

esuit martyrdom, which was widely repro-
Jesuit missionaries being tortured and killed
(1549), and Jean de Brébeuf (1596–1625).

small bone splinters began to protrude.
the same treatment, though they did not
sons. They were angry with the French
s the year before to accept the peace
offer.

from their chase after a human quarry
these barbarians divided up their booty
prey with great shouts of joy. As I saw
distributing our spoils, I sought also for
tives, baptizing those who were not yet
tches to suffer steadfastly, in the assur-
the severity of their torments. I
that we were twenty-two captives, not
spot. An old man, aged eighty years,
id to the Iroquois who were command-
an old man like me to go visiting for-
if you refuse me life.' These words were
elled him.

try truly foreign, where our Lord favored
the thirteen days that we spent on that
most unendurable and, in the soul, morn-
ing sun, the threats and hatred of those

leopards, and the pain of our wounds, which, in the absence of any dressing,
became putrid and worm infested. All this certainly caused us much distress.
But these things seemed light to me in comparison with an inward sadness
that I felt at the sight of our first and most ardent Huron Christians. I had
expected them to be the pillars of that rising church, and I saw them become
the victims of death. Seeing the path to salvation closed for such a long time
to so many nations, people who perish every day for want of succor, made me
die every hour in the depth of my soul. It is a very hard thing, a cruel thing, to
see the triumph of the devils over whole nations redeemed with so much love
and ransomed in the currency of a blood so adorable.

* * *

1647

JOHN WOOLMAN

In the catalog of American writers, John Woolman (1720–1772) stands out as a model of integrity, decency, and forthrightness. He was born on his family's farm in Burlington County, New Jersey, a few miles east of Philadelphia, and attended school in Mount Holly, New Jersey, where he later set up in business for himself. Woolman's success in business offended his Quaker belief in simplicity, and he deliberately cut back his commercial dealings. While writing a bill of sale for an enslaved person, Woolman first became aware of the conflict between public law and private conscience that was to absorb him for the rest of his life. Although he tells us that on that first occasion he remained silent, "gave way," and wrote the bill of sale, he never made that mistake again. The next time, he informed the owner that slavery and a religious conscience were incompatible. Woolman thereafter found his true vocation in "speaking up" fellow Quakers in their homes and at assemblies. In his "conversations" with Quakers, Woolman warned of dangers: materialist society, exploitation of workers, military conscription, paying taxes to support wars, and above all, corruptions caused by slavery.

First published in 1774, and in print ever since, Woolman's *Journal* has been admired not only for the life and temperament it reveals but also for the directness and simplicity of its style.

From The Journal of John Woolman¹

[Early Life and Vocation]

I have often felt a motion of love to leave some hints in writing of my experience of the goodness of God, and now, in the thirty-sixth year of my age, I begin this work. I was born in Northampton, in Burlington County in West Jersey, A.D. 1720, and before I was seven years old I began to be acquainted

1. The text is from *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman* (1971), edited by Phillips P. Mouton.

with the operations of divine love. Through the care of my parents, I was taught to read near as soon as I was capable of it, and as I went from school one Seventh Day,² I remember, while my companions went to play by the way, I went forward out of sight; and sitting down, I read the twenty-second chapter of the Revelations: "He showed me a river of water, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb, etc."³ And in reading it my mind was drawn to seek after that pure habitation which I then believed God had prepared for His servants. The place where I sat and the sweetness that attended my mind remains fresh in my memory.

This and the like gracious visitations⁴ had that effect upon me, that when boys used ill language it troubled me, and through the continued mercies of God I was preserved from it. The pious instructions of my parents were often fresh in my mind when I happened amongst wicked children, and was of use to me. My parents, having a large family of children, used frequently on First Days after meeting⁵ to put us to read in the Holy Scriptures or some religious books, one after another, the rest sitting by without much conversation, which I have since often thought was a good practice. From what I had read and heard, I believed there had been in past ages people who walked in uprightness before God in a degree exceeding any that I knew, or heard of, now living; and the apprehension of there being less steadiness and firmness amongst people in this age than in past ages often troubled me while I was a child.

