

The Life of Anne Audland Camm

by Anne Audland Camm

The sermon recounts the life of Anne Audland Camm, highlighting her unwavering faith and dedication to ministry amidst persecution and trials.

Scripture: Proverbs 31:30, Philippians 1:21, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:1, 1 Peter 4:16

Topics: "Persevering Faith", "Christian Ministry"

Description

Anne Audland Camm, a dedicated minister of the Gospel in the Society of Friends, led a life of faith, service, and perseverance despite facing imprisonment, false accusations, and harsh persecutions for her unwavering commitment to spreading the message of Christ. She exemplified humility, wisdom, and unwavering faith in the face of adversity, always seeking God's guidance and approval through prayer and Scripture reading. Anne's ministry bore much fruit, leading many to the Truth and establishing new meetings in various regions. Her life and teachings serve as a powerful example of enduring faith, sacrificial love, and steadfast dedication to the cause of Christ.

Transcript

A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE

OF

ANNE AUDLAND CAMM

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

IN

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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Anne Camm, the daughter of Richard Newby of the parish of Kendal in Westmoreland, a family of good repute, was born in the eighth month, 1627. Her parents gave her a good education in those branches of learning suitable for her sex and endeavored also to imbue her mind with the love of virtue and piety. In her thirteenth year she was sent to London to be under the care of her aunt and have the opportunity of further improvement in learning. She resided there seven years and having been favored from early youth with the precious visitations of the love of God to her soul, she sought an acquaintance with the most religious people and connected herself with the Puritans from an apprehension that they were the most pious and consistent.

After her return to reside at Kendal, her religious exercises continued and being desirous of finding a more perfect way, she joined herself to a company of sincere seekers who often met together for Divine worship, sometimes sitting in silence, at others times holding religious conference, and frequently they were engaged in fervent prayer. At these meetings John Audland sometimes attended, though he lived at a considerable distance, his mind being attracted thither by a desire to partake of that spiritual food which, through the goodness of the Lord, was at times dispensed among them. Anne Newby and he becoming acquainted were married about the year 1650, and in 1652 attended the memorable meeting held by George Fox at Fairbank chapel where his living and powerful ministry was blessed to their conviction, and they both joined the Society of Friends.

John Audland had previously been a preacher among the dissenters and his wife was esteemed a woman of great piety, but coming more fully under the operation of that baptism, which is with the Holy Ghost and fire, it wrought powerfully upon them, preparing their hearts as empty vessels, washed and sanctified, for the reception of the Lord's gifts. And in the following year they both came forth in the work of the ministry to the edification and comfort of their friends and the conviction of many others. She was in all respects a valuable help-meet and co-laborer with her worthy husband, endeared to him by similarity of disposition and pursuits and by the higher and stronger tie of heavenly love. In the occupancy of the gifts thus committed to them, they were indefatigable laborers, freely sacrificing their time and substance, the comforts of home and of each other's society, and enduring many hardships and bitter sufferings for their testimony to the great truths of the Christian religion.

Her first journey in the work of the ministry was into the county of Durham. And being engaged in preaching to the people in the town of Auckland on a market day, she was arrested and imprisoned. But that love which prompted her to seek the salvation of souls was not to be restricted by the narrow walls of a prison house. Under its constraining influence she continued preaching to the people from the window of the jail, declaring the truths of the Gospel and inculcating the necessity of being seriously engaged for the welfare of their immortal souls. Several persons were much affected by her testimony, and toward evening

she was discharged from confinement.

John Langstaff, a man of considerable eminence in the neighborhood, was so reached by her ministry that he voluntarily accompanied her to prison and on her release took her to his house. His wife, however, offended at her husband's conduct and apparent change, received him and his guest with language which showed her disapprobation. Unwilling to take up her lodging where she perceived her presence was not welcomed by one of the heads of the family, Anne withdrew into the fields, designing to seek some covert there where she might be secure for the night. But it happened providentially that Anthony Pearson, a respectable person of Rampshaw who had formerly been a justice, hearing through George Fox who was then at his house that Anne was in Aukland, came there just at this time and conveyed her to his residence. After her release, she continued her travels in the ministry of the Gospel, to the spiritual benefit of many. And when she believed her allotted service was accomplished, she returned home.

