

Short Account of Sarah Cheevers

by Sarah Cheevers

Catharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers' courageous stand against the Inquisition serves as a testament to the power of faith and the importance of remaining steadfast in the face of adversity.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, Matthew 5:10, Romans 8:35, 2 Corinthians 4:8, 1 Peter 4:16

Topics: "Persecution", "Faithfulness"

Description

Catharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, valiant ministers of the Gospel, endured nearly four years of cruel treatment in the Inquisition in Malta. Despite facing threats, imprisonment, and pressure to convert to Catholicism, they remained steadfast in their faith, boldly testifying against idolatry and superstition. Their unwavering commitment to God's truth, even in the face of severe persecution, inspired admiration and respect from those who witnessed their courage and resilience.

Transcript

A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF

THE SUFFERINGS

OF

THOSE VALIANT MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL

CATHARINE EVANS

AND

SARAH CHEEVERS

Who for Nearly Four Years Endured

The Cruelties of the Inquisition in Malta

As Related in

THE HISTORY OF
THE RISE, INCREASE, AND PROGRESS
OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD CALLED QUAKERS

By

William Sewel

In the year 1658, Catharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, having drawings in their minds to travel towards Alexandria, went in a ship from England to Leghorn in Italy, and having been thirty-one days between Plymouth and Leghorn, they at length safely landed at that city where they found some of their countrymen and friends and stayed there several days dispersing many books when occasion offered. They spoke also with people of various degrees without being molested by any. Thence they got passage in a Dutch ship bound for Alexandria, but the master of the ship, being in company with another ship going to Malta, went also thither, though he had no business in the place. Before they came there, Catharine fell into such an anguish of mind that she cried out, "Oh! we have a dreadful cup to drink at that place!" Being come into the harbor and standing on the deck of the ship and looking upon the people who stood on the walls, she said in her heart, "Shall ye destroy us? If we give up to the Lord, then he is sufficient to deliver us out of your hands. But if we disobey our God, all these could not deliver us out of his hand." And so all fear of man was taken from them.

The next day, being the First-day of the week, they went on shore where the English consul met them and asked them what they came there for. They answered what they thought convenient and gave him some books. Then he told them there was an Inquisition and kindly inviting them to his house he said all that he had was at their service while they were there. They accepting of this invitation went thither, and many came to see them, whom they called to repentance, so that several became tender.

About night they went on ship-board, and the next day came again into the city, and going to the governor he told them he had a sister in the nunnery who desired to see them. Thereupon they went to the nunnery and talked with the nuns and gave them books. One of their priests, who brought them into the chapel, would have them bow to the high altar, but they refused, being grieved because of the idolatry committed there, and went to the consul's again, where they stayed some weeks.

During that time they once went into one of the places of worship in the time of worship and Catharine standing in the midst of the people, turned her back to the high altar and kneeling down, she lifted up her voice in praise to the Lord. The priest that officiated put off his surplice and kneeled near her till she had done. Then he reached forth his hand to them to come to him and offered her a token, which she taking to be the mark of the beast, refused. Thereupon he put the piece into Sarah's hand, but she gave it to him again and showed him her purse that she had to give, if any had need, and as yet was in no want.

He then asked if they were Calvinists or Lutherans? And they answering 'Nay.' He asked if they would go to Rome to the pope. They denying this, he asked if they were Catholics, to which they said they were true Christians, servants of the living God. But since they had yet learned but little of the language spoken there, they expressed themselves very defectively. What they did was partly in words and partly by signs, as well as they could. And many that came about them were amazed. However at last they departed peaceably.

Some time later they went again to a mass-house where the sacrament, as they call it, was administered. There were many lights, and great costliness and fineries, and being grieved because of their idolatry, they stood about three quarters of an hour, weeping and trembling, especially Catharine, and this so struck the congregation with amazement that some removed further from them for fear. At length they both went out, but yet under such a trembling that they went along the street reeling and staggering, so that they became a wonder to all that saw them.

They were about three months at the house of the English consul and he, for that reason, being under a suspicion, did not what he might have done to save them. But in some respect he delivered them up to the Inquisition, though by his oath he was obliged to protect the English there. In the meanwhile he kept them in his house and suffered them not to go abroad, though the governor had told him he might let them go about their business, "For," said he, "they are holiest women." The consul could also have let them go free before they came under the power of the black rod.

Now they perceiving that something to their prejudice was in agitation and making account already that a prison would be their lot, they signified that they suspected him and told him that Pilate would do the Jews a service, and yet wash his hands in innocency. He being at a loss, required a sign of them, if they were the messengers of God. And they gave him to understand that this might serve for a sign, that it would be well with them, but that it should not go off well with him.

Afterwards it happened that they were sent for by the Inquisition and that day the consul's wife brought them some victuals. But as she passed by, Catharine was smitten, as with an arrow, to the heart, and she seemed to hear a voice, saying, "She hath obtained her purpose." Then Catharine would not taste of the meat, but went aside and wept exceedingly. The consul called her and told her that the Inquisition had sent for them, having received letters from Rome, but that he did hope they should be set free, which however was not true, for he knew, (as they understood afterwards,) that there was a room prepared for them in the prison of the Inquisition. Neither was it long ere there came the chancellor, the consul, and one with the black rod, who took them before the lord inquisitor and he asked them whether they had changed their minds, for it seems that had been required of them before. But they answered, "No," and that they should not change from the Truth.

Then he asked what new light it was they talked of. They answered that it was no new light, but the same the prophets and apostles bore testimony to. Next he asked how this light came to be lost since the primitive times. They replied that it was not lost, men had it still in them, but they did not know it, by reason that the night of apostasy had overspread the nations. Then he said that if they would change their minds and do as they would have them, they should say so, or else they would use them as they pleased. But they signifying that they would not change, said, "The will of the Lord be done."

He then arose, and went away with the consul, leaving them there. And the man with the black rod and the keeper took and put them into an inner room in the Inquisition, which had only two little holes in it for light and air. This place was so exceeding hot that it seemed as if their intent was to stifle them, as we may see in the sequel.

