

## LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1833)

January 15th, 1833

My dear Brother,

Through persuasion and entreaty, I remained one week longer at Brighton than I expected to do. But the Lord was pleased to bless the word to my soul, and to the souls of others, so I felt constrained to remain. In passing through London, I preached twice, and the latter time was for the benefit of the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society. I preached in Abrahams' Chapel, Regent Street, City Road, London. I had several ministers and deacons for hearers, and the old Hebrews came out of their holes, to spy out the barrenness of the land. I believe there were many of God's children among my hearers. The Lord was with us, I trust, and enabled me to be faithful according to my light; so that I kept a good conscience.

On my return, I found a letter inviting me to preach an anniversary sermon on Good Friday, in a large chapel in London; but I declined, as I am not very anxious to preach anywhere, and especially on such occasions.

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

You seem to be learning something of the various changes in your own soul. You learn by experience that you have no desire for hearing, reading, and

talking about the best things, but as the Lord gives it. This will lead you to wait and pray; and the various trials and difficulties that you meet with will necessarily work for the good of your soul. I do not wish to flatter and deceive you, though I would not quench the smoking flax. You have not at present had any sweet revelation of Christ to your soul; but you have desired it. You have not seen God's glory in the face of Christ; but a little hope has sprung in your soul that God is doing something for you, and that He will perfect His own work. It is a great mercy to have the day-star arising in your heart, and the day dawning, and you may have many difficulties before you behold Christ in His glorious manifestation.

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

Whoever will be a disciple of Christ must take up his cross and follow Him, through evil report as well as good report; and if your religion is not tried, and does not bring you into crosses and losses, it is not worth much. But what you have felt and handled you can boldly testify of; and when you tell the professors, from what you have experienced, that you would not rest upon their hope for salvation for a thousand worlds, they will be confused and very angry. But the truth commends itself to the conscience. You can tell them, if you do not know Christ, Christ must be known, or there will be

no salvation. It is the power of godliness that will bring the cross, and it will, blessed be God's holy name, enable us also to bear it. The light which God has given you to discern the low state of the Church, and the emptiness and vanity of the mere profession of the day, will cause you to be a troubler in your neighborhood to a certain extent. But, "as your days, so shall your strength be."

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

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

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

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

"Sell that you have, and give to the poor" is a harder lesson to learn than election; but the time may come when great sacrifices must be made for Christ's sake. Money-matters will try professors. May the Lord give us

very liberal hearts, and more erase "Spare yourself," so deeply written in them. I believe your religion has induced you to be more liberal and kind to the poor; and, when that is seen, it commends itself to the consciences of those who are without. **If we have less money, and at the same time less wants, we are better off; and "people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1 Tim. 6:9-10. All things below are uncertain. ""Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21**

In the best bonds,  
William Tiptaft

June 27th, 1833

My dear Brother,

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

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

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

as Wallingford, Chichester, etc., if they have not a preacher, read a sermon of Huntington's, or of some deep-taught minister of God.

Yours very affectionately, for Christ's sake,  
William Tiptaft.

September 11th, 1833

My dear Brother,

I am glad to hear that your meetings are well attended. You will need encouragement, in one way or other, to keep you together meeting in the name of the Lord, for the right way is uphill, and some will be continually growing faint and weary.

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

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

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

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

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

Yours most affectionately,  
William Tiptaft.

December 5th, 1833

My dear Brother,

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

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

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

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

I will not justify \_\_\_\_\_ in disappointing you, but I hope that you will manifest the power of religion in your kindness and forbearance towards him. "Overcome evil with good." "Who makes you to differ?" Poverty and a large family have driven even God's children to do what is not fitting of the gospel, and what may you expect when there is no grace? God has wonderfully provided for you and your family, and I have no doubt that He will. But those who have godliness with contentment are as rich as you. In the primitive days of the gospel, how the rich sold their lands and houses and laid the money at the apostles' feet! But we scarcely like to mar our

inheritance. You and I have much to learn in the school of Christ before we deserve the name of teachers of others, and no school is more profitable to be taught in than that of unselfishness. "Let your fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers in the streets." "He who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly." Real religion does not consist in outward things; but where genuine religion is, the fruits of righteousness will be made manifest.

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

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

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

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

Mrs. Husband is very delicate and poorly from pain in her chest. Husband has licensed his house at Appleford, and preaches there in the evening. Philpot was here yesterday, and slept at Appleford. He is rather better.

May the Lord abundantly bless your meeting together, for Christ's sake.

I remain, my dear Brother,  
Yours very affectionately,  
William Tiptaft.

December 16th, 1833

My dear Brother,  
"Man devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps."

In your last you said, "I trust that you will have a call in this direction, when the alteration is made in the chapel." Now it has so occurred since I wrote to you, that my Wolverhampton friends have made a particular application to me to preach for them the last Lord's day in this month and the first in the next. I have written to say (God willing) I will preach to them on the above-named Lord's days; and thence I purpose, if the Lord will, to proceed to you, and accept your invitation; and as you desire that I should be with you two Lord's days, I am making arrangements here to be with you on Jan. 12th and 19th. I scarcely know how to leave here; nevertheless, I hope that it may be made very manifest that I was to visit you this winter. I shall be glad to find you in a lively state in your souls, manifesting the fruits of the Spirit; and your zeal will doubtless provoke very many.

My chapel being still crowded has excited a great zeal among the Church people and they have made a liberal collection to have a third service in the Great Church. They do not like so many straggling down to my chapel, and imbibing such sentiments as cause them to doubt whether all were moved by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel who stand up in their steeple-house. They intend to commence their lecture in the evening on the first Sunday in the new year. I am speaking the real sentiments of my mind when I say that I wish they had knowledge equal to their zeal.

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

even the children of God are worldly and carnal, and heavenly-mindedness is but little seen and known.

It is a blessed truth that Christ came to justify the ungodly, and the children of God know, from heartfelt experience, that they stand among those characters, are stripped of every hope, and have no refuge but in their hiding-place, the Lord Jesus, their Rock. Their life is hidden with Christ in God. Neither wrath, terrors, judgments, law, nor the devil himself, can ever prevail against the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He has conquered, and, as the great Captain of Salvation, will lead all His blood-bought chosen ones to fight the good fight of faith, and so to conquest and to crowns of glory. I trust and hope that there are a few in Oakham and the neighborhood that will stand when He appears; but they are, like myself, very young and feeble, and need strengthening.

The way to heaven is narrow, and beset with many difficulties, and we, at times, are almost sorry that we ever ventured out, especially when we keep continually meeting with the lions in the way; but nothing so much checks and stops us as vile self. It cleaves to everything on the way, and wants so often to turn us out of the way, and the ear is not deaf to the alluring and enticing invitation of Demas to look into the silver mine. Blessed are they who are only allowed to look in; for, alas! how many glaring professors and speedy travelers to Zion, who have been brave companions on the way for a time, have stopped short at that mine, and never could be seen beyond it! Our hearts are very closely knit with everything that the world loves and admires. Good old David had to say, "My soul cleaves to the dust;" and so do all God's children say it now, at times, if they know the plague of their own hearts.

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

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

O that the Lord would, of His infinite mercy, pour out His Holy Spirit upon all His dear children, so that we might indeed say that the Lord has done great things for us. I am tried in my soul in various ways. The formation of a church here is in consideration, and I feel it a very weighty matter. I do not at all feel myself fit for a pastor to go in and out before them, nor can I conscientiously continue to neglect the Lord's ordinances. I am in a strait. The Lord's people are very odd people to rule, and it is difficult to keep them even looking kindly towards each other. It can be done by no other power than the Lord's; for "You are taught of God to love one another." I shall be very glad to find you growing in faith, and your charity towards each other abounding.

May there be an earnest spirit of prayer, that I may come unto you in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. I shall be pleased to find, after a time, that the Lord had some hidden ones in dark Oakham, to bring forth and to cause to shine as lights in a wicked world. It is an infant of days with you at present, but the day of small things is not to be despised. It is first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. But grace will manifest itself, before long, wherever it is.

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

Yours very affectionately,  
William Tiptaft