer in any measure as they did, under present circumstances. God will take care of His own family. Yes, he will cut off hundreds of 'rich Nabals' rather than one of His own shall not have that which is good.

I am not afraid so much of your suffering in temporals as being puffed up with pride that you are counted worthy to suffer. The devil works with deep-laid schemes. He knows that your heart is not set upon the gratification of the flesh, and upon making large provision for your children, in order that they may fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

I rejoice that you are not in a dead calm at Oakham. If Satan roars, it is a sign that his kingdom is in danger, and we shall never see love and union among Christians until there is power enough in religion to excite persecution; through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. It is an alarming truth for many professors. They may indeed cry, "Surely we are in By-path Meadow, very easy and comfortable." While in such a way, they have no need of that sweet promise being applied—"Your shoes shall be iron and brass."

Since I wrote to you I have received a letter from J. He offends many by his decision and self-denial. He has furnished his house poorly, which has very much offended his friends, though they are evangelical people. He has plain tables and no carpets, and that way of living is not very satisfactory to 'flesh-pleasing Christians'. He is not a legalist; he is taught self-denial, and when a man can act a little like Paul, he can preach with authority.

Religion suits people in general as long as it brings no cross, but when their Isaacs are to be sacrificed, they seem determined to wait until they can find an easier way to heaven. The Lord must lead us and teach us by His blessed Spirit how to act. I hope that a spirit of grace and supplication will be poured down upon you, so that your cry may reach the ears of the Lord Almighty, and if He sends you one of His servants, He will fit him for the work. If a minister preaches with power, he will give offence; and if his eyes are enabled to discern the formality and hypocrisy of professors, he will have a host of 'merely religious' people crying out against him; but wisdom is justified of her children. You will be able to see more of the great lack of spirituality in the professing world. It must be 'heart work' to give offence, and that is the only work the world will oppose, and Satan will attempt to destroy.

How few 'sensible sinners' can you find! How few have ever been led deeply into a knowledge of their own evil hearts! How few know anything of being justified by the righteousness of Christ! How few have been stripped of their own filthy rags, and made willing to accept the righteousness of Christ! You must find yourself very ignorant when you meet with a person who can fully enter into a work of grace upon the heart. I have no doubt you are tried in your mind whether the work is really begun by God; and the more the Lord teaches you, the greater fool you will become in your

own opinion.

Religion is a personal thing. Do you believe on the Son of God? There are glorious mansions for God's dear children, but they must be made fit for them. Many are desirous to have Paul's faith and joys, but they do not want his poverty, affliction, and extreme sufferings and trials. 'Creature comforts' and 'spiritual consolations' very seldom go together; nor do the friendship of the world and the favor of God. When you lose the friendship of the world, and are losing a large part of your income, your own heart, as well as wife, children, and friends, will cry out as Peter did, "Spare yourself!" May you answer in the words of Christ, if it be really for the Lord's cause. You are to be as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. You are on a hill. May the Lord hold you up and preserve you, and may you by continuance in well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

I am very glad that you bear a testimony against the false prophets by testifying that you cannot hear them. If you come out from among them and be separate, you will be much hated. Husband was very pleased with your letter. I slept there last night, and met Philpot. He has been very much scolded by an evangelical, and chiefly because he defends me.

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

William Tiptaft.

October 16th, 1832 My dear Brother,

Tomorrow morning I am going to visit an intimate friend a few miles from hence, who is to drive me to Cheltenham to preach there on Thursday evening. We are engaged to dine with Dr. Foot, a physician there, who is "a speckled bird" like yourself. Cheltenham is a place of great profession; there is one chapel that will admit men of truth, in which I am to preach; and I am to preach at the town of Fairford on the Friday evening, on my return. On Saturday I hope to return safely to preach in my own chapel on Sunday, and on Monday I am to go into Wiltshire, where I am engaged to preach on that evening, and on the four following evenings, in different chapels. On Sunday next week I am to preach at Trowbridge for Warburton, and on my return, at Devises, etc. I have to seek no places to preach in, but have to refuse many invitations. Two weeks ago I preached in a barn. It was at Stratton, about twenty-eight miles from hence, and I did not please them all. I preached morning and evening in the barn, and in the afternoon in a chapel at another village, and someone threw a stone into the chapel through the window, close behind the pulpit; but I escaped, for it hit the window-frame.

Lately I have preached a good deal, and have had very large congregations, and my own chapel as yet continues to be crowded. I think, nevertheless, I am liked better here than at Oakham. Many wait for my halting, and if God were to let me or any of my set fall, it would be a good feast for the Pharisees; for God says, "They eat up My people's sins as if they eat bread," but may the Lord keep us humble, crying out, "Hold us up, and we shall be safe." From the various accounts I receive from you, I am encouraged to believe that there is a small band in Oakham "whose hearts God has touched;" there is opposition to you, and will be more so when you are more united. I am daily more fully convinced that there is no religion where there is no persecution. Where Christ is, the devil will roar, and raise all the opposition in his power. Christ says, "They have hated Me, and they will hate you also." Many have a religion now that costs them nothing; but Christ says, "Count

the cost." "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." Many find that religion works well with their temporal affairs, and through their religion they thrive and prosper. And many a minister after the flesh may bless God for sending His Son into the world, for they have taken His name in their mouths, and have made Him a stalking-horse to get more of this world's goods, and to enjoy them by Him; some riding in their carriages, and crying out on Sundays, "We must walk in Christ's steps." They cannot say of themselves, "Jesus, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." It will be, alas! "You in your lifetime received your good things."

What a mercy it is to have a testimony from the Lord in being counted worthy to suffer loss and shame for His name. There must be power in true religion, and it will cause a change in a man's life and conversation. He will be brought from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.

Paul says, "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." The shortest way of entering into a man's religion is to ask him whether he has the Spirit of Christ, and if he says, "Yes," then ask him what the Spirit of God has done for him, what change it has wrought, etc. If he can give a good scriptural account, you will say, "I have met with a brave companion;" if he evades questioning, you can tell him you would not be in his place for a thousand worlds. The Lord giving you grace to set your faces against Satan's ministers will make their master very malicious and spiteful; for nothing displeases Satan so much as when you show contempt for his ministers, for they are his strongholds. Our very nature that partakes of his spirit joins with him, and the world is manifestly on the same side; consequently, any one who "takes heed what he hears" must suffer reproach. If I go to hear a minister, I want to know who that are spiritually-minded sit under him. If I can find none of the sheep of Christ, I am sure that the minister is not a shepherd. But God will, by His grace, bring out His people from such ministers as you have at Oakham by bringing home to their minds the following texts—"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" "What are you doing here, Elijah?" "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." And again, "Come out from among them, and be separate." When God has applied such texts with power to the heart, so that they have not received them as the word of man, but as the word of God, which effectually works in those who believe, neither friends nor relatives, neither good customers, neither good masters nor good mistresses, can make them hold up the hands of false prophets, for God has spoken unto them, and where there is the voice of a King there is power. "Believe not every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they be of God."

Since I wrote the above, I have had a very pleasing young man to see me, from Oxford, to ask me to preach for them there on Sunday next, which I intend (God willing) to do between my services; for they are there without a preacher. It is lamentable to think how many are crying out for the bread of life in various large towns, and there are scarcely any ministers to give unto them a portion in season (Amo 8:11-12). It is a great mercy to have a desire given to us for the sincere milk of the word. It is of God's grace if we differ from the gay and foolish multitude around us!

I want to know more of what the Lord is doing for your souls at Oakham; how you are tried in your minds, whether you are really partakers of grace, and have the root in you; and what testimony you have that you shall continue to the end.

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft

LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1833)

January 15th, 1833 My dear Brother,

Through persuasion and entreaty, I remained one week longer at Brighton than I expected to do. But the Lord was pleased to bless the word to my soul, and to the souls of others, so I felt constrained to remain. In passing through London, I preached twice, and the latter time was for the benefit of the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society. I preached in Abrahams' Chapel, Regent Street, City Road, London. I had several ministers and deacons for hearers, and the old Hebrews came out of their holes, to spy out the barrenness of the land. I believe there were many of God's children among my hearers. The Lord was with us, I trust, and enabled me to be faithful according to my light; so that I kept a good conscience. On my return, I found a letter inviting me to preach an anniversary sermon on Good Friday, in a large chapel in London; but I declined, as I am not very anxious to preach anywhere, and especially on such occasions.

I was pleased with your last letter, and I trust that the Lord is leading you on to know Him. He has brought you out of the 'profane world' for some time, and now He seems to be bringing you out of the 'professing world'. You seem to know better what religion is not, rather than what is. The Lord seems to have taught you your ignorance and insufficiency, and has made you know that there is a power attending vital godliness, and without that power man must perish. Your soul cannot feed under any ministry where the power of the gospel is not; consequently, knowing your darkness, and your fallen state by nature, and that the form of godliness, without the power, is but a shadow; you know that all around you are in the same state by nature, so you cannot have communion with any who are "wise in their own conceit," and who imagine they can do something towards their own salvation. The Lord, in mercy, seems to keep your conscience honest, and constrains you to speak what you feel and believe; therefore you cannot escape the cross, and must surely give offence. You see in what state the professors are, which they cannot; and this true light, as far as it goes, will be a testimony and witness for the Lord. I am glad to find that you are not ashamed to confess your ignorance, foolishness, and inability. This is humbling to pride, but pride must have a fall. "Before honor is humility," and "God gives grace to the humble, but the proud He knows afar off."

You seem to be learning something of the various changes in your own soul. You learn by experience that you have no desire for hearing, reading, and talking about the best things, but as the Lord gives it. This will lead you to wait and pray; and the various trials and difficulties that you meet with will necessarily work for the good of your soul. I do not wish to flatter and deceive you, though I would not quench the smoking flax. You have not at present had any sweet revelation of Christ to your soul; but you have desired it. You have not seen God's glory in the face of Christ; but a little hope has sprung in your soul that God is doing something for you, and that He will perfect His own work. It is a great mercy to have the day-star arising in your heart, and the day dawning, and you may have many difficulties before you behold Christ in His glorious

manifestation.

I feel assured that you want to hear ministers who can trace the footsteps of the flock, who can describe the path that you are traveling in, and who can take up the stumbling-blocks out of your way. You want them to tell you what you have felt and experienced, and what you have not; and when they speak of repentance and faith, you want them to tell you what they mean, both in their power and in their effects, so that you may know whether you are a partaker or not. You want to have the gospel trumpet blown with a distinct sound, so that you may clearly distinguish the note; and it must be a life-giving sound, or you will not be satisfied. If there be nothing but a confusion of sounds, you will have cause to murmur. You will leave such preaching without profit, and more confused than when you went, and you will come home without the knowledge of the way you are traveling in; for such ministers do not divide the word rightly, nor their hearers; consequently, the characters of the regenerate and unregenerate not being set forth, how can a seeking soul find solid comfort? First he is comforted, and then cast down; at one time encouraged by the minister setting forth salvation as all of God, and then distressed with a conditional salvation at the end. If ministers do not preach the finished work of Christ, and hold out the breasts of consolation to the sucklings and weaklings, the name of Christ will not be as ointment poured forth, nor will the Spirit of truth bear testimony to such preaching. I believe, from what you have said to me, that you would rather read a chapter in the Bible and sing a hymn at home, than go after such ministers, "For a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers."

Whoever will be a disciple of Christ must take up his cross and follow Him, through evil report as well as good report; and if your religion is not tried, and does not bring you into crosses and losses, it is not worth much. But what you have felt and handled you can boldly testify of; and when you tell the professors, from what you have experienced, that you would not rest upon their hope for salvation for a thousand worlds, they will be confused and very angry. But the truth commends itself to the conscience. You can tell them, if you do not know Christ, Christ must be known, or there will be no salvation. It is the power of godliness that will bring the cross, and it will, blessed be God's holy name, enable us also to bear it. The light which God has given you to discern the low state of the Church, and the emptiness and vanity of the mere profession of the day, will cause you to be a troubler in your neighborhood to a certain extent. But, "as your days, so shall your strength be."

There must be a cross before the crown of glory; and this cross you will not escape, if you are a true son of God. But if it be for righteousness' sake, happy are you, for "as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our consolations abound by Christ." Chastenings, troubles, and afflictions will lead you to pray, and God will deliver you, and you shall glorify Him. You will strive, perhaps, to reconcile the two kingdoms, and with your family you will be powerfully tempted to endeavor to reconcile the friendship of the world with the favor of God. But the Lord will take care to lead His people by a right way to the city of habitation, and that way is sure to be rough, and thorny, and well hedged up, so that you may cry to God for help, that He may deliver, and you may bless and praise Him for His mercy and goodness.

If the Lord wills, after I have been a few weeks at home with my people, I will pay you a visit. But have you a quickened people that are really hungering for the bread of life, and is there a probability that a minister would come and preach to you?

I shall be very glad to hear from you soon, and I am anxious to know how God's children are treated and cast out by the 'Ishmaelites'. You will not suffer much persecution, because you have so little grace. When the Lord has taught you more of the fullness of Christ, and your hearts are established with grace, then you will be more faithful, and more peculiar as God's children. For "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

Mr. Cole, of Highbury Park, who has left the Church of England, preached for me on Sunday last. He is a well-taught man in his own soul, and can well describe the operations of the Spirit upon the heart. He keeps a school, and speaks without getting gain from his ministry. He has published a little book called "The Substance of Four Sermons on Regeneration." I wish you would read it. It is a great subject to write upon, but I consider that he has handled it in a masterly way. I am going to hear him speak this evening at Oxford. He is a great friend of Mr. Chamberlain.

"Sell that you have, and give to the poor" is a harder lesson to learn than election; but the time may come when great sacrifices must be made for Christ's sake. Money-matters will try professors. May the Lord give us very liberal hearts, and more erase "Spare yourself," so deeply written in them. I believe your religion has induced you to be more liberal and kind to the poor; and, when that is seen, it commends itself to the consciences of those who are without. If we have less money, and at the same time less wants, we are better off; and "people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1Ti 6:9-10. All things below are uncertain. ""Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Mat 6:19-21 In the best bonds,

William Tiptaft

June 27th, 1833 My dear Brother,

As you express the desire of several that I should visit you again as soon as possible, I intend being at Oakham as early in July as I conveniently can, and shall be with you to speak, if the Lord will, on the 14th in the Riding School. The time seems short since I was with you.

I am of Cole's opinion in his "New Birth," that the ministry and the church must rise and sink together. Individuals may be brought through deep trials, and taught deep things; but very few indeed can be found who have not been profited much in hearing, whether they have humility enough to confess it or not. I never heard of a church that was manifest as such, without a preacher. If the soul is quickened, it will "desire the pure spiritual milk," "for the young children ask bread, and no man breaks it unto them." No great work of the Lord will go on at Oakham or elsewhere without such instruments in the hands of the Lord as preachers and builders up of the church of God. Meeting together and talking, singing a hymn and praying, will be blessed of God rather than hearing false prophets; but deadness and coldness will prevail if the gospel is not preached occasionally.

If your souls are much blessed in your meeting together without preaching, I shall rejoice, but I must assure you I shall be much surprised. Many places, as Wallingford, Chichester, etc., if they

have not a preacher, read a sermon of Huntington's, or of some deep-taught minister of God.

Yours very affectionately, for Christ's sake,

William Tiptaft.

September 11th, 1833 My dear Brother,

I am glad to hear that your meetings are well attended. You will need encouragement, in one way or other, to keep you together meeting in the name of the Lord, for the right way is uphill, and some will be continually growing faint and weary. My soul was much refreshed and encouraged when I was in Wilts, about ten days ago, by finding that the word preached by me in a barn there, for two Sundays last autumn, was much owned and blessed; so that it is well with me, though some curse me, if God will bless me. Some think my work is to go from place to place, preaching as I go, but I cannot say so, though I am sometimes inclined to think so. I have repeated invitations to go out to preach, but I scarcely know how to answer, and I cannot get an answer from God to satisfy my mind on these occasions; others, again, condemn me for going away, as I am still so well attended in my own chapel. My hearers think I neglect them, and leave the few sheep in the wilderness; so I am in a strait. I have had two or three very pressing invitations to go to a favored people in Sussex, who are without a pastor, namely, at Hailsham and Eastbourne, and I have promised them, God willing, to be with them the last Sunday in this month, and the first in next; and as the Lord seems to bear testimony to my preaching among you, I feel inclined, as you invite and wish me to come again among you soon, to preach to you at Oakham on the second Sunday in October, that is, 13th; and may it be made manifest that the Lord has ordered my coming to you. The Lord only knows what 'hidden ones' are in the little dark town and county, and He will appoint means to bring His banished ones home.

Philpot preached in a church near me on Sunday, and some who understood the distinction of sounds, heard him extremely well. I think that he will soon leave the Church of England. His church at Stadhampton, where he has preached for five years, is very much crowded. He has refused to send any children to be confirmed, and so I expect the Bishop will intervene.

Two more ministers of the Church of England have lately left in this neighborhood. I think very poorly of those that continue in it, but I cannot think well of some that leave it. The errors, when strongly represented, can be seen very plainly by the light of nature, but grace is little in operation in the souls of the Lord's people. We live in a dark day, but I think darkness prevailed much about fifty years ago also. I have light enough to see the ignorance and worldliness of even those who pass for good people among good people, and very few indeed seem to be enjoying much of the presence and love of the Lord. As for myself, I am "faint yet pursuing," but to be enabled to hold on in the fight against the threefold enemy is a very great mercy. Before I shall ever be of much use to the Lord's family, I must be much more deeply taught in my own soul. It shows me the great darkness of the present day, and a great lack of ministers, that the churches keep applying to me; but there is one good reason, that they hear what they hear from me at the same rate as the Corinthians heard Paul's sermons. I cannot see the work going on at Abingdon as I could wish, either in conversion or building up, but seldom do I go to any other place but I return more satisfied with my own hearers.

Old nature is very corrupt, and will continually show itself. I know, from heartfelt experience, that I cannot keep alive my own soul nor raise my affections to heavenly things. The Lord does encourage me now and then, but I generally walk much in darkness and with hardness of heart. I think my heart is much like yours, "carnal, sensual, and devilish." If we ministers were on the wing, those of our hearers who are in the mire would cry out. Very spiritually-minded ministers, enjoying much of the presence of the Lord, would not preach to suit the churches of the present day; nevertheless, if the Lord so favored them, it might be for the refreshing and reviving of the things that are ready to perish. Whatever obstacles and trials we may meet with, it is the right and sure path. The worldlings and mere professors will have their portion here, but how great a blessing do they receive who are made to differ, and for whom the Lord has prepared eternal mansions of glory! But we must be a prepared people for our prepared place.

I believe at times you are tried and tempted to give up all hope, and you doubtless wish you had never been so forward in spiritual things. You have put your hand to the plough, and there is no going back from the work. But your troubles respecting religion are scarcely begun; you are dandled on the knee at present. You will find your enemies more lively and strong the farther you advance in the divine life.

Yours most affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

December 5th, 1833 My dear Brother,

Now that you have a chapel, I hope God will consecrate it with his presence. The Lord has conferred a great honor upon you and your sisters in using you as instruments in opening a place for the preaching of the everlasting gospel, and many would like to serve you as the heifers, which drew the ark of God. They will say to you, "We know your pride and the naughtiness of your heart, why you have provided a chapel." But you may answer with David, "Was there not a cause?" I am very glad to hear that the people flock to hear the reading and to join in prayer. I conceive you will be more anxious for preachers than you now appear; but if the Lord does not send them among you, they will come in vain and for no profit.

I am obliged by your kind invitation, but for the present I do not see my way to Oakham. But if there be a real desire in the souls of the people and any work for me to do, I must come.

I have been very quiet at Abingdon since I left you, and I hope and trust that I see more of the work of the Lord going on among us, but it is neither with myself nor people as I could wish. There is a great spirit of hearing generally, so that I am slow to leave them. I have preached to my people regularly for several Lord's days now. I scarcely know what to do in leaving them—in going anywhere. I have had a letter from the friends at Colsterworth, and they speak of a farmer being called under my ministry who assembles in a room with them. The work of grace is a great work wherever it has been begun.

There must be trials of soul to break the ties which bind us to the things of time and sense. I am afraid your mind is perplexed and harassed with the affairs of this life. I wish you could be extricated from all worldly cares, except your regular calling.

I will not justify _____ in disappointing you, but I hope that you will manifest the power of religion in your kindness and forbearance towards him. "Overcome evil with good." "Who makes you to differ?" Poverty and a large family have driven even God's children to do what is not fitting of the gospel, and what may you expect when there is no grace? God has wonderfully provided for you and your family, and I have no doubt that He will. But those who have godliness with contentment are as rich as you. In the primitive days of the gospel, how the rich sold their lands and houses and laid the money at the apostles' feet! But we scarcely like to mar our inheritance. You and I have much to learn in the school of Christ before we deserve the name of teachers of others, and no school is more profitable to be taught in than that of unselfishness. "Let your fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers in the streets." "He who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly." Real religion does not consist in outward things; but where genuine religion is, the fruits of righteousness will be made manifest.

You at Oakham as well as we at Abingdon need more of the Spirit's teaching. We need more powerful operations of the Spirit on our souls, and sensible apprehensions of the Lord's great love to us; and we need to die daily. Much may be learned in the letter, but that soon dies away, and leaves a man powerless in his life and conversation. If the Spirit of God rests upon a man, he will be hated and yet loved; unknown and yet well known; dying and still alive; very weak yet very strong.

I have but very little grace and true knowledge, and I wonder that the Lord should bear testimony to my preaching, and that the people will persevere in coming to hear me. I sometimes enjoy a little of the light of God's countenance, but I soon become dark and barren again.

It is now more than two years since I left the Establishment, and, through mercy, I continue in a measure faithful to the light which the Lord has been pleased to give me. I have learned more of my own ignorance since that time, and feel as fully convinced that the most vital godliness is to be found among those who are falsely called 'Antinomians'. The work of grace is by no means clear and regular apparently to us in the hearts of the Lord's people; and many things seem even inconsistent in those who can speak of the deepest trials of soul, and the greatest revelations, and the sweetest testimonies of peace to their souls.

I believe that God will mar the pride of man. He will have all the glory, and prove that the best of men are but men at the best. Such instances are left on record in God's word, and we may truly say God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor God's ways as our ways. If we have the Spirit of Christ, we must have treatment similar to His. The ungodly will hate the godly, and if we do not suffer with Him we shall not reign with Him. You will have your trials and crosses before you will have your crown, and they will not come in the way most suited to your natural wishes. A cross is to be a cross. You will have trials with your chapel, trials with your brethren, and trials with the world; but that monster SELF will be your worst trial, for he will so often plead your friend. Nevertheless, as the sufferings abound, so also the consolations; and as your days, so your strength shall be.

Mrs. Husband is very delicate and poorly from pain in her chest. Husband has licensed his house at Appleford, and preaches there in the evening. Philpot was here yesterday, and slept at Appleford. He is rather better. May the Lord abundantly bless your meeting together, for Christ's sake.

I remain, my dear Brother,

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

December 16th, 1833 My dear Brother,

"Man devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps." In your last you said, "I trust that you will have a call in this direction, when the alteration is made in the chapel." Now it has so occurred since I wrote to you, that my Wolverhampton friends have made a particular application to me to preach for them the last Lord's day in this month and the first in the next. I have written to say (God willing) I will preach to them on the above-named Lord's days; and thence I purpose, if the Lord will, to proceed to you, and accept your invitation; and as you desire that I should be with you two Lord's days, I am making arrangements here to be with you on Jan. 12th and 19th. I scarcely know how to leave here; nevertheless, I hope that it may be made very manifest that I was to visit you this winter. I shall be glad to find you in a lively state in your souls, manifesting the fruits of the Spirit; and your zeal will doubtless provoke very many. My chapel being still crowded has excited a great zeal among the Church people and they have made a liberal collection to have a third service in the Great Church. They do not like so many straggling down to my chapel, and imbibing such sentiments as cause them to doubt whether all were moved by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel who stand up in their steeple-house. They intend to commence their lecture in the evening on the first Sunday in the new year. I am speaking the real sentiments of my mind when I say that I wish they had knowledge equal to their zeal.

You will be much tried in your mind respecting your providing a place for the Lord's people to meet in, and will be tempted to fear whether or not you have been actuated by the influence of the Spirit of the Lord. It will be profitable for you to have searchings of heart, for you need self-examination continually, to know whether your eye is single to God's glory. You will find even the children of God are worldly and carnal, and heavenly-mindedness is but little seen and known.

It is a blessed truth that Christ came to justify the ungodly, and the children of God know, from heartfelt experience, that they stand among those characters, are stripped of every hope, and have no refuge but in their hiding-place, the Lord Jesus, their Rock. Their life is hidden with Christ in God. Neither wrath, terrors, judgments, law, nor the devil himself, can ever prevail against the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He has conquered, and, as the great Captain of Salvation, will lead all His blood-bought chosen ones to fight the good fight of faith, and so to conquest and to crowns of glory. I trust and hope that there are a few in Oakham and the neighborhood that will stand when He appears; but they are, like myself, very young and feeble, and need strengthening. The way to heaven is narrow, and beset with many difficulties, and we, at times, are almost sorry that we ever ventured out, especially when we keep continually meeting with the lions in the way; but nothing so much checks and stops us as vile self. It cleaves to everything on the way, and wants so often to turn us out of the way, and the ear is not deaf to the alluring and enticing invitation of Demas to look into the silver mine. Blessed are they who are only allowed to look in; for, alas! how many glaring professors and speedy travelers to Zion, who have been brave companions on the way for a time, have stopped short at that mine, and never could be seen beyond it! Our hearts are very closely knit with everything that the world loves and admires. Good old David had to say, "My soul

cleaves to the dust;" and so do all God's children say it now, at times, if they know the plague of their own hearts.

Neither the terrors of the law, nor the arguments nor persuasions of men, can ever separate a man from the world, and keep him from being a lover of himself. It requires the same power to effect it as made the world. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts." It is through the Spirit that the deeds of the body are mortified.

I do not consider that the churches are very spiritual in the present day, nor will they ever be without various trials from without or within. They need to have their senses well exercised to discern both good and evil. Gold bought in the fire makes the Christian rich. I consider that it is a sign of a very low state of soul, for anyone to see the Church in such a low state without mourning and grieving, and having a longing desire to see the Lord's people revive as the grain and grow as the vine. The ministers themselves are very indifferent about the prosperity of Zion. I believe that they will be revived in their souls before the churches prosper; for "like people, like priest."

O that the Lord would, of His infinite mercy, pour out His Holy Spirit upon all His dear children, so that we might indeed say that the Lord has done great things for us. I am tried in my soul in various ways. The formation of a church here is in consideration, and I feel it a very weighty matter. I do not at all feel myself fit for a pastor to go in and out before them, nor can I conscientiously continue to neglect the Lord's ordinances. I am in a strait. The Lord's people are very odd people to rule, and it is difficult to keep them even looking kindly towards each other. It can be done by no other power than the Lord's; for "You are taught of God to love one another." I shall be very glad to find you growing in faith, and your charity towards each other abounding. May there be an earnest spirit of prayer, that I may come unto you in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. I shall be pleased to find, after a time, that the Lord had some hidden ones in dark Oakham, to bring forth and to cause to shine as lights in a wicked world. It is an infant of days with you at present, but the day of small things is not to be despised. It is first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. But grace will manifest itself, before long, wherever it is.

Nothing is to be compared to real and vital godliness. The least work of grace in the heart is worth a thousand worlds. I hope that you will be more and more zealous for the Lord's cause, and that you will manifest to those around you that neither your time and money are worth mentioning as a sacrifice in the cause of Christ, who made that inestimable sacrifice, not of gold, nor silver, but of His own precious blood, to redeem selfish, carnal, ungodly, and hell-deserving sinners! Moreover, He has bestowed upon them more than we can ever ask or think, glory and honor be to His adorable name!

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft

1834-1837

LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1834 - 1837)

February 17th, 1834 My dear Brother,

Yesterday I preached here in the morning, at Wallingford in the afternoon and evening, and had a very favorable day in my own soul. Husband baptized four. One was an old woman about 80 years old. He baptized in the mill-dam near his old church. He was low in spirits because I was not there, but the arrangement was entirely through him.

I find my old nature cleaves to money very closely when I part with it. If I had lived in the apostles' days I would have found the sin of Ananias in my heart, if it had not prevailed. Selling all or selling a part is very different. But if the world sees that we are covetous, and will make no sacrifices, they will quickly say, "What do you more than others?"

Yours most affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

P.S.—I expect Warburton here next week. We scarcely know what to do here about forming a church. I found it good for my soul in breaking bread yesterday. I believe God's children are desirous of fulfilling God's will in receiving the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him.

July 7th, 1834 My dear Brother,

Many thanks to you for your kind letter; and as I have very lately heard from friend Gadsby, I now write to say when you may expect him. It is his intention to be one night at Uppingham, I imagine from invitation; consequently, he purposes being at Leicester on Monday, August 18th, on Tuesday at Oakham. In answer to this letter, you will let me know whether the above arrangement is agreeable, as he requests that I will inform you, that you may let him know; but if you very soon tell me, I will inform him. He especially wishes me to be at Manchester the whole of September; therefore, if the Lord will, I will preach at Oakham the last Lord's day in August, if you prefer my coming then in preference to my returning from Manchester, in October, by Oakham. You will be pleased with Gadsby's company. He will be very encouraging, and he will make himself quite at home with you. You will convey him to Uppingham, and the Uppingham friends can take him to Stamford.

I hope you will not raise your expectations too high about Gadsby. You can receive no blessing through him without the Lord's special grace. I hope to hear that the Lord sends him among you for the revival of His work in the souls of the Lord's people.

Last Lord's day week I spoke to a large multitude assembled together to see Husband baptize four members, and upon the whole it was a favorable day. I was enabled to speak plainly on the occasion.

We still talk about baptizing and forming a church here, but there are so few that I can fully receive in heart, and I feel myself so unfit for a pastor. I have at present no lack of hearers and I think, at times, that the Lord is surely with us, but I am a very poor, ignorant instrument as a minister. I feel more deeply the burden of the work, and am ready to halt. I have so little grace and power, and at times I question whether I have any. I feel myself so vile, so sinful, so full of unbelief, and at times I can thank God I am not in hell. But the Lord encourages me, at times, both in my own soul and in the ministry; and then I think that the Lord has really a work for me to do, and that my preaching will not prove altogether in vain.

I have various invitations to preach. Last Wednesday evening I preached in a wagon. The place would not hold the people, and on next Lord's day I am to preach at Wallingford.

If I could be what I would be as a man and a preacher, I would be very different from what I am. I would be more on the mount, I would pray more, and love more, and bring forth more fruit; but when I would do good, evil is present with me. Sometimes I feel very thankful that I am not left to fall a prey to my lusts, and to the temptations of the devil. I am daily a debtor to sovereign grace. Many, I believe, are waiting for my halting. Through the grace of God, I trust their eyes will fail with waiting.

There is nothing worth living for in this vain world. Vanity is stamped upon all created good, and my desire is to die to the world, and to be alive unto God. Oh! that the Lord Jesus would manifest more of His love to us, that we might triumph in Christ, and that we might speak of His glory and talk of His power. We need continually quickening and helping. We need holding up in all our goings out and comings in.

You are in a conspicuous situation; you have come forward in the Lord's cause. May the Lord manifest His power in you. May you be much more concerned about the Lord blessing your souls in The Factory than about its alterations.

All dealings with the world are of a deadening nature; therefore, whatever unnecessarily brings us into contact with the world should be avoided. We acknowledge the truth of it, and wish it when we are in our right minds. "No man can serve two masters." That great truth is a continual cross to many. "O wretched man that I am!" says the great apostle; and so says every child of God who knows the plague of his own heart. We need stripes, scourges, rods, and afflictions, besides various other crosses to separate us from worldly things. Our souls so very much cleave to the dust.

I hope that the Lord is blessing the church in your house. Sometimes grace seems to work very slightly in your heart as you view each other, but it is according as God deals forth to each. A day of trial may come upon you to prove the work in you all, and to make it more manifest to each other. Grace uplifts the heart with its own gifts, yet when the Lord blesses, the soul rejoices and sings, and is ready to despise the weaklings in the mire and dirt. The soul is in its best state when most humbled. Lowliness of mind and contrition of spirit are the best evidences of the effects of grace wrought in the soul. The promises are nearly all for the humble, the lowly, the broken-hearted, the tempted, the tempest-tossed, the devil-harassed, the afflicted children of God; for the Lord will revive the humble and the contrite. He will give grace to the lowly, and feed the hungry with good things.

Real religion is in the heart. Every child of God has a judgment-seat set up in his heart, and he knows repentance is not the work of a day, but he is continually sinning and repenting, and knows that godly sorrow must come from God alone.

