

The Last Illness and Death of Lucia Fish

The following account was written by Rev. John Berrien Fish.

Some events that closed the life of my Lucia written for her children by their Father.

Hartwick, July 14, 1836

My dear Children,

We have just buried a Mother who loved you tenderly, a Mother who prayed for you; whose highest wish for her dear children was that they might be Christians here, and saints in heaven hereafter. You are all young; the scene that has just passed before your eyes (except those of Charles & Lucia) will soon be forgotten: though her illness was long protracted, yet soon the impression will be very faint that you have seen your Mother on a sick bed and followed her to the grave. I wish you to remember her; therefore I will write a little concerning her last illness. I will do it to gratify my own feelings; -- to keep in mind while I live the scenes through which God has led me.

It is not my intention to give you a sketch even of your Mother's life. Will only preface the account of her last illness by saying she was born in Bridgewater, Oneida Co. N.Y. Nov. 29th 1804; openly dedicated herself to the service of the Lord when about 16 years of age; and was married in 1826.

We lived in Canterbury, Orange Co.¹ -- where Emily was born; in Monticello, Sullivan Co. -- where Edward was born; -- in Sidney, Delaware Co. where Charles H. was born; -- in Chester, Orange Co. where Thomas F. was born; in Canterbury, where Lucia was born.

Your Mother had, for a year or more, some disease of the liver that afterwards affected her lungs. About the middle of June, 1835,² being then in a very feeble state, she had a sort of fainting fit that alarmed us for her life. But we entertained hopes of her recovery until the morning of the 1st day of July, '35; the evening preceding I had been talking with her; her mind was dejected, she felt herself in danger of death, and fears had prevailed respecting her future condition. I endeavored to present her case in its true light. I did not flatter her; but knew she had been a growing Christian, especially for the few years past. She said "You revive my hope"; and in regard to life, while I freely told her that friends anticipated her removal, she was not discouraged by it, but thought the Lord would still continue us to each other and our children. But that night about 4 o'clock the nurse called me to hasten to your Mother's room. I asked "Is Mrs. Fish worse?" she answered "I think she is." When I entered the room, she rose up in bed and extended her arms, saying, "O Berrien, I am going to die! but it is all well."

She then told me that after I left her the evening before, she had been in a very happy state of mind; had been able to give up the world; to look on death with composure; -- had never in her life before felt ready to die. Her husband and her dear children, -- here was the struggle; -- but she had risen Superior to this: could commit us all to her covenant God, & bid the world farewell. After this she was impressed with the belief that her hour had come, &

¹ Now called Cornwall, it is 5 miles south of Newburgh, N.Y. (All the towns mentioned are in New York state).

² Note that she had just given birth in June 1835.

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Kewtown July 14 1836.

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"Some events that closed the life of my Lucia..."

feared that she would not live until I could get to the room. The family were then called: we stood around her bed, she talking in an animated strain, taking her last leave of us. But she continued until morning when I sent for your Aunts from Newburgh; they came, a good part of

Uncle Thomas³ family, and some of the neighbors & particular friends from Canterbury, and we spent the whole day most affectingly and profitably listening to her earnest appeals to us that we live for the Lord & expecting every hour, her departure. About noon, after having disposed of some books and trinkets, and talked a great deal of her absent friends, she called for her babe; was bolstered up in the bed, and I baptized it Lucia at her request: she laid down again saying, "Now I have done."

And this day she thought of everything & everybody: talked almost constantly: & seemed disappointed toward night that she tarried so long.

At evening the Dr. came & informed us she would probably live four or five days. This was a great relief to us. My hopes were raised also by a conversation with your mother, in which she was very cheerful & talked of living months. It was very remarkable to me that in all the conversation at this period of her sickness, notwithstanding the high state of feeling & the almost constant weeping around her, she never shed a tear. I suppose it was a fact that on that 1st of July & afterwards she was not wholly in her right mind; but this I did not know until afterwards.

From the time of the Alarm, July 1st, I did not leave her -- not even to go to the village (1/2 a mile) for weeks --- except that I went Sabbath to preach. I did not take off my clothes to sleep until the 23^d & then only for a night.

On the night of the first Sabbath in July, she called me at one o'clock; talked incessantly about Anna Chase, a girl who had lived with us for years, but was now gone. She was then flighty; very much so all day Monday -- refused to see your Aunts Lydia⁴ & Eleanor.⁵ We strove to prevent her talking so much & she finally consented not to talk, but wd. insist on having her tongue cut at the end to make it sore; this would prevent her talking. I could not avoid scratching it with my knife; so earnest was she that I had to do it several times. She complained that I trifled with her & did not scratch deep enough. When I was absent, she prevailed on the nurse to give her a needle & thread. She thrust the needle through her tongue & tied the thread, & told her that now when troubled with bad dreams she had only to feel of that & it wd. bring her mind straight. She appeared much better satisfied. In the evening was dejected; much concerned about her soul; would wring her hands & swing her arms and complain bitterly of herself, groaning in great distress of mind. She said, "I am a dying woman; I have no religion; I have deceived myself. I have acted like a Christian, but my soul is unconverted." Again & again she plead with me to pray for her.

I sat by her side & she listened very attentively while I recounted some interesting periods of her life & showed the evidences of her piety in the goodness of God to her soul; I talked of Mrs. Lois Baxter,⁶ once a very dear friend of hers who, a few months before, had gone to heaven. Spoke of the love that bound their souls. She was calm & happy. Said she, "Talk so,

³ Thomas Fletcher Fish (1787-1862), who lived in Newburgh, N.Y.

⁴ Lydia (Greenoak) Fish, wife of Thomas Fletcher Fish.

⁵ Jane Eleanor (Fish) Roe (1799-1886).