In the following year, accompanied by Mabel, wife of John Camm, she performed a journey through Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Leicester, and into Oxfordshire. At Banbury they went to the place of public worship, but the people dragged them out of the house in a rude and violent manner and abused them in the yard. The priest passing by, Anne Audland called his attention to it by saying, "Behold the fruits of thy ministry." The next morning they were brought before the mayor and two witnesses procured to swear that she had spoken blasphemy. From the peculiar temperament of the public mind at that time, as well as the laws then recently enacted, it was not difficult to procure convictions for blasphemy, and the enemies of Friends often brought forward this charge on the most false or insufficient ground in the hope of inflicting severe penalties. On the information of these accusers, Anne Audland was committed to prison and her companion dismissed. After some days, two reputable inhabitants of the town gave bond for her appearance at the ensuing assizes and she was set at liberty.

Indefatigable in the performance of her Lord's service, she employed her time in promulgating the glad tidings of life and salvation in Banbury and its vicinity and through the power and seal of the Holy Spirit attending her ministry, numbers were convinced of the truths she preached and turned to the grace of God in their own hearts, which bringeth salvation through Christ Jesus the Lord. Among these were her two bondsmen, who with several others joined the Society of Friends. The establishment of a large meeting in Banbury and several others in the adjacent country was a part of the fruit of her faithful labors. And to her friends in those places, she cherished the most affectionate regard to the latest period of her life. Thus was the malice of her enemies overruled for good and made subservient to the furtherance of that blessed cause which was dearer to her than kindred or life.

The success which attended her labors provoked the persecutors and they threatened that she would be burnt. Her enemies being greatly exasperated and having considerable influence on their side, several Friends thought it a duty to attend the assizes and by their sympathy and assistance, as well as their countenance, to encourage and support her in maintaining the cause of Truth and righteousness. Her husband, John Camm, Thomas Camm, and several others from London and Bristol, were among the number.

The indictment was grounded on the assertion that she had said, "God did not live." This was entirely a perversion of her words. In speaking to the priest of Banbury she had observed that "true words might be false in the mouths of some who spoke them," alluding to the wicked. And quoting in proof and explanation of her meaning the language of the Prophet Jeremiah, "Though they say the Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely." From these expressions they manufactured the charge of denying that God lived. But when the

evidence came to be examined, it did not prove what her enemies designed. During the course of the trial she conducted herself with so much prudence and innocent firmness, tempered with engaging modesty, and gave such pertinent and judicious answers to the questions propounded to her that the judge was evidently inclined to her acquittal, notwithstanding the power and influence of those who sought her condemnation.

Perceiving the shortness of the evidence and that the facts did not support the charge, he observed, in addressing the jury, that it was evident she acknowledged that the Lord her God and Redeemer lived but there were gods of the heathen also, that were dead gods, and did not live. Some of the justices who had been active in committing her, finding their designs were likely to be frustrated, stepped down from the bench among the jury, in order to influence their minds against her, which being observed by another of the justices, he rose and said, he would sit there no longer, until they showed more regard to justice. And other officers in the court threw down their staves and protested against their arbitrary and unrighteous proceedings.

On the return of the jury, they reported her "guilty of a misdemeanor only," which called forth the observation from some of her friends that such a verdict was not legal and that being indicted for one offence, they could not convict her of another but must report simply guilty or not guilty on the indictment by which she had been tried.

It is painful to observe the looseness of judicial proceedings at that period and how often the most sacred forms of justice which constituted the safeguard and bulwarks of the rights and liberty of the subject, and often of life itself, were prostrated and trampled upon to gratify feelings of private animosity or public hatred, or to satiate the cravings of a relentless and persecuting bigotry. Though legally and honorably acquitted, yet the judge, willing to appease the disappointed rage of her enemies, demanded bond for her good behavior which, as an innocent woman of good repute, she declined giving, and he remanded her to prison. Sensible, as it would seem, of the iniquity, as well as illegality of their proceedings, and willing to shrink from their share of the responsibility, the justices, one by one, stole away from the bench in confusion during this scene without any regular adjournment of the court, which occasioned much remark.

Being now left in the hands of her oppressors, she was thrust into a filthy dungeon, several steps below the ground, on one side of which ran the common sewer, emitting a horrible stench and giving admission to frogs and vermin which infested her apartment. It was also destitute of any convenience for making a fire to warm the inmates or to dry up the noxious vapors which exhaled from its filthy and disgusting contents.

Jane Waugh, who was also a minister among Friends, actuated by feelings of sympathy and affection for her imprisoned friend, came many miles to visit her and was rewarded for this Christian act of love with a participation of her sufferings, this being the only crime alleged against her by those merciless persecutors. Hard, however, as were their outward accommodations and cruel the deprivations they had to endure, there was peace and joy within. Conscious that they were suffering for the cause of that blessed Savior who suffered so much for them and supported by the sense of his holy presence, they passed the days of their imprisonment with cheerful contentment.

At the expiration of about eight months, and about a year and a half from her first commitment, Anne Audland was discharged. After holding a number of meetings in and about Banbury, and by her solicitation obtaining from the mayor and aldermen the liberation of her friend Jane Waugh, she traveled through

several counties to Bristol where she met her beloved husband. She joined him in religious service, continuing in company until they reached their home in Westmoreland.

Subsequently to this they were both engaged in frequent journeys for the purpose of promoting righteousness in the earth, sometimes together and at others separately, until her husband was rendered incapable of further labor by an attack of illness, which at length terminated his life in the year 1663, aged about thirty-four. He died in great peace, being often filled with praises to God, and overcome with the sense of his love and unspeakable joy as a foretaste of the glory and felicity which awaited his redeemed spirit.

This worthy couple, being nearly united to each other in the bonds of Christian affection, enjoyed much domestic happiness, which made the trial of their separation more severe to the bereaved widow. Yet, she sustained it with Christian fortitude and resignation to the Divine will, and in a tribute to her husband's memory, which she penned, thus speaks: "God, who by his providence joined us together in marriage in our young days, in his blessed counsel also caused his day to spring from on high upon us in the marvelous light and shining whereof he revealed his Son in us and gave us faith to believe in Him, the eternal Word of life, by which our souls came to be quickened and made alive in Him. And by the quickening of his holy power we were made one in a spiritual and heavenly relation, our hearts being knit together in the unspeakable love of God, which was our joy and delight and made our days together exceedingly comfortable, our temporal enjoyments being sanctified by it and made a blessing to us. How hard it was and how great a loss to me to part with so dear and tender a husband is far beyond what I can express. My tongue or pen is not able to set forth my sorrow. Yet in this I content myself, that it was the will of the Lord to take him away from the evil to come and that my loss, though great, is not to be compared to his eternal gain."

After remaining a widow between two and three years, Anne Audland was married to Thomas Camm, son of John Camm, the intimate friend and faithful companion of her former husband. Thomas Camm was a man of solid religious experience and a faithful minister of the Gospel. Their union being grounded in religion and entered into in the fear of God, with a single eye to his honor and the promotion of his cause, they experienced great comfort in each other's society and lived in the utmost harmony and affection for nearly forty years. Amid the various and severe trials which attended them, they found their religion to be an unfailing support to their minds and a source of peace and enjoyment, of which the malice and cruelty of persecutors could not deprive them, realizing the truth of that saying of Holy Writ, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

Anne Camm had her share in the sufferings of that trying day, but being steadfast in the faith and hope of the Gospel and earnest in seeking Divine support, she was enabled to sustain them with patient resignation and Christian fortitude. Beside her own imprisonments, she was frequently separated from her second husband as she had been from the former by a succession of tedious and close imprisonments for conscience sake. He was confined so closely at Kendal for three years that he was not permitted to see his family during all that time, and afterwards for nearly six years at Appleby.

