

For
Richer,
for
poorer

Clare Heath-Whyte

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INTRODUCTION

I wonder what pictures come to mind when you think of the nineteenth century? It probably depends where you come from. At the risk of serious oversimplification in Britain you perhaps would think of Queen Victoria and Charles Dickens; in America maybe the Oregon Trail and Civil War; in Australia transportation and the gold rush. The nineteenth century also covered, obviously, a whole hundred years. In 1800 Jane Austen's first novel was still eleven years away. George III still had twenty years left on the throne – there were two more kings to go before Victoria eventually became queen. Manchester was a small town with a population of 50,000. By 1900 Manchester was a vast metropolis of 700,000, the first cars were on the roads and powered flight was just a few years away. In many ways the modern world was being developed in the nineteenth century. Many of the inventions that we take for granted first appeared – railways, electric lighting, tin cans, batteries, cement, stamps, sewing machines, safety pins, contact lenses, drinking straws, coca cola ... along with the revolver, machine gun and dynamite.

Modernisation came at a cost. The growth of cities led to over-crowding, poor housing and poor health. The poor themselves were often exploited and mistreated

– with appalling working conditions and few ways to protest. Many Christians were at the forefront of the campaigns to fight for social justice and many took innovative and practical steps to improve the lot of the oppressed. The husbands of Barbara Wilberforce and Minny Shaftesbury campaigned against the slave trade and against the dreadful conditions in factories and mines. Mary Muller worked alongside her husband to house, care for and educate thousands of homeless orphans. Elizabeth Fry personally transformed prison conditions, particularly for women, not just in Britain, but throughout Europe. All of these humanitarian efforts were carried out in the name of the Lord Jesus, and went hand in hand with the proclamation of the gospel. The growth of the cities also provided great opportunities for evangelism on a bigger scale than was even seen during the Evangelical Revival of the previous century. Emma Moody and Susannah Spurgeon supported their husbands as they preached to thousands – and coped with the celebrity that went with that.

The women in this book were all very different. They had very different personalities and backgrounds, were married to very different men and lived at different times during the century. Intriguingly the most ‘modern’ woman was perhaps Elizabeth Fry, who was active early in the 1800s. In some ways women’s opportunities narrowed as the concept of the ‘Angel

in the House’, based on a popular poem, became increasingly influential after the mid-century. The ideal woman was a devoted and submissive wife, whose entire life would be centred on the home. Fashions became more restrictive over time – the free-flowing dresses of the Regency period were replaced by corsets, crinolines and bustles. Despite these restrictions and the limitations placed on them by their health, their families and in some cases their personalities, the women of this book were still able to live for the Lord Jesus.

What that looked like varied enormously – as it always will. Some were dynamic and proactive; others were behind the scenes and under-appreciated; most struggled – as most always will. Their struggles were sometimes different from those we face in the twenty-first century, but many seem all too familiar – time, priorities, parenting, health ... As you read about their lives I hope you will find things that resonate with your life – either as a challenge or as an encouragement. They served the same Lord as we do today. He sustained them – He will sustain us too, whatever we face.

Clare Heath-Whyte

CHAPTER ONE
Elizabeth Fry
1780–1845
A Multi-Tasking
Minister of Mercy

Women are supposed to be good at multi-tasking. Briefly there was a time when women were told that they could ‘have it all’ – a perfect marriage, several children, an exciting social life and a rewarding career. Labour-saving devices and new technology were supposed to herald the dawn of a new age of female emancipation when all things were possible. Perhaps now we are more realistic – just about coping can sometimes seem an aspirational aim for a working mum. Lack of time, lack of sleep plus competing priorities and expectations all cause stress in the modern home. Elizabeth Fry faced these same problems nearly two hundred years before working mothers became the norm. The dilemmas she faced as the mother to eleven children while simultaneously fighting to reform the barbaric prison system and work as a Christian teacher and evangelist seem very relevant today. As one of the

very few women to appear on the back of an English banknote she can't have done too badly!