⁶ Possibly Lois (Johnston) Baxter, born 1814, died 25 October 1834, daughter of Witter Johnston and wife of Levi Baxter. It seems plausible that this it was this Lois, since Lois and Levi had married in Delhi, N.Y., and also that Lois' brother Milton Johnston married Lucia's sister Delia Hull.

Berrien, & I will go to sleep." From that time she was comfortable, & in the morning gave all the credit of a good night to the string in her tongue.

Tuesday morning she said she had put the string in her tongue to guide her mind when it wandered, that she might have some point to which she might bring it and know that she had made her peace with God. This day she took less notice of her children & less when I kissed her.

She was at times very anxious to read. Had her Hymn Book (Village Collection) the leaf turned down at 564.

"'Tis hard from those we love, to go,
Who weep beside our bed;
Whose tears bedew our burning brow,
Whose arm supports our head &c"⁷

Read it, my children & learn the conflict in your mother's heart at this time. And imagine, if you can, the feelings of your father as he looked upon a beloved wife, & at her request, read the whole hymn. She would then repeat parts of it, Then:

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are."⁸

The 599th hymn was a favorite; I must read it to her.

"Ye angels who stand round the throne,
And view my Immanuel's face &c."⁹

Read this too my children, & learn how your mother felt in view of death. This hymn continued to be a favorite while she lived. But at this time she was very feeble & expecting every day would be her last. I had written for her father to come and see her. So she said when I turned to that hymn, -- "Now don't read that if you think it will be too much for me. I want to last until this afternoon & see if my father will come."

Wednesday, she was very wild; knew not what she talked about: said she had committed the unpardonable sin, & accused herself of gross crimes of which she was innocent. Said she was not a Christian: -- dwelt on this all day: I could not stop her. In the course of the day she would sit up in her bed -- said she was trying to leave the world; at some times refused to speak; refused medicine; afterwards said she was then trying to die. "Lucia," said I, "do you wish to leave me." "No, Berrien," said she, "but I want to get away from those ugly creatures," meaning by that, the offensive thoughts & impure ones that had haunted her. She appeared, now, rational & composed, & afterwards slept.

She had persisted in her attempts to die, until her feet & legs were quite cold. She had a cold sweat upon her, & we all thought her death at hand. She said she sat up endeavoring to faint; and when she concluded not to die, she was in a happy frame of mind, listened to singing "The Trumpet" twice over, with pleasure, & said "I shall sing in heaven."

I cannot point you to all the sweet hymns your dying Mother delighted to dwell upon and to mark, but there is one more I wish you particularly to notice: it is the 303^d.

"Dear Saviour, if these lambs should stray

⁷ <http://www.hymnary.org/text/tis-hard-from-those-we-love-to-go>

⁸ <http://www.hymnary.org/text/why-should-we-start-and-fear-to-die>

⁹ <http://www.hymnary.org/text/ye-angels-who-stand-round-the-throne>

From thy secure enclosure's bound,
And, lured by worldly joys away,
Among the thoughtless crowd be found.

Remember still that they are thine:
That thy dear sacred name they bear;
Think that the seal of love divine,
The sign of covenant grace they wear."¹⁰

Read it all my children, & remember that Mother felt a deep anxiety for you before she left the world. Look into her red Morocco hymn book and you will find at the close of this 303^d hymn, "My last prayer," signed with pencil with her trembling hand.

Thursday morning pretty comfortable in mind but not sane. Afterwards more calm so that it was a satisfaction to converse with her; & this was a rare thing. Friday morning, more wild than ever before; extravagant in all her conversation. Talked of the death of her husband months before: had no recollection that she had a young child; would not own it when brought to her; said her children were all dead. She sat up in bed: appeared very strong, and made the most extravagant expressions of surprise when I told her I was her husband and that I was not dead.

She talked all this time of odious crimes with which she charged herself: complained that she had committed the unpardonable sin, and often repeated in her wild exclamations, "I am drinking the wrath of God."

Friday & Saturday pretty comfortable; amused herself preparing on paper the character of the ministers of her acquaintance, and it was, indeed a curiosity, truth & fictions of her disordered brain. Expressed strong disapprobation of second marriages of ministers; & often said, It is wicked for ministers to marry.

In these wild freaks she would often talk of Satan having been round the neighborhood inoculating the male Quakers with the varioloid.¹¹

Sabbath extremely wild; insisted on my staying at home, said the people did not wish to hear me preach. She was greatly agitated; would not be persuaded to take any medicine.

One day when more sane than usual, she said, "I don't know whether I have been sick or dead; have been one or the other a good while, but I don't know which." I asked if I should tell her which. "No Berrien, for I am governed by the impressions on my mind & your words will make no difference in my feelings."

Monday morning she appeared composed, listened to a part of Dr. Beecher's¹² trial that was then had in Cincinnati, for heresy; she talked much about it; saw things in a strange light; said it was a strife between the Maternal Association & the AntiSlavery Society.

¹⁰ http://www.hymnary.org/text/dear_savior_if_these_lambs_should_stray

¹¹ A form of smallpox. "A mild form of smallpox affecting people who have already had the disease or have been vaccinated against it"

¹² Lyman Beecher, who was acquitted of the charge of heresy. Dr. Beecher's wife had also died in 1835. He was the father of Henry Ward Beecher, and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Tuesday, was very wild; often during this period would go over the names of members of the churches in Canterbury & in other places where she had lived and tell who were Christians and who were not Christians.

She talked of her father; him she greatly respected. She feared her death would not sanctify him as it ought. She feared also that your Uncle Laurens¹³ would not honor Christ in the choice of a profession. This day as I started to leave the room she said, "Come here Berrien," & throwing her arms wide she pