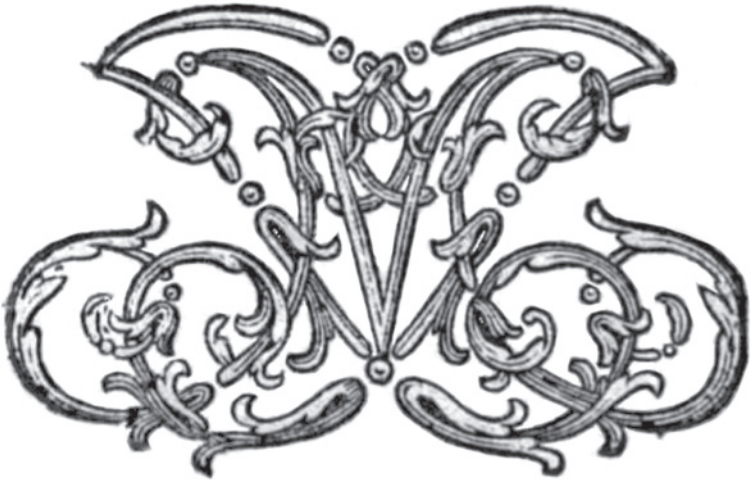


ADVICE

to my children and grandchildren



JOHN CROOK

QUEBEC

Samizdat, below Cap-Rouge

Dec 3rd, year of the Lord, MMXVII



Advice to my Children And Grandchildren (written 1698) by John Crook (1617-1699).

Drawn from *The Design of Christianity, With Other Books, Epistles, and Manuscripts of the Ancient Faithful Servant of Christ Jesus, John Crook.* London: James Phillips, 1791, pages 411-412.

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ADVICE TO MY CHILDREN & GRAND- CHILDREN



Dear Children,

I must leave you in a wicked age, but comment you to the measure of the grace of God in your inward parts, which you have received by Jesus-Christ; and as you love it, and mind the teachings of it, you will find it a counselor to instruct you in the way everlasting, and preserve out of the ways of the ungodly.

I have seen much in my days, and I always observed, that the fear of the Lord God proved the best portion, and those that walked in it, were the only happy people, both in this life (while they continued faithful) and when they come to die, though they meet with many hardships in the passage. By experience I can speak it, that the ways of holiness afford more true comfort and peace to the upright soul, than the greatest pleasures this world can afford; the former reaches the heart and soul, while the delights of this world are but a shew, and appearance only, vanishing like a dream; and whoever believes otherwise of them, will certainly find them to be but lying vanities; therefore the apostle, Rom. vi. 21. might boldly put the question to the converted Romans, viz. "*What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.*"

Therefore, dear children, be in love with holiness; make it your companion, and those that walk in it; you may find buddings of it, from an holy feed in your hearts; as you mind the inner man, the light will manifest the stirrings of it after God, which I felt from my tender years; although I understood them not so plainly, till I heart the truth declared.

I advise you to keep a pure conscience, both toward God and man; for it that be defiled, hypocrisy and formality will deprive you of all comfortable feeling of God's presence; and then deadness and dryness will be your miserable portion.

Be careful of how you spend your precious time, for an account must be given of every idle word, though but few regard it; but foolish jesting, and vain talking, are said to grieve the spirit of God; read Eph. iv. 29, 30. But improve your time in prayer, and religious exercises, &c. and be diligent in your lawful callings, for "*The desire of the slothful man killeth him,*" Prov. Xxi. 25.

Be careful what company you keep; for a man is commonly known by the company he keeps, as much as by any one outward thing; and of your behaviour in company; for I have found, that a wise and sober deportment, adds much to a man's reputation and credit in the world.

Watch to the light, and its discoveries of good and evil, that you may not be ignorant of Satan's devices; so the net will be spread in vain in the flight of the bird; for watchfulness will make you in love with a retired estate; and the more truly and perfectly any man knows and understands himself, the better discerning will such have of other men; as in the beginning, when deep silence of all flesh was more in use, the spirit of discerning was more common, and quicker, than since it hath be neglect; therefore be sure you spend some time, at convenient seasons, in waiting upon God in silence, though it be displeasing to flesh; for I have had more comfort, and confirmation in the truth, in my inward retiring in silence, than from all words I have heard from others, though I have often been refreshed by those also.

Love the Holy Scriptures, preferring them to all other books whatsoever; and be careful to read them with an holy awe upon your spirits, lest your imaginations put constructions upon them to your hurt; but execute faith in the promise of Christ, who hath said, "*My spirit shall take of mine, and shew them unto you.*"

Keep constantly to religious meetings amongst Friends¹; but look to your affections, that you respect not persons, but the power and life of truth, from whomso-

1 - Amongst themselves, the Quakers were known as the *Society of Friends*.

ever it comes; not minding the tickling of your affections, but the demonstration of the truth to your understandings and consciences; for that will abide, when flashes of affections will fade and come to nothing, after the words are ended.

Love one another truly, manifesting your love by good counsel; and being helpful to each other upon all occasions; being good examples to all you converse with, especially to your children, and those of your own families, that pride and vanity may not be countenanced by you, but rather reprov'd; remembering, while they are under your government, you must give an account of the discharge of your duty to God towards them.

Lastly, be always mindful of your latter end, and live as your would die, not knowing how soon your days may be finished in this world: and while you do live in it, despite not the chastenings of the Lord, whatever they be, he is pleased to visit you withal. I have been afflicted from my youth up, both inwardly and outwardly, but God whom I served, provided for me, when all my outward relations forsook me, none of them giving me any portion to begin the world withal. This I speak, to let you know, I shall leave more outwardly, even to the least of you, than was left me by all my relations, &c. I need not mention this affliction (beyond expression) in my old age, because, in some measure, you know it; but I could not have been without it, as the Lord hath shewed me, for I have seen his wonders in the deeps: therefore I say again, despise not afflictions, but embrace them as messengers of peace to your souls (though displeasing to the flesh.)

These things I commend unto you, out of true love to your souls, knowing how the vain mind of man little regards such advice as this I leave behind me: but by this advice I shew my true love to you, desiring God's blessing upon it; to whom I commit you all, my dear children, and end my days.

Your loving father and grandfather,

Hertford, the 1st of the 1st month, 1698-9.

John Crook



JOHN CROOK (1617-1699), quaker, was born in 1617 in the north of England, probably in Lancashire, of parents of considerable wealth (see *A Short History*, by himself, 1706), and was educated in various schools in or near London till about seventeen years old, when he was 'apprenticed' to some 'trade.' About this time he joined one of the puritan congregations. A few years later he went to reside at Luton, where he possessed an estate and was placed on the commission of the peace for Bedfordshire. In 1653 he was recommended to the Protector as a fit person to serve as a knight of the shire for Bedfordshire (see '*A Letter from the People of Bedfordshire*,' dated 13 May 1653, to Cromwell, in *Original Letters, &c.* of John Nickolls, jun., 1743). In 1654 he was 'convinced' by the preaching of William Dewsbury—Gough says of George Fox—and became a Friend, shortly after which his commission as justice of the peace was withdrawn. Crook states that he once held some public appointment. In 1655 he was visited by George Fox, and entertained a large number of the more important gentry of the district, who came to see the 'first quaker,' and later in the same year he held a theological dispute with a baptist at Warwick, where, together with George Fox and several others, he was arrested.

Owing to want of evidence he was discharged on the following day; but the townsfolk stoned him out of the place, and during the following year he was imprisoned at Northampton for several months on account of his tenets. Somewhat later he became a recognised quaker minister, his district seeming to have comprised Bedfordshire and the adjoining counties. Two years later the yearly meeting of the Friends, which lasted three days, was held at his house, where Fox (*Journal*, p. 266, ed. 1765) computes that several thousand persons were present. In 1660 he was imprisoned with several others for refusing to take the oaths, and committed, as a 'ringleader and dangerous person,' to Huntingdon gaol, where he lay for several weeks after the others had been discharged. In 1661 he and seven others were apprehended at Culveston, near Stony Stratford, for attempting to hold an illegal meeting, and his conscience forbidding him to give security for good behaviour, he was detained for at least three months (see Gough, *History of the Quakers*, vol. iii., ed. 1789).

Shortly after this he went to London, and while there was engaged in ministerial work. In the following year, after being imprisoned for six weeks, he was tried at the Old Bailey for refusing to take the oath of allegiance. His arguments against the legality of his imprisonment, which are given with some fulness by Gough, show him to have been a man of considerable legal attainments and much acuteness. During his trial one jury was discharged and another composed of picked men empanelled, nor was he permitted to speak, 'but when he did an attendant stopped his mouth with a dirty cloth.' The trial ended by his being subjected to the penalties of a *præmunire* and being remanded to prison.

Crook immediately drew up a full statement of his case, and after the lapse of some four weeks was liberated, it is said, by the express order of the king. When, however, he had been at liberty three days, an attempt was made to rearrest him, which failed owing to his having left London. From this time he seems to have chiefly resided at Hertford, and to have been permitted to continue preaching without interference till 1669, when there is reason to believe he was again arrested at a meeting and imprisoned for some weeks. During his later years he was afflicted with a complication of painful disorders which materially interfered with his usefulness. He died at Hertford in 1699, aged 82, and was buried in the Friends' burial-ground at Sewel in Bedfordshire. Crook was a man of wider culture than most of the primitive quaker ministers, of an amiable genial nature, and possessed of considerable literary skill. He wrote largely, and several of his productions enjoyed a wide popularity during the whole of the last century.

Source: Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Volume 13, by Augustus Charles Bickley

