

II

Breaking Away
from
Family and Churches
1833-1836

NOVEMBER THE 26TH, 1833. The beginning of my traveling. I left home for Marcus Hook by a gift of God. I had been sent there five months before, but my fears of being too fast caused me to wait. And when the Lord laid His rod upon me, then I knowed and I willingly obeyed, and went.

The way was made, very mysterious, for my going. A lady I sewed for in Philadelphia, her mother lived in Marcus Hook and wanted me to make her a visit. Her son ran a packet up and down the river. He told his mother before he left, he would bring me down, and it would cost me nothing, and then I would have no excuse. Her daughter gave me money to get a merino cloak.† I had a good plaid cloak but I did not think it was suitable for me to go on an errand of that kind. I was not able to get a suitable one, and while I was pausing in my mind about it, she give me money to get a merino cloak, not knowing anything about my having a work of God to do—only to save my own soul. But she did not know why it was that I did not go down to see her mother, but I was afraid to go down and not deliver this message, and I was afraid of being too fast. And my own family knowed not of my exercise on the work, for I kept it to myself. So when I got a suitable one, I had everything else. So now I had my passage also. Here the way was made for me to go, according to the sign given me.¹ I went and was kindly received.

Her mother said, "Now Rebecca, after dinner I will take you to see one of the nicest colored women I know. It is the only colored family in this place." So we went. And when we went in, the man and the woman fastened their eyes upon me with great surprise. For after the lady went away and left me to spend the evening, the woman said to me, "Ain't you a messenger for Jesus?" I paused in my mind to answer and said,

1. She did not have to ask for money, but her wants were provided for. For this "sign," see part 1, n. 54. Amanda Smith, later in the century, used a similar test of her mission, praying on one occasion, "If it is thy will for me to go, put it into somebody's heart to get me fifty dollars" (*Autobiography*, p. 206).

"You have asked me a hard question." It was said in my mind, "Tell her yes, but the least and the meanest that ever was sent." When I told her, she said, "I saw you in a dream and told my husband." He answered and said, "I knowed her the moment she entered the door, from what you said." She then said, "We have been striving for one year to raise a little meeting here, and a brother from Wilmington† comes every Saturday, holds meeting on Sunday, and home on Monday. He felt it was not worthwhile for him to come anymore. The people won't come out. There was only one person here. I told him to come one more week—I would pray and I believed the Lord would send us help. That night I dreamt that He sent you and you are the same woman and are dressed in everything as you were in the dream." "Yes," said her husband, "Even her cap and the collar of her dress." "Well, won't you hold meeting here tomorrow night?" "Yes." "Well, I will send my son up through the country and through this village. So—at early candlelight." "Well, goodnight."

So I came to my place. The lady told me I might stay just as long as I choosed—she would go to bed and leave the door unfast, I could fasten when I came in.

I came home, a prisoner, and went to bed a criminal²—Satan buffeted me all night. He made me believe that the news would be brought to this lady in the morning before I got up, and she would hate me, and turn me out of doors. And then her daughter would have nothing more to do with me. And not only that, my brother, when he would hear of this, he would despise me, to think that I pretended that I was going down to make a visit, then to go to pretend to preach! And here I was, in as much trouble as I could bear up under.

I came down in the morning. The lady was kind, asked me when I was going there again. I said, "This evening." "Well, you must have your tea early. I had you take tea with them last night, but no more—you must eat here all the time."

So I went, and when I got there the house was full, and all around the door, and they were nearly all white people. And when I saw the table, book, and candle, I like to fall, my knees smote together. I cried out aloud, "Lord Jesus, if Thou hast sent me here to preach, clothe me with Thy power! And if Thou hast not, make me a public example before this people!" And in a moment, as it were, I was wrapped up in a mantle and clothed with power. And while I was speaking, I saw that

2. She felt as trapped and guilty as a prisoner or criminal would, because of what she fears her white hostess and her brother will say if she preaches.

this was the people that ate my cakes off of the griddle and out of the fire and out of the ashes in 1831. There were two women that fell down and cried aloud. One of them was the wife of a mate of a vessel, and her brother was present. He stood near me, and when he saw his sister fall, he was taken with a shaking, and he made his way out the best he could.

There was some wicked men that was down there at that time. When they heard that a woman was going to speak, they came to prevent it. So it seemed they had placed themselves before the table, before I got there. The one that was the leader stood nearest to the table. I was told he didn't stand long before he was glad to sit down. When I first saw him sitting arocking, I thought he sat there because he had no seat. Just before I got through the spirit of prophecy rested upon me. I spoke as the spirit gave utterance. The head officer of that village stood just inside of the door. He had been under an exercise of mind about a duty which he had not done. When I closed, he made his way to the table with tears and said, "The Lord has sent this woman here to search me out." And he made an open confession with tears before all the people. When he was doing this, the man sitting on the floor said, "My name is Aswearing Jack. I am the wickedest man in this place. But this woman has told me the truth, and I want you to please to pray for me." He wept freely and told what he came to do. "But I won't touch this woman, nor nobody shan't. I han't got much money, but all I have I will give to this woman, that she may go and tell everybody and do all the good she can."

I stayed six days, held meeting every night. The next night at the officer's house, next at the mate's house. There was a work of reformation in that place which they said had not been before. When I was done, I returned home justified. [I went home feeling justified, knowing that I had done the will of the Lord. I always believed that if the Lord had a work for His children to do, He was able to make it as plain as the light. And, as my experience was not sufficient for me to know the many spirits that had gone out into the world,³ therefore when I received a command, I waited upon the Lord to know who gave it. For I knew that God was just, and all power was His, and what we do not understand we must wait upon the Lord in faith and humble prayer until we do. (James 1:5)]

3. This seems to indicate RJ's belief that both good and bad spirits could speak to living souls directly—probably a later, Shakerized version of her early interpretation of her inner voices as being either "the true Spirit of God" or (implicitly) Satan.

Just before the boat came to, I was told to look in the crowd, I should see a woman that was following me to the city. As soon as the boat made fast, "Go ashore, turn up the wharf, then go through the opening and she shan't see where you go." I did so. When I got home I told what a good visit I had with Mrs. R.G., but I was careful not to tell what I had been about.

So this woman came in to the market. The first colored woman she met, she asked her if she knowed me. The woman asked her what my name was. She said, "I don't know, but she has been down to Marcus Hook holding meeting for six nights, and there has been such a time there as never was known.† The people fell on every side as though they were knocked down, and they could not stand, and they shook like a leaf on a tree. Some ran out when the shaking would take them. And nobody knows who she is. And I was determined to know, so I followed her to the city, kept my eye on her all the way. I saw her just before the boat came to, and I never seen her since. I looked all among the people, asked if they seen which way she went. Nobody seen. She had on a white straw cortege† with a white satin ribbon on it, and a green merino cloak and a brown merino† dress. She has turned that place upside down." The woman that she asked said, "I don't know her." The woman went home, and when she went, my brother was there. She asked him if he knowed a woman speaker of that description. He said no, but he knowed in his heart—though he saw she did not know, because she had not seen my new cloak, always seeing me wear my plaid cloak. So just before he came home I was told, "Your brother knows what you have been doing." I went out before tea. I came home before him and went to bed.

In the morning before he went to his work, he told Rebecca, "Tell your Aunt Rebecca I wish her to pour out my coffee at the breakfast table this morning." So when I came down she told me. My heart ached in me. I cried to the Lord to be my strength, tongue, and utterance. Samuel saw something was the matter. He asked me what ailed me. I told him all about it. He said, "The Lord will give a tongue." "Oh, yes," said Rebecca, "Aunt, I will pray for thee."

So when he came down and we was at table he said, "Sister, I wish to ask thee a question and I want thee to tell me the truth." "Did I ever tell thee a lie?" "No, but I want thee to give me a decided answer to my question. Does thee believe that the Lord has called thee to preach the Gospel?" "Brother, that is a hard question for thee to ask me." "Yes, it is, but I want answer." "I will tell thee what I know." "Well, what is it?" "The Lord has called me to call sinners to repentance, and on my

obedience to that call depends my eternal salvation, Joseph." "Well, I don't see how thee is agoing to do it. Thee won't join no meeting—how thee expects to travel about I can't tell. They will take thee up and put thee in prison." "Well, Brother, I expected to have been put in prison long ago, but I knowed that if I was, it was because there was somebody there which the Lord intended that I should deliver the message to. And when I have done it, He will bring me out again." "Oh, well, if thee has counted the cost that way, go on. Please to pour out my coffee."

So I received a message, while I was down at Hook, for an elder of the Little Wesley Church.⁴ So after breakfast, I took it. When I went, he said, "You are the very one I want to see. I want you to speak for me this afternoon." "Well," I said, "you know I don't belong to no church, and you may get yourself in trouble." "I don't care, if you will only speak for me today." I spoke that day. It stirred up a great persecution in the city.

So I went to Marcus Hook after that time every two weeks, going down on Saturday, held meeting on Saturday night and Sunday, three times. The meeting on Saturday night was for those who was in the work of the reformation. It was a speaking meeting for everyone to tell how they were agetting along in overcoming their sins. And I was always being blessed in words of encouragement. And on Monday I would go home. This officer from the first night gathered right to me and always helped me in the meeting. He was quite a wealthy man and had great influence in that village—his name was J.A.E. I continued going for more than one year. [It was distant twenty miles from Philadelphia.]

THE VISION OF THE MARBLE,† A HOLY ONE

February the 5th, 1834, I was put ashore four miles from the place, and I was not well and the walking was bad, muddy and slippery. I did not know the way by land, never went that way before, and I was alone. With much difficulty I got there. Not being used to get my feet wet, I took a bad cold. When I got to the house, I was so hoarse that I could only whisper, and how I was to lead the meeting, I knowed not. And I was very sick, but I did not let on. The hoarseness I could not hide.

The people gathered. I got up, and when I spoke my voice was clear

4. On Hurst Street, Philadelphia. Founded 1821; placed in a circuit by the Philadelphia Conference of the A.M.E. church, 1843 (see fig. 2 for its proximity to Bethel and Wesley churches).

as though I had no cold. We had a good meeting. As soon as I closed meeting my hoarseness returned again.

I went to bed. I was very sick. My pipes seemed as if they would close. I found that I got worse. All sleep left me and I felt I must die. I closed my hands together upon my breast and said, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," and in a moment I saw a man descending from the northeast. He came like a man diving into water to swim, with a staff in his hands. He held it up before him like a man taking mark. He came south, which was where I was. He fastened his eyes in my eyes. When he got within a handbreadth of my forehead—that is, the end of his staff which he held opposite to the center of my forehead—he descended from the heavens. His form was like white marble, beautiful. His form, his eyes, his staff was all of one whiteness, white as the light. He then began to return from where he came, which was northeast, and drawing me after him by the strength of his staff and the power of his eyes.

The first thing I saw was a stone house of a darkish look. I saw he was going to bring me through this house. I then thought, "Here I shall feel the effect of death," and when I got through, I found it was like passing through air. He then turned westward. I then saw a marble house, like himself. When I saw his feet passing through this also, I had the same thought, but I passed through with the same ease. He then turned eastward and I then saw a river. It ran north and south. It extended as far as your eyes could see. It was white like silver. There, I felt, was the place of death. However, my faith was unmovable. As his feet began to extend over the water, the river became transparent. And when he had brought me over the midst of the river, the river, the man, the staff, the heavens, the air, and all things as far as my eyes could extend, and myself, were all one state of transparent glory, as bright as brightness. I cried out, "Glory to God!" and like Peter in the Mount, my trance ended. And I found myself in the bed, just as I was when I thought I was dying. Oh, how sorry I was! In the morning I was quite comfortable. My speech was clear. I was able to do my duty, return home. [BA 85-93; WR 49-55]

[The dream of the cakes was unfolded to me the first time I went to Marcus Hook—the people who ate my first, second, and third cakes attended my first, second, and third meetings there. The cakes that I baked represented the testimony of truth that those people received from me. I testified as far as I had received, and that was all that God required of me at that time, and I came home justified.

[By obedience to all that God required of me from day to day, I found a daily growth in grace, in wisdom, and in understanding. And in this I saw more the holiness of God, and more and more the unholiness

of my nature. Though I always received a blessing for my obedience, and it always purged away my dross and tinny nature and gave me power over sin—yet I could see my sinful nature more clearly, and also saw clearer the necessity of living more consecrated to God, and saw room for me to do so. And that is the only way of salvation from sin.

[I do truly thank the Lord my God for His abundant mercy to me, in showing me the self-denying path. And I more abundantly thank Him that He gave me to understand that no soul can be saved without walking in it, and that too, in obedience to all requirements that our Lord has laid down in the holy Scripture. And if we do not believe in them, we do not believe in God, and if we do not labor to fulfill those requirements every day, we deny the knowledge.

[For all who know God, know that He is the God of truth. And all who faithfully labor to do His will, He will give them power sufficient, for He is not a hard master. He requires no more of us than He did of His Son, and He has promised to give us an inheritance with His Son in eternal life.

[And that man and that woman who thinks God will give them an inheritance with His dear Son in light, while they live in this world according to generation,⁵ instead of living in the regeneration, as His dear Son did to show us the way of eternal life, so that we might with Him possess all things and that God might be glorified in His Son . . . † For when we live in the regeneration, which is to live without sin, herein we glorify God and herein also God's power is made manifest through all the obedient, to the children of men.

[This is the New Heaven and the New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and it is the First Resurrection.⁶ For the souls of men and women are hereby raised out of their fallen nature into the Spirit of

5. In Shaker thought, this is the opposition between the unredeemed life lived according to nature's law—which included "generation" of children—and the redeemed life, only possible to the Believer in Christ's Second Appearing, who confessed and forsook sins and imitated the sinless lives of Christ and Ann Lee. This Christ-like life included celibacy, as well as moderate, plain eating; wearing uniform and simple dress; expressing nothing but loving unity with one's spiritual sisters and brothers; engaging in diligent work; renouncing private property; denying the authority of the state; maintaining a physical separation from the unredeemed or "the world"; and relying completely on the wisdom of the appointed spiritual and temporal leaders believed to derive their authority from Ann Lee. See Appendix for excerpts from Shaker theology relevant to Jackson's writings.

6. See below, p. 189, for her revelation on the mystical nature of the Resurrection, which draws on Shaker concepts.

Christ, and this is eternal life. "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). We have to die before we can live to the glory of God, and in that death we lose our will, mind, and way, with all our lusts (Matt. 22:30).] [WR 248-49 *primary*]

My way was made for my travel from Marcus Hook up through the country, Chester, Thornsburg, West Chester in the Valley, Uwchland, Bush Hill, Spartansburg, Yellow Springs, Mernel Springs, Gulliverville, Coatesville, East Goshen, West Goshen, Downington, Pottsville, Chestnut Hill, and so from place to place.⁷ And I never asked alms nor an appointment. And in four months I have traveled and delivered sixty-nine discourses. I only speak of this to let the people know that the sign given me in my call stood unmovable.

MY HEAVENLY LEAD⁸ ENTERED HER LITTLE TEMPLE

1834, I had a little meeting at home, and I was strangely wrought upon. I felt to go and lay my hand on sister E.L.'s head. I was singing much in the spirit, and when I done it, the spirit increased upon me. I felt to go and lay my hand on the head of all in the room. The last one I laid my hand on I felt as if I was going out of time. I saw the cross, as I have mentioned in this writing, with Christ on, was a little child, and under his feet a little stool which I had been striving to get under for three years.⁹ For it was made known to me that was my place. And as I was

7. Most of these towns are in Chester and Delaware counties. See fig. 7 for the locations of towns visited by Jackson on preaching tours of the 1830s and 1840s. The date of this tour seems to be summer 1834, but see n. 45, below.

8. "Lead" is the Shaker term for leader, specifically the elders and ministry of the Shaker communal families and communities. Shakers at midcentury recognized three levels of "parents" or "leads" in the invisible world beyond death: "spiritual," "heavenly," and "eternal." These designated, respectively, the spirits of the founding Shakers or "the first elders," including Ann Lee's brother William Lee (Father William) and Mother Lucy (Lucy Wright); the male and female embodiments of the Christ spirit, Ann Lee and Jesus; and Holy Mother Wisdom and Almighty God. RJ later identifies this female "heavenly lead," retrospectively, as Mother Lucy Wright (part 4, nn. 3, 40). See Introduction for discussion of RJ's adaptation of Shaker theological feminism, which included a retrospective discovery of this female guardian spirit, as well as female aspects of divinity.

9. Jackson is referring to her earlier vision (p. 85), where the cross stood on a small, one-foot-square table. She seems to be interpreting the "little stool" as a symbol of spiritual "lowness" or humility required of the Christian. The Shakers made much of "lowness," "littleness," and "simplicity" in their ideology

afalling they caught me and I felt myself asliding, feet foremost, under the stool. And I thought I was going out of time and they saw I was sick. They got something and bathed me. I looked at them and smiled, and slid right under. And as soon as I was under, this woman entered into me, who I had followed as my heavenly leader for three years.¹⁰ And as she entered me, the heavenly influence of her divine spirit overcame my soul and body and I can't tell the heavenly feeling I had. These was all new things to me.¹¹ This was in the fall.

THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT

The summer before, I was about forty miles in the west and there was an old woman that was blind. She lived five miles from where I was. She heard a woman was to speak—she desired to hear her. One of her friends led her to the place where I put up, and when I saw her, I was sitting in prayer and I had such a sense of pity for her. And in it I was moved to go and lay my hand on her head in love. I got up and went, and as soon as I done it, I was commanded to sing, hold my right hand on her head, my left on her left shoulder. And I sung three heavenly songs,¹² and while I sung the third, the power of God fell upon her and she cried out, "Oh, that I could see you my dear child, for I know your voice! What is your name?" I told her. My mother and her used to belong to band meeting¹³ together when I was a child. It was my mother's voice she heard in me.

and ritual, maintaining that in order to imitate Christ, one should strive to be childlike in spirit. They had a whole category of "humility songs" to be sung and danced with appropriate gestures, with titles such as "I Will Bow and Be Simple," "Lay Me Low," and "Who Will Bow and Bend Like a Willow."

10. The woman Jackson had "followed for three years" is the Shaker-like woman in light drab, glimpsed walking ahead of her, whose decorum, spirituality, and plainness of dress Jackson was trying to imitate (see part 1).

11. Another instance of her insistence upon spiritual experience preceding her knowledge of theologically innovative doctrine (see part 1, n. 38).

12. Possibly these are the "spiritual songs" favored by the "sanctified sisters" within the A.M.E. church of the early nineteenth century but disapproved of by many of the regular clergy. See the discussion of the controversy over "spiritual" religious expression and practices in the Appendix section, "Female Preaching and the A.M.E. Church, 1820-1852."

13. "Band meeting" refers to a Methodist praying band, usually single-sex in membership. This reference to her mother's religious experience is one important indication of Rebecca Jackson's long-standing familiarity with black female Methodist traditions of religious expression and mutual support.

So while I sung with my hands upon her, she received sight, and praised the God of heaven, and I went and sat down again. I felt thankful that I had obeyed the Lord. For I did not know that God was going to give her sight by my hands, but I knowed that He gave me the sense of pity that I had, and told me to do all that I had done.

And the next morning she went home alone. And she done more work in four months than she had in four years. She lived at a ladies' boarding school. She went out with the rest to pick cherries, and picked two or three days. The last day, as she was coming down the tree, she thought she was nearer the ground than she was, and she jumped on a stone and broke her ankle. The bone came through the skin. I visited her in her death sickness. She suffered great pain. I stayed all one night with her, and seeing her suffering was so great [—her foot was full of living things—], and hearing her groans and crying, they seemed to pierce my very soul. [She was calm in mind, and I talked much to her about the world of spirits.] I kneeled down by her bedside and prayed that her pain might be removed from her, and it was. She fell into a sleep, which she had not done for three weeks. She lived one week from that night.

I left her in the morning. She requested me to preach her funeral service—I refused. She said, "You have been with me and you know more about me than the minister. You have done that which nobody has done. You are the one to speak." "Well, I will do the best I can, if they will let me. Now I am going twenty miles northwest. Farewell." She had no more pain, died in August, 1834. She was past 70. Sabrorer Harmon,† Chester County.

THE FORESIGHT OF HER DEATH

I thought I would say a few words on this. I was at Chestnut Hill on Sunday morning, speaking to a large assembly, and just before I closed, it was said to me, "Sabrorer is dead. Give out her funeral service at Bush Hill at 3 o'clock this day, three weeks." And when I closed, I done as I was told.

The young sister that was with me from Philadelphia was frightened. She spoke to me as soon as she could and said, "What made you give that out? You don't know whether she is dead or no." The reason why she addressed me this way, it was because the friends, where we put up, was talking to me about her, whether she was yet in time or no, just before meeting. And she was with me, and knew that nobody had spoke to me since. Therefore, she knew I had no chance to know.

However, before she got through, there come a young man in haste to me with a letter, to give out her funeral service at Bush Hill this day,

three weeks, in the afternoon. The lady who kept the boarding school had sent the letter. Sabrorer had lived with her as cook for 15 years, and she thought a great deal of her, and she and all her family paid great respect to me. The reason why he was in haste—because he wanted it done before the people was gone. When it¹⁴ was made known, it made a stir among the people. For persecution at this time was raging without control. I said, "Let us all be faithful."

THE SIGHT OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER AND THE BLESSED SON

1835, between Christmas and New Year's, I was brought to a place that I could go no further—my way was hedged, and a mountain was in my path and the top of it appeared to reach to the heaven.¹⁵ And I could go no further. And to go out of it I was not willing, lest I should not be able to get in it again. For I knowed the Lord had said that He would suffer no more to come upon his people than he would give them grace to bear. And I kneeled down to prayer with my face on a chair, and I cried in the bitterness of my soul to Almighty God to help me in this my great extremity. Without His help I must fall. I cried from 10 o'clock until 11. And at 11, my strength failed, I fell prostrated on the floor with my face to the floor. And it seemed as if I must die. Then I pled with the Lord until 12.

And then I saw the Father, whom I never saw before. He was in the northeast from where I was, His face was toward the south, the Savior was on His right side. They both looked upon me, and the Father said, "What aileth thee? What is the matter?" And at His voice the mountain dissolved, which was in my path, although it appeared to reach to

14. Her "gift of foresight" or prophecy, when it was fulfilled, made her a controversial figure.

15. Using the spiritual metaphor of the mountain in her path, Jackson is almost certainly referring euphemistically to the final struggle with her husband over her desire to cease sexual relations with him. In this account of events of December 1835, she refers to asking God "concerning things" in prayer and receiving assurance that her difficulties would be removed and that she should therefore prepare for a preaching career "yonder." In January 1836 she has a dream in which Samuel "releases" her ("A Dream of Three Books and a Holy One"). Then she is told by her inner voice to notify Samuel that she will serve him no longer (January 31, 1836). In the fall of 1836, she visits the Shakers during a tour including a trip from New York to Albany and a visit to Providence, R.I. When she returns from this tour, she has the final conflict with Samuel. He attempts to kill her and then realizes that she is "a woman of God" and releases her. These events are not told in strict chronological order below but, rather, are connected through associative logic.

the heavens. And it became white, like isinglass, and spread itself from the south to the west by the power of His voice.

And He spoke to me concerning things which I asked Him in prayer, and said, "I will see to this, go thou yonder and do my work"—spreading his right hand toward the south and westward. At the spreading of his hand this mountain covered a long space from the south to the west, white and glittering like the sun shining on isinglass. These were these places where I had borne a testimony against all sin.

And this night I found the difficulty, that had become a mountain in my path, now was moved by the power of the voice of Almighty God, and had not only become a light in and to my path, but had lit up the large spaces of ground to which I was sent to bear the truth. But this was the Lord's doing, and it was new and marvelous in my eyes—yea, in my spiritual eye, for all these things I saw with my spirit eye.¹⁶ And all the time the Father was atalking, the Savior was asmling and looking on me with great pity, though He never spoke a word.

These truly were all new things to me, for I did not know that any mortal could see God while they were in the body on earth. But so it was that it pleased God in His great mercy to show these great and hidden mysterious things to me, in this the latter day of His glory. I saw first the Savior on the cross in childhood. And the next, a female leader, a spirit, showed me the self-denial path and how to walk in it. Then I heard the voice of God. Then I saw the glory of God—which I have not mentioned in this writing.¹⁷ Then I saw the spirit, a Holy One, that led me by the power of His eyes and staff through two houses and on the transparent sea. And then the Father and the Son, the Son in manhood.

A VISION IN 1831, OF GOD'S TRUE PEOPLE ON EARTH,
WHO LIVE IN CHRIST AND CHRIST IN THEM

I should have mentioned this,¹⁸ in between the Savior on the cross and my heavenly lead. While I was under great sorrow and suffering about

16. Jackson makes this interesting claim, that all of her religious ideas were first visualized and then understood in a more conceptual way, more than once; see discussion in Introduction.

17. RJ seems to refer to a vision not included in the manuscript she was working on. It is probably the briefly described vision of "glory" inserted above, part 1, n. 58.

18. She wishes to insert an important visionary experience that predicts her discovery of the Shakers into the sequence of visionary experiences she has just

living a holy virgin life, everything seemed to stand in opposition to that life. Yet in me it was revealed, and all desire for carnal pleasure was slain. This made my life burdensome to me and to my husband, and to my friends—to my friends because I had to bear open testimony against all sin, and all that belongs to the Fall is sin.

So I was buffeted, sometimes beyond description. The Christian Church would be set before me, with all their Bishops and Elders, all living in the works of the first Adam. I saw nobody lived the life I was called to live. I then entreated the Lord to tell me why it was that I was called to live a life that nobody lived on the earth. Then in answer to my request, "I have a people on earth that lives the life that I have called you to live."

Then my spiritual eyes were opened and I saw in the distance flocks of kids, white as snow, on beautiful green grass. They laid close to the ground. Their forefeet were crossed and their chin rested on their forefeet. They were many miles apart. They all looked like one kid yet I seen them distinct. And when I saw them, it was said to me, "These are my people.¹⁹ These live the life that I have called you to live. And if you are faithful, I will bring you to see them."

My eyes and my understanding were greatly opened and enlightened—my eyes opened to see into the way, into the very heart and thought of the people. And I saw the state of the churches and their destruction, that they would all come down. Many passages of Scripture were spiritually unfolded to my mind and I testified against the churches. I told of many things that would take place, beforehand.

One night I was speaking in the upper part of this city, Philadelphia. I said that none of the people under the Law went to Heaven, not even Abraham, nor the Prophets. And while I was speaking, the people looked as though I ought not to be suffered to live. But when I had opened the subject and then proved it by the Old and New Testaments, then some of their countenances were changed. I said, "If they went to

reviewed. The major waking visionary experiences she mentions (note that the list excludes dreams) are the vision of the Savior on the cross in childhood (p. 85), the sight of the woman in Shaker dress (p. 93), the "voice of God"—apparently the words she hears after her prayer abates the rain (p. 98), the vision of the Holy One (p. 130), and the vision of the Father and Son (p. 135).

19. The flocks of kids clearly represent the nineteen different Shaker communities. This is an uncharacteristically "allegorical" vision. Although she dates it as occurring in 1831, the account of it must surely have been written after her extended visit to Watervliet in the winter of 1843, as she expresses confidence in her commitment to the Believers.

Heaven, it was not a place of rest. For the witch of Endor could not have had the power to bring up the prophet Samuel, disturb him, in Heaven.²⁰ Where was the power of God to protect his people in Heaven? Even with Himself, while the witch of Endor brought up the prophet Samuel. And again, Christ said, 'No man hath ascended up into Heaven but the Son of Man which came down from Heaven.' " I had taken my text out of the Old Testament, as I generally did, or out of the Revelation. The preachers would say, "She always takes her text out of the Old Testament or out of the Revelation and we preachers don't pretend to understand them books." So all my movements seemed to stir a continual fire.

I said those flocks of kids laid close to the ground—I never seen anything lay so close to the ground. It was made known to me that it showed the state of the spirit of humiliation that they were called to live in daily, in order to live without sin.

There are many things that took place in my travels that I can't note, for the want of time and room.

MY FIRST VISIT TO NEW YORK AND TO SEE THE SHAKERS²¹

In the fall of 1836 my first visit to New York. Sister Diana Wiggins ran on the North River.²²

The doors were open in New York for me to deliver my message. The news went to Albany, they sent for me by Sister Diana Wiggins.¹ So I went.

And when I got in Albany, Sister Diana asked me if I would go and see the Shakers. I had never heard that name but once, when I was young, and had only heard the name—I knowed not what it meant. However, I told her, "if I could get back in time enough to fill the appointment." She said I could. I then began to pray, "If these be my people, make it known to me."

So when I got in the house, I saw an aged man in the front end of the building. My spirit ran to him and embraced him in my arms as a

20. See 1 Sam. 28.

21. Note that this episode, like the vision of "God's True People on Earth" that precedes it, is out of chronological order—it is followed by events that occurred several months earlier; see n. 15, above.

22. Jackson may have inadvertently omitted a word or phrase that would have made this sentence clearer. It appears from a later reference that Sister Diana Wiggins regularly traveled by boat between New York and Albany (part 3, n. 12).

father. I loved him as I loved nobody on earth. And it was said to me, "These are my people." And I waited for them to come. It is strange to tell, though true: I never looked on the assembly,²³ though there were many sitting there. It never entered my mind that *they* were the people, but that they were yet to come.

So as I said, I waited for the people to come. When they came in, the power of God came upon me like the waves of the sea, and caused me to move back and forth under the mighty waters. It was as much as I could do to keep my seat. They all took their seats. They all set alike. They all were dressed alike. They all looked alike. They all seemed to look as if they were looking into the spiritual world. For the first time I saw a people sitting and looking like people that had come into a place prepared for the solemn worship of the true and living God, who is a Spirit and who will be worshiped in spirit and in truth. This people looked as though they were not of this world, but as if they were living to live forever.

Here I saw why it was that I was moved upon always, when I went to meeting,²⁴ to get right up and come out as soon as the service was delivered, so that nobody could speak to me. And if they did, it always wounded my spirit. I felt that we should always go to meeting in prayer, sit in prayer, get up in prayer, come out and come home in prayer, and then go and kneel down in prayer and return thanks to God for the blessed privilege. And here I was confirmed. Here my faith was made strong in the true worship of the true God, not the God of this world. So I sat waiting.

All at once they all rose as if by one call and went forth in their manner of worship,²⁵ which was very strange to me, but let that be as it may. It was told me when I first came in the house, "These are my people and if you are faithful, when you are done the work which I have give you to do in the world, I will gather you to my people." So I let the

23. The audience of non-Shakers waiting with Jackson for the Shakers to come into the meetinghouse. In addition to frequent religious services within and between Shaker families, each community had a public service on Sunday, to which non-Shakers were invited.

24. To Methodist class meetings, in the past. Jackson's writings frequently refer to her strong preference for silence around her when she is having special spiritual experience, perhaps in order to attend to her inner voice more clearly. When she was directed to different houses of the sick during her early "gift of healing," she told Samuel not to speak to her as they went, for example.

25. The Shaker dance, which was an important part of the religious service; see figs. 10, 11.

worship alone, formed no thoughts about it, thought I would give anything to hear them speak so I might know what their faith was. But nobody spoke.

When the meeting was over we came out. Now my troubles begun—there was Martha Low, Diana Wiggins, and the chambermaid, and I was afraid they would make some remark on their worship. And as I had in the beginning of my journey the gift of power given to me, I felt now was the time to use it. So I bound them.²⁶ We got into the carriage and I should think we rode near two miles before one word was spoke. Then Martha said, "If them people ain't the people of God, then there is none on the earth." I said, "That is the truth." Martha said, "I never felt the power of God so as I did this day. I thought I should have to put it down my way, but I was afraid they would put me out, and then I should lose something. So I had to bear it."²⁷ And nobody made any remark.

I was too late, and when I got in, there was one afilling the appointment. So I spoke at night.

The next day, there came a man that had been living in among the Shakers. He said to me, "The Spirit told me to give thee this book to read. And if thee understands, thee must keep it. And if thee don't, thee can give it to me again. I was at meeting last night and heard thee." [This man had lived in the Society some time, but he was not one of them, or he would not have left them, and he brought the book away when he left the Society. Knowing their faith, after he heard my testimony, he gave me the book to find out if I was one.] So I took it and handed it to Martha. She opened on their worship. When she read it she said, "I am now satisfied. It has been on my mind ever since yesterday about their dancing, for they are the true people."²⁸ So Martha

26. One of the clearest indications in RJ's writings that she believed herself endowed by the divine with supernatural powers, which she could use, in an emergency, on her own. She means that she was able to prevent them from speaking evil of the Shakers. This is a "gift of power."

27. No quotation marks are used in BA or WR versions of this passage. I have interpreted the whole comment through "So I had to bear it" as Martha's. It is not quite clear what "I thought I should have to put it down my way" means. Perhaps Martha is referring to "shouting" or "getting happy" under the influence of the Spirit, "the power of God." There is a similar episode in Amanda Smith's *Autobiography* in which she is tempted to "shout" in a Presbyterian church but refrains, so that she will not frighten the people (p. 212).

28. Martha had been bothered by Shaker dancing, because a Methodist would have seen dancing as sinful. She has just read the Shaker defense of dance as a

handed it to me. Martha knowed I read no books but the Bible.²⁹ So I sat with the book in my hand.

After he was gone, I went upstairs, and I was told, "Open the book and look into it." I opened on a part of my own experience [I opened at a passage that condemned the works of the flesh in the regeneration, as it was shown to me from heaven, and which no mortal had ever told me]. And when I saw it, I was told to take it as at the hand of the Lord, and give him one dollar as a present. I dropped down on my knees and lifted my heart to Almighty God for the gift. It was the first time I ever saw or heard anything like what had been revealed to me. I put it in my traveling bag and came down.

There was something in the gift of this book that seemed strange—his giving the book to me and not to M. (we being together and she spoke as well as me). If he had said, "for us," I should not thought so much. And then it being said to me, "Take this as at the hand of the Lord," and it being told me at the beginning that I must not read any book, only the Bible—and I never had. This was the first, in the fall of 1836. [BA 93-104; WR 55-62]

[But I can now understand why it was that I was not to read. It was because the time had not yet come for me to read anything else. God in His wisdom designed that my mind should not be corrupted with reading the teachings of Antichrist, but that His will should be revealed from Heaven into my soul. He intended that I should believe what I saw and heard, without the help of man, that He might be glorified in me through faith. He had proved me six years, and I had done His will, and He revealed it to me from Heaven in the midst of a gainsaying world.

[I had suffered all manner of persecution and had kept the faith and daily did the work that God required of me, though my only brother whom I loved as my own soul turned against me. I chose rather to suffer

part of worship ("David danced before the Lord," etc.) in one of their publications—probably *The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing* (1808) or *A Summary View of the Millennial Church* (1823).

29. Jackson's later remarks make it seem likely that she was accused at some point of having taken her celibacy doctrine from the Shakers, rather than receiving it directly through spiritual experience. The somewhat confusing handling, in her writings, of just when she received Shaker books, and whether she read them at the time, gave them to one of her spiritual sisters, or just kept them to read later, seems to be part of her defense of herself against this accusation, which may have been made during an internal struggle between two factions of the Little Band. This seems to be the first time she makes the claim that she read no books but the Bible.

at any time than to offend him—but when I saw God, heard His voice, and understood what His will was concerning me, I lost sight of my brother, husband, and all of my people by nature, for I would not displease God to gratify my self in anything, no, nor any other person on earth. Therefore the world, the flesh, and the devil were all against me, and I stood alone in the earth. And of the people, there were none with me, even as there were none with Christ when He stood in the Judgment. He was left alone, yet He was not alone. And neither was I alone, for the Father and the Son were with me, and had given me understanding of the dream I had had of the Day of Judgment.³⁰ The wrath of God was pouring from the four wings of Heaven,† and encompassed me in the midst of the earth, and all the people had vanished. And so it was when the Spirit of God began to pour into my earth, from the four persons in the Deity.³¹ In my dream, I thought it was the Day of Judgment, and that the wrath of God was burning up the earth and all that was in it. But these four Persons are now made manifest, which are God the Father and God the Mother who created Adam and Eve in their own likeness, and the Lamb and the Bride (Rev. 19:7). I have received the influence of the Spirit of Truth and of Power, which is the Spirit of Burning and the Spirit of Judgment. And it has set the Judgment in my soul and has judged all the works of the Fall, and condemned them.

[And it has burnt up all natural ties, burnt up all the bonds of [earthly] brotherhood, burnt up all the bonds of matrimony and all worldly lust—and burnt off the veil of the flesh, so that I am able to look into the Holy of Holies and know God's will concerning me from day to day. And I can say it is my meat and drink to do my Father's and Mother's will. I know them both, and they teach me every day.

[I will now mention why it was that I was commanded to take that book as at the hand of the Lord. It was because the time had arrived when I was to have an earthly witness for the establishment of my faith forever in the mysteries of God concerning things which I had seen and heard. And that I might have a sufficient evidence and a proper understanding that Christ had made His Second Appearance known to others besides me. And if I had read those writings which are so common

30. See above, p. 108.

31. A Shaker idea of a Godhead in which the male and female, as well as the creating and redeeming, aspects of God were perfectly balanced. Though they objected to viewing God as four "persons" (see excerpts from *A Summary View of the Millennial Church* in the Appendix), they allowed Shaker spirit-mediums or "instruments" to enact the four aspects of the Deity as separate characters during the "Era of Manifestations" of the late 1830s and 1840s.

among men, they would have darkened my understanding, so that when the time came for me to read the truth, I would not have been able to have received it.

[This book contained much of my experience, and also many things hard for me to understand, but I was to understand them in time. And this book was an earthly companion, for I had none to converse with that had seen these wonderful things which the Lord had been pleased to show me. He had chosen me to be one of the witnesses of Christ's Second Coming, and had raised me up and made me stand alone in this city. And I stood in His strength until in His own time He brought me to know that He had a people on earth and this book was a record of their testimony. Though I did not read the book except in two places—in one of which it spoke against the flesh and in the other it treated upon Holiness³²—until I had lent it to Sister Peterson.

[She appeared to believe in Holiness, and seeing these words agreed with my testimony, I said, "See here, Sister Peterson, read this, and you will see that what I say is true—you can live holy!" She answered, "Oh Sister, I believe we can." I showed her how far to read, which was as far as I had read, and left the book with her several days. My motive was pure in the sight of God, both for the glory of God, and her salvation. When I called for the book, she had read it through, and saw clearly in me, through this book, to the contents of which I was a stranger, having read only two or three leaves out of 320 pages which the book contained.

[However, I found in the book the foundation of my sanctification, which was the condemnation of the flesh³³ with all its ties and connections, as not belonging to the New Birth, but to the World. And Jesus said, "My people are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." I looked clearly at the life of Jesus, and understood the Scriptures to say He was our example. And how we could ever follow Him and live the life of the flesh, I never could see nor believe after I received that blessing. And when I received that book and saw therein described the life of a Christian, which I had never heard since I came into the world—only as it was revealed to me from Heaven—I could then understand

32. If the book was *A Summary View of the Millennial Church*, the section on Holiness to which Jackson refers was probably "A few remarks concerning the true nature of Perfection," in which the Shaker idea of progressive growth in "perfection" (very similar to John Wesley's in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*) is outlined; see the Appendix, p. 334.

33. The condemnation of the flesh is also a major theme of *A Summary View of the Millennial Church*; see the Appendix for some excerpts that RJ may have read and responded to.

why I was told to take this book as at the hand of the Lord. And indeed I did, and it was of great price to me. It was my earthly fortune, my earthly Father and Mother, yet, without the unction of God which I was to receive by my Spiritual Father and Mother,³⁴ which is the true riches. I mean eternal life, full redemption in the blood of Jesus—that is, His Spirit, Christ revealed in my soul and become the life and acting principle and Lord not only to the subduing of my fallen nature and bringing it into subjection to His will, but to the final destruction of that nature and the raising of my soul into eternal life. And this is the First Resurrection, over the subjects of which the Second Death has no power.

[I was not permitted to read the book again for a long time, because I had shown it, when it was for me. Through ignorance I did it. And thus I have learned obedience by the things which I have suffered, and it is sweet to my soul. Having received this witness, I was strengthened in the testimony from Heaven, and went on testifying that Christ had come, and I had seen Him.

[As my testimony increased, my persecution increased. And Sister Peterson, finding my testimony according to the book, mentioned that I had given her a book to read that contained that doctrine, but she did not think I was going to hold it forth to the world. When I heard that, my soul was grieved, knowing I received all I had from the Lord. It was on this ground that I was not permitted to read the book, except the little I have mentioned, until I had faithfully held forth the testimony which God had revealed to me from Heaven.

[She said she believed in Holiness, and so did I. And when I saw the record of it, it agreed with the nature of the spirit of Holiness which I had received in my own soul. And herein I was not stumbled. And I wondered why she did not receive the doctrine. And I looked in my mind to see why she did not receive the testimony, if it came out of the book, for she had read the book, though I had not. Herein I saw she did not believe in Holiness, only in that kind which would allow one to live in the works of the flesh. Sister Martha Low and Sister Mary Peterson having both seen the book, through their words, the gospel suffered much in my hands, through my showing them the book which was given to me for a witness of the things I had received—which things I could

34. See above, n. 8. In this case, Jackson might refer either to her elder and elders, who have the "unction of God" (in that they are the duly appointed descendants of "the anointed ones"), or to Mother Ann and Jesus themselves. Shaker terminology was not always consistent for the three (or four) levels of "parents."

not receive out of the book. For the letter killeth but the spirit makes alive.

[So seven years rolled around before I was permitted to read the book and get a knowledge of its contents, which I might have got when I first received it, if I had received it with understanding—for it was given to me, and not to Martha nor Mary. But if the spirit and substance of which the book treated had not been revealed in me as it was from the beginning of my pilgrimage,† I might have read it all the days of my life, and could no more have understood it than they did.] [WR 251-54 *primary*]

And there is one thing I feel to mention. And that is, the Shakers was dressed like the woman I followed three years who showed me how to walk through the world without looking right or left. She walked straightforward, and so did the Shakers. I had never seen anybody before that looked like her, and I never saw any people before that I loved as I loved this people. And here I saw the love of God to me. I greatly desired to hear them speak that I might know their faith, but I did not. So it pleased God to give me the book, which gave a full account of their faith, although I did not know it then.

MY LIFE AT STAKE

So I spoke several times and then returned to New York. I then visited Providence, Rhode Island. In the Narragansett we were in a sea storm and all on board was sea sick. However, we got there safe. I was so sick that I returned in the boat back to New York and did not speak in Providence, Rhode Island. I spoke again in New York, then came home. I was gone four weeks.

And when I came home, it seemed as though my very life was at stake. To mention all that I passed through would fill this book, but from that time, Samuel sought my life day and night.³⁵ And if I had not had the gift of foresight given to me at the beginning, I must have fell in death by his hands. So by obedience to the light that was revealed in my soul, and also to my heavenly lead, I always was able to know what he was agoing to do before he did himself. For the God that I served was the master of his God.

So when he had tried all ways that was in his power, and found that he failed, he then come out and confessed that he was a wicked man,

35. This is Jackson's only reference to Samuel's resorting to violence against her. It makes much more sense after we read (below, p. 147) of her declaration of her intent to serve him no longer.

and asked me to forgive him, and said, "Now, Rebecca, you may sleep at your own house, I will trouble you no more. Go forth and do the will of God. I know that He has called you to do a work and I have tried to hinder you until I have suffered everything but death. Nobody but you knows what I have suffered in this house for trying to stop you. I know you are a woman of God—He has showed it unto me. I am a wicked man, but I will not hurt you now, though I would have done it before. But you need not be afraid of me now, I never will trouble you."

These words, with tears, he spoke to me in the presence of a strange woman whom he never saw before that morning. She had come to see me. She was from the west. She had seen me about two years before in prison, when I visited a man there under the sentence of death. And she had a great desire to see me ever since. So this was her salute from my husband that morning. Her name was Hannah Hazard. She was from West Chester, where she saw me in prison. She was then on her way to Canada.

A DREAM OF THREE BOOKS AND A HOLY ONE

In the first of January† 1836, I was about 40 miles west when I dreamt this dream. I thought I came home, and as I came near the house, Samuel came out of the back door, which opened on the east side. He came around on the south side, and met me on the west side, which was where our front door was. And the way he came, was no passage, for a house stood there. And as he came he said, "Here she is now," as if he was aspeaking to somebody in the house. And he turned right around and went back. And when he got to the door, he turned his face to me, as I followed him, and he handed me into the house.

A white man took me by my right hand and led me on the north side of the room, where sat a square table. On it lay a book open. And he said to me, "Thou shall be instructed in this book, from Genesis to Revelations." And then he took me on the west side, where stood a table. And it looked like the first. And said, "Yea, thou shall be instructed from the beginning of creation to the end of time." And then he took me on the east side of the room also, where stood a table and book like the two first, and said, "I will instruct thee—yea, thou shall be instructed from the beginning of all things to the end of all things. Yea, thou shall be well instructed. I will instruct."

When Samuel handed me to this man at my own back door, he turned away. I never saw him any more. When this man took me by the hand, his hand was soft like down. He was dressed all in light drab. He was

bareheaded. His countenance was serene and solemn and divine. There was a father and a brother's³⁶ countenance to be seen in his face.

And then I awoke, and I saw him as plain as I did in my dream.³⁷ And after that he taught me daily. And when I would be reading and come to a hard word, I would see him standing by my side and he would teach me the word right. And often, when I would be in meditation and looking into things which was hard to understand, I would find him by me, teaching and giving me understanding. And oh, his labor and care which he had with me often caused me to weep bitterly, when I would see my great ignorance and the great trouble he had to make me understand eternal things. For I was so buried in the depth of the tradition of my forefathers, that it did seem as if I never could be dug up. But I bless God who had power and means to affect the good work which He had begun in my soul. And I am a monument of His great mercy and a witness of His truth. And I rejoice to bear witness of His truth, because He counted me worthy.

After I saw these three books it was made known to me that they were agoing to be revealed from Heaven by the revelation of God, and I should see them, and at times I would feel to speak of them. This was in 1836.†

MY RELEASE FROM BONDAGE

Shortly after this dream I came home. I was commanded to tell Samuel I had served him many years, and had tried to please him, but I could not. "And now from this day and forever, I shall never strive again. But I shall serve God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength and devote my body to the Lord and Him only. And when I have done it, He will be pleased." This was in the latter part of the same month that I had the dream of the three books. It was January 31, 1836.

I now passed through many sorrows and trying scenes on the account of my faith. My sufferings were so great at times that I did not know what the end would be. So I gave myself to fasting again, as I did at the beginning—then I fasted the three first days of every week. This I done for more than a year without ceasing. And always fasted on Friday for many years, until I learned the true fast. So now I undertook to fast

36. This is a conventional Shaker expression for referring to elders respectfully. The general appearance of the "white man" makes it quite clear that he is a Shaker.

37. One of several interesting instances of her ability to continue a vision into a waking state from a dream.

for three weeks, by taking a morsel now and then. But I did not work nor go out nor nobody came in during this time but Samuel. And I never spoke, and he had no power over me, not even to speak to me. And nobody had power to come until the three weeks was ended. I prayed day and night. And at the end of the three weeks (which was on Thursday before Good Friday)—the three last days of the third week, I was told at the close of my prayer to say the Lord's Prayer, which I did for three days and nights. And I prayed on my knees many times in a day. And when I was not kneeling, I was walking the floor back and forth in prayer.

So at the last day I kneeled just at the hour of twelve, which was an hour given me at the beginning. Twelve at night, twelve in the day, and at the break of day—these were my appointed hours. I suffered nothing to hinder me from these hours of prayer. And as I have said in this writing, I "put my hands to work and my heart to God" in secret prayer. So I prayed always and whenever I was moved to leave my work at any time to go and kneel in prayer, I went. I soon found that obedience in all things was the way to salvation.

So, the third day of the last three, which I closed with the Lord's Prayer at twelve o'clock, kneeling with my face to the east, as I said, "Thy kingdom come," I saw a white ball, the color of a white cloud with the sun reflecting in it, which made it the color of gold.

These three days that I said the Lord's Prayer, I saw the Father and the Son in the northeast, in the same place that I saw them when the mountain was in my path. The first day, when I first said the Lord's Prayer, I saw them first. So I saw them three days.

And at the third day as I repeated, "Thy kingdom come," I saw this ball for the first time. It came from the right side of the Father and from the left side of the Son, as the Son was on the right side of the Father. This ball seemed to proceed out of them both. And when I repeated that word, it began to roll from them to me. So when I saw, by the word, "Thy kingdom come," that this ball was coming to me, I kept on saying that, and that only. And it came to me, entered into my heart.

And as soon as it entered it became a man, and my heart became an arch, and a chair in it. He had a mantle on him. He raised himself up three times, wrapping his mantle around him every time. Every time he wrapped his mantle, it caused black specks to rise up out of my heart and pass away into nothing. They were like the cinder of a burnt paper, about the size of mustard seed. And when it was all out, he wrapped his mantle close around him and sat down on this chair. And when he sat down, my heart and soul, spirit, and all that I possessed, sank into a

sea of humility, and my soul was filled with the love of God. I was like one buried in a sea of love, peace, quietness, joy, and thankfulness. I was indeed separated from all my kindred. And I then rose from my knees and walked the floor in quietness, praising the Lord in my new heart. And I found myself in the temple, praising God where no man could see me or hear me.

After this I held forth the testimony with greater power and with a better understanding. And my enemies increased like the hairs of my head.

And there was three Methodist ministers that said I ought not to live. [These were William Henry, Isaac Lowers, and Jeremiah Miller of West Chester, Penn.]³⁸ These three appointed what death I ought to die. One said I ought to be stoned to death, one said tarred and feathered and burnt, one said I ought to be put in a hogshead, driven full of spikes, and rolled down a hill. These men called themselves preachers of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But I felt to pity and pray for them, and to continually pray to God, to keep me from thinking hard of them, and to always enable me to feel the worth of their souls at heart. And I can say in truth that God has both heard and answered my prayer. [After passing through ten years of persecution from these men and others,] I never have felt that I could not pray for them as well as I could for any soul on the earth. And I always spoke to them, when I saw them, kindly, and I felt a kind and motherly feeling toward them, for which I both praise and thank God for the gift. For this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. And to Him be all the glory.

[OCCASION SOUGHT AGAINST ME. A TRIAL OF FAITH]

In the fall of 1837, I went to New York again. And there was a minister that went on before me and told the people that I was acoming, and not to let me speak, for I preached a false doctrine, and that I had parted a great many men and their wives, and they had stoned me out of the Jersey, and I was going to flee there, for they were going to stone me to death in Philadelphia. So when I got to Sister Martha Low, her countenance forbid me to enter. However, she suffered me to come in. I did

38. This verbal attack by three "Methodist" ministers (at least two of them A.M.E.) probably occurred in 1835 (see below, nn. 44, 51). It is also possible that she refers here to a series of incidents that took place over ten years, roughly from 1833 when she began to travel to 1843 when she made a commitment to the Shakers.

not know of the rumor. Sisters [Ellen Low and Jeannette E.] was there. They all looked at me with rigor. It pleased the Lord to show me Sister Martha Low's heart, but I was commanded to pray and not to talk. So after a while, Sister Martha told me of the rumor, and said she heard I spoke in the Presbyterian church,† and had held forth an awful doctrine, and that one of the ministers had called on me about it. I told her it was not so. She seemed surprised and said, "Sister Ellen, didn't you tell me you asked Sister Rebecca, and she could not deny it?" "Yes, I did." I looked at her and wondered in my mind, asked her when I told. She said, the day that she was at my house. I then told her every word that passed while she was at my house, and she could not deny it. I said, "I did not know they were agoing to stone in Philadelphia. I will go back. For if it is the will of God that I shall die for the testimony of truth, I am willing. So I will go back on Saturday." Martha said, "I would not. You have just come." This was on Saturday.

I went to Brother Peterson, asked him who gave me the appointment in the Presbyterian church. He said he did not know. I told him I thought it was him, as his wife brought it to me. "However, I have just come from New York. I heard there that they were agoing to stone me here for preaching an awful doctrine in the Presbyterian church. Now, Brother Peterson, I don't feel to run over everybody because I don't belong to any church. If I have preached a false doctrine, I wish to be tried by your Bishop and five or six of your ministers, men that can read and that are spiritual,³⁹ and four or five of the ministers of Big Wesley Church, two or three of the Little Wesley Church, and the minister of the Presbyterian church, and yourself.⁴⁰ And if I am in an error, I wish to be convinced of it, and I will fall at the feet of the Lord, and at yours also, expecting to find mercy at the hand of the Lord and at your hand also. As I don't belong to any church, I wish to be tried in my own house. And I wish three or four of the mothers of the church, and your

39. This seems to refer to her objection to being judged by any A.M.E. preachers who condemned her scriptural exegesis but hid behind illiteracy or ignorance of the Scriptures. Her insistence on "spiritual" men seems to refer to the factionalism in the Philadelphia A.M.E. church during these years between those who believed in, and encouraged, direct experience of divine revelation and those who did not. See the reference, in *Elizabeth: A Colored Minister of the Gospel*, to the clergy who have no experience of the Spirit themselves (Appendix, "Documents: Female Preaching and the A.M.E. church, 1820-1872").

40. Daniel Peterson was at this point a licensed preacher in the Philadelphia A.M.E. church.

wife, Martha Low,⁴¹ and my brother and his wife.⁴² These women I wish to hear me tried, but I wish nobody to speak in my behalf. If I am wrong, let me be righted by the Spirit and by the Scriptures. You know, Brother Peterson, my great persecution, and you know I never have defended my course. But now the Gospel is at stake and I feel it my duty to defend the Gospel as much as in my power lays."

He answered me and said I had talked a little erroneous and he thought I had better not mention these things. And I said, "Ain't they true?" "Yes, but the people can't bear them." I looked at him. He said, "I suppose you feel that you must please God." "I thought so, Brother Peterson." So I left and went home.

On the next morning, my brother came around. He seemed as if he could tear me in pieces. He was like a lion.⁴³ I told him the same as I told Brother Peterson. He said, "Try thee?—Ah, *that* thee will never get, me girl!"

I was then strengthened in the Lord. For when I was in New York, and heard all that rumor, I did not know what to do. But I thought I would come home and pray to the Lord to teach me what to do. And when I was on my way home, I was told to offer myself for trial, just as I did. And I as much expected that they would try me, as I expected to get home if I lived. But when I found they would not, then I knew the Lord had done it for the trial of my faith, and I was strengthened indeed. But yet I was humbled before the Lord, and I felt a thankful heart to God for His tender mercy toward me alone on the earth. I was not suffered to go to New York again until 1840, but to bear the testimony in this place.

The same minister that tried to stop me in New York called on me in

41. Because Martha Low seems to have been a New York woman (see "Glossary of Proper Names"), it is not clear why she would be an appropriate witness to such a trial; perhaps Jackson wanted to convince her New York supporters, through Low, that she was not making heretical statements.

42. This reference indicates that Joseph Cox was married (presumably remarried) in 1837.

43. The story of Joseph Cox's coming around "like a lion" indicates that RJ was no longer living in his household at this point. Perhaps she and Samuel moved out when Joseph remarried. It is also possible that when she told Samuel Jackson she would serve him no longer (in 1836) she established residence somewhere else. Tension between RJ and her brother had obviously been increasing since early in her awakening, and this seems to be the definitive end of their relationship. For a discussion of this rift, see the Introduction.

Philadelphia the next spring to speak in his church for him. I done so, though he did not do it for the glory of God or for the good of souls, but that he might have wherewith to accuse me, that he might stop me from speaking. He gave me an appointment and he also took me to his camp meeting, where I spoke to thousands [white and colored]. And the Lord was with me in His wisdom and power, and to Him be all the glory. And he never was able to gainsay my testimony, but he said it was the truth, though he never had received it. And while he was adoin'g all this, his heart, his design, and all his intention was as naked before my spirit eye as his face was to my natural eye. But in this time many honest souls heard the word, and my soul was strengthened in doing the will of God.

[PERSECUTION RAISES FRIENDS.⁴⁴
REVELATION OF THE MOTHER SPIRIT]

In 1835, I was in the west⁴⁵—I thought I would not mention this but I feel it a duty so to do—persecution was raging on every side. The Methodist ministers told the trustees⁴⁶ not to let me speak in the church nor in any of the houses. And nobody must go to hear me—if they did, they should be turned out of the church. One of the trustees got up and said he would go 20 miles to hear me. So the minister turned him right out, and said he hoped he would never be taken in again.

They published me in three Quarterly Meetings—at Bush Hill, West Chester, and West Town.⁴⁷ He said he would stop me. He would go as

44. Note that this section is out of chronological order. Apparently she had originally planned to pass over it in silence, but the process of recording the 1837 incident convinced her that it was her duty to speak plainly and in some detail about the "persecution" by clergy already alluded to vaguely; see n. 38, above.

45. West of Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania. She has already indicated that her four-month tour took place in the summer of 1834 (see n. 7, above). But in this account, probably written at a different time, she is plainly referring to the same four-month tour, in which she delivered the sixty-nine sermons. I have not been able to determine which of the two dates is correct; but see n. 51, below.

46. In A.M.E. church organization, the trustees were the legal governance body of the local church, responsible for its financial well-being, as distinct from the "ministers" or clergy, who met in conferences to supervise its spiritual affairs.

47. Every three months, each local circuit or station of the Methodist church held a Quarterly Meeting Conference, at which ordained and lay preachers, class leaders, trustees, and stewards discussed spiritual, moral, and organizational affairs. In this case, the three A.M.E. congregations, Bush Hill, West Chester,

far as his horse would travel, and then he would write, where he could not go.

The friends⁴⁸ stopped him in Downingtown and told him that they would stop him or me. So they took his horse, and told him they would take care of it, and him too, until he proved Rebecca Jackson to be the woman he said she was. They had sent to me before, desiring me to put the law in force, and defend my course. I told them that I understood my call, before I started, was to live the life that I preached, and if I did, they would say all manner of evil about me, for they had about Christ when He was on earth.

So when they found that I would not, they took it in hand. They said it was a shame, a set of men ariding through the country, persecuting a poor, strange, lone woman. In these three Quarterly Meetings, he said he could prove me to be the woman that he said. But when the friends gave him a chance so to do, he said he knowed nothing about me, and he never seen me but once, but the people had set him on. So they made him give a libel,⁴⁹ and let him go with a promise to trouble me no more. He never did to my knowledge, but has opened his church for me to speak.

This great persecution throwed open doors before me. Even a wicked drunken man, when the members was afraid to let me speak in their houses and the people waiting to hear the word, he opened his house and said, "Let her come into my house and preach. I don't belong to meeting." So when the people heard, they came and told me. I went. The house was filled and all around the house and the road each way.

And at this time I had as much upon me as my soul and body and spirit was able to bear. I was all alone, had nobody to tell my troubles to except the Lord. When I got up to speak to the people, and seeing [them] on the fence, on the road, in the grass, my heart seemed to melt within. I throwed myself on the Lord. I saw that night, for the first time,

and West Town, seem to have "published" (banned?) Jackson, who was on an itinerant preaching tour, at the instigation of a particular A.M.E. minister. This would mean that members of a church could be expelled for opening their homes for her to speak in.

48. "The friends" refers to sympathetic Methodists rather than Quakers. See the comparable usage by Jarena Lee, referring to a time when on the itinerant preaching circuit she found herself "among strangers" but "made inquiry for Methodist friends, and found brother Streeter, a coloured family, very respectable" (Lee, *Religious Experience and Journal* [1849], p. 47).

49. Acknowledge that he had tried to defame her?

a Mother in the Deity.⁵⁰ This indeed was a new scene, a new doctrine to me. But I knowed when I got it, and I was obedient to the heavenly vision—as I *see* all that I hold forth, that is, with my spirit eye. And was I not glad when I found that I had a Mother! And that night She gave me a tongue to tell it! The spirit of weeping was upon me, and it fell on all the assembly. And though they never heard it before, I was made able by Her Holy Spirit of Wisdom to make it so plain that a child could understand it.

It was after this night's meeting, that the friends took up this minister, and the doors were opened—barns, schoolhouses, churches, dwelling-houses. I left home to stay two weeks, and when I found that persecution, nay, in such a manner, I entreated the Lord to let me return home again in two days. For I could do no good in such a persecution, and the doors were all shut. But my answer was this, "I open and no man shuts, I shut and no man opens. Stay while a door is open for you." So I stayed four months, delivered sixty-nine sermons, instead of two weeks.† And I had many friends raised up. So I have learnt with God there is nothing impossible. So it was when I came home off of this journey that I found the mountain in my path which was removed by the voice of God.⁵¹

There were many circumstances like unto the one I have just mentioned that have taken place in my travels, where opposition stood in the way, and God in His wisdom made a way so plain that the wicked have said, "The Lord has done it." They even made a plot at different times and places to take my life, and I was saved by the hand of the Lord.

There was at one time fifty men from a stone quarry that came to Thomas Miles's in the Valley, where I was aspeaking, to tear me in pieces.⁵² But they heard me and went away and said I ought not to be troubled, though I spoke very hard against the Priests,† they were all . . .

50. For Shaker explanation of the female aspects of God, see excerpts from *Millennial Church* in the Appendix. Again, Jackson is at pains to claim that she experienced the truth of it before she had read about or even heard of it.

51. Because she says the "mountain" episode occurred right after Christmas 1835, the dating of her western tour is probably summer of 1835 rather than 1834 (see above, n. 15).

52. I can shed no light on this incident, unfortunately, or on the reason why the account seems to break off in the middle.

III

Finding "God's True People on Earth"

1840-1843