I had a dream about the ninth year of my age as follows: I saw the moon rise near the west and run a regular course eastward, so swift that in about a quarter of an hour she reached our meridian, when there descended from her a small cloud on a direct line to the earth, which lighted on a pleasant green about twenty yards from the door of my father's house (in which I thought I stood) and was immediately turned into a beautiful green tree. The moon appeared to run on with equal swiftness and soon set in the east, at which time the sun arose at the place where it commonly does in the summer, and shining with full radiance in a serene air, it appeared as pleasant a morning as ever I saw.

All this time I stood still in the door in an awful⁶ frame of mind, and I observed that as heat increased by the rising sun, it wrought so powerfully on the little green tree that the leaves gradually withered; and before noon it appeared dry and dead. There then appeared a being, small of size, full of strength and resolution, moving swift from the north, southward, called a sun worm.⁷

Another thing remarkable in my childhood was that once, going to a neighbor's house, I saw on the way a robin sitting on her nest; and as I came near she went off, but having young ones, flew about and with many cries expressed her concern for them. I stood and threw stones at her, till one striking her, she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit, but after a few minutes was seized with horror, as having in a sportive way killed an innocent creature while she was careful for her young. I beheld her lying dead

2. Saturday. Quakers substituted numbers for the days of the week both for the sake of simplicity and to discard the names of the pagan gods (for example, Saturday was named in honor of the Roman god Saturn).

3. Revelation 22.1.

4. That is, similar moments when he felt God's

presence again.

5. Quakers refer to their assemblies as "meetings" and their church as a "meetinghouse." It is the custom for worshipers to remain silent until someone is moved to speak.

6. Full of awe.

7. That is, sun snake, an imaginary creature.

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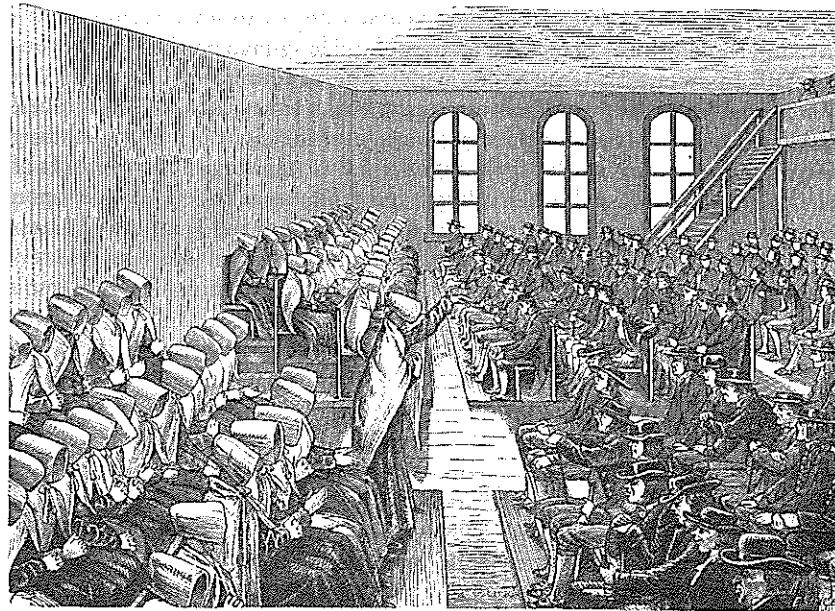
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Quaker church. This wood engraving of a Quaker church in Philadelphia portrays a woman speaking to a congregation of both men and women. Most Christian denomina-
tions severely restricted women's speech to such mixed audiences.

and thought those young ones for which she was so careful must now perish for want of their dam to nourish them; and after some painful consider-
ations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the young birds and killed them, supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably, and believed in this case that Scripture proverb was fulfilled, "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."⁸ I then went on my errand, but for some hours could think of little else but the cruelties I had committed, and was much troubled.

Thus He whose tender mercies are over all His works hath placed a principle in the human mind which incites to exercise goodness toward every living creature; and this being singly attended to, people become tenderhearted and sympathizing, but being frequently and totally rejected, the mind shuts itself up in a contrary disposition.

About the twelfth year of my age, my father being abroad, my mother reproved me for some misconduct, to which I made an undutiful reply; and the next First Day as I was with my father returning from meeting, he told me he understood I had behaved amiss to my mother and advised me to be more careful in future. I knew myself blameable, and in shame and confu-
sion remained silent. Being thus awakened to a sense of my wickedness, I felt remorse in my mind, and getting home I retired and prayed to the Lord to forgive me, and do not remember that I ever after that spoke unhand-
somely⁹ to either of my parents, however foolish in other things.