Not long after that they were brought before the inquisitors to be further examined, and they not only asked their names, but also the names of their husbands and parents, and what children they had, and also why they came thither. To this they answered that they were servants of the living God, come there to call them to repentance.

The next day they were called again, but then examined apart, and Sarah being asked whether she was a true Catholic, said that she was a true Christian, worshiping God in Spirit and in Truth. Then they held forth a crucifix to her and would have her swear that she would speak the truth. To this she said that she would speak the truth, but she would not swear, for Christ had commanded, "Swear not at all."

The English consul who was present endeavored to persuade her to swear and said that none should do her any harm. She having some books with her, they were taken from her, and they asked her wherefore she brought those books. To this she answered that it was because they could not speak their language. Then they asked her what George Fox was. She answered, "A minister." Further they asked, wherefore she came thither. And she replied, to do the will of God as she was moved of the Lord.

The next question was, how the Lord did appear unto her, to which she answered, "By his Spirit." And being asked whether she did see his presence and hear his voice, her answer was that she heard his voice and saw his presence. They then asked what he said to her. She answered that he required of her to go over the seas to do his will. This made them ask how she knew it was the Lord who required this of her. To which she answered that since he had signified to her that his living presence should go along with her, she found him to perform his promise, for she did feel his living presence. After this they went away.

Two days later the inquisitors came and called for Catharine, and offering her the crucifix, they told her that the magistrates commanded her to swear that she would speak the truth. To this she said that she would speak the truth, for she was a witness for God, but she would not swear, since a greater than the magistrates said, "Swear not at all; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay; for whatsoever is more, cometh of evil." Then said they, "You must obey the justice and he commands you to swear." She returned, "I shall obey justice, but if I should swear, I should do an unjust thing; for the just, (Christ,) said, 'Swear not at all.'"

Then they asked her whether she did own that Christ that died at Jerusalem. She answered, "We own the same Christ and no other. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Next they asked her what she would do at Jerusalem. She answered that she did not know that she would go thither, but she intended to have gone to Alexandria. They asked what to do. Her answer was, "The will of God. And if the Lord opened my mouth, I would call people to repentance and declare to them the day of the Lord and direct their minds from darkness to light." They asked her also whether she did see the Lord. She answered that God was a Spirit, and he was spiritually discerned.

Now, though from the answers of these women, little could be got to blame them, yet they were kept close prisoners, which seemed to grieve the English consul, for he came to them with tears in his eyes, and said he was sorry as for his own flesh. For it seems that he had received something for delivering them up, which he would willingly have given back if thereby he could have obtained their liberty. But a slavish fear possessed him and he never had peace while he lived.

Some days after this came a magistrate, two friars, the man with the black rod, a scribe, and the keeper of the Inquisition to examine them and they were again required to swear. But they answered as before that Christ said, "Swear not at all," and that the apostle James gave the same charge. Hereupon the magistrate asked if they would speak truth and they said, "Yes." He then asked whether they believed the creed, to which they said that they did believe in God and in Jesus Christ who was born of the Virgin Mary and suffered at Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate and arose again from the dead the third day, and ascended to his Father, and shall come to judgment, to judge both quick and dead. He further asked how

they did believe the resurrection. And they answered that they believed that the just and the unjust should arise according to the Scriptures.

Next he said, "Do you believe in the saints and pray to them?" To this their answer was, "We believe in the communion of saints, but we do not pray to them, but to God only, in the name of Jesus." His next question was whether they did believe in the Catholic church. And they answered that they did believe in the true church of Christ, "But the word Catholic, we have not read in Scripture." He also asked if they believed in purgatory. They said, "No, but a heaven and a hell."

Then one of the friars, who was an Englishman, said that we were commanded to pray for the dead and since those that are in heaven have no need and for those that are in hell there is no redemption, therefore there must be a purgatory. And he asked if they believed in the holy sacrament, to which their answer was that they never read the word sacrament in Scripture. The friar replied, "Where you read in your Bibles sanctification, it is sacrament in ours." And he said that their holy sacrament was bread and wine, which they converted into the flesh and blood of Christ, by the virtue of Christ. "Then," said the women, "ye work miracles, for Christ's virtue is the same as it was when he turned water into wine at the marriage in Cana."

The friar said, "If we do not eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, we have no life in us." They replied, "The flesh and blood of Christ is spiritual and we do feed upon it daily, for that which is begotten of God in us can no more live without spiritual food than our temporal bodies can without temporal food." Then he said, "You never hear mass." "But we," said they, "hear the voice of Christ. He only hath the words of eternal life and we find that is sufficient for us." He said, "Ye are heretics and heathens," to which they replied, "They are heretics that live in sin and wickedness, and such are heathens that know not God."

Then it was asked them who was the head of their church. They told him, "Christ." It was further asked what George Fox was, and they said, "He is a minister of Christ." And it being asked whether he sent them, their answer was, "No, the Lord did move us to come." Then the friar said, "Ye are deceived and have not the faith, though ye had all virtues." And they replied, "Faith is the ground whence virtues proceed."

Hereupon it was told them that if they would take the holy sacrament they might have their liberty or else the pope would not releave them for millions of gold, but they should lose their souls and bodies too. To this they said, "The Lord hath provided for our souls, and our bodies are freely given up to serve him."

Then it was asked them if they did not believe that marriage was a sacrament and they answered that it was an ordinance of God. It was further asked if they did believe men could forgive sins and their answer was that none could forgive sins but God only. After some other words to and fro, the women asked, "Wherein have we wronged you, that we should be kept prisoners all the days of our life? Our innocent blood will be required at your hands." The friar said he would take their blood upon him. They replied that the time would come that he should find he had enough upon him without it.

Then it was told them that the pope was Christ's vicar and what he did was for the good of their souls, to which they answered, "The Lord hath not committed the charge of our souls to the pope, nor to you neither, for he hath taken them into his own possession, glory be to his name for ever." Then it was said unto them that they must be obedient. And they returned that they were obedient to the government of Christ's Spirit or light. The friar said, "None have the true light but the Catholics. The light that you have is

the spirit of the devil." "Woe," said they, "to him that curseth Jesus. Can the devil give power over sin and iniquity? That would destroy his own kingdom."

"You," replied the friar, "are laughed at and mocked of every one." "But," said they, "what will become of the mockers?" "It was no matter," he said, "you run about to preach and have not the true faith." They returned, "The true faith is held in a pure conscience, void of offense towards God and men. Every one hath the true faith that believeth in God and in Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. But they that say they do believe and do not keep his commandments are liars, and the truth is not in them." The friar confessed this to be true, though he was continually very troublesome to them with threats, to make them turn. And to this end they were locked up in a room that was so exceedingly hot that it was said that it was impossible that they could live long in it. They were also so exceedingly stung by gnats when they lay in bed that their faces became swelled, as if they had been sick of the small-pox, so that many began to be afraid of them, and the friar said to Sarah that he spied an evil spirit in her face.

At another time being examined, they were asked how many of their friends were gone forth into the ministry and into what parts. They answering to that query what they knew, it was told them that all that came where the pope had anything to do should never go back again. But they said that the Lord was as sufficient for them as he was for the children in the fiery furnace, and their trust was in God. Catharine being sickly was asked why she looked so, whether her spirit was weak. She answered, "Nay, my body is weak, because I eat no meat." The friar hearing this offered her a license to eat flesh, for it was in their lent. But she refused this, and said that she could not eat anything at all. And going afterwards to bed, she lay there night and day for twelve days together, fasting and sweating, for she was in much affliction and great was her agony.

After having lain ten days, there came to her two friars, the chancellor, the man with the black rod, a physician, and a keeper. One of the friars commanded Sarah to go out of the room and then pulled Catharine's hand out of the bed, and said, "Is the devil so great in you that you cannot speak?" To this she said, "Depart from me, thou worker of iniquity. The power of the Lord is upon me, and dost thou call him devil?" Hereupon he took his crucifix to strike her on the mouth, and she asked him whether it were that cross that crucified Paul to the world and the world unto him. This ignorant monk said it was. But she denied it, and said, "The Lord hath made me a witness for himself against all workers of iniquity."

He then bade her to be obedient and went to strike her, at which she said, "Wilt thou strike me?" And he saying he would, she further said, "Thou art out of the apostles' doctrine, for they were no strikers. I deny thee to be any of them who went in the name of the Lord." To which he said that he had brought her a physician in charity. And she returned, "The Lord is my physician and my saving health."

The monk growing angry said she should be whipped, quartered, and burnt that night at Malta, and her mate too. But she told him modestly that she did not fear because the Lord was on their side and he had no power but what he had received. And if he did not use it to the same end that the Lord gave it to him, the Lord would judge him. At these words they were all struck dumb and went away. Then the friar went to Sarah and told her that Catharine called him a worker of iniquity. "Did she?" said Sarah. "Art thou without sin?" To which he said that he was. "Then," replied Sarah, "she hath wronged thee?"

Late in the evening something was proclaimed at the prison gate by beating of a drum, and early in the morning some came again with a drum and guns. It seems that this was done on purpose to frighten these poor women and to make them believe that they would be put to death, for indeed they looked for little

else, having for several weeks expected that they should be led to the stake. But they were fully resigned and given up to what the Lord might be pleased to permit.

In the meanwhile, Catharine continuing sickly, the friar came again with the physician. But she told him she could not take anything unless she felt freedom. He then said that they must never come forth of that room while they lived, and pretending to be kind to them, he further said, "You may thank God and me that it is no worse, for it was like to be worse." Thereupon they said that if they had died, they had died as innocent as ever any servants of the Lord. He then said that it was well they were innocent. And turning to Sarah, he bade her take notice what torment Catharine would be in at the hour of death, saying that thousands of devils would fetch her soul to hell. But Sarah told him that she did not fear any such thing.

He then asked Catharine if she did not think it expedient for the elders of the church to pray over the sick. And she said, "Yea, such as are moved of the Spirit of the Lord." He then fell down on his knees and did howl and wish bitter wishes upon himself if he had not the true faith. The physician in the meanwhile was enraged because she did not bow to him.

Now whilst Catharine was sick, Sarah was not without great affliction, for it grieved her to see her dear companion so ill. And she easily foresaw that if Catharine died, her own sufferings would be heavier. But yet she was given up to the will of the Lord and would not in the least grudge at Catharine's eternal rest. But in time Catharine began to mend and grow hungry, and eating, she was refreshed. But the room wherein they were locked was so excessively hot that they were often made to rise out of their bed and lie down at the chink of the door for air to fetch breath. And this heat was the greater, because it came not only from without but within also, which so affected them that their skin was parched, the hair fell off their heads, and they fainted often, and their afflictions were so great that when it was day they wished for night and when it was night, they wished for day. Yea, through human weakness, they desired death, eating their bread weeping and mingling their drink with tears.

Once Catharine asked the monks, who came to her with a physician and said it was in charity, whether they did not keep them in that hot room to kill them, and then bring a physician to keep them longer alive. To this the friar said that the inquisitor would lose his head if he should take them thence, and it was better to keep them there, than to kill them. Then they wrote to the inquisitor and laid their innocence before him, and said also that if it were their blood they thirsted after, they might take it any other way as well as to smother them in that hot room. But this so incensed him that he sent the friar to them, who took away their ink-horns, their Bibles being taken from them before. They asked then why their goods were taken away, to which it was answered, "All is ours, and your lives too, if we will." Then they asked how they had forfeited their lives, to which it was told them, "For bringing books and papers." They replied that if there were anything in them that was not true, they might write against it. To this the monk said that they scorned to write to fools and asses that did not know true Latin. And it was further told them that the inquisitor would have them separated because Catharine was weak, and she should go into a cooler room, but Sarah should abide there. Then Catharine took Sarah by the arm, and said, "The Lord hath joined us together, and woe be to them that part us. I had rather die here with my friend, than part from her." This so struck the friar so that he went away and came no more in five weeks, and the door of their room was not opened in all that time.

Then the monks came again to part them, but Catharine was sick and broken out from head to foot. They thereupon sent for a doctor, and he said they must have air or else they must die. This was told the inquisitor, and he ordered the door to be set open six hours in a day. But ten weeks after, they were

parted, which was such a grievous affliction that they declared death itself would not have been so hard to them. But the monks said they corrupted each other and that being parted, they would bow and submit. But they saw themselves disappointed, for the women were stronger afterwards than before, the Lord fitting them for every condition.

Before they were parted, the friars brought them a scourge of small hempen cords, asking them if they would have it and saying they were used to whip themselves till the blood came. But the women said that whips could not reach the devil because he sat upon the heart. Then the monks said, "All the people of Malta are for you. If ye will be Catholics, none but will like you." To which they returned, "The Lord hath changed us into that which changeth not." The monks then said, "All our holy women do pray for you and ye shall be honored of all the world if ye will turn." They replied, "The world lies in wickedness, and the honor and glory of the world we have denied." To this the monks said, "You shall be honored of God too, but now ye are hated of all." "This," said one of the women, "is an evident token whose servants we are. The servant is not greater than his Lord."

Once, on a First-day of the week, the friars came and commanded them to kneel down with them to prayer. They signified that they could not pray but as they were moved by the Lord. Then the friars commanded them the second time and kneeled down by their bedside and prayed after their manner, which being done, they said to the women, "We have tried your spirits. Now we know what spirit ye are of." But they told them they could not know that unless their minds were turned to the light of Christ in their consciences.

The English friar then growing angry showed them his crucifix and bade them look on it. But they told him that the Lord saith, "Thou shalt not make to thyself the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

The friar seeing Sarah speak so boldly to him called for the irons to chain her. She then bowed her head and said to him, "Not only my hands and feet, but my neck also for the testimony of Jesus." The friar seeming appeased, said he would do them any good he could, for he saw what they did was not in malice. And the friars came often and said to them, "If ye would do but a little, ye should be set at liberty. But you will do nothing at all, but are against everything." To which they returned that they would do anything that might tend to God's glory.

While they were imprisoned here, it happened that the Inquisition house was new built or repaired, which took up about the space of a year and a half, and during this time some of the great ones came often to see the building, which gave opportunity to these women to speak to them and to declare the Truth in the name of the Lord.

Now though they were threatened by the monks for preaching the light of Christ so boldly, yet not only the magistrates, but the lord inquisitor grew moderate towards them and gave orders that they should have pens, ink, and paper to write to England. And they seemed inclined to have them set at liberty, but the friars worked mightily against it and had labored about three quarters of a year to part them before they could bring it to pass. And when at length they had effected it, they told Catharine that they should never see one another's faces again.

In the meanwhile Catharine being sickly had little stomach to eat and had no mind to eat anything but what came from Sarah to her. And having told one of the friars that she wanted somebody to wash her linen

and to prepare some warm victuals for her, he sent to Sarah to know if she would do it for her, and she said she would. And by that means they for some weeks heard of one another every day. And the friar said once to Catharine, "You may free yourself of misery when you will. You may make yourself a Catholic and have your freedom to go where you will," to which she told him, "Thus I might have a name that I did live when I was dead. Thou hast Catholics enough already. Endeavor to bring some of them to the light in their consciences so that they may stand in awe and sin not." But he was so eager that he said he would lose one of his fingers if she and Sarah would be Catholics. Then she told him it was Babylon that was built with blood, but Zion was redeemed through judgment.

Many ways were used to draw them off. And once they would have persuaded her to set a picture at her bed's head for a representation. But she said with abhorrence, "What, do ye think I want a calf to worship? Do ye walk by the rule of Scriptures?" To which the friar said, "We do, but we have traditions too." She replied, "If your traditions derogate or dissent from the fundamentals of Christ's doctrine, the prophets, and apostles, I deny them in the name of the Lord." But he asserted that they did not. Then she asked what rule they had to burn those that could not join with them for conscience sake, and he returned, "St. Paul did worse, for he gave them to the devil." And he further said that they did judge all damned that were not of their faith. Then she objected to him several of the superstitious rites of the church of Rome, and mentioned also the forbidding of marriage, "Which," said she, "is a doctrine of devils, according to the saying of the apostle."

The friar being put to a nonplus told her that St. Peter was the pope of Rome and did build an altar there, and the pope was his successor, and he could do what he would. But she refuted this with sound reason. He then boasting of the antiquity of their church, she signified that the church she was of was yet older. "For," said she, "our faith was from the beginning and Abel was of our church."

The friar being at a loss and no longer able to hold out against Catharine went to Sarah and talked with her at the same rate and she also told him Abel was of our church. To this he said, "Abel was a Catholic," and quite overshooting himself, he said likewise, "And Cain and Judas were so." To which Sarah returned, "Then the devil was a Catholic and I will not be one. I will not turn, though ye would tear me to pieces. I believe the Lord would enable me to endure it."

At another time the said friar, whose name was Malachy, came again to Catharine and told her that if she would be a Catholic, she should say so. Otherwise they would use her badly and she would never see the face of Sarah again, but she would die by herself, and a thousand devils would carry her soul to hell.

She then asked him if he were the messenger of God to her. And he said, "Yes." "Why, what is my sin," said she, "or wherein have I provoked the Lord that he doth send me such a message?" "It is," returned the monk, "because you will not be a Catholic."

Whereupon she said, "I deny thee and thy message too, and the spirit which speaks in thee, for the Lord never spoke so." He growing angry said that he would lay her in a whole pile of chains, where she would see neither sun nor moon. She intimating how resigned she was, said he could not separate her from the love of God in Christ Jesus, lay her wherever he would. And he further saying he would give her to the devil, she resumed, "I do not fear all the devils in hell, for the Lord is my keeper. Though thou hadst the Inquisition, with all the countries round about it on thy side, and I was alone by myself, I do not fear them. If they were thousands more, the Lord is on my right hand, and the worst they can do is but to kill the body. They can touch my life no more than the devil could Job's."

Then the monk said she should never go out of that room alive. To which she courageously said, "The Lord is sufficient to deliver me. But whether he will or no, I will not forsake the living fountain to drink at a broken cistern. And ye have no law to keep us here, but such a law as Ahab had for Naboth's vineyard." The monk then cursing himself and calling upon his gods, ran away. And as he was pulling the door, he said, "Abide there, member of the devil." To which she said, "The devil's members do the devil's works, and the woes and plagues of the Lord will be upon them for it."

He then went and told the inquisitor of it, who laughed at him, and before he came again, Catharine was moved out of that room. When he came, he brought one of the inquisitor's men with him and two very good hens, and said that the lord inquisitor had sent them in love to her. To which she said that she received his love, but yet she showed herself not very ready to accept them and signified that she was willing to pay for them, being loth to be chargeable to any whilst she had of her own.

The friar, who it seems would have had them lay down their money at his feet, said they must not count anything their own, for in the primitive times they sold their possessions and laid them down at the apostles' feet. He further said, "You shall not want anything, though we should spend a thousand crowns. But you are proud, because you will not take the inquisitor's hens which he sent you in charity."

She then asked what kind of charity this was, since he kept her in prison. The friar said that it was for the good of their souls that he kept them in prison, further adding, "If you had not been going to preach, ye might have gone where ye would." She returned, "Our souls are out of the inquisitor's reach. Why should your love extend more to us than to your own family, for they commit all manner of sin which you cannot charge us with. Why do not ye put them into the inquisition and bid them turn?"

He then said, "You have not the true faith," and showing her his crucifix, asked her if she thought he did worship that. And she asked him what then did he with it. He answered that it was a representation. And she replied that it did not represent Christ, for he was the express image of his Father's glory, which is light and life. "But," continued she, "if thou canst put any life in any of thy images, then bring them to me. What representation had Daniel in the lions' den or Jonah in the whale's belly? They cried unto the Lord, and he delivered them."

The friar, who could not abide to hear her speak so much against idols, said that she talked like a mad woman, adding, "I will give you to the devil." She not fearing this, said, "Give thy own, I am the Lord's." He then stood up, and said, "I will do to you as the apostles did to Ananias and Sapphira." She then standing up also, said, "I deny thee in the name of the Lord, the living God. Thou hast no power over me."

Then away he went with the hens to Sarah and told her that Catharine was sick and the lord inquisitor had sent two hens, and she would be glad to eat a piece of one, if she would dress one of them now and the other tomorrow. Sarah no less circumspect and cautious than Catharine, and unwilling to receive this gift before she knew what might be expedient, answered him accordingly as Catharine did. Then he carried the hens away again, saying, "You would fain be burnt because you would make the world believe that you love God so well as to suffer in that kind." Catharine hearing this, said, "I do not desire to be burnt, but if the Lord should call me to it, I believe he will give me power to undergo it for his Truth. And if every hair of my head was a body, I could offer them all up for the testimony of Jesus."

The friar coming afterwards, again asked Catharine whether she had not been inspired of the Holy Ghost to be a Catholic since she came into the Inquisition. She said, "No." But he maintaining the contrary, said, "You are those who call the Spirit of the Holy Ghost the spirit of the devil." "No," replied they, (who though

they were parted yet could hear one another,) "the Spirit of the Holy Ghost in us will resist the devil, and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost is not wrought in the will of man nor in man's time, but in God's will and time." More discourse they had about this matter, and then asking for their Bibles, which had been taken from them, he said that they should never see them again, for they were false.

Thus they were often troubled and importuned by the friars who generally came two at a time, though sometimes but one. One of these often lifted up his hand to strike them, but did not, for they not being moved by fear, he was put out of countenance and would say they were good women, and he would do them any good. As indeed sometimes he did work for them and would say that it was for God's sake and that they ought to thank him for it, to which they replied, those that did anything for God did not look for a reward from man. This once made him so angry that he said they were the worst of all creatures and that they should be used worse than the Turks, Armenians, and Lutherans. Whereupon one of them said, "The pure life was ever counted the worst, and if we must suffer, we are the Lord's and can trust him. Do what ye will with us, we do not fear any evil tidings. We are settled and grounded in Truth and the more ye persecute us, the stronger we grow," for this they experienced indeed, according to what they signified in their letters, though they were separated a year from each other.

The friars coming once to Sarah, told her that if she would she might go out of the prison and say and do nothing. And she saying that she would on that account, they said they would come next morning. But Sarah perceived their deceit, and therefore when they came, she, to avoid the snare, could not resolve to go forth, though the friars behaved themselves friendly, and told her that the Inquisition had said that if they wanted linen, woollen, stockings, shoes, or money, they should have it.

Once it happened that an Englishman who lived there, having heard that Sarah was in a room with a window next the street, got up by the wall and spoke a few words to her. But he was violently haled down and cast into prison upon life and death, for he was one they had taken from the Turks and made a Papist of him. The friars coming to them to know whether he had brought them any letters, they said, 'No.' Neither had Catharine seen him, yet it was told them he was like to be hanged. Of this Sarah gave information to Catharine by writing a few lines to her, (for it seems they then could not hear one another,) and she told her that she thought the English friars were the chief actors of this business. This grieved Catharine, and she wrote to Sarah again, (for they had a private way to send to each other.) In this letter, after her salutation, she said to Sarah that she might be sure the friars were the chief actors, but that she believed the Lord would preserve that poor Englishman for his love, and that she was made to seek the Lord for him with tears. She desired her to send him something once a day if the keeper would carry it.

She said that she herself was ravished with the love of God to her soul, and her beloved was the chiefest of ten thousands and that she did not fear the face of any man, though she felt their arrows. Moreover she said that she had a prospect of their safe return into England. And in the conclusion, she bade Sarah take heed if she was tempted with money. But this letter, (by what means they never knew,) came to the English friar's hands, who translating it into Italian, delivered it to the lord inquisitor. Afterwards he came with the inquisitor's deputy to Catharine and showed her both the papers and asked her if she could read it. "Yea," said she, "I wrote it." "O, did you indeed?" said he. "And what is it you say of me here?" "Nothing but what is true," replied she. Then he said, "Where is the paper Sarah sent? Give it, or else I will search your trunk and everywhere else." She then bidding him search where he would, he said that she must tell him who it was that brought her ink, or else she should be tied with chains immediately. And she returned that she had done nothing but what was just and right in the sight of God, and what she did suffer on that account would be for Truth's sake, and she would not meddle with the poor workmen.