Elizabeth Gurney, as she was, did not have a very promising start. Her family would not have predicted that she would become one of the most famous women of her generation. She was born in Norwich in 1780 and was the fourth of eleven children. Her family were wealthy Quakers. Her father ran Gurney's bank and her mother was from the Barclay banking dynasty. Although she had a close and loving family, in her memoirs Elizabeth, or Betsy as she was known, wrote that her childhood was 'almost spoiled through fear'.¹ She was scared of the dark; she was scared of drowning; and she was scared to death of death – particularly the death of her mother. She wrote, 'Such was the love for my mother, that the thought that she might die and leave me used to make me weep after I went to bed.'² She was almost certainly dyslexic, which meant she struggled academically. She couldn't spell or express herself clearly on paper and her handwriting was almost unreadable. As dyslexia was then unknown she was just seen as being deliberately slow and lazy. Spiritually she did not show much potential either. Her father was a nominal Quaker, and although her mother was keen that her children should share her faith, later Elizabeth wrote that her mother was not 'fully enlightened as to the fullness of gospel truth'³ and that her 'religious impressions, such as I had, were accompanied by

gloom.'⁴ When she was just twelve her greatest fear became a reality when her beloved mother died. Her one genuine spiritual influence was gone. Despite the Quakers' reputation for simple living, Betsy's father enjoyed hunting, dancing, music and singing. He sent the children along to the Goat's Lane Quaker Meeting House, but strictly discouraged any form of religious enthusiasm. A typical comment from the time was 'Goat's was dis'.⁵

Betsy was all set to fit in with her father's set. As a teenager she was fashion conscious and fascinated by celebrities, particularly the royal family. At the age of seventeen she wrote, 'I fear being religious, in case I should be enthusiastic.'⁶ At the time 'enthusiasm' or wholehearted Christian faith, as shown by the Methodists and evangelical Anglicans, was very suspect in polite society. This was unlikely to be Betsy's problem. Her sister Richenda wrote, 'Sister Betsy was generally rather restless at Meeting; and on this day, I remember her very smart boots were a great amusement to me; they were purple, laced with scarlet.'⁷ A year later Betsy had decided to wear modest Quaker clothes and her conscience was being troubled by dancing, plays and even music.

What had changed? In February 1796, when Betsy was fifteen, she was sufficiently unwell for her to be sent to London to visit a doctor. It has been suggested⁸ that this may have prompted her to think about her

own mortality and take her religion more seriously. It doesn't seem to have had a lasting effect as her sister's comments about Betsy's fidgeting in the meeting in her trendy boots was made two years later. But, despite outward appearances, over the previous few months there had been signs that she was becoming dissatisfied with her vacuous social life. On 18 January 1798 she wrote in her journal,

I am a bubble, without reason, without beauty of mind or person; I am a fool. I daily fall lower in my own estimation. What an infinite advantage it would be to me, to occupy my time and thoughts well. I am now seventeen, and if some kind and great circumstance does not happen to me, I shall have my talents devoured by moth and rust. They will lose their brightness, lose their virtue, and one day they will prove a curse, instead of a blessing. Dreaded day! I must use extreme exertion to act really right, to avoid idleness and dissipation.⁹

Just a few weeks later, at the meeting, wearing her purple boots, Betsy found what she was looking for. A visiting American Quaker, Thomas Savery, was speaking. He had a far higher view of the Bible and a clearer understanding of the gospel than most British Quakers at the time would have done. For many Quakerism was just a matter of distinctive and modest dress and speech – which Betsy's family rejected – rather than a devotion to Christ, his word and the gospel. After

the meeting Savery visited Betsy's family – where he was unimpressed by their worldliness. Betsy was very impressed by him and his message. Her sister Richenda wrote, 'From that day her love of pleasure and of the world seemed gone.'¹⁰ Betsy herself wrote,

