

A Short Account of God's Dealings with Mr. Thomas Hogg
(1750)¹

Thomas Hogg (c. 1705–50), a young London merchant, was married to Mary Hastin in 1732 at Holy Trinity, Minories. In 1738 he came under the preaching of George Whitefield and Charles Wesley in the Minories district. Hogg became a close friend of CW and in November 1741 wrote an account of his conversion experience, at CW's request. CW was present at Hogg's death on June 29, 1750, and performed his funeral on July 2 (see MS Journal). Shortly thereafter CW polished and published Hogg's conversion narrative, attaching to it both a funeral hymn and an epitaph.

[Charles Wesley.] *A Short Account of God's Dealings with Mr. Thomas Hogg; written by himself.* London [Strahan], 1750.

This *Account* stayed in print throughout CW's life, and served as a model for many other Methodist accounts of conversions.

The transcription which follows reproduces the first edition of the *Account of Thomas Hogg*, indicating the page transitions (in **red** font) of the original.

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**Short Account of God's Dealings
with Mr. Thomas Hogg**

November 1741

Reverend Sir,

In obedience to your request, I give you the following account of my experience from time to time, and the true state of my soul at present.

Some time before you began to explain the gospel in the Minories,¹ I was drawn to hear the word under the Rev. Mr. W.² I found sweetness in frequenting the house of prayer, although ignorant at that time of the love of God to poor sinners. After this I was taken to hear the Rev. Mr. L. and was more and more delighted in the ways of the Lord. His doctrine was good morality, and plain to be understood, and I took a great liking to him. The next I heard was the Rev. Dr. H.,³ but he was quite out of my reach. I could not understand him. His discourses were spiritual, but I was carnal, [p. 4] seeking to be saved by the work of the law, going about to establish my own righteousness.⁴

After a few times hearing him, I was brought to hear you. You was explaining the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans,⁵ which was to me like a man speaking in an unknown tongue. You was endeavouring to convince us of sin, and showing the difference betwixt the law and gospel. You told us what we were by nature, described the motions of sin stirring in us, and the blessings we received by Jesus Christ.

It was all a mystery to me. I could not understand but now and then a word. I heard you to the end of your discourse. You gave notice when you was to be there again, and the Lord inclined my heart to attend, for which I shall always praise his holy name.

I seldom missed an opportunity of hearing you, or your brother, or Mr. J. in your absence; and by my constant attendance, and the blessing of God's Spirit upon your labours, I began to see those beastly and devilish tempers in me which you so often pressed very close upon you hearers.

When the Rev. Mr. [George] Whitefield came to town I often attended him, and I bought Burkitt's Exposition of the New Testament.⁶ I wanted what I had not, a true knowledge of Jesus Christ. And this I would have gained by books, for I also bought me a dictionary, that I might

¹The Minories is a street which runs north from the Tower to Aldgate in London.

²This and the next clergyman mentioned were apparently Church of England ministers in the London area.

³Rev. Dr. John Heylyn (c. 1685–1759) was rector of St. Mary-le-Strand in Westminster (1724–59) and a prebendary of Westminster Cathedral. He was called the "Mystic Doctor" because of his stress on the interior life.

⁴See Rom 10:3.

⁵CW records preaching on Romans 5 in the Minories on Oct. 29, 1738 (MS Journal). He was working his way through the book, so Hogg likely heard him first in mid-November 1738.

⁶William Burkitt, *Expository Notes with Practical Observations on the New Testament* (London: Parkhurst, Robinson, & Wyatt, 1700).

know the true meaning of words. But very little use did I make of it, for I soon perceived Christ was not to be found there.

Once, under a discourse at Mr. [John] Bray's, I felt the words come with power to my soul. I had a strong hope of the blessed promises. My [p. 5] heart was filled with joy and my eyes overflowed with tears. I could have cried out with Peter, "It is good for me to be here."⁷ The next day I read Burkitt's explanation of the chapter and the Spirit came with the letter. My heart was again filled with joy and my eyes with tears. I fell down before the Lord in extempore prayer, as I never did before or for many months after. "This was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in my eyes. Therefore praise ye the Lord, bless the Lord, and magnify his name forever."⁸

I often looked back at the sweetness I then received, but could not taste the like comfort, or not in so full a manner. I had not then felt the weight of my sins, neither could I say the burden of them was intolerable. But I was in a measure dead to many of my outward sins, particularly that which did so easily beset me.