Then he said, "For God's sake tell me what Sarah did write." And she told him something, and said that what she spoke was truth. "But," returned he, "you say it is much we do not tempt you with money." And this indeed happened afterwards. The deputy then took Catharine's ink and threw it away, and so they went also. And the poor Englishman was released the next morning.

They now coming to Sarah told her that Catharine honestly had confessed all, and that she had best to confess too. And they threatened her with a halter and that they would take away her bed and trunk, and her money too, to which Sarah said that it may be that she might not send to Catharine any more. And she asked the deputy whether he was a minister of Christ or a magistrate. If he were a magistrate, said she, he might take her money, but she would not give it to him. He then growing angry said that she was possessed, to which she replied, "If so, then it is with the power of an endless life."

Thus from time to time they suffered many assaults, and sometimes it so happened that those who came to see them were struck to the heart, which offended the friars. Now at length their money was almost gone, they having sometimes employed it for victuals. But the friars told them they might have kept their money for other services, for they would have maintained them whilst they kept them prisoners. To this they said that they could not keep their money and be chargeable to others.

Then it so fell out that their stomachs were taken away, and they did eat but little for three or four weeks, till at length they found themselves obliged to fast for several days together. This made the friars say that it was impossible that people could live with so little meat as they did. And it was told them that the lord inquisitor had said that they might have anything they would. To this they signified that it was not in their own will that they fasted, and they must wait to know the mind of the Lord, what he would have them to do.

They continued weak, especially Sarah, who apprehending that her death was near, dressed her head as she would lie in the grave. They both were so feeble that they could not put on their clothes, neither put them off, being also unable to make their beds. And though they desired to be together in one room, yet the friars would not permit it. In this condition they concluded that they were like to die. But heaven had provided otherwise.

Catharine, about that time being exercised in supplication to the Lord that it might please him to put an end to their trial, which way it seemed good in his sight, thought she heard a voice saying, "Ye shall not die." She took this to be a heavenly voice and from that time they felt themselves refreshed with the living presence of the Lord to their great joy and comfort, so that they felt freedom to eat again. And then they were provided with good victuals. But yet they were under a fear of eating anything which in some respect might be counted unclean, and therefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, "We had rather die than eat anything that is polluted and unclean." And Catharine believed it was said to her from the Lord, "Thou mayest as freely eat as if thou hadst wrought for it with thy hands." And Sarah, who sometimes had wrought for others in the Inquisition house, was persuaded that it was told her by inspiration, "Thou shalt eat the fruit of thy hands and be blessed." And so they did eat, and for eight or ten days they got whatever they did call for.

But afterwards they were so straitened for want of food that it did them more hurt than their fast. Yet they being preserved alive, the friar said, "The Lord keeps them alive by his mighty power because they should be Catholics." To this they returned that it would be known one day that the Lord had another end in it. But the friars told them plainly that there was no redemption for them.

Whereupon they said, "With the Lord there is mercy and plenteous redemption," and they bade them take heed, "That ye be not found fighters against God." To this the friars returned, "Ye are foolish women." "Then we are," replied they, "the Lord's fools and they are dear and precious in his sight." The friars then showing their shaven crowns said that they were the Lord's fools. And pointing to their gowns they said that they did wear them for God's sake to be laughed at by the world.

One of the friars about this time did what he could to send Catharine to Rome. And not succeeding, he said they should both go. But this not taking effect, the friar was sent thither with a paper to the pope containing matter of charge against Catharine. But she speaking zealously to the scribe pronounced woe against it and defied it in the name of the Lord. Before the friar departed, he told Sarah that Catharine was a witch and that she knew what was done elsewhere. He said this because once telling Catharine abundance of lies, she told him that she had a witness for God in her which was faithful and true and she believed this witness.

After he was gone, the English consul came to her with a dollar from the master of a ship who came from Plymouth. She told him she did receive her countryman's love but could not receive his money. He then asked her what she would do if she would take no money, to which she answered, "The Lord is my portion, and thus I cannot want any good thing. We were in thy house near fifteen weeks and didst thou see any cause of death and bonds in us?" And he saying 'No,' she signified to him that in some respect he had been accessory to their imprisonment and had not been ignorant of the intent. "Thou knewest," said she, "that a room was provided for us in the Inquisition and had we not been kept alive by the mighty power of God, we might have been dead long since."

Endeavoring to excuse himself, he said, "How could I help it?" Then she put him in mind of what happened at his house when they were there, and how they called them to repentance and forewarned them. To which he said, "However it be, it will go well with you." Then she reminded him how he required a sign of her when they were at his house, if they were the servants of the Lord God. And she asked him whether that was not true they spoke to him. "Thou art a condemned person and standest guilty before God; yet nevertheless repent, if thou canst find a place." While she thus spoke to him, his lips quivered and he trembled, so that he could scarce stand upon his legs. And though otherwise a very handsome man and in his prime, yet he now looked as one that was pining away. And this was a sufficient sign for the whole city, if they had duly taken notice of it.

Catharine having refused the piece of money, he went to Sarah with it, but she likewise told him that she could not take it. However, if he had a letter for them, she would be free to receive it. He said that he had not any and asked her what she did want. And she answered that the Lord was her shepherd and she could not want any good thing, but she did long for her freedom. He not willing to discourage her, said, "That you may have in time." But he did not live to see it, because the next time they heard of him, he was dead.

Whilst the friar was gone to Rome, it was told them that they were also to be sent thither. And there was indeed great working about it, but it seems they could not agree in the matter. In the meanwhile Catharine and Sarah remained separated, and there were five doors between them with locks and bolts. Yet Sarah sometimes found an opportunity, either by the carelessness of the keeper, or that it was done on purpose, to come where she could see Catharine. And how much soever the friars did watch them, yet she came to Catharine's door by night. But being once discovered she was locked up again. Yet not long after, the doors were again open so that they sat in sight of each other.