It has caused me to feel religion. My imagination has been worked upon ... at first I was frightened, that a plain Quaker should have made so deep an impression on me ... but I hope I am now free of such fears. I wish the state of enthusiasm I am in may last, for today I have felt that there is a God.¹¹

Over the next couple of years Betsy was transformed inside and out from a fashionable, worldly teenager into the modestly dressed and pious icon familiar from old £5 notes. It did not happen overnight. On a trip to London she was very excited to see the Prince of Wales at a concert, writing, 'I own, I do love grand company ... I felt more pleasure, in looking at him, than in hearing the music.'¹² Gradually she changed her outward appearance and behaviour. She started using 'thee' and 'thou' rather than 'you', as serious Quakers did. She wore plain colours and was reluctant to dance – but she still wore a fashionable turban which allowed her blonde curls to show, and referred to fellow Quakers as 'Mr' and 'Mrs' rather than 'brother' and 'sister'. Much of the change seems to have been external. At this stage she lacked assurance and still spoke of 'supreme wisdom' and 'religion' rather than of Jesus, her Saviour, or God,

her Heavenly Father. One important change was her attitude to those in need. Early on in her Christian life she wrote, 'I don't remember ever being any time with one who was not extremely disgusting, but I felt a sort of love for them'(!)¹³

Betsy was approaching marriageable age, and was now seen as a suitable bride for the stricter brand of Quaker. Joseph Fry was a wealthy banker like her father, but he took his faith far more seriously. He seemed the perfect match. He could provide Betsy with all the home comforts she was used to, while supporting her in her new faith. Joseph and Betsy married in August 1820, when she was twenty and he was just three years older. She moved to London, where they lived at the bank. From being considered weirdly religious by her family and friends in Norfolk she was now the frivolous one! Wanting to be more genuinely spiritual and charitable, and just a week after the wedding, she was determined to have daily prayers for the household – even though her more worldly brother and another guest were staying. She was nervous what they would think, but went ahead anyway – and set a pattern that would last her whole life and that would eventually influence the family devotions of a generation! She was more uncertain about her charitable role. She felt both drawn to and repelled by the poor. She wrote in the early months of her marriage, 'I walked out and went to see a poor woman who I half like and half do not,

as there is something in her very odd; however, I spent much time about her.'¹⁴

Very soon she did not have 'much time' to spend about anyone or anything. Her new life was a social whirl – even if it was a rather more sedate whirl than she was used to! She wrote, 'I do not think, since we married, we have had one-fourth of our meals alone. I long for more retirement, but it appears out of our power to procure it ... engagement follows engagement so rapidly day after day, week after week ...'¹⁵ Soon she was pregnant, as she was to be almost constantly for the next fifteen years! Kitty was born just a year after the wedding, and it sounds as though Betsy suffered from post-natal depression: 'I did not experience that joy some women describe when my husband first brought me my little babe, little darling! I hardly knew what I felt for it, but my body and spirits were so extremely weak, I could only just bear to look at those I loved ... I almost wept when she cried.'¹⁶ Betsy was also suffering from toothache – it was not a good time. A few months later we see the first hint of the clash of priorities that she would struggle with for years: 'I went to see a poor woman, it is always a cross to me leaving my child, but going over the bridge I enjoy; the air, sky and water looks so sweetly.'¹⁷

For the first nine years of her marriage Betsy enjoyed visiting and helping the poor near her home. She enjoyed it so much that it brought its own temptations:

'Attending the afflicted is one of those things that so remarkably brings its reward with it, that we may rest in a sort of self-satisfaction which is dangerous.'¹⁸ It was also a change from the relentlessness of family life which then, as now, sometimes did not seem that rewarding. She had six children in nine years and her mental health suffered with each pregnancy.