Some time after this I came down out of my shop to dinner and was deeply meditating in my heart on the deplorable condition which my friends and relations were in, when in a moment I was struck all on a heap. The torments of hell compassed me round about, and I thought I saw the flames of it before me. Then indeed I could say [that] the remembrance of my sins was grievous unto me. It was for one particular sin I was most wounded. The burden of that was really intolerable. I had no reason to look any longer at my friends, but at myself. My dinner stood before me, but I could not touch it. I continued in this state for a small season only. I do not remember that I had then any thought of prayer, but I was in a very great fright. The Lord saw my deplorable condition and sent me help from his [p. 6] holy hill. He was pleased to apply to my heart, "Why should I be afraid, when Christ has died for me?" At this I received present ease, but did not find any great joy—only *a thorough deliverance from that heavy burden*, too heavy for me to bear.

I took a little food, but was still deep in thought of what had happened to me. The accuser of the brethren set my sin before me, and would fain have brought me into condemnation again. But the Lord appeared on my side with, "Fear not, Christ hath died." I held fast this shield and, blessed be God, have proved more than conqueror, through Christ strengthening me.⁹ I did not then distinctly know that I had received the forgiveness of my sins. Sometimes I thought I had, and at other times was in doubt of it.

I was a constant hearer of the word, but had very little conversation with any who had experience of the work of God upon their souls, excepting a few who were seeking after him. I often was in great joy, and found sweet peace to my soul; sometimes in heaviness, and many doubts lest I should fall away, for I thought I could not continue to the end because I was young and had many years to live. Then I was desirous to die. These thoughts often troubled me. I did not then know that it was a temptation, being ignorant of Satan's devices.

I began to exhort and reprove when I thought I could be free, and was desirous to bring souls to Jesus. Yet there was the fear of man in me, as there is to this day. At that time I belonged to a drinking club, but was very desirous to leave it, for I went to it with great reluctance and was

⁷Matt. 17:4.

⁸Cf. Ps. 118:23.

⁹See Rom. 8:37.

fully convinced of the [p. 7] error of it. Yet I did not give it up, because it was at a friend's house.

When the Bishop of London's *Letter* came out at the time of Mr. Whitefield's leaving England,¹⁰ Satan strove hard for me and set his instruments at work, and who should they be but the very persons who had first brought me to hear the gospel. Having drawn back themselves, they were continually buffeting me, telling me of my error, and endeavouring to draw me back after them. This they laboured to do whensoever we met. I was often in great disturbance of spirit about it. But blessed be God, the seed which was sown had taken root. You had not laboured in vain, neither run in vain. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the praise, for thy loving kindness and for thy truth's sake."¹¹

After this I found my heart very hard and cold. I could not repent as I desired, was tossed about in prayer, first to one book then to another, but could not find so much taste in any as I did in two or three collects of our own Church. But with them I could not be satisfied, thinking they were not prayers long enough—yet I was often repeating them.

About this time I was taken into the society, where I lay like a dead dog. Your prayers seldom made any impression on me. My old sin strongly beset me and was very grievous to bear. I was even urged to commit it, that then I might truly repent and come to a saving knowledge of the blood of Jesus Christ. For as yet I was in doubt. I was often near the fire, but the Lord preserved me in a wonderful manner and would not suffer me to be burnt. [p. 8]

After this I was advised to meet in band, one of the first that met at the Foundery.¹² I thought it was for my good and came, though with great uneasiness, not knowing what to say. I seldom missed meeting, but was still beset with that slavish passion. I told my brethren how I was troubled. They explained to me the difference betwixt sin and temptation, which till then I did not know, for I though I committed sin by having those evil thoughts. Then I began to learn a little experience. But still I had not received a clear sense of my forgiveness. Yet I held fast my hope, and about last August was a twelvemonth,¹³ I was coming from the sacrament with our brother H., and asking him the state of his soul. He told me he knew himself in a state of grace, because he had peace within and did not commit any known sin, neither had sin any dominion over him. Farther, he told me there was now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, etc.¹⁴ I received his words with great earnestness and found my experience to answer his. I knew that I did not commit any known sin. The promises he named were set home to my heart. I received the word with gladness and had a clear sense of the forgiveness of my sins, the Spirit of God bearing witness with my spirit that I was a child of God.¹⁵

¹⁰Edmund Gibson, *The Bishop of London's pastoral letter to the people of his dioceses; particularly to those of the two great cities of London and Westminster, By way of caution against lukewarmness on one hand, and enthusiasm on the other* (London: S. Buckley, 1739).

¹¹Ps. 115:1.

¹²This would have been in early 1740; by 1742 Hogg was the leader of one of the bands for married men.

¹³I.e., about Aug. 1740.

¹⁴See Rom. 8:1.

¹⁵See Rom. 8:16.