Sometimes there were of divers nations brought prisoners into the Inquisition and the friars, and other great men, endeavored in their way to make Christians of them. Then these women would often show them the errors of popery, and declare the Truth, for which they were willing to suffer death if required. But this was taken very ill. At length it happened that two Englishmen came into the city and tried to obtain their liberty, but in vain. Yet a little while after, the magistrates sent for them and asked them whether they were sick or whether they did want anything, saying that they might write to England, ordering the scribe to give them ink and paper.

Not long after came one Francis Stewart, a captain of a ship, and a friar of Ireland, who both took great pains to get them released. And their friends in England had not been wanting in any thing that might procure their liberty. But the time for it was not yet come. The said captain and the new English consul endeavored much to procure their liberty. But it was not in the magistrate's power, for the inquisitor said that he could not set them free without an order from the pope.

Yet Catharine and Sarah were brought into the court chamber, and the English consul asked them if they were willing to go back to England, and they said, "Yes, if it were the will of God they might." The captain of the ship, who also was there, spoke to them with tears in his eyes and told them what he had done in their behalf, but in vain. "It is the inquisitor," said he, "who will not let you go free because you have preached among these people." To which they said that they had witnessed the Truth, which they were willing to maintain with their blood. He replied that if they could be set free, he would freely give them their passage and provide for them. And they returned that his love was as well accepted of the Lord as if he did carry them. He also offered them money, but they refused to take any.

They then gave him a relation of their imprisonment and sufferings, and said that they could not change their minds, though they were to be burnt to ashes or chopped in small pieces. The friar then drawing near said that they did not work. But this was not true, for they had work of their own and did work as they were able. They also told him that their work and business was in England. He confessing this was true said that they had suffered long enough, and too long, and that they should have their freedom within a short time, but that there wanted an order from the pope.

In the meanwhile it grieved the captain that he could not obtain their liberty and going away, he prayed God to comfort them, and they besought the Lord to bless and preserve him unto everlasting life, and never to let him, nor his, go without a blessing from him for his love. For he ventured himself exceedingly in that place by laboring to get their freedom.

After he was gone, they met with worse usage, and the inquisitor coming, looked upon them with indignation, for the taking away of their lives was again on foot, and their doors were shut up for many weeks. After some time the inquisitor came again into the tower where they sat, and Sarah called to him and desired the door might be opened for them to go down into the court to wash their clothes. He then ordered the door to be opened once a week, and not long after it was opened every day.

And since it had been said that they could not be released without the pope's leave, Sarah said to him, "If we are the pope's prisoners, we appeal to the pope. Send us therefore to him." But those that had their abode in the Inquisition, especially the friars, were their mortal enemies, although they would sometimes have fed them with the best of their victuals and given them whole bottles of wine, if they would have received it. And it troubled them exceedingly that they refused to eat and drink with them, which they did because they looked upon them as their fierce persecutors.

Once there came two or three English ships into the harbor, and the English consul telling them of it, said that he did what he could for them, but that they would not let them go unless they would turn Catholics and that therefore they must suffer more imprisonment yet. Before Sarah knew these ships were come thither, she saw them in the night in a dream and heard a voice saying that they could not go yet.

When the ships were gone, they were sent for, and it was asked them if they would be Catholics, to which they answered that they were true Christians and had received the Spirit of Christ. One of the magistrates showing them the cross, they told him that they did take up the cross of Christ daily, which was the power of God to crucify sin and iniquity.

Knowing that there was a friar who, as the captain had told them, took a great deal of pains for them, but not seeing him there, (for he that secretly favored them was now absent,) they said to those that were present, "One of your fathers hath promised us our liberty." But this availed nothing. Yet they acknowledged his kindness, and told him afterwards that he would never have cause to repent it.

A friar once coming to them, said, "It is God's will that ye should be kept here, or else we could not keep you." On this Catharine told him, "The Lord suffers wicked men to do wickedness, but he doth not will them to do it. He suffered Herod to take off John the Baptist's head, but he did not will him to do it. He suffered Stephen to be stoned and Judas to betray Christ, but he did not will them to do so, for if he had, he would not have condemned them for it."

The friar hereupon asking, "Are we then wicked men?" She answered, "They are wicked men that work wickedness." "But," said he, "you have not the true faith." To which she answered, "By faith we stand, and by the power of God we are upheld. Dost thou think it is by our own power and holiness that we are kept from a vain conversation, from sin and wickedness?" He then saying that was their pride, she told him, "We can glory in the Lord, for we were children of wrath once as well as others. But the Lord hath quickened us that were dead by the living word of his grace, and hath washed, cleansed, and sanctified us in soul and spirit, according to our measures. And we do press forward towards that which is perfect." He then said, "Ye are good women, but yet there is no redemption for you, except ye will be Catholics."

This was the old lesson of the friars, who, at another time, said, "Ye may be Catholics and keep your own religion too, and ye shall not be known to be Catholics, except ye were brought before a justice." To this they returned, "What, should we profess a Christ we should be ashamed of?"

Some of those that came to see them would pity them for not turning Catholics, but others showed their hatred by crying that they must be burnt, and by bawling, "Fuoco, fuoco," (fire, fire.) Whilst they were separated from each other, Catharine was often much concerned for Sarah, and afraid that she should be ensnared, for one of the friars many times accosted her with fawning words. But they both continued steadfast and were often ravished by the inward joy and consolation they felt.

Catharine in one of her letters said that the spirit of prayer was once upon her, but that she was afraid to speak to the Lord for fear she should speak one word that would not please him. And then it was returned to her from the Lord, "Fear not, daughter of Zion, ask what thou wilt and I will grant it to thee, whatsoever thy heart can wish." But she desired nothing of the Lord but what would make for his glory, whether it were her liberty or bondage, life or death. And in this resignedness she found herself accepted of the Lord.

Sometimes they spoke so effectually to those that came to them that they could not gainsay them, but were made to confess that God was with them, though others would make a hideous noise, and cry, "Jesu

Maria," and run away, as people that were struck with fear.

