

Introduction

Published in the wake of a particularly tumultuous period in England, Grace Barwick, wife to the once-Cornet of General John Lambert¹, writes from the perspective of the oppressed citizenry of England, who were subjected to the compulsory payment of *Tithes* (not to be confused with modern volunteer church-donation), to the clergy and governing bodies. Barwick's work takes on three distinct sections: the first, addressed to "all present Rulers, whether Parliament" or otherwise; the second section is addressed directly toward Robert Barwick's former commanding officer, John Lambert and his fellow officers; in these first two sections, Barwick's attention appears to be directed towards *individuals*, whereas the third and final section is addressed to "friends:" a broader address to the entirety of England, commonfolk and elite alike.

This translation/transcription of Barwick's work can be considered a chimeric in a way, as the work is ultimately a synthesis of Barwick's manuscript and the *Women Writers Online* transcription, *seasoned* with some additional context and explication on the editor's behalf. Understanding this, the photocopy of the manuscript used in reference, due to a lack of accessibility, is of poor quality, and leaves certain portions of text truly unintelligible. In instances where contextual clues allowed for *possible* or *potential* solutions to the missing parts of words, the use of endnotes will be of benefit to explain the editor's choice made, in addition to providing additional context or direct explanation or definitions.

¹ John Lambert maintained the position of major-general, who is often attributed with playing a pivotal role in the Anglo-Scottish Wars, under Oliver Cromwell. After Cromwell's death, he would attempt to seize rule, leading to his eventual imprisonment.

To preserve the aged nature of Barwick's writing (published in 1659), decisive editing choices have been made to maintain as much of the authors' voice/specific word choice as possible. With the text's age, it has ultimately lost a degree of "readability;" what is meant by this, is that *especially* in cases such as undergraduate researchers, many may not *yet* possess the familiarity or ability to effectively engage with Barwick's text in its present state—found on the *W/O* database or photocopy, both leave little to be desired in regard to their *readability*. Both in the clarity of the image, as well as clarity of the text itself can be quite murky at times. This is not to discount the writing of Grace Barwick, as she provides insightful perspective into the sentiments of not the rich and powerful (as most history often records the perspective of), but of the despondent and angry majority. The expressed interest of this document to provide a *more accessible* form of Grace Barwick's collection of writing. In the pursuit of maintaining this as much of Barwick's voice, minimal changes have been made to the word choice throughout. In most cases, words were spelled either in a way that would be difficult to distinguish, or altogether spelled incorrectly. Sections of the manuscript that the *W/O* transcriptionists found unintelligible, this essay found to be quite apparent, however in other cases no conclusive understanding could be reached in the determination of some missing words. In these cases, the maximum potential number of characters that *could* have been present within the manuscript are represented by individual question marks ("?"). So, in the case a word-fragment is missing 1-2 characters, so Door becomes Do[?]. This is not the ideal arrangement, and it is with great hope that in future revisions of this document, a greater understanding of Mrs. Grace Barwick's writing may be gained. It would be the editors' suggestion that the end notes be printed or otherwise attached separately, to better accommodate frequent thumbing between pages as you read through.

To all present Rulers, whether Parliament, or whomsoever of England.

Friends, I, having been under a burden concerning you these several months, and seeing the judgements of God's hand over your heads, my heart hath trembled, and many times I have besought the Lord for you that he would not cut you off in your sins; but that he would open your understandings and give you spirits of discerning¹ to see what it was that hindered the work of the Lord from going on. Yea, I have risen out of my bed in the night season, and besought the Lord for you, and feeling the weight lie heavy upon me, I made preparation to come unto you; but the Lord said unto me "Thou shalt stay my appointed time," so I waited sometime longer, till the Lord cleared this time unto me, and now I am come a hundred and fifty miles in obedience to the Lord; so this is the message I have from the Lord to you: therefore, bear the word of the Lord, this is the word of the Lord God unto you, if you will stand in my council—and they my voice—then I will delight to do you good, and you shall reign over all my enemies, but if you take² your selves, and forget my word, and set up the abomination which my [??]ateth³, or join with them that set up even the Priests that preach forlies⁴, and the Prophets that divine for money, then I will bring my righteous judgements upon you, and you shall partake them in their plagues, for I will pour out my wrath upon them for all of the

false lies they have told in my name; therefore, in the presence of the of the Lord I charge you that you give no item forced maintenance, nor oppress people on their behalf, but let their folly make them manifest, for they must reap that which they sow; therefore, quit your selves like *men*, and join with those that fear the Lord, and take council at the Lord with them speedily: for your time is very but that you may escape in the day of the Lords wrath, for his indignation rekindled against the wicked, and woe, woe, woe unto them that obey him not; therefore, incline your ears and hear that He may establish you upon earth, and make you vessels to honour, but if you be disobedient—but if you be disobedient, confusion from the God of Heaven shall come upon you; so in clearing my conscience in the Lord, I have peace, a lover of your souls.

Grace Barwick

To *John Lambert*, and the rest of the *Officers*.

Friends, unto you I write, whose hearts the Lord hath touched any measure; yea verily⁵ I have felt something amongst you, which hath looked toward God to which I direct you: take to being God-fearing men, and go on with your faces *toward* God, taking away all oppression of laws, placed upon the consciences of the Lord's people; yea remove the weight⁶ of gold cups⁷ of your camp even Tithes, for it brings the curse upon you, as doth the abomination of the false Prophets, which I mentioned before⁸, and let in no fears upon your spirits of a greater party withstanding you, for I testify unto you in the presence of the living God: if you be faithful in these things the Lord requireth of you, *then* will the Lord strike your enemies with dread, and confusion of face shall cover them, and He shall give you victory over them but if you distrust the Lord and join His enemies to set up these *abominations*, desolation from the Lord will suddenly come upon you, and your portion shall be with the hypocrites, for the Lords' wrath is kindled against the wicked, and woe unto them that withstand His work for the Lord *will* overturn, overturn till it come into His hands whose right it is, and this is the word of the Lord God unto you. Therefore, dread and fear before Him, for the Lord God will surely bring to pass all that he hath spoken unto you by his handmaid, who is known by the name of,

Grace Barwick, wife of Robert Barwick,
once a Cornit⁹ under General Lambert.

Friends,

There is a great darkness over you, and confusion amongst you, and the wisdom on the wise Men seems to be confounded, and I feel a¹⁰ rending and tearing, in a wrong mixed amongst you all, and there is the will and policy and craft and ambitious spirit up in *both* parties striving on, against one another, and the life of God you do not perceive: render doth anything yet appear from you that the seed of God can join with joy¹¹ the Lord prosper for the good in *all*—and among all is veiled¹² and confusion is fallen upon the wise part, and simplicity, &c.¹³ —the naked truth is buried, and my love thought to carry on by policy, and each to be more political than others, God to prevail thereby, but that shall never rule for God in our Law, but God will lay a weight *upon* it, and it shall be stricken into confusion; and another thing must appear to rule that yet hath appeared, and this Nation shall never more trust to the policy and wisdom of Men, but the truth and innocency shall by the trust of *all good people*, and you'll be broken more and more¹⁴, till you learn righteousness and fear; friends consider, for the state of things appears dark, and misery and great destruction may come, except the Lord prevents it.¹⁵

And you must bring forth good things, and do some thing which may answer the good principle of God in *all people*, that you may gain the good in all, to be your friend, for many provoked by reason of these things, and except you *do* remove oppression that hath *long* been promised to be done— you cannot be blessed: God *requires* it of you to be mindful of His cause and

the cause of His people, and do not seek your selves bow to exalt and seare¹⁶ your selves, for if you do so, and neglect the cause of God, you shall *never* be happy: but the Lord will do unto you as you have done unto others, He will confound you, before your enemies; therefore, lay it to hearts and do the thing that is just, whether it engage or disengage Men to you, you do not seek dies¹⁷, nor your confidence in the army of flesh¹⁸, for the multitude of a Hoast¹⁹ shall not save you, but *righteousness* and the *doing of justice* that shall defend you, against your enemies; is it not high time to remove the oppression of Tithes? Is it not that oppression finished in the Nation? Hath not the sufferings of the Lords' people be sufficient witness to God's anger, because of that oppression, doubtless it is the very *crying oppression* of our Nation. And *there* is a weight of blood cruelty and injustice laying under this great Mountain, and it is time to be cast down, and being once brought down, and the people eased from it: it can never be supposed, that *reasonable* Men will be [??]shish²⁰ as ever to fight to set it up again; and the people *love* Liberty, and never that it shall come to them, it will be thankfully received, whether by a law or contrary to a Law; so now it is brought to your door that you may do something while time is in your hands, for time is precious, and the Lord spied it and takes it away e're ever men are aware; and if you trifle away your hour about places of honour, and disputations about those things receiving to your own interest and safety; *then* your candle shall be put out, of your names, they shall die in reproach, wherefore do something that is

good, that the Nation may feel ease, that you may answer the expectations of *good men*, and confound the thoughts of the wicked; and do not provoke the sincerity in men against you, for if you do, it will be hard for you to be preserved, and you have better make that your friend, than to have a multitude of flatterers: they will be but a broken reed to you.

²¹Therefore, love singleness of heart, and let not the men that are of a single heart be accounted your enemies. For it is truth and freedom and just judgement and mercy—that goal men seek after, it is these things that will please the Nation: It is not the changings of Governments into new titles and names, but it is *truth* and *perfect freedom* that the best of men delight in, and it is *that* which will satisfy the hungering people; and that will make up the breach of a distracted nation, many before you have pretended to do great things, but we have found *nothing* but promise breaking, and men of high degree a very lie and therefore God hath confounded them against one another, and do not you go any longer in that path; do not cheat God and your Nation, but let us *see* the *effect* of righteousness, that we may behold mercy and justice running down as a stream, for it is *that* that our souls long to see; and we are yet faint of good hope, concerning you also, as the Lord doth stir up your hearts; and you be obedient to Him, forget not to recompense the interest of oppressing Laws and Priests: and consider the condition of the Nation that lies bleeding and wounded for deliverance; let your own interests be the *least* in your eye, but have the respect to the

cause of God and *all* his people, or else your day will be cut off in a moment; oh, that you would learn to stand in God's council, and that you would inquire at His oracle that only speaks the truth, and that you would cease to go to Egypt for help, *then* should i be well with you, but while it is contrary to you, *you cannot be established*.
And this is from a lover of righteousness.

Printed for Mary Westwood, 1659.

Notes

¹ Reference to 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (NKJV).

² Gap in transcription; reference photocopy of manuscript, characters resembling “t” and “k” appear, implication being that the word ‘take’ is used in this case.

³ Gap in transcription; unable to identify characters used, in place of missing characters (2-3), the maximum possible characters used in the word are represented by the number of question marks (?) placed within brackets.

⁴ According to the *OED*, ‘forlie’ is a variant form, probably an antecedent, to the modern verb, ‘lie.’ See “forlie (v.) Forms.” (*OED*)

⁵ This specific use of ‘verily’ aligns the definition that describes the term’s use “to emphasize a negative or affirmative response word.” See “verily (adv.), c.” (*OED*)

⁶ This originally has an apparent gap in translation of 1-2 characters. Upon closer examination of the photocopied manuscript, it appears to be also an issue of misspelling. As it appears on the page, it reads “weig,” however, Barwick’s penchant for repetition of phrases throughout the text (“lay a weight upon...weight of blood cruelty”) informs suspicion this is merely a misspelling of the word “weight.”

⁷ Gap in transcription, missing 1-2 characters; contextual clues implies that the weight of the gold cu[ps] “brings the curse upon” Barwick’s intended audience, akin to the “abomination of the false Prophets.”

⁸ This may be a reference to the mention of “Prophets that divine for money” in the section that begins with “To all the present rulers...”

⁹ This term refers to since-amended position of the British military, whose modern spelling reads ‘cornet;’ the position was the lowest position a commissioned officer could hold in the service; in modern military structures, the position of a *second lieutenant* is widely considered to be the equivalent rank.

¹⁰ Reference photocopy of manuscript to see the shape of an “a” in the shadow of the page margin.

¹¹ Extended gap in transcription totaling in 4-5 characters missing. Referencing the photocopied manuscript, the poor quality of the scan

renders the portion difficult to discern; given contextual clues, the implied word is “joy,” with the indiscernible characters omitted here.

¹² This use of ‘vailed’ aligns with the definition that describes how one gives “vails or gratitudes.” See “vail V. (3).”

¹³ In another form, et cetera, or etc.

¹⁴ Missing 1-2 characters in transcription; Barwick uses repetition for the effect of emphasis throughout the manuscript; by implying the intention of “more” here, the overall effect of the utterance is maintained with this inclusion.

¹⁵ In the WWO transcription, the WWO transcription omits an indentation present in the photocopied manuscript, between “Lord prevents it,” and the beginning of the following paragraph (“And you must...”). This indentation is included here to better signal Barwick’s decisive choice to make a break in her writing.

¹⁶ According to the *OED*, this use of ‘seare’ aligns with a period-appropriate definition that, “in a wider sense” relates to the general act of burning or scorching, with a more specific association with the “putting out [of] (one’s eyes) by burning,” acknowledging the possibility that this could be used in a figurative sense as well. See “sear, V. (4).”

¹⁷ The use of ‘die’ here may serve as referencing either of the following: ‘*dies irae*’ or ‘Day of Wrath,’ is the name of the Latin hymn on the Last Judgement, often attributed to Thomas of Celano (c1250).

¹⁸ Error-in-transcription on WWO; the symbol ‘ſ’ (which can be understood here to be represented by “s”) is confused for the letter “P”, however the ‘long s’ is correctly identified within the same word. WWO transcribes this as “slesh,” however, interpreting this to read as “flesh,” a possible connection 2 Chronicles 32:8 presents itself when considering the “arm[ies] of flesh” that King Hezekiah faced.

¹⁹ Within this context, the most applicable definition pertains to *archaic* and *poetic* reference to “an armed company or a multitude of men” or simply “an army;” See “host, N. (1a).”

²⁰ Gap in transcription; unable to identify characters used, in place of missing characters (1-2), the maximum possible characters used in the word are represented by the number of question marks (?) placed within brackets.

²¹ Editor's note: From multiple perspectives, it made sense to place a sudden break in Barwick's writing for the explicit purpose of providing a clearer signal to readers the shift in Barwick's tone; the extended section that described the suffering and oppression in the present tense is thus distinguished from the following conclusionary section, where Barwick writes *toward* the future of the Nation and its' people.

Works Cited

- Barwick, Grace. "To All the Present Rulers, Whether Parliament, or Whomesoever of England." London, 1659, Women Writers Online, <https://www.wwp.northeastern.edu/texts/barwick.rulers.html>.
- Knowles, Andrew. "A Regency History Guide to the British Army in 1815." *Regency History*.
- Oxford English Dictionary. *Forlain*, *Adj.* Oxford University Press, July 2023, Oxford English Dictionary, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4106875511>.
- . *Forlie*, *v.*, *Forms*. Oxford University Press, June 2024, Oxford English Dictionary, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8886845371>.
- . *Host*, *n.*¹. Oxford University Press, Dec. 2025, Oxford English Dictionary, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5895936737>.
- . *Sear*, *v.*, *Sense* 4. Oxford University Press, Dec. 2025, Oxford English Dictionary, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9724740173>.
- . *Vail*, *v.*³. Oxford University Press, July 2023, Oxford English Dictionary, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/7513934895>.
- . *Verily*, *Adv.*, *Sense* c. Oxford University Press, Dec. 2025, Oxford English Dictionary, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8110885940>.