I shall be very glad to have a very long letter from you, giving me a full and particular account of the Lord's dealings with the people of God among you. Please to give my Christian love to them, not forgetting those in your own house. I have been chiefly at home with my own people since I was with you.

I hope you are very liberal to the poor children of God. Open your hand wide to your poor brother. You will be no poorer for giving a sovereign or a five-pound note now and then. You only lend it to the Lord; and you are not your own; therefore glorify God in body and in spirit, which are His.

Yours very sincerely and affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

April 6th, 1835 My dear Brother,

I thank you for your kind letter, and, though I have little to communicate worth postage, I imagine that you may be expecting a letter from me in answer.

I am glad to find you tried and harassed in mind. If there were no law in your conscience, there would be no working up of all manner of evil desires; and if there be no humility, there will be no honor. So you must be abased in your own eyes, and know something of the vileness of your corrupt nature, or you would be slipping into some of the various pits of error, and would not be a witness against the presumptuous free-willers. May the Lord break down your self-will and free-will, and make you a humble man; for if the dross be taken away from the silver, there comes forth a vessel for the refiner. It is a painful process to pass through the furnace; but the best religion is bought the dearest, and what we get cheap we do not much value.

I can scarcely tell you how I am getting on. Sometimes I get on tolerably well, and at other times I seem to be going backwards. Sometimes I seem to have marks of grace, and of my call to the ministry, and at other times I have none. There is one mark I am scarcely ever without, which is that the unbelievers continue to slander me. When I was traveling from Stamford in February, a gentleman (whom I believe to be a clergyman) on the coach, who had been visiting at Stamford, began to tell me and the others on the coach a long story about 'Tiptaft'. He said he had been preaching at Oakham and in the neighborhood, and brought several charges against me, such as making merchandise of my hearers, in two or three chapels, and ruining other ministers by drawing away their hearers. I asked him for his authority. He said that he had heard it at Stamford, and that I had a sister married at Stamford to a gentleman of wealth and respectability, and that it was all true. I thought it was not honest and kind to allow him to proceed without telling him who I was. He then told me he had a friend who knew me when I was curate at Treborough, who had spoken to him in the highest terms of me, and that he could not but regret that one of such eminent qualities should secede from the Church of England. The conversation was rather interesting to our fellow-travelers. I told him that the charges against me were false; and, though it was often reported that I was making a gain of godliness, I was at present free from the guilt of it. He would probably have told me something that might have been profitable; but I was not ruffled by what he

said, as they were old tales. He was very civil afterwards, and apologized. I gave him, when he left at Huntingdon, Rowland Hill's letter. This and other reports prove to me that Satan is not idle. I trust that my preaching is not in vain, and that his kingdom is receiving some little damage by me. I feel it more and more a great mercy that I can boldly and conscientiously meet all the charges, and may the Lord in His goodness and mercy hold me up, and then I shall be safe. David says, "Let them curse me, but You bless me"; and poor Jeremiah said, "I have heard the many rumors about me. They call me "The Man Who Lives in Terror." And they say, "If you say anything, we will report it." Even my old friends are watching me, waiting for a fatal slip. "He will trap himself," they say, "and then we will get our revenge on him." Jer 20:10

Friend Philpot is with me for a day or two. He has left the Church of England, and has resigned his fellowship. His reasons for resigning will be published in a few days. It is a faithful testimony. He could stay in it no longer.

Poor Mr. Kay is still with me. His way is still shut up. Philpot says that the more he sees of him the better he likes him.

I dare say you will be much tried about your own soul, and about making the chapel; you will think that both began in the flesh; doubts, fears, and anxieties will follow you, and you will think how much better you would get on in every way, if you had made no profession in religion. But you may as well have no religion as that which brings no cross. There is no such path ever mentioned in God's word which leads to glory. Sometimes you will think that you have a great many crosses, and at other times you will think that you have not sufficient to prove that you are really a son. The Lord's people are led in paths they know not, and they frequently get where Job was when he said, "I am vile," and "I am full of confusion." You will never be sorry you have waded through much miry clay when you are delivered, and you will learn to put a right value upon religion; for if a man is taught of God, his heart will make him speak aright, and pray aright, and will add learning to his lips. He will, by such teaching, be led to discern between good and evil, and to know things that differ.

Whatever true religion a man gets, he must buy; and "he who believes shall not make haste." I seem to get comfort from these words, for I am sure I do not make haste. Hardness of heart, unbelief, uncleanness, pride, self-seeking, covetousness, indifference about the Lord's cause, backwardness to prayer and preaching, with various other evils, make me feel more fit for hell than this earth, and I am glad to get comfort from the thought that Paul had to make a complaint of such evils, when he says that the law worked in him all manner of evil desires. These evils and abominations do not satisfy my soul that I am right; but I do not envy those, however holy they may be, and however strong their faith is, if the corruptions of their own hearts have never been stirred up; you will find that the genteel Christians generally fall short in such knowledge. But God must be known by His people as a heart-searching and thought-trying God. I question nearly everybody's religion which stands in much joy, peace, and comfort, for faith must be tried. If they are even sincere in thinking that they are blessed with such strong faith, they are only deceived, for in the present day very few can justly say they believe they are pardoned. Most of the Lord's people that I meet with cannot get beyond, "I hope and I trust." As regards myself, I must confess that my prayers are faint and few. Sometimes I am concerned about my soul, and at other times feel hardened. I find the ministry a great trial to me, as I feel myself so ignorant and unfit for the

work. I am driven into corners, and often wonder where the scene will end. O that the Lord would pour down his Holy Spirit on me, and make me more useful, so that I might have a sweet testimony in my soul that he is truly with me! I can preach very little about Jesus Christ, as I know so little of Him—so little of the power of His grace in my own heart. It even seems a mercy of mercies that I continue making a profession of the Lord's blessed name unto this moment. I find the way that I am in, is all up hill; but that does not satisfy me that it is the right way. I do not lack outward marks, such as sneers and persecutions, but I lack internal marks—more and more of the Spirit's work upon my heart, more and more of a spirit of love both to Jesus and His people.

I hope the Lord is blessing you in your meetings. You must not judge altogether of the good done by outward appearances. It is a great blessing that you are not worshiping with the congregation of the dead. I hope that the Lord will keep you, and make you very liberal to the Lord's people. And may you and I be kept, in the midst of all the enemies of the gospel, who are watching for our halting, and would be so glad to say, "Ah, so would we have it."

Yours very sincerely and affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

August 24th, 1835 My dear Brother,

Through mercy, I continue until this moment professing the name of the Lord Jesus; but not without difficulties, and trials, and temptations, and many fears whether I shall endure unto the end. Sometimes I think it will be well with me, and I shall endure unto the end. I meet with a share of the reproach and contempt cast upon the truth, and I believe God will ever bear testimony to, and defend the doctrines which I preach. But of late many violent opposers of the blessed truths have had the hand of God put forth against them in a conspicuous manner. I heard, last week, that a minister's wife, who heard me preach some time ago in Wilts, was extremely violent against me and the doctrines; and in three or four days after hearing me, while severely condemning me and the truth, she was actually struck dumb, and remains so to this time. "The hand of the Lord shall be known towards His servants, and His indignation towards His enemies." It is awful to see a person so very violent against the distinguishing doctrines of grace. I feel myself altogether unworthy to have the hand of the Lord known towards me; but may I ever justify Him in maintaining His own blessed gospel.

I am more and more convinced how little I know, and how unfit I am to preach; and the work of the ministry is a greater trial to me than ever it was. It seems to me, at times, to be almost presumption to stand up in the Lord's name, being so ignorant, knowing so little of myself, and less of God. Hardness of heart, unbelief, and a sense of various inward abominations constrain me to contend for a free-grace gospel, the difficulty of going to heaven, and inability of man in every respect. I cannot think well of Christians who have always had a smooth path. If they have never had the pot boil within so as to be sensible of the scum, they have never valued mercy and the restraining grace of God. I get shut up in such places that I can neither go backwards nor forwards, and my hope of entering heaven sinks into nothing. When in that state, I wish someone would tell me how to exercise faith, and to get a glimpse of hope from the past. When people talk about their religion without trials, conflicts, and diverse and manifold temptations, I think it is theirs, not God's; for He will prove the religion that He gives to a poor sinner to be genuine. Look out for humbled,

broken-down, devil-harassed, and heart-plagued sinners, and make much of them. Such will be low in a low place, and the eye of the Lord will be over them, and He will dwell with such. We are sure to meet with difficulties in the way to heaven, and we may question whether we are in the way without them. If the law works a little in a poor sinner's soul, he will not want ministers to preach any free-will in their sermons. You and I have abominations in our hearts that we are little aware of; and if we are not brought to feel and confess how bad we are, we shall never know how good God is to us.

You are sure to be tried about your chapel, if any good be done. Though health, strength, and wealth are all Christ's, you will grudge and murmur about spending much in His cause. When your unbelief shows itself, it will condemn you for your foolishness, for having anything to do with religion beyond a mere form to please the world. But when you are in your right mind you will feel thankful that you are counted worthy to be an instrument to promote the Lord's cause, even in the least degree.

You are not to expect great things in yourself or others without great trials, afflictions, and persecutions. You may bless God, if grace enables you, for not giving you up to your vile affections, and thereby making you a dreadful example unto others. It is a great mercy that we are out of hell. Give my best love to all who love the Lord in sincerity.

Yours most affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

February 1st, 1836 My dear Brother,

I have been hoping for some days to receive a letter from Oakham; but hope deferred makes the heart sick, so I write that I may have an answer.

Through mercy, I arrived safely at Abingdon again, and have been going on much as usual. I find that sin is a powerful enemy within me, and keeps me from preaching perfection in the flesh. I am obliged to make humble confession of my weakness, ignorance, sinfulness and foolishness, and I am sometimes almost without a mark of a child of God, except it be that I may be numbered among "the discontented." When I shall enjoy better days, I know not; but brighter scenes seem more desirable, if they are not so profitable. My preaching tries me very much. I feel so unfit for it, and so unworthy of so great a work. I am constrained to think that the Lord is patient; that He does not cut me off for my presumption; for I often feel as if I had no reverence for His great name, and no delight to see Him honored and glorified. But in the midst of all my confusion, blindness, and deadness, I do trust I am not without sensible feelings of having something good in me towards the Lord. Some visible marks seem to show themselves for my encouragement, and I have signs and tokens that the Lord has been with me, and will be with me, even unto the end. But I am not satisfied with myself as a Christian, much less as a preacher. I want more powerful proofs and testimonies that God is my Father, that Christ is my Savior, and the blessed Spirit my Teacher. These mercies seem to be too great, and the knowledge so high that I cannot attain unto it.

I know and feel too much of my corrupt nature to be content with speaking of the Trinity, as many do, in word, and thus call themselves Christians. I am sure nothing will do for a sensible sinner but a knowledge inwrought in the soul by the blessed Spirit of God. All things here below seem

opposed to the spiritual kingdom in the heart. Pride, lust, selfishness, unbelief, and strong love of self, with the powerful influence of the devil, seem to tread down and destroy everything in the soul which strives for and searches after eternal things. "When I would do good, evil is present with me." So going to heaven is a continual conflict, a daily cross, and a climbing of mountains, which difficulties often make the poor sinner wish himself back in Egypt, that there was no heaven, and that he had never gone forth as a pilgrim. He wonders where the scene will end, and is afraid of that text which says, "He who endures unto the end shall be saved." Encouragement is not given so soon as we think we want it, and we are obliged to say, with one of old, "Is His mercy clean gone forever?" And "have You forgotten to be gracious?"

Those who are always satisfied with their faith and hope, and who are not shot at by Satan, may despise our poor, low and groveling religion, creeping and hobbling on as we are obliged to do; but it is written, "The last shall be first, and the first last." "And he who gathered little had no lack." If we are so favored as to have the least grace, "the dust" of the building is to be "remembered," and the "prayer of the needy shall not always be forgotten." The Lord will regard the sighing of the prisoners. The afflicted, the tempted, and distressed will pour out their groans and sighs, and they will enter into the ears of the Lord Almighty; and "those who are ready to stumble shall be girded with strength."

I am more and more convinced that no religion will do to die by which does not work by power and bring a man to see and feel himself very vile, very ignorant, and very helpless; and if a man is really weighed down and pressed in spirit through inward trials and outward crosses, he will not want to live always, and will not be puffed up by being upon good terms with himself, nor will he find delight and happiness in his worldly plans and ways. "Vanity of vanities," he must at times say, and desire to know Christ as his everything, his all in all. Unbelief and self-love will strive powerfully to make us act upon worldly principles, frequently termed prudence; and they would compel us, if grace did not prevent, to walk in the course of this world, and then, if that were the case, our 'mere opinions' would be the only proof of our religion. God will cleanse His people from their idols. He will give them those things that they hate, and take from them those things that they love, and hedge up their ways, and confound their worldly schemes and wisdom, until they wonder what He intends to do next.

If we are partakers of God's grace, we are rich indeed, being joint-heirs with Christ; but if we are to reign with Him, we must suffer with Him. There is no other path to heaven but the path of tribulation; and whoever finds no crosses and no trials in his path, "woe is me" if I encourage him in his religion. Experience and the truth of God's word are both against him, and he has neither law nor gospel to endorse his profession. Christians are very scarce who bear genuine marks of having passed through Moses' school to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I sometimes question the religion of people so much as to think true Christians are nearly as scarce as snowballs at mid-summer and roses at Christmas. "Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure; the Lord knows those who are His." I have reason to condemn my own religion. My heart sinks within me at times, and I am full of fears and doubts whether the Lord is leading me by the right way to a city of habitation. If it were not for some little marks of life, feeling, and love in my soul, I might despair indeed. A religion worth having is not cheaply bought and quickly obtained. There are many ups and downs, and we are not very willing to give up our own righteousness and doings. We daub away with untempered mortar, until we are really ashamed of our work, and

confounded at our ignorance, our helplessness, and foolishness; and then we are obliged (no praise to us), from necessity, to receive the least hope or mark of mercy as flowing from sovereign grace.

Friend Kay is much the same. He was pleased with his shirts. (These were sent to him as a present from Oakham.) He lives, like many more, in hopes of seeing more independent days; but the Lord orders all things very wisely.

I shall be very glad to hear how you are going on in your meeting together—whether you are encouraged and comforted much in the work. Trials you must and will have; and if things went smooth and easy, you might be sure it is not God's way of carrying on His work. I hope the Lord is blessing you and making you fruitful branches. If grace works in your hearts, it will not work in vain. Flesh goes one way, and grace another, and there must be a war. Do you feel a desire of having less to do with the world? Prosperity in worldly things will dampen the desire of eternal things. God's children are generally poor, for we never hear, scarcely, of much grace in the heart and much gold in the pocket. Have you learned to your own comfort, in your own experience, that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Open your hand wide to your poor brother, and give liberally.

There are many very poor in this neighborhood, and some whom I hope well of, and believe to be partakers of grace, contend with great difficulties. I sometimes feel as if I had a mind to help; but my pocket is so soon empty, and I generally find where there is the empty pocket there is largeness of heart; for when a man stores up gold, it is his idol, and he will not part with it. I think there are a very few rich Christians that could lay down their lives for the brethren, for they are so slow to lay down a little of their money. It is a great mercy to be able to make a good use of our money. Money is a bad master, but a good servant, particularly when it supplies the pinching needs of the Lord's own dear children. SELF is so forward for everything, that the poor and destitute can get but little.

I sometimes think I am negligent in urging those who have plenty of this world's goods to give more liberally to the poor. Example is better than precept; but it is more contrary to our vile and selfish hearts. Selfishness is so strongly rooted, and is so cherished and nourished by the advice and example of others, and by the tradition of our forefathers, that a liberal spirit is sooner checked than encouraged by these words—"Spare yourself!" He, however, "who gives to the poor lends unto the Lord." But many who profess great love to Christ are rather covetous, and would rather trust to money in the funds than to God's promises—"All these things shall be added unto you;" "and no good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly." Whatever sins I may be guilty of, I trust I may be kept from hoarding up like a miser, while so many have scarcely bread to eat.

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

April 15th, 1836 My dear Brother,

Whatever charge they may bring against me, they cannot say that I am guilty of heaping up riches, while God's children are in such painful and trying straits.

I find myself too ignorant and sinful a creature to be a preacher of the gospel; and I wonder that God blesses me in any way. I would like to be more holy and heavenly-minded, and to enjoy more of the Lord's presence and love; but instead, I have to feel the bitter evils of my heart, and to question what right I have to make a profession of religion in any way whatever. I learn that there is no real hope, but in God's mercy. I am sure that I deserve hell. I have sinned; I am unclean; I am vile. I need the Lord's helping hand, and His delivering goodness. I feel no union with those who are not exercised with the evil workings of their hearts, and feel their helpless state. The Lord's people must and shall know that their strength is in God. I want to know more of the fullness of the gospel, and of the riches of God's grace realized in my soul, so that I might speak more clearly of what the Lord has done for me. I do not like to be obliged to take so low a ground, and to find so many oppositions within to everything that is good. I do not much expect to be quiet and at ease here long. Real religion will surely be opposed and appear very scarce, so that we shall be disappointed if we expect to see much in ourselves, or in others. It is only a "pledge" that the most gracious will ever have in this time-state; and whatever sweet and blessed testimonies any one may have, there will surely be ballast.

I hope the Lord will graciously appear and manifest Himself in your prayer-meetings, so that you may be encouraged to go on; for you will feel so dead, backward, and careless that you will need either a 'stripe' or a 'smile' to keep you moving. But remember, "he who believes shall not make haste."

All is vanity here below and vexation of spirit; everything earthly is full of dissatisfaction; but we have a nature that cleaves to the dust; our hearts especially cleave to 'fine gold dust', because it is the representative of all things; and we have hearts like those whose "idols are silver and gold." We like to be laden with 'thick clay' rather than be freed from such a burden; and at times we feel it no favor to have opportunities of doing good, even to the Lord's children. We cannot trust God. We are very much like those who have no religion. I wish that the Lord would make me esteem all things but rubbish and dross compared to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. It is one thing to preach, another to practice.

Grace must make us to differ, for we have the same evil hearts as the rest of the world. What a mercy it is to be enabled to say, "By the grace of God I am what I am!"

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

April 28th, 1837 My dear Brother,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter, with thanks, together with its contents.

You may, perhaps, not be expecting another application for money before I visit Oakham; but I have so many opportunities of assisting in real distress, without even seeking objects of great poverty, that I soon find my purse empty. I trust that you do not suppose I spend much of my money in luxuries and ornaments, and for the gratification of the flesh; nor am I speculating in any manner. It is a great mercy when our consciences are made tender in such things. If we are enabled to dispose of any of our riches for the real benefit of the needy, we prevent the temptation of falling into the snare of spending the money on our fancies and selfish desires. Distrust and

unbelief keep the purse-strings tight; but I feel satisfied, in my right mind, that a little money well bestowed to others, is better than a great deal well laid up for ourselves. But we have to steer against a tide of selfishness in our own hearts, and to climb over heaps of examples and maxims of unbelievers, if we go along in the path of liberality, which may be considered such in the light of God's word. With respect to liberality, Paul says, "See that you abound in this grace also." And what does the apostle mean by the word "abound"? We have such self-seeking hearts that we are slow to believe the full extent of the expression, but readily consent for 'Mr. Worldly Prudence' to put his construction on it.

While we are in these tabernacles of clay our souls will cleave to the dust; and "Spare yourself!" is written so deeply on our hearts that we need provoking by example and exhortation to consider those who are in adversity. "When we would do good, evil is present with us." Nevertheless, where there is a living faith accompanied with this world's goods, the hungry and naked, and especially the Lord's family, will meet with something better than the mere words, "Be fed, and be clothed;" although much may be done in this way by mere natural people, and even to the condemnation of those who profess to love the Lord Christ.

Various sins will ever try us while in the body; and it is a mercy when we feel them, and groan under their weight. We are ready to excuse in others the sins we are most inclined to indulge in, in order to justify ourselves, when we can speak very severely against other sins which we think ourselves more free from. Pride and selfishness are nearly allied. This you will consider a kind of preface to asking you to be so kind as to send me a ten pound note on Monday next. I am aware that I shall find myself very much in arrears; but it has been a long winter, and I am glad to say that I do not regret what is disposed of to the benefit of the poor and needy, for I am convinced that an empty purse with a large heart is a thousand times better than a full purse with a small heart; and may the Lord teach me ever to value the former, for it has even the greatest blessing in this life.

I shall be glad to hear how you are going on in the ways of God. Darkness and deadness are more known than the light of life. I get on much as usual, and wonder how it is at times I get on at all; for I have much evil and corruption to contend with, and my mind is frequently very much exercised and tried. O that the Lord would bless me!

I am full of fears about eternal things very frequently. I scarcely know how the scene will end, my unbelief and inward wickedness testify so much against me. May the Lord keep us. The work of the ministry is very trying. Without trials and exercises of mind we are very dead and unprofitable, yet we want to go to heaven without tribulation; but it is impossible.

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

August 4th, 1837 My dear Brother,

"Like people, like priest." Every one wants to be encouraged either in a false or true religion. Some like to be built up in empty notions, and others to have their hearts well searched, and their thoughts tried, that they may have the testimony in their conscience that they are true men of God; but the halt, and the lame, and afflicted will meet with the only true encouragement. The great question is, Are we in the right way? Is life communicated to our souls? What is all our preaching,

reading, praying, and professing, if we have not the root of the matter in us? I believe every true-born soul will find that he will be tried, as long as he is in this tabernacle of sinful dust, whether he can be right, with so much pride, lust, and worldliness, etc. Satan, the world, and the flesh make such inroads upon his soul, at times, as to make him say that he feels destitute of every mark of a gracious character.