8. Proverbs 12:10.

9. Undutifully, ungraciously.

Having attained the age of sixteen years, I began to love wanton¹ company, and though I was preserved from profane language or scandalous conduct, still I perceived a plant in me which produced much wild grapes. Yet my merciful Father forsook me not utterly, but at times through His grace I was brought seriously to consider my ways, and the sight of my backsliding affected me with sorrow. But for want of rightly attending to the reproofs of instruction, vanity was added to vanity,² and repentance to repentance; upon the whole my mind was more and more alienated from the Truth,³ and I hastened toward destruction. While I meditate on the gulf toward which I traveled and reflect on my youthful disobedience, for these things I weep; mine eye runneth down with water.

Advancing in age the number of my acquaintance increased, and thereby my way grew more difficult. Though I had heretofore found comfort in reading the Holy Scriptures and thinking on heavenly things, I was now estranged therefrom. I knew I was going from the flock of Christ and had no resolution to return; hence serious reflections were uneasy to me and youthful vanities and diversions my greatest pleasure. Running in this road I found many like myself, and we associated in that which is reverse to true friendship.⁴

But in this swift race⁵ it pleased God to visit me with sickness, so that I doubted of recovering. And then did darkness, horror, and amazement with full force seize me, even when my pain and distress of body was very great. I thought it would have been better for me never to have had a being than to see the day which I now saw. I was filled with confusion, and in great affliction both of mind and body I lay and bewailed myself. I had not confidence to lift up my cries to God, whom I had thus offended, but in a deep sense of my great folly I was humbled before Him, and at length that Word which is as a fire and a hammer broke and dissolved my rebellious heart. And then my cries were put up in contrition, and in the multitude of His mercies I found inward relief, and felt a close engagement that if He was pleased to restore my health, I might walk humbly before Him.

After my recovery this exercise⁶ remained with me a considerable time; but by degrees giving way to youthful vanities, they gained strength, and getting with wanton young people I lost ground. The Lord had been very gracious and spoke peace to me in the time of my distress, and I now most ungratefully turned again to folly, on which account at times I felt sharp reproof but did not get low enough to cry for help. I was not so hardy as to commit things scandalous, but to exceed in vanity and promote mirth was my chief study. Still I retained a love and esteem for pious people, and their company brought an awe upon me.

My dear parents several times admonished me in the fear of the Lord, and their admonition entered into my heart and had a good effect for a season, but not getting deep enough to pray rightly, the tempter⁷ when he came found entrance. I remember once, having spent a part of the day in wantonness, as I went to bed at night there lay in a window near my bed a Bible, which I opened, and first cast my eye on the text, "We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covers us."⁸ This I knew to be my case, and meeting with so

1. Frivolous, unthinking.
2. See Ecclesiastes 1.2. "Want": lack.
3. Ultimate spiritual reality.
4. Those ideals basic to the Religious Society of Friends.

5. See Ecclesiastes 9.11.
6. Religious experience.
7. Satan.
8. Jeremiah 3.25.

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unexpected a reproof, I was somewhat affected with it and went to bed under remorse of conscience, which I soon cast off again.

Thus time passed on; my heart was replenished with mirth and wanton-ness, while pleasing scenes of vanity were presented to my imagination till I attained the age of eighteen years, near which time I felt the judgments of God in my soul like a consuming fire, and looking over my past life the pros-pect was moving. I was often sad and longed to be delivered from those vanities; then again my heart was strongly inclined to them, and there was in me a sore conflict. At times I turned to folly, and then again sorrow and confusion took hold of me. In a while I resolved totally to leave off some of my vanities, but there was a secret reserve in my heart of the more refined part of them, and I was not low enough to find true peace. Thus for some months I had great trouble, there remaining in me an unsubjected will which rendered my labors fruitless, till at length through the merciful continuance of heavenly visitations I was made to bow down in spirit before the Lord.