In all his sufferings and services she participated with him as a faithful helpmeet, sympathizing with and encouraging him under his sufferings for the testimony of Jesus, supplying his place as far as she could in his family and business and exerting a prudent care to keep their outward concerns in commendable order. When he was at liberty and believed himself called to go from home in the work of the ministry, she not only freely resigned him to the Lord's service and encouraged him to faithfulness therein, but she was

also at times a powerful fellow-laborer with him in the Gospel, performing several journeys in company through different parts of the nation to the edification and comfort of the church.

In one of these, she had a severe attack of illness at Bristol which appeared to threaten her dissolution. But her mind was raised above the fear of death and preserved in a sweet and lively frame, many of her expressions being so weighty and affecting as to make a deep and lasting impression on the minds of her auditors. She warned all to prize their time and prepare for death while opportunity was mercifully granted, blessing the Lord that he had inclined her heart to do so in very early life, the fruit of which she now enjoyed, even peace unspeakable here, with a blessed assurance of eternal rest and felicity in the life to come. It pleased the Lord, however, to raise her from this bed of sickness and enable her to continue her zealous and fervent labors for the promotion of righteousness, serving the church of Christ faithfully for many years afterward.

Although she was deservedly held in honorable esteem for her works' sake, as well as her many virtues and endowments, natural and spiritual, yet she was preserved in humility, not doing her works to be seen of men, but rather seeking retirement and desiring that "honor which cometh from God only." It was her practice often to retire alone into her closet or some other private place and there wait on the Lord in fervent prayer to seek his counsel and approbation and also to set apart some time daily for reading the Holy Scriptures and other religious books.

In the attendance of meetings for the worship of God, she was an example of great diligence, very reverent in her waiting on him. And though endued with an excellent gift in the ministry, beyond most, yet she was not forward to appear, either in preaching or prayer. When she was thus engaged, her manner was fervent and weighty and her testimony in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, to the refreshment of the church and the awakening and warning of transgressors.

In large public meetings where there were brethren well qualified for the Lord's work her voice was rarely heard unless under some extraordinary constraint, and being gifted with a sound understanding and discernment, she knew when to speak and when to be silent, keeping her station and place in the Truth. In these respects she was a good example. And when she saw any too hasty or forward in their public appearances, as a wise, nursing mother she tenderly admonished them, often with good effect, taking care also to encourage those sincere and timid ones who came forth in a testimony for God, as with trembling hearts and a stammering tongue. Thus she demeaned herself as a humble servant of her Lord and Master, Christ Jesus, washing his disciples' feet and helping and serving the least and tenderest of his flock.

Her last public testimony was at the Monthly Meeting of Kendal, the second of the ninth month, 1705. Although far advanced in years and afflicted with the infirmities incident to old age, yet the liveliness and fervency of her spirit remained unabated and her faculties strong and clear to admiration. In this farewell address, she pressed her friends with affecting earnestness to be faithful and diligent in the service of their Lord, that they might receive a blessed reward with those who had nearly filled up the work of their day and were about to enter their eternal rest.

On the following day she was attacked with the disease which terminated her life. And during the course of her illness, she realized the blessed effects of her religion in supporting her under bodily infirmity and pain and enabling her to look forward to her approaching change with joy, in the humble assurance that a crown of unfading glory awaited her.

Because her husband, who best knew her worth, was affected with sorrow at the prospect of being deprived of so valuable a companion, with a noble fortitude she endeavored to console and encourage him to submit with cheerful resignation to the Divine will, saying, "My dear, if it be the good pleasure of the Lord, who joined us together and has blessed us hitherto, now to separate us, I entreat thee to be content and give me freely up to the Lord, for thou knowest we must part. And if I go first, it is only what I have desired of the Lord many a time. I believe that the consideration of the desolate condition that I would be left in if I survived thee will induce thee more freely to commit me to the Lord, whose I am and whom I have loved, feared, and served with an upright heart all my days. His unspeakable peace I now enjoy and his saving health is my portion forever. I pray thee, be content with what the Lord pleases to do with me. Whether it be life or death, his holy will be done. Let us leave all to the Lord, and however it be, all will be well. I have loved thee with my soul, and God has blessed us, and he will bless thee and be with thee, and make up all thy losses. Death is gain to me, though it be thy loss. And I hope for the sake of my gain that thou wilt bear thy loss with patience. I bless the Lord that I am prepared for my change. I am full of assurance of eternal salvation and of receiving a crown of glory, through my dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whom God the Father has sent to bless me and many more by turning us from the evil of our ways into the just man's path, which shines more and more unto the perfect day. If God now pleases to finish my course and to take me out of this earthly tabernacle, I am well contented. I am clear and have discharged myself in the sight of God to all Friends, except that it has of late been upon my mind to send a farewell epistle to Friends in the South."

She said that the substance of what she wished to communicate to them was the remembrance of her dear love to them all, with tender advice to the professors of Truth to keep in the simplicity thereof, out of all heights and exaltation, under the power of the cross of Christ which would crucify them more and more to the world and baptize them into Christ. Thus they would put on Christ Jesus the new and heavenly man in whom they would become new creatures, prepared to serve God in the Spirit and to enjoy the unity thereof in the bond of peace and love which the God of this world is laboring to break. "I have seen him," she said, "at work to make a breach and separation among Friends and if he prevails, it will be under specious pretenses of a more angelic appearance than at any time before, which will deceive those who live above the cross and true self-denial. And I would warn all to stand their ground in the power of God which alone can bruise Satan and preserve out of his subtle snares."

Several Friends coming to see her, she exhorted them to prize their time. And after imparting much excellent counsel, added, "I bless my God that I lie now in great peace and contentment, though my body be afflicted with pain. Oh! that it may be so with you all, my dear friends."

Being very weak and low, inquiry was made if she knew some Friends who were present? To which she replied, "Yes, I know you every one. I have my understanding as clear as ever. How should it be otherwise, since my peace is made with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. I have no disturbance of mind and my understanding and judgment are clear. It would be sad, indeed, to lie under affliction of body and of mind also, to feel pinching pangs of body, even to death, and to want peace with God. Oh, that would be intolerable! Oh, let my soul praise the Lord for his peace and plenteous redemption!"

It being proposed to send for her daughter and her son-in-law who was skilled in physic, she seemed unwilling, saying to her husband, "Be not careful in the matter. The Lord my God is near me, and I have thy company. It is enough. And all will be well if this lump of clay in which I dwell is dissolved. I have full assurance of a house and dwelling of which God is the maker that will never wax old or be dissolved. Oh, my soul, bless thou the Lord and be glad in his salvation for evermore!"

Her illness increased and many Friends coming to see her, she was often engaged in exhorting them respecting the work of the soul's salvation. On one occasion she said to some, "The cross is the only way to the crown immortal. Shun it not, therefore, lest you fall short of the crown. Stand up nobly for your testimony to the Truth in all things, and especially against the antichristian yoke of tithes, for which many have not only suffered great spoiling of their goods, but imprisonment unto death and received the crown of life. Oh, if all who have been called to this testimony had stood firm and true therein, God would have wrought for his people more abundantly. But unbelief makes a long wilderness, and it is well if some die not in it and never see the promised land."

About two days before her decease she gave much good advice to her grandchildren and servants, and thus addressed her husband, "My dear, thou hast spent much time and strength in serving the cause of Truth and thy friends. Thy reward with God is sure. I never grudged thy absence in that good service. And if it now be the time of our parting, as I think it will, I desire thee to free thyself from the things of the world as much as may be that thou mayest with the more freedom pursue thy honorable service for Truth to the end of thy days. I trust the Lord will give thee strength to travel again and warn all, but especially the rich, to keep low and not be high minded. For humility and holiness are the badge of our profession. God Almighty keep us all low and humble. It is a safe and blessed state. One thing I beg of thee--give me up freely to the Lord. The Lord joined us and gave us to each other, so let us bless his name if he now take us from each other as to the outward, for our joining in spirit remains forever. Oh! therefore, let me go easy out of this world where I have had a great share of trouble many ways, as thou knowest, and go to that haven of rest where I have a full assurance of entering."