O! how dreary is the prospect of eternity when we long after nothing but what the world affords—when we have a heart ready for everything but prayer, self-denial, and what is God-glorifying! I used to find and think religion very different. And if I had not had the experience of some who seem always inclined to God and goodness, I would stumble when I considered their state, and should say, "Surely the Lord is with them alone"; but having had my religion sifted in sharp trials of mind, and heart-stirring seasons, I am confident that no religion is rightly measured if the opposition to it is not gauged also; that is, we are not to consider what wonderful conquests the new man has gained, if we do not hear a clear account of the power, might, and strength of his enemies in the old man. We must learn our religion in warfare, temptations, and fiery trials, which will surely attend every quickened soul. There must be a reality in a man's religion. Where there is life, there will be fearing and sinning, loving and hating, falling and confessing, doubting and hoping, mourning and rejoicing, and various ups and downs, ins and outs, in a very mysterious manner wrought in the soul. I meet with but little vital godliness. Very few seem to have any powerful operations of grace upon the heart; and those few who can speak of the Lord's dealings seem very much like professors, with a name to live. The Lord evidently does not bestow much of His heavenly blessings on elect souls here below, so that they are reminded that they are to have only a pledge in this life. All things are very puzzling, and no one more than myself to myself; for I am a mystery indeed. I feel sensible, at times, of the Lord's goodness and mercy, that I am what I am; that I have any hope, faith, and love is a mercy indeed. And I am sure that the Lord must keep and preserve every tempted sinner; for all who know their inbred corruptions will acknowledge that the Lord is very merciful, in that He has not cut them off as vile cumberers of the ground. As long as we live in this world we shall find that our hearts again and again cleave to the dust. All things here, however, are very uncertain and unsatisfactory. It is a great mercy when we can use the world as strangers and pilgrims. I am continually finding myself very dead and cold in spiritual things; but, through mercy, I continue. But, to my encouragement, I hear that the Lord blesses His word by me, and still gives me seals to my ministry. I am so hated, despised, and cursed that the Lord does favor me for their reproaches and curses; but it is a bad sign when a minister has the smiles of worldly professors.

I hope that grace is manifested in you and the Oakham friends, to draw down reproach and contempt. I hope, also, that the Lord has blessed your wife in all her exercises of mind.

How much we need wisdom to guide and direct us in all things!

Yours most affectionately and sincerely,

William Tiptaft.

1838-1842

LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1838 - 1842)

March 2nd, 1838 My dear Brother,

I feel very dead, sinful, and unfit for a pulpit; and it seems a great mercy indeed that my preaching does not altogether fall to the ground. I know not, at times, what use my preaching is; but the Lord can bless by whom He will bless; and if His presence and power are with me, all my enemies within and without cannot prevent good being done in the name of the holy child Jesus. It is the Lord's blessing I want, both in and out of the pulpit; for what is this world, and all things in it, if a man does not have God for his friend? All things around us remind us that we are nothing better than grass, and are like a fleeting shadow. And if we are void of saving grace, awful is our state, whether we feel it so or not. But we find that the Lord must make us view things in their true colors. And if He favors us with a few breathings after the 'heavenly manna', it will stop us from so earnestly seeking that 'bread which perishes'. The world is a great enemy! It contains so many snares and baits so suitable to our carnal appetite. We are surrounded with everything that is trying to fasten our hearts to earthly things; and if we were to have no crosses, and no enjoyment and comfort in spiritual things, we would be endeavoring, still more than we are, to find our happiness in earthly things. A tender conscience and godly fear in the heart are great mercies; and if the Lord does bless our souls with a sense of His pardoning love, it is a wonderful favor. For we know our vileness sufficiently to be sure that there is no hope for us but through His rich, unmerited love and mercy. It is a very narrow path, and the Lord must guide and direct us in it.

I am glad you set an example in being liberal to the poor. If you stand by the poor, God will stand by you.

Yours very affectionately and sincerely,

William Tiptaft.

March 29th, 1838 My dear Brother,

I preached at Worcester on the 9th on my way to Wolverhampton; and as I found it a fine large city full of ministers—and darkness. I made a few plain remarks that seemed to stir up some of the people in favor of me and some against me. Some having heard me satisfactorily, and being very anxious for me to preach again, I consented to preach again on my return, which I did on the 26th. I understand that one minister who heard me the first time was made so ill with my sermon that he had to be in bed for three days. Some mocked, and others desired to hear me again.

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

April 18th, 1838 My dear Brother,

I was glad to receive the kind letter which you and your better half sent me; and I wish you would write more upon spiritual things; but we find that our hearts cleave so close to the dust that we cannot enter with any life and power into heavenly subjects. It seems a great mercy that we do not deny them, for hope will spring up, in the midst of all our halting and hobbling, that we are among the 'little children'; for the Lord does bless the small as well as the great.

I am often led to wonder how I ever have got on to this time, and particularly in the ministry; but all past mercies, favors, and encouragements do not make me believe, when I am in a dark state, that I shall continue. Last Friday evening the Lord seemed to be with me, and the friends here expressed themselves to have been favored in hearing. I find that nothing but true religion will satisfy me, although my mind seems inclined to everything else, and all manner of deadness and evil possess me, in such a way that I cannot trace the work of grace in my heart. I sometimes think that I shall never be lively in my soul without a hot furnace—which I dread. Nevertheless, anything seems better than carnality and sensuality. But it will ever be "uneasy when I feel my load, uneasy when I feel it not."

I am afraid of having my heart "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." The world in such various ways is our enemy, that we have more to fear from smiles than frowns; for when the flesh prospers there will be but little watching, praying, seeking, crying, groaning, and talking about the sufferings of Jesus. It seems to me much harder work to continue than to begin; but the church in all ages has been worn down with harassments and perplexities, or the promises would never have been so numerous for the faint and weary. That religion which brings no difficulties will not lead to any cry for help—and if we could get along without God, we would not seek Him.

Free-will, self-sufficiency, and independence, are three strongholds in our hearts, and they only fall before the winds of adversity and soul-trials, which make us to know that Christ is a refuge from the storm and tempest which arise, again and again, in every quickened soul. I get exercised in such various ways. I am sometimes in such places, in which I wish to act right, and yet I do not know what to do. Things may be more smooth for me after a while, for I am sensible to sinking daily, and at times I seem not to have a grain of faith or strength, and could not trust God for anything. If the Bible is true, the only good investment is giving money to the poor. That is safe; it is money put out on the best security, as being lent to the Lord; and what a good thing it is to make a good use of money, while so many spend nearly all they have on their selfish desires, fancies, and lusts. I believe we all love the world more than we think; and "Spare yourself!" is written very deeply in our hearts. I think we love the poor children of God less than we think; for deeds, not words, come closest to the heart, and it is easier to preach than to practice. The matter of the greatest importance is the spending and distributing of money. An ungodly man may have much, but he cannot consider the cause of the poor, if the Lord does not bless him with the mind to do so. So an ungodly man's money is either spent on his lust, or brings him under a curse—"Woe be to him that is laden with thick clay." What a dreadful thing it is to have the curse of a covetous heart! "The love of money is the root of all evil," and sticks to one's heart like the flesh to the skin, and if any one at all despises money, the devil and the world are in such a fight with him that they are ready to knock him on the head or throw him into the fire, and will abuse him for being a fool, or a madman!

Yours very sincerely and affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

June 8th, 1838 My dear Brother,

Through mercy I arrived here safely from Brighton, and felt myself better for two or three weeks after illness; but on the 1st of this month, I was seized again with colic, but not so painful as at Brighton. Nevertheless, I have not been out of doors since, except for a short walk this morning. I find this sickness profitable to my soul. It has, I trust, meekened and humbled my spirit, and I have been brought down to lie passive in the Lord's hands. I deserve many such, and much more severe, chastisements for my daily sins and iniquities; and it is through God's mercy that I am spared to write to you. I feel this sickness to be a rod that I needed. If we escaped such trials, we would wander farther from God after idols and the vain delights of our wicked hearts. This sickness has made me feel and think more of poor people who cannot get comforts and even necessities in their daily ailments, while I have abundance. But gratitude must come from God. The mayor and some of the leading people of Abingdon have applied to me today to give them something towards making a feast on the Coronation day. I told them that such feasts led to drunkenness, etc., and I could not conscientiously give them anything towards it, for I considered them among the "revellings"; but if they would establish a sick fund, or benefit the poor in any other way, I would contribute. The mayor is a dissenter, and there were several dissenters with him; but they did not know that "Fear God" stands before "Honor the Queen." It will be a very great day of wickedness in England. My opinions seem to differ from other people's, and they cannot make out what kind of man I am.

Yours very affectionately and sincerely,

William Tiptaft.

July 18th, 1838 My dear Brother,

I feel myself a very poor preacher. The work tries my mind and body; and the last two Lord's days, when I said, after the morning sermon, that Mr. Kay would preach the other time, I felt as a horse would, that had his harness taken off after a journey. I find that religion is uphill work; and the more I try to rise, the more I sink. I scarcely know how to make my religion out. I am not satisfied with those who get on so well and so fast, and yet any religion appears better than mine. How trying it is to preach to people alive in their souls, while so dead and carnal myself. Well might Paul say to the Corinthians, "So then death works in us, but life in you." "Faint, yet pursuing," is an experience not to be despised in the present day, for nearly all are zealous with 'false fire', and those who seem to have any real religion consider themselves dead and carnal.

Yours affectionately and sincerely,

William Tiptaft.

August 19th, 1839 My dear Brother,

Through mercy, I arrived safely here on Wednesday evening, the 7th. I had, upon the whole, a favorable journey, and felt myself but little fatigued by it. I preached once on Lord's day, the 11th. Very many came to hear; so also yesterday; and some professed to hear with much profit. It has been reported several times, far and wide, that I was dead; and also that during my absence, that I

have been confined in a madhouse. Some seemed pleased to see me again; but many, who had hoped never to see such a 'troubler of Israel' in these parts any more, are disappointed.

We live in times which need a searching ministry; but ministers must be searched themselves, before they can search others. Searching work is trying work, for it takes away false confidence, and keeps a man from boasting of an untried faith. It makes hypocrites manifest, and separates the poor, tried, and humble souls, from the mere professors with a name to live while dead. But the work is in the Lord's hands, and if He does not cause the 'chill north wind' to awaken, and the 'warm south wind' to blow, ministers will labor in vain. He has, however, promised that "His word shall not return to Him void, but that it shall accomplish that which He pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto He sends it."

How much preparation of heart is needed to receive the word! What trials, afflictions, and sorrows are required to separate us from the world; and very seldom is it that afflictions are without profit to God's people. How hard, carnal, and selfish does a man become who has nothing to soften him! We need daily crosses and daily trials to keep us in any way alive to eternal things, and to maintain a spirit of prayer and watchfulness.

I trust I can say that my sickness has proved profitable to me; but I am a very dull scholar in Christ's school, and need line upon line and precept upon precept. I have to lament a heart full of wickedness, vanity, and folly; and I feel a strong inclination to avoid every cross. But I am sure, nevertheless, that crosses are daily needful. How we cleave to the world! What pride, vanity, flesh-pleasing, and worldly conformity are manifest in us, especially to those who are spiritually minded, and can discern our state.

Yours affectionately and sincerely,

William Tiptaft.

November 13th, 1839 My dear Brother,

Since I wrote to friend P., I have not suffered from any further attacks; and, through mercy, I may say that I have but little pain, and take my walks as usual. I find the exertion of preaching earnestly, a little trying; so I still continue to speak but once on a Lord's day.

J. Kay was absent nearly ten weeks, and I spent the time very quietly, and, I trust, not altogether unprofitably; for I was favored with an inclination to read the word of God. I find it good to lead a retired life, even if it is not pleasant to the flesh.

How we find that there are two principles within us continually at war, and how they ever wrestle for mastery! But whatever suits and pleases the flesh will surely make the soul lean, and bring on deadness and barrenness. The more we taste of the pleasures of sin, the more we get blinded and intoxicated by them, and the more anxious to enjoy them in this time-state, whether we go to heaven or not. Right hands and right eyes are dear to us, and self-denial is a continual cross. When we are tried, tempted, and harassed, we want ease and comfort. Yet we daily learn that without ballast we should not sail in any way safely on the seas of temptation. We need chastisements, rods, and crosses, to bring us to a throne of grace; and we need a daily sense of our vileness and our sins to constrain us to fly to the only true refuge for poor helpless sinners, who is a Friend in need and a Brother born for adversity. But I find that my unbelief would strike at

the root of all my hopes, so that I scarcely know what to make of my religion, and think it will be a wonderful mercy if I ever enter into that rest which remains for the people of God. Very often, through the various exercises of my soul, my religion is obliged to go into a very small compass, and I am compelled to confess to my hearers what straits I get into. But the more confounded I become in my soul-exercises, the better they seem to bear with me, and to hear me, and tell me they find that my sickness is made profitable to them. And yet I am often tried what right I have to be in a pulpit. The more, however, I am tried about my own evidences, the more I am tried about the evidences of other people, and the more convinced I am that very many are deceived who are calling themselves 'experimental Calvinists'. Sin, in one way or other, reigns and rules in the heart, and is but little opposed, except, at times, by a little honesty of conscience. Grace will reign in the called elect, although sin may break out and struggle for victory, and make the poor sinner feel that he is a hell-deserving wretch; and, at times, the tempted saint feels the vilest and unworthiest of all around him.

I imagine that the poor old people never liked your soup better than they do this year, as provisions are so scanty. "A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor." Pro 22:9. What you give to the poor you cannot spend upon your lusts; and although flesh cleaves very fast to the 'thick clay', in your right mind you will never be sorry that you have refreshed the affections of the poor. What you give to the poor you lend to the Lord; and if that be not a good investment, there never was a good one. But I dare say you find that you have a vile, sinful, wretched mind, craving after other sorts of investments. It is well if you feel it and groan on account of it. If none are to go to heaven but those who are free from covetousness, few indeed will be saved. Nevertheless, it stands among the black marks of the dead in sin. What a hard sin it is to pray against with the heart, while there are a dozen speculating plans in the head!

It is a mercy to be made sensible of our besetting sins and lusts, that we may feel our need of the atoning blood of Christ, and to be fully satisfied that if we depend upon anything short of the blood and righteousness of Christ we must perish eternally, for all other hopes are cut off. Such a sense of sin and vileness cuts up Arminianism by the roots, and prepares us to hear the gospel, and to know that it brings glad tidings to poor, lost, and helpless sinners.

Yours very affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

February 5th, 1840 My dear Brother,

I hope and trust I am rather better than when I last wrote. I find that my walks are beneficial to my health, and I now generally take two or three daily, according to your opinion and advice. I scarcely ever take anything to drink except tea, and water; and I think very little good is done by fermented liquors, although some so strongly recommend me to take them in moderation.

We live in a day of great profession; but I believe there are very few true living souls, and even in those who have life, it is scarcely manifested. Nearly all the quickened children of God feel this and mourn over it, more or less. We may wish for a revival, and great spiritual blessings; but great trials and troubles would come therewith, for grace must be tried. Our flesh shrinks from the least cross, and we do not like to lose a little finger, much less a right eye, or a right hand. The flesh will be consulted, or it will rage and storm, and present such 'mountains' in the path to heaven, as will

make the poor child of God tremble. Carnal security, fleshly gratifications, the friendship of the world, and a smooth path will appear so very desirable; that if we are not led to buy a little faith tried in the fire, so that we might have a glimmering view of the King in His beauty and of the land afar off, we would feel determined to go along By-path meadow, let the consequences be what they might. We would become deserters of Christ's banner, and resolve never to fight valiantly, endure hardness, or suffer any difficulties for the elect's sake, or in the Lord's cause.

Oh! how we need daily renewing and strengthening to enable us to take up the cross, and to contend against the sins that so easily beset us! For we have to say with David, "Our souls cleave to the dust; quicken us, according to Your word."

I shall be glad to hear how you are going on, whether you see more "the sin of grasping after an empty shadow", which promises much and performs nothing, and worse than nothing, for it causes vexation of spirit. I shall rejoice if the Lord draws up your mind more to heavenly things, so that you may be kept from minding earthly things in that way which caused Paul to weep. I wish I had more of that blessed concern, which Paul manifested, respecting the godly and upright walk of the children of God.

Yours affectionately and sincerely,

William Tiptaft.

1843 - 1864

LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1843 - 1864)

January 30th, 1843 My dear Sister,

I was glad to hear that you are about to follow the Lord Jesus Christ through the ordinance of believer's baptism. May your soul be much blessed in it. Many find it only a shell; but I believe some are so favored as to find a kernel within the shell, in the Lord's presence being manifested on the occasion. Whoever may slight and despise it, we have on record how blessedly the Trinity bore testimony to it, when Jesus Christ was baptized (Mat 3:16-17). "Whoever shall do the will of God, shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." I dare say you are anxious to know the proceedings here yesterday respecting it. There was a very large concourse of people both times, and many children of God scattered through this neighborhood were gathered together, distant and near. There were many from mere curiosity, and many could not get even standing room, particularly in the afternoon. I went through a regular service, and then baptized seven women and five men, and after the afternoon service I baptized six women and five men. It seems a great number to be baptized in one day by a minister called so narrow-minded.

This, however, is the first time of baptizing with us, and it is nearly fourteen years since I came into this neighborhood, and more than eleven years since I left the Church of England. In the morning I felt rather shut up in speaking, but in the afternoon I was blessed with a little power and liberty, and I trust and believe that the Lord was with us, and several, I understand, found it good to be there. What a different feeling I had in going down from the pulpit to baptize those of whom I had a good hope that they were partakers of grace, according to the mode so clearly stated in the word of God, from what I used to experience when I had to descend from the pulpit in the Church of England to 'sprinkle infants', and to give a flat contradiction to what I stated in the pulpit respecting regeneration, at the same time encouraging the blind and ignorant 'godfathers' and 'godmothers' in their sin and mocking of God, who came forward so boldly and carelessly to make such dreadful vows and promises! I am satisfied many things may be bought too dear—even gold; but one thing cannot—which is a good conscience.

I have now something to relate, in which, I trust, you and the other friends at Oakham will feel interested, and will be glad to hear; and may the Lord make it a blessing, and may He have all the praise! It is a new strain for me to begin with—"My heart is inditing a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer."

After talking over the proceedings of the day with four friends, I retired (on Lord's day evening) to bed in a comfortable state of mind, feeling thankful that the Lord had brought me through a trying day, concerning which I had been much exercised, and trusting the Lord had blessed the word to some that day through such a worm as I felt myself to be, as well as owning His own ordinance, to which we had been attending. When I knelt down to offer up a few words by the bedside, I felt my soul drawn out to God, and humbled low before Him with a sense of my sins; but as soon as I was

in bed I began to feel a melting of heart, and a sweet sense of God's love to my soul, which immediately made my tears flow; and the Lord sweetly began to apply precious promises to my soul with unction and power, and to such an extent as I have never been blessed with before. In fact I have never experienced any such blessed manifestation and sweet deliverance, though I have been blessed at different times that I can mention; but they were far short of this sweet blessing to my soul; and the savor of it sweetly abides with me still, but I am afraid of losing it, or of being robbed of it. When the promises began to flow into my soul, these words came with as great power, and as often as any—"Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is as the dew of herbs;" and again and again—"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins—return unto Me; for I have redeemed you!" "I will honor those who honor Me." "He who has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me—and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." I did sweetly experience this manifestation of love to my soul; and I said to the blessed Lord, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His mouth is most sweet." The promises flowed into my soul, and my tears flowed so fast that I soon began to water my couch with tears of joy, and not of sorrow.

I lay until between twelve and one o'clock in this blessed state, and then fell asleep, for about two hours, and awoke in a delightful frame, the Lord blessing my soul again, until I had to restrain myself from crying aloud. I did not go to sleep again, but lay awake, blessing and praising God for His goodness and mercy to my soul, with debasing views of myself, and with exalted views of the blessed Jesus, having communion and fellowship with Him in His agony and sufferings. But during my soul-enjoyment I kept saying at times, "Is it real, Lord? Is it real, Lord?" I wanted to know whether it was real. I asked myself whether I was willing to die, and I felt I was; and if it were the Lord's will, I was willing to die, without telling anyone of His great goodness to my soul; for the Lord's will was my will. I asked myself whether I would rather have a large bag of gold, or this blessing—and I felt a large bag of gold was no more to me than a large bag of pebbles, compared to the Lord's rich blessing. These words came to my mind sweetly again and again—

"Now will I tell to sinners round

What a dear Savior I have found." And Deer's hymn, "Blessed Spirit of truth, eternal God," was sweet to my soul.

I went up and told J. K. early in the morning, and could not refrain from crying, and could scarcely shave myself through shedding tears so fast. I shed more tears last night than I have shed for years, for my tears do not flow so easily as many people's do. These words came with power—"Sing, O you heavens; for the Lord has done it," and also—"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This has been to my soul "a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well refined;" for "the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie—though it tarry wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

You, as well as others, know I have had to wait, and have been much tried, because the Lord has not blessed me more with His presence and manifestations of His love, though He has given me a 'few sips' by the way, both in preaching and at a throne of grace, and in times of need and temptation. But I have known to my sorrow what it is to sit in the dust, almost without hope whether the Lord would ever put a new song in my mouth. These words were brought again and

again—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name! bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits—who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies!"