Catharine's prison being so near the street that she could be heard by those that went by, she was moved sometimes to call them to repentance and to turn to the light wherewith they were enlightened, which would lead them out of all their wicked ways and works, to serve the true and living God in spirit and in truth. This so reached some that they did sigh and groan and stay to hear her, but not long after it was forbidden upon great pain. Yet some that passed by to their worship-houses were so wicked that they threw stones at her window, and often made a sad noise and howled like dogs.

Thus they were assaulted both from abroad and within doors from the friars who fiercely threatened them for their bold testimony against idolatry. Once when they showed Sarah the Virgin Mary and her babe pictured against a wall and would have her look upon it, she, to show her zeal against idol-worship, stamped with her foot, and said, "Cursed are all images, image-makers, and those that fall down to worship them."

It happened that some French and Spanish ships came to join with the cavaliers of Malta to fight against the Turks. Sarah hearing this said, "God is angry, God is angry. Go not forth to kill one another. Christ came not to destroy life, but to save it." This she told many who were persuaded of obtaining a victory, but it fell out otherwise, for their fleet was beaten by the Turks, and they returned with great damage.

A friar coming once to Catharine asked her why she did not work. This made her say to him, "What work dost thou do?" He answered, "I write." To which she returned, "I will write too if thou wilt bring me pen, ink, and paper." He not willing she should write, said, "St. Paul did work at Rome, and by knitting you might get about three half-pence a day." She told him, "If we could have that privilege among you which Paul had at Rome under Caesar who was a heathen prince, we would have wrought and not have been chargeable to any. For he lived in his own hired house two years, preaching the gospel and doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ."

She asked him also, whether he knew the holy war of God? "And if thou knowest it," said she, "then thou canst not but know that we cannot be without exercise day nor night." This stopped his mouth. Besides, it was well known that they spent not their time idly, for they knit stockings for those that were serviceable to them, they made garments for the poor prisoners, and mended their clothes, though they were not willing to work for the friars who sometimes coming to her, kneeled down and would have Catharine to say after them the words they spoke. But this she refused to do, though it made these men grow more angry.

Such and the like occurrences so grieved her that once in anguish of spirit she cried out to God, "It were better for me to die than to live thus." For being almost continually constrained to testify against idolatry and superstition, she would have been willing to have laid down her life for a testimony against it, if it had been required of her. And when once the friars told her that Sarah was to be carried to Rome, whilst she should stay at Malta, it so grieved her that with supplication she asked the Lord if he did not count her worthy to go to Rome also and to offer up her life there for the testimony of Jesus. Because, if she was at liberty to choose, she would rather do so than return without her to England.

At another time, when it was told them that their Bibles were false, Catharine asked the friar that said so, "Wherein are they false?" He replied, "Because the books of the Maccabees are not in them." To which she answered that though something might be wanting, yet the rest might be good for all that. But if something were added, then the Bible was corrupted. This struck at some additions she had seen in the Bibles there.

Then he asked her whether she did not think that every one must bow at the name of Jesus, and she answering, "Yea," he said, "Jesus," and bade her to kneel down or to bow herself. To this she said that her heart and whole body was bowed down under the name of Jesus but that she would not bow at the will of him or anybody else. "He that departs from iniquity," thus she continued, "bows before the name of Jesus. But they that live in sin and wickedness do not bow before the Son of God."

Then he said that he and his companions stood in the same power and were led by the same Spirit as the apostles. This made her ask why then they abused that power and used carnal weapons? He answered that they did not do so, for their Inquisition, nay, even their chains and fetters were spiritual. Then he asked her whether she did not think that all those were damned that were not of her persuasion. She said, "No, Christ hath not taught us so, for those that are today in a state of reprobation, the Lord, if it please him, can call tomorrow out of it." He then said, "We think you damned, and all those that are not of our belief." To which she returned, "The judgment of man doth not hurt us."

Sometimes some came to the prison upon their saints' days and asked them what day it was. And they not being acquainted with those saints would answer, "We do not know it." When the others then told them that it was such or such a saint's day and that this saint would punish them that night because they did not observe his day, they answered that they knew the saints to be at peace with them and that therefore they did not fear them.

Another time a friar came and told them that it was seventeen days to Christmas and that the Virgin Mary conceived that present day. On this Catharine made this pretty remark, that indeed this was very singular, that she did go with child but seventeen days. Such like occurrences grieved her exceedingly when she considered the gross darkness that these people were in. And as she was crying to the Lord in prayer that it seemed that all their travail and labor was fruitless, she felt this answer, "Be not grieved, though Israel be not gathered, the seed of Malta is to increase into multitude. That which ye have sown shall not die, but live."

After Catharine and Sarah had been imprisoned at Malta about three years, there came one Daniel Baker who did whatever he could and went also to the inquisitor to obtain their liberty, but in vain, for he required that some English merchants at Leghorn or at Messina should engage for four thousand dollars, that they being released should never return into those parts. But they were unwilling to enter into those terms, as not knowing what the Lord one time or other might require of them.

Daniel, seeing he could not obtain their deliverance this way, offered himself to be imprisoned instead of them. And this not being accepted, he went yet further and signified that he was willing to lay down his life for their liberty if it was not to be purchased otherwise. Great love, indeed! of which but few instances are to be found. And they hearing of this were touched with exceeding great admiration. In the meanwhile, he found a way to get some letters delivered to them and wrote also himself, both to comfort and exhort them to steadfastness.

At length he found means also to speak to them. For on a time as they stood at the prison grates, he being come in their sight, saluted them in these words, "The holy body of God's elect, right dearly beloved, own your testimony, and ye are a sweet savor unto the Lord and his people." One of them answered that it was a trouble to them that they could not be more serviceable. This made his heart melt with pity and compassion, considering the wonderful mercy of the Lord in preserving them without fainting in that sharp trial. And they beholding one another at a distance through the iron grates were mutually refreshed at that

season.

They afterwards wrote to him and signified with the most tender expressions how highly they valued his great love, and also sent him letters for their friends and relations in England. And he neglected not to write back again to them during his stay, which was in the forepart of the year 1662. But he was forced to leave them prisoners there. Yet the time of their redemption drew nigh, which was brought about at the instance of George Fox and Gilbert Lathey by writing to the lord d'Aubigny, as hath been said already.

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