A little before she died she was attacked with fainting, and after reviving, she observed, "I was glad, thinking I was going to my eternal rest without disturbance." Again, she said, "I have both a sight and sense of eternal rest with God in the world to come and, therefore, I labor hard to be swallowed up in immortal life and to be made possessor of that rest which cannot be disturbed, where sorrow will cease forever. Oh, my soul, this is thy glorious portion, therefore bless thou the Lord and wait patiently his appointed season."

Soon afterward she desired to be raised up in the bed, and her pains increasing, she grew very weak and faint, and observed, "Methinks I grow weak and cold. My hands and feet are very cold, but my heart is strong, and before it yields I must meet with sharper pains than I have yet felt. My God has hitherto laid a gentle hand upon me."

A while afterward, her sufferings being great, she said "This pain is hard to flesh and blood, but it must be endured a little time. Ease and eternal rest are at hand and I am glad that death is so near. Remember me to all my dear babes and grandchildren. I shall behold them no more with these eyes. God Almighty bless them all and make them his children so that I may enjoy them forever in the heavens above. Neither shall I see my sons and daughter. Ah, my prodigal son, what shall I do for him! I have prayed and longed for his return. The time may come. God grant that it may. But I shall not see it in my time. He is my son, the son of a godly father, [her former husband,] and therefore I cannot but love him. Tell him that it is his immortal soul's well-being for which I am concerned, not so much for his outward state here. For that, however miserable, will quickly end. But the misery of the soul separated from God will never end. And, my dear, though our counsel has not had the desired effect, yet I do entreat thee to remain a father to him and counsel him again and again. Leave him not to run on in the way of misery, but labor and pray for his return. My love is to his wife. I desire that she may mind heavenly things. And I pray God to bless their offspring, that they may walk in the footsteps of their grandfather who is gone to his eternal rest."

The day of her death being that of the Monthly Meeting, many Friends came to visit her, to whom she expressed, with much fervency, her joy and comfort in the salvation of God and his peace and perfect redemption. Observing some of them to weep, she said, "Be not concerned for me. All is well. I have only death to encounter, and the sting of it is wholly taken away. The grave has no victory and my soul is ascending above all sorrow and pain. Let me go freely to my heavenly mansion--disturb me not in my passage."

She then desired the Friends present to go to meeting, adding, "Let me not hinder the Lord's business, but let it be chief in your minds and faithfully done by you all, that at the end you may receive your reward. Mine is sure. I have not been negligent, and my day's work is done."

Apprehending that the hand of death was upon her and finding her pain increased, she earnestly besought the Lord to help her through the last conflict, saying, "Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Thou hast not forsaken me, blessed be thy name forever. O my blessed Lord and Savior, who suffered for me and for all mankind those great pains in thy holy body upon the cross, remember me, thy poor handmaid, in this my great bodily affliction. My trust is in thee. My hope is in thee only, my dear Lord. O come, come, dear Lord Jesus, come quickly and receive my soul. To thee I yield it up. Help me now in my bitter pangs."

Her husband now kneeled down by her and prayed that the Lord would make her passage easy, and their prayers were graciously heard and answered. She had no more severe pain, but gently drew her breath shorter and shorter. She observed that it was good to leave all to the Lord, and calling upon those present, said, "Oh, pray, pray, pray," and so fell asleep in Jesus, in a good old age, being in her seventy-ninth year. She died the 30th of the ninth month, 1705, and was honorably buried the 3rd of the following month, her remains being accompanied to the ground by many ancient Friends and others from thirteen of the adjacent meetings.

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