Her journals show her spiritual growth during this time. She was learning to trust in God more and in herself less, and her faith was becoming more personal and biblical. Regularly her journals show her praying for strength to fulfil her many different roles – even before she started the prison work that was to make her famous: 'Strengthen, if Thou seest meet, my weak hands to become a better wife, a better mother, and a better mistress. May self never take the glory for any duty or service Thou mayest enable me to perform; but mayest Thou the great Giver receive glory, honour, thanksgiving, and praise from me, both now and for ever more.'¹⁹ She was growing increasingly frustrated by the narrow focus of her life. On her eighth wedding anniversary she wrote, 'My course has been very different to what I had expected; instead of being, as I hoped, a useful instrument in the Church Militant, here I am, a care-worn wife and mother, outwardly, nearly devoted to the things of this life.'²⁰ In the same entry she acknowledged that she had learnt humility and a greater trust in God through those trying and often dull years: 'It is our place, only to be as passive as

clay in His holy hands, simply and singly desiring that He would make us what He would have us be.'²¹

That God is in control and not us is a hard lesson to learn – particularly for a dynamic woman like Betsy. That God had an important role for her to play at home was something she could not ignore with so many children to care for. She was made to learn patience and, as she expressed it, 'a sense of what I am' in relation to God 'that He may be glorified, either through us or others, in our being something or nothing, as He may see best for us.'²² She later showed that she had the gifts and personality to achieve great things in her life. What she learnt through these years at home meant that those achievements would be for God's glory not her own. That is a great perspective for a stay-at-home mum to have. Few will have quite as many years of pregnancy and nappy changing as Betsy, but it is still worth remembering that God can teach us during those times of busy boredom caring for small children.

In 1809 Joseph's father died and the family moved into his former home in Plashet – now part of the London borough of Newham, then a rural retreat. There were opportunities for Betsy to help in the local community. She became more involved with the Quaker Meeting House and contributed in their meetings, sharing Bible passages that she found helpful. She set up a girl's school in East Ham with the support of the local vicar. Initially the girls met in her home, but soon seventy

girls were attending and the school needed its own building. There was a poverty-stricken Irish colony half a mile from their house and Betsy took them carriage loads of flannel petticoats for the winter. She asked their priest's permission to hand out Bibles and tracts and to encourage the children to go to school. She was even trained by a local doctor to give smallpox vaccinations to the poor! She was also a great supporter of the recently founded Bible Society and was getting to know evangelical Christians from other denominations, which expanded her network and her understanding of the gospel.

She was doing things she loved and that she felt were important, but she was, and always would be, worried whether she had got her priorities right: 'May my being led out of my own family by what appear to me duties, never be permitted to hinder my doing my duty fully towards it, or so occupy my attention as to make me in any degree forget or neglect home duties.'²³ With now eight young children her journals are full of her concerns for their health, their spiritual growth, her poor mothering and her need for God's help. When she was feeling particularly inadequate she wrote, 'My feeling of my own great deficiencies towards them and others, at times leads me to take great comfort from the shortness of life, if I be but ready, and have done faithfully the work committed. I could willingly leave them and all, trusting that better instruments might be raised up for their help.'²⁴

At this time, in 1813, there is also the first mention of a visit to Newgate Prison, which would become the focus of so much of her later work. Prison conditions at the time were appalling. Prison was generally a holding pen for the real punishment – either execution or transportation to the colonies. They were places of violence and depravity, with those still awaiting trial for minor crimes held with hardened criminals awaiting the death sentence. The conditions were cramped, there was no bedding and some prisoners had no clothes to wear. Betsy was shocked by 'their deplorable condition'.²⁵ Another visitor gave this description: 'The railing was crowded with half-naked women, struggling together for the front situations, with the most boisterous violence; and begging with the utmost vociferation. She felt as if she were going into a den of wild beasts, and she well recollects quite shuddering when the door closed upon her, and she was locked in with such a herd of novel and desperate companions.'²⁶

Betsy only visited a few times before family crises took over. Her oldest children were reaching adolescence and two more babies were born in quick succession. The family business suffered as a result of the banking crisis of 1812 – and of Joseph's poor business decisions. Betsy had to ask her brothers to bail out her husband's bank. Her brother and a close family friend died, as did her four-year-old daughter, Elizabeth. This all took its toll on her physical and mental health: 'I

have known much this winter; the loss of my lovely child – the frequent illnesses in the house amongst the family – loss of property – my own long cough; yet I know hardly any trial, except in deed real evil, that appears so greatly to undermine comfort outwardly and inwardly, as a nervous state of body and mind.¹²⁷

Betsy was struggling. She wrote,

*I have been of late principally occupied at home, which has its peculiar exercises, as well as being abroad; having to govern such a large household, where the infirmity and evil propensity of each one, old and young, too often show themselves and deeply try me in many ways; they confirm me in a feeling of my own infirmity, they humble me.*²⁸

Ten children – a screaming newborn, tantruming toddlers, lively kids and stroppy teenagers – would try even the most capable mum in many ways! Strategies were developed to cope with the growing family. The older children were sent on extended holidays with various family members and eventually the hard decision was made to send the older boys away to school – trusting God that He would look after them and keep them from temptation! She found it hard when the children were all at home, but she missed them when they weren't: 'Our house looks charmingly, as far I think as a house can – so clean, neat and lively – but it wants its inhabitants very much.'²⁹

A clean, neat house was one benefit of having fewer children at home. The other was that Betsy now had more time to devote to prison work. She wrote to her sister, who was looking after her older daughters, 'I have felt in thy taking care of my dearest girls, that thou art helping me to get on with some of these important objects, that I could not well have attended to, if I had had all my dear flock around me.'³⁰ She set about setting up a school for the children in Newgate, who were imprisoned with their mothers, as well as for the younger prisoners. Although there were fewer children at home, she still struggled with her many commitments, but trusted that God would help her prioritise and give him the glory:

My mind too much tossed by a variety of interest and duties – husband, children, household, accounts, Meetings, the Church, near relations, friends, and Newgate; – most of these things press a good deal upon me; I hope I am not undertaking too much, but it is a little like being in the whirlwind and in the storm; may I not be hurt in it, but enabled quietly to perform that which ought to be done; and may it all be done so heartily unto the Lord, and through the assistance of His grace; that if consistent with His Holy Will, His blessing may attend it, and if ever any good be done, that the glory of the whole work may be given where it is alone due.

That should be every busy woman's prayer!

In 1817 Betsy set up the Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate, which aimed to 'provide for the clothing, the Instruction and the Employment of the women; to introduce them to a Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and to form in them, as much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety and industry, which may render them docile and peaceable whilst in prison, and respectable when they leave it.'³¹ She built a team of Christian women visitors – soon including her older daughters – to read the Bible to the prisoners and to provide practical help. She drew up a list of rules that had to be agreed by the inmates – including no swearing, fortune telling, drinking, gambling or reading 'improper books'. They also had to agree to the Bible readings and to producing needlework for a wholesale clothing company to keep them occupied and teach them a skill. Monitors were appointed from the 'better' prisoners to make sure the others kept the rules! After just a month the results were extraordinary: 'From being like wild beasts, they appear harmless and kind. I am ready to say, in the fulness of my heart, surely "it is the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes."³² She saw the Bible readings as the central part of her reforms and later resisted attempts, particularly in Roman Catholic countries, to copy her reforms without including them. Nearly twenty years later she gave evidence to the Select Committee of the House of Lords:

If anyone wants a confirmation of the truth of Christianity, let him go and read the scriptures in prisons to poor sinners; you there see, how the gospel is exactly adapted to the fallen condition of man ... for though severe punishment may in a measure deter them and others from crime, it does not amend the character and change the heart.³³

The many letters Betsy received over the years from women whose hearts had been changed by the gospel show that her confidence was well founded – an excellent reminder for those involved in any 'ministry of mercy'.

Almost immediately Betsy became famous. The authorities were astounded by the success of her reforms and she was bombarded by letters from women around the country who wanted to set up similar projects in their local prisons. Just a year after her work began she wrote, 'I have led rather a remarkable life; so surprisingly followed after by the great and others, in my Newgate concerns; in short, the prison and myself are become quite a show, which is a serious thing in many points.'³⁴ Politicians and the nobility flocked to visit the prison to see Betsy and her ladies reading the Bible to the now almost perfectly behaved prisoners. She was even invited to meet the royal family! She was asked to visit prisons in the north of England and Scotland, and her visits were reported in the press. But she was always aware of the cost to her family and tried to ensure the

children were all well cared for when she was away: 'All my sweet flock are, I trust, carefully provided for; Katharine and the three little ones at Earlham, Joseph and Chenda at Ructon, John and William at school, and Rachel with me.'³⁵ Childcare issues are not a new problem!

Inevitably she was criticised for her decisions:

*I have ... had some perplexity and discouragement, thinking that some of those very dear, as well as others, are almost jealous over me, and ready to mistrust my various callings; and are open both to see my children's weaknesses, and almost to doubt the propriety of my many objects. Such are my thoughts! Indeed I too feel the pain of not being able to please everyone.'*³⁶

Interestingly it seems as though her husband supported her work. A contemporary account said of Mr Fry that 'far from opposing her benevolent labours, he facilitates them, and affords her ample means of relieving the unfortunate by annually placing at her disposal a considerable sum, which she applies entirely to the benefit of the poor.'³⁷ Despite the criticism and the pressure she expanded her work to improve the condition of women transportees – those sent to Australia as punishment. She organised matrons for the journey as well as needlework to occupy the women and to provide them with an income when they arrived

to save them from prostitution. Not surprisingly overwork effected Betsy's health. It was described as a time of 'nervous illness' and she was bedridden for several months. Once again Betsy was determined to learn through the tough times:

*I have found in the most awful moments of this illness, that precious as it is, in ever so small a measure to have followed our Lord, or manifested our love to Him; yet we can in no degree rest in any works of righteousness that we have done, but that our only hope of salvation is through Christ our Redeemer, to whom alone we desire ever to give the glory of His own work, in time and in eternity.'*³⁸

When she was better she continued working as hard as ever. She visited prisons in, amongst other places, Nottingham, Lincoln, Doncaster, Sheffield, Leeds, York, Durham, Newcastle, Carlisle, Lancaster and Liverpool. Wherever she went she set up committees to organise visiting female prisoners, which generated a vast amount of correspondence. This was all happening at a time when her family responsibilities were becoming even more complicated. Her older sister was dying of TB and so Betsy went to Norfolk to care for her for the final six weeks of her life. Her eldest daughter, Kitty, now twenty-one, was getting married to an Anglican. Betsy was disappointed that Kitty was not marrying a Quaker, but generally approved of the match – which

most of her Quaker friends did not! The following year, when she was five months pregnant with her final child, she travelled back to Norfolk to care for her dying sister-in-law, but had to come home to 'receive the Princess of Denmark; it was a satisfactory visit. Several Italian noblemen and others to dinner ... My fatigue great.'³⁹ In November 1822 her eleventh child was born – on the same day as her first grandchild! Just six weeks later she was back at work in Newgate. Somehow she managed to juggle it all: 'Again to Newgate, one of the bishops and many others there; it was a solemn time; a power better than ourselves seemed remarkably over us. I visited another prison and then returned home; besides these out of door objects, I am much engaged in nursing my babe, which is a sweet employment, but takes time.'⁴⁰ She was also visiting and speaking at Quaker meetings around the country and promoting the work of the Bible Society. Not surprisingly she wrote at this time, 'Much was accomplished in a short time, although not without deep exercise of spirit, and considerable fatigue of the body.'⁴¹

Predictably Betsy became unwell once more. Also predictably she used her illness for good. While convalescing in Brighton she was bothered by beggars at the door. She was unsure whether the callers were genuinely destitute or not, so she set up a District Visiting Society in the town. Families were visited, and their needs assessed. The poor were then encouraged to deposit small sums when they could to save for a rainy

day. Benefactors added to the pot, and those unable to help themselves were given relief. As if that was not enough, Betsy also became aware of the lonely job of the coastguards as she saw them patrolling the beach for smugglers at night. She decided to set up libraries for them along the whole coast, with Bibles as well as other books. The letter she received showed they were really appreciated by the men and their families. She later wrote, 'Out of deep distress, I formed these institutions (if I may so call them) little thinking that an illness that appeared to myself, as it would almost take away all my powers, should be the means of producing good to so many – surely out of weakness I was made strong.'⁴² When we are ill it is easy to feel resentful or frustrated at being unable to do what we habitually do. Betsy saw illness as bringing new opportunities – to get to know God better and to serve him in new ways.

It was a great attitude to have – and she needed it as she faced new disappointments and challenges. There was yet another financial crisis in 1828, and this time her family were not able to save her husband's business. Joseph was declared bankrupt, and according to their rules was thrown out of the Society of Friends (Quakers). They had to leave their home and move back to live with their son at the bank. She felt utterly humiliated, but rested in God's love: 'How have gospel truths opened gradually on my view, the height, the depth, length and breadth of the love of God in Christ Jesus, to my unspeakable help and consolation.'⁴³

She was also encouraged by her old friend William Wilberforce, who had known his own share of financial insecurity. He wrote to her, 'May every loss of this world's wealth, be more than compensated by a larger measure of the unsearchable riches of Christ.'⁴⁴ She wondered whether due to her changed circumstances she could continue with her prison work. Wilberforce urged her to keep going. Thank God for wise friends! She commented that after all the initial excitement many of the public had lost interest in prison reform – but there was still so much to do! Even so she still found time to write a devotional, with short Bible readings for each day, which were meant to be short enough to be read by busy working people. She called it her 'Text Book' and she became passionate about giving it out to everyone she met.

With so many children, one or more was always going to cause her concern. When her teenaged son Gurney went travelling to the continent with friends she wrote a strict letter to the tutor who went with them:

*Never allow the boys to be out alone in the evening; nor to attend any public place of amusement with any person, however pressing they may be. I advise, thy seeing that they never talk when going to bed, but retire quietly after reading a portion of the holy scriptures. In the morning, that they be as quiet as possible, and learn their scripture texts, whilst dressing.*⁴⁵

What actually happened we will never know! A few months later another two of her children chose not to marry Quakers. Despite being friends with Wilberforce, Simeon and other prominent evangelicals, who she respected as fellow believers, Betsy did not attend her son's or daughter's Anglican weddings, but stayed on her own at home instead. The Quakers often frustrated her. She despaired at the lukewarm faith of some and their lack of emphasis on biblical teaching. She knew that some who attended meetings were not converted and wondered what they were thinking about in the lengthy silences! But she was a loyal Quaker, and even though her children professed faith she was hurt by their rejection of Quakerism.

As she grew older Betsy became tired more quickly and tried to build rest and relaxation into her busy schedule. It was not always successful. A 'holiday' in Jersey was spent visiting the islanders and giving out tracts, holding open Quaker meetings and visiting the asylum, workhouse and prison. The rest of the family spent their time sketching, rambling and going on picnics! Even during 'downtime' on her increasingly frequent 'business trips' to the continent she chatted to the locals – though they often didn't understand her – and handed out her Text Book and other tracts in translation.

The idea of prison reform was catching on in Europe and she became the darling of European royalty. She