The enemy laboured much to take away my shield, but now all his attempts were vain. The more he tempted, the stronger was my faith, and the promises of God were more deeply stamped upon my heart. When he set my sin before me, through grace I flew to the [p. 9] promise: “He that believeth on him is not condemned.”¹⁶ And “God so love the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”¹⁷

I will not say that I have been faithful to the grace given and never found any guilt upon my soul since this. But when I have offended, the Lord was loving and showed me my error, and I confessed my fault and came unto him as a poor condemned sinner and said, “Father, if I have sinned, with thee an advocate I have.”¹⁸ And the Lord was gracious and showed forth his love to me again.

I do not know that I have for any length of time laboured under the guilt of any sin. But for a few hours I have been in doubt whether I had committed sin or no, by speaking words unadvisedly. I have laboured much under an evil heart. But I have almost continually the witness of God’s Spirit with my spirit that I am a child of his. Yet there remains within an evil root. The seed of the serpent is not done away, and it often presents itself in the risings of anger, pride, peevishness of spirit, evil surmising, and desires, covetousness and such like unholy tempers. But when the enemy besets me with any of these, I cry unto the Lord for help. For without him I can do nothing, but through Christ strengthening me I can do all things.¹⁹

I believe also that there remaineth a rest for the people of God.²⁰ But I have been in doubt whether or not it was to be obtained till a very short time before the hour of death, and therefore I was not in such earnest pursuit of it as I ought to have been. But since your coming to [p. 10] town, and Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield,²¹ in hearing you both frequent upon it, and your strong reasonings and many proofs which you brought from the Scriptures, I have been thoroughly convinced of my error.

I think it was last Tuesday was three weeks [since] I heard Mr. Maxfield. His discourse was from Romans 6[:2], “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” He reasonings, I think, were so strong that no man could gainsay them. The texts of Scripture which he brought in confirmation were many. I received his saving and was quickened by the Spirit of God unto a lively hope, believing I should, in his time, enter into that blessed state and so be happy for evermore.

I remained thus many days, earnestly contending for the hope of the gospel. But being much in the hurry of business at this time, and nature crying “Spare thyself,” there is something of a slackness has taken hold of me. Wherefore I humbly beg your prayers, that the Lord would not suffer me to grow cold or lukewarm, but so inspire my thought that I may earnestly press

¹⁶John 3:18.

¹⁷John 3:16.

¹⁸Cf. 1 John 2:1.

¹⁹See Phil 4:13.

²⁰See Heb. 4:9.

²¹Thomas Maxfield accompanied CW to London in April 1740 and was there frequently thereafter.

forward to the mark of the prize of our high calling, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;²² that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear I may also appear with him, and meet you, reverend sir, in glory, to sing praises to God and to the Lamb who sitteth upon the throne forever and ever.

From your unworthy son, servant, and brother in Christ,

Thomas Hogg

[p. 11]

**On the Death of Mr. Thomas Hogg
June 29, 1750**

- 1 Steady, faithful soul, adieu!
 Thou the mortal debt hast paid,
Nobly fought thy passage through;
 By the guardian hosts conveyed,
Go to thy eternal rest,
Go to thy Redeemer's breast.

- 2 Thee with sacred envy moved,
 Clean escaped from earth we see,
Challenged by the best lov'd,
 Him, who died to purchase thee,
Him, who justly claims his own,
Him, who called thee to his throne.

- 3 At the noon of life prepared,
 In thy strength of years and grace,
Thou hast seized the full reward,
 Thou hast won the glorious race,
Found the bliss for saints designed,
Left thy weeping friends behind.

- 4 Sad, disconsolate, alone,
 By our old companion left,
We the common loss bemoan,
 Of our dearest friend bereft,
Friend to every child of grace,
Friend to all the ransomed race.

- 5 Who shall now the orphan feed,
 All the widow's wants supply?
Who shall help the souls in need,
 Who the mourner's tears shall dry,

²²See Phil. 3:14.

Feel the tempted spirit's load,
Bear them to the throne of God?

[p. 12]

6 Answer thou, who hear'st the prayer,
Thou who didst our brother lend,
Now thy church's loss repair,
Now the equal blessing send;
Whom I view caught up to thee,
Let his spirit rest on me.

7 Meek like him, and just, and pure,
O might I, ev'n I arise!
Prompt to act, and strong t' endure,
Meanest, least in my own eyes,
Dead to pleasure, wealth, and fame,
All-devoted to the Lamb.

8 O might I, with calmest zeal
For the faith, like him, contend,
Love the men whose hate I feel,
Bear their burden to the end,
Win them by my parting breath,
Conquer all my foes in death!

Epitaph

Here rests in hope, beneath this humble clod
A breathless temple of the living God,
Assured the all-reviving trump to hear,
To see the judge on his white throne appear,
Spring from the tomb, and meet him in the air.
Body and soul shall then united rise,
The dead shall live—a life that never dies,
And I obtain my place eternal in the skies.