I have gone on in the ministry ready to halt, with sorrow before me, with my soul much discouraged because of the way; and had not the Lord given me seals to my ministry and testimonies now and then to my soul, surely I would have fainted by the way. If the blessing had come twelve hours sooner, someone else must have preached and baptized, for I could have done neither, through blessing, praising, and crying for joy. Very many of my hearers would have said, it was not enthusiasm in the bud, but in the flower, for they are strangers to such feelings. "The heart knows his own bitterness; and a stranger does not intermeddle with his joy." And how clearly did I see David's wisdom in saying, "Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul." David well knew, that if they did not know a "secret" in religion, they would not be able to understand a work of grace upon the soul. I have been long kept upon short commons, and I have had great murmurings and rebellion respecting it, and now the Lord is pleased to lead my soul into green pastures; but how long I am to be favored, I know not, but this I know, I feel grateful for what the Lord has granted me, and I love Him, and can bless His holy name. "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

I have been led to know my vileness, and to feel much of the depravity of my heart, so as to be sensibly a poor, lost, ruined sinner. Sometimes I have envied the brute creation, and at times I have thought God would strike me dead, being sensible of so much sin in my heart. I felt sure I had but little grace, if I had any at all; and my mind has been much tried respecting the formation of a church here, seeing it a grievous thing that the ordinances of God's house should be slighted and neglected year after year by those who, I believe, were the proper people to attend to them. I could, therefore, see the need of church order and government much better than I could see in any way 'my fitness' to be a pastor. So I was in great straits, and looked forward to the ordinance next Lord's day with much exercise and trial of mind, having to administer it in my darkness of soul, and knowing also that there is such a thing as eating and drinking unworthily, and that such "eat and drink damnation (or condemnation) to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body." On Friday evening I was with two friends who were speaking of the Lord's manifestations to their souls; but I was silent, and could say nothing, and felt as if I could not possibly stand in the position I was placed in, being so dark, shut up, and tried. On Saturday, too, I felt much darkness and trial of mind, but I little thought that God's great goodness and mercy were so soon to be manifested to my soul. I have had 'sips', but now my 'cup is full', and even runs over. In the days of adversity I have considered how the scene would end, but now in the day of prosperity my soul is joyful. "I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities, and have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a large room." "The blessing of the Lord, it makes rich, and He adds no sorrow with it." The Lord continues to bless my soul with His love, and Christ is precious; and I am sure the Lord's spiritual blessings to my soul do not lead to worldliness and licentiousness—but to deadness to the world and to separation in spirit from it. Real faith works by love, and Christ is truly precious, and there is no true victory over the world but through this blessed experience, known and felt in the soul. And

love to Jesus is accompanied with love to the brethren, and with earnest and sincere prayers for the children of God. "They shall prosper, who love Zion." Before this blessing I looked forward to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as a man would who had a great payment to make, and had nothing with which to pay; he wishes that there was no such engagement, or that the time was rather distant; and now I can look upon it as the man would upon the payment, if any one had given him all, or more than all the money.

Tuesday Morning.—The Lord's goodness still follows me, but this night was not like the previous; that will be a night to be much remembered by me. I have had these words brought to my mind very sweetly, "You are fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into your lips, therefore God has blessed you forever."

I never went out of doors yesterday, but J. K. was among the friends, and I am glad to say that he brought in good tidings, for he had heard that the ordinance of baptism was much blessed on Lord's day; and I hope the Lord's blessing may specially rest upon the friends at Oakham on the 19th. What a little cross it is to bear, for those who have any sense of the crosses, sufferings, and afflictions and agonies that the Lord Jesus Christ, who was harmless, had to endure for the vilest and basest sinners! I believe many are not tried so much about 'the cross' of it, as they are about their fitness to be baptized. It has been a profitable time for the Lord's people here during the formation of the Church, through having to give in their experience, and the hearing of the experience of others has revived their souls.

Give my love to all inquiring friends, and I believe some will be glad to hear that the Lord has visited my soul with blessed promises and testimonies of His love.

Yours affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

April 20th, 1847 My dear Deborah,

. . . You have lived long enough to see that a Christian is not to be long without trials and troubles, much less a minister. If a minister has a conscience worth having, he is sure to have trouble; and if he has not a conscience worth having, he had better be a shoe-shine. There are no blessings like spiritual blessings; but how little do we crave them, and how little do we value them, particularly at times. So deeply rooted is unbelief in us, and the world in various ways so opposed to vital godliness, the heart is deceitful and so wicked, that we need 'rods' and 'fires' as well as 'smiles' and 'sweet testimonies of His love', to make us in any way alive and fruitful unto God. I trust I may say that the Lord blesses my soul at times; but I do not enjoy that peace and love I wish, and have enjoyed in times past. Your affectionate Brother,

William Tiptaft.

December 13, 1845 My dear Friend,

I like to receive letters, but I do not like writing the answers. However, we shall find through life one thing must be set over against another; there is no separating the bitters and sweets, the joys and the sorrows, and the sweetest pleasures and severest pains. All things are to work together for good for those called by grace, and surely trials, afflictions and chastisements will be experienced

by the child of God, as well as the Love, Mercy and Goodness of God—all proceeding from the Loving-kindness of a merciful God. In our right minds, what could we wish to be altered in outward things? All things are right, well-ordered, and the language is, "God knows best!"

"May Your will be done" is a hard lesson to learn, and far beyond what flesh and blood can attain unto. Tribulation must work patience, and when God blesses us with that, we can hear the rod, and know who has appointed it. What have we to fear but sin, and in that we have very much to fear; although we may be blessed to have the sting taken away through a blessed deliverance, nevertheless that enemy never dies, and it has made all true Christians groan, and surely it will us. But what a mercy it is to groan on account of it—instead of committing it with delight and greediness!

I feel the power of it, and feel grateful to God that it does not reign with that power it sometimes threatens to do. And it is a great mercy that we are not left to contend with so powerful an enemy in our own strength. I desire to bless God for 'restraining grace' as well as 'saving grace', and I am sure that none are well kept, except those whom the Lord keeps. How much sin we are conscious of, and how much we are ignorant of! Who is a God like unto our God, who pardons iniquity and delights in mercy? At times Christ is precious to my soul, and I can bless God for His great mercies to such a worm as I am; and at times I feel as if grace could not possibly be in my heart, and all comfort, joy and peace are gone. I seem to have no heart to read the Bible, no heart to pray, much less to preach. Nevertheless, through mercy I continue to this day, and to the Lord be all the praise! Necessity compels us to contend for the renewings and revivings of God's Spirit, and makes us to know that all our springs are in God, and from Him all fruit comes.

It is an exercise to the mind to know what preaching invitations to accept, and what to refuse. It is well when we are not left to confer much with flesh and blood. To go where the Lord would have us go, and where He will condescend to bless His word through such worms, is the best. Last week I preached at Yately, Hartley Row and Wallingford. The friends in Wilts were asking whether you would come down there. . . I shall be glad to hear that poor P. is in a smoother path—though smooth paths are dangerous.

Yours affectionately,

William Tiptaft.

January 8, 1856

Dear Friend,

Your kind letter was duly received bringing "good tidings." I am glad to receive such blessed testimonies of the Lord's loving-kindness; for it confirms those who have been favored in a similar manner, that the hearts of others are filled with gratitude, when the Lord appears for them, and sets their souls at liberty. You have known adversity before prosperity. "I will rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities; You have not shut me up in the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a large room." When the Lord delivered my soul, thirteen years ago this month, how precious was Christ to my soul! The promises came with sweetness and power, as if they were all mine, and more than I could receive. They were to me like a full bosom to a ravished babe. Those who long for a deliverance are brought to value

such a wonderful mercy and favor, above all that the world calls good or great. After I was blessed how I desired that those I know who were in bondage might have their souls delivered; and I could understand different parts of Scripture, hymns, and accounts of the enjoyments of those whose experience had been published, in a way I never could before; and I could tell that others were not in my state who had not known these secrets. I did not want to be robbed; so I did not like to go into a shop to buy a common article. Those in much sorrow of soul, or in much enjoyment of soul, are not much fit for this world; but not many are mourning as sinners, or rejoicing as knowing themselves to be sinners saved by grace.

I have been tried about my blessing at times very much, whether it was real—and oftentimes, as Deer says, it has encouraged me, that if it were not a revelation, it was a revolution; for it caused a great change in my soul. It was a feast of fat things. My cup ran over and I shed many tears of joy. I had a new song put into my mouth; so I could bless and praise God. How precious was Psalm 116, and many of Deer's hymns. "That special grant of heaven," I never understood until then. Your bondage was both long and severe; so you can but rejoice now the jubilee time is come. Some will envy you, and some will be jealous; if others in their bonds are led to pray more earnestly for liberty, they will reap a benefit from your deliverance. You can never prize it too highly, nor can you ever speak too highly of the blessed Deliverer. If you had a thousand crowns, you would put them on His head, and if you had a thousand tongues, you would be glad to sing His praises with every one of them. It is a comfort for you to have a father to talk over these blessed realities with. His heart will be glad. "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found!"

Give my love to your father and any enquiring friends. May the Lord be with you, to bless and keep you, and may you still be favored with the Lord's presence.

Yours in the Truth,

William Tiptaft.

July 12, 1864 My dear Philpot,

You will be glad to hear that my soul has been greatly blessed. It was a blessing similar to the one I enjoyed at Oakham, last October 15th. "Thus far my God has led me on, and made His truth and mercy known." The friends were anxious that my soul should be blessed in my new house. Friend H. had been praying that my soul might be blessed on Lord's day, at chapel. Although a conveyance was sent twice for me, I was not well enough to go. About tea-time on the 10th, my soul began to enjoy the Lord's loving-kindness and goodness. I shed very many tears, and could realize my saving interest in the covenant of grace, so that I was not afraid to die. I did not want to be robbed. Friends came to see me, and were witnesses of my blessed frame of soul. I valued the blessing and do still. Anyone afflicted as I am will surely be grateful; and if their mouths were not filled with praises, they would be condemned for ingratitude. I would not barter away my spiritual blessing for riches and honors.

I read the March 'Gospel Standard', where the blessing is recorded of the first baptism at Abingdon. My soul was blessed at Oakham, May 22nd, in the evening; but I had a greater sense of God's loving-kindness and of His pardoning love this last time. I am near the Cemetery. What a very great mercy to be made fit for the great change! May the Lord cause me to pray earnestly that

my last days may be my best.

What a difference there is in having a knowledge of gospel mysteries, and having the soul blessed with heart-felt experience of the various portions of Scripture setting forth the liberty of the gospel, and also sweet enjoyment of hymns exalting the riches of God's grace in saving vile sinners. We cannot value too highly, a grain of humbling grace. Such a religion must be bought; no cross—no crown. It is through much tribulation that we are to go to glory. Then what can we say in favor of a smooth path, or of such ministers who please their hearers by encouraging those who have only a knowledge of gospel mysteries, and a little morality? Real saints, who fear God, find that they have many trials and crosses, and that they need them. How few ministers in London preach the Spirit's work! How little there is of that preaching that goes from heart to heart! Those who want to be searched and tried would be a very small proportion to those who want smooth things and peace. It is a very narrow way to heaven, and none can be rightly in the path except by God's grace; nor can they keep there, except by grace. What debtors we are to grace!

"Come, You fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Your grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise."

It is thirty-two years this month since I first preached in the large, dark city of London. Many have died in Christ, with a blessed experience of divine things; but how very many have died who have not had a religion of the right sort! Many great professors in town, before they die, may be brought low enough to say that it is a mercy to be well laid in the grave. God has been a kind and good God to me, in various ways, for more than sixty-one years. I wish to acknowledge His goodness to me.

"Mercies of providence and grace
Flow from Your bounteous hand;
These claim incessant songs of praise,
And fervent love demand."

How little gratitude for such great blessings in upholding, keeping and preserving us to the present moment! If we know that it is a mercy to be out of hell, we have no room for boasting. What a precious Savior Christ is to those who really need Him! May the Lord bless your own soul in preaching, and others will be blessed also.

Yours very affectionately,
William Tiptaft.

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