I remember one evening I had spent some time in reading a pious author, and walking out alone I humbly prayed to the Lord for His help, that I might be delivered from all those vanities which so ensnared me. Thus being brought low, He helped me; and as I learned to bear the cross⁹ I felt refreshment to come from His presence; but not keeping in that strength which gave victory, I lost ground again, the sense of which greatly affected me; and I sought des-erts¹ and lonely places and there with tears did confess my sins to God and humbly craved help of Him. And I may say with reverence He was near to me in my troubles, and in those times of humiliation opened my ear to discipline.

* * *

About the twenty-third year of my age, I had many fresh and heavenly openings in respect to the care and providence of the Almighty over his crea-tures in general, and over man as the most noble amongst those which are visible. And being clearly convinced in my judgment that to place my whole trust in God was best for me, I felt renewed engagements that in all things I might act on an inward principle of virtue and pursue worldly business no further than as Truth opened my way therein.

About the time called Christmas I observed many people from the coun-try and dwellers in town who, resorting to the public houses, spent their time in drinking and vain sports, tending to corrupt one another, on which account I was much troubled. At one house in particular there was much disorder, and I believed it was a duty laid on me to go and speak to the master of that house. I considered I was young and that several elderly Friends in town had opportunity to see these things, and though I would gladly have been excused, yet I could not feel my mind clear.

The exercise was heavy, and as I was reading what the Almighty said to Ezekiel respecting his duty as a watchman,² the matter was set home more clearly; and then with prayer and tears I besought the Lord for His assis-tance, who in loving-kindness gave me a resigned heart. Then at a suitable opportunity I went to the public house, and seeing the man amongst a com-pany, I went to him and told him I wanted to speak with him; so we went

9. To live mindfully of Christ and in humility.

1. Desolate places.

2. Ezekiel was a priest and prophet to whom God said, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman

unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me" (Ezekiel 3.17).

aside, and there in the fear and dread of the Almighty I expressed to him what rested on my mind, which he took kindly, and afterward showed more regard to me than before. In a few years after, he died middle-aged, and I often thought that had I neglected my duty in that case it would have given me great trouble, and I was humbly thankful to my gracious Father, who had supported me herein.

My employer, having a Negro woman, sold her and directed me to write a bill of sale, the man being waiting who bought her. The thing was sudden, and though the thoughts of writing an instrument of slavery for one of my fellow creatures felt uneasy,³ yet I remembered I was hired by the year, that it was my master who directed me to do it, and that it was an elderly man, a member of our Society, who bought her; so through weakness I gave way and wrote it, but at the executing [of] it, I was so afflicted in my mind that I said before my master and the Friend that I believed slavekeeping to be a practice inconsistent with the Christian religion. This in some degree abated my uneasiness, yet as often as I reflected seriously upon it I thought I should have been clearer if I had desired to be excused from it as a thing against my conscience, for such it was. And some time after this a young man of our Society spake to me to write an instrument of slavery, he having lately taken a Negro into his house. I told him I was not easy to write it, for though many kept slaves in our Society, as in others, I still believed the practice was not right, and desired to be excused from writing [it]. I spoke to him in good will, and he told me that keeping slaves was not altogether agreeable to his mind, but that the slave being a gift made to his wife, he had accepted of her.

1774

3. That is, it contradicted his sense of right, so he felt ill at ease with his conscience.

JOHN MARRANT

John Marrant (1755–1791) was born in New York City into a free Black family. While he was still a child, the family moved to Florida and then Georgia. When he was eleven they moved again, settling in Charleston, South Carolina. There Marrant studied music for two years and began learning a trade. He was thirteen when he heard a sermon by the evangelist George Whitefield that transformed his life and led to the adventures in his narrative. *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black* was immensely popular, printed at least twenty-one times between 1785 and 1835, and read on both sides of the Atlantic. An "as-told-to" text transcribed and edited by the Reverend William Aldridge, the *Narrative* shares features of several narrative traditions—conversion, Indian captivity, and slave—and thus encapsulates the pervasive role that themes of capture and liberation played in several of early America's most popular and influential literary genres. Some of the narrative's appeal came from its improbable story of the spiritually motivated adventures of a free Black teenager.

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1. The text is from *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black* (London: Printed for the Author, 1785?).

2. Marrant was still a child when his mother and sibling died. In the preceding narrative, he speaks about his newfou-

suicide, but he reflects that he could not

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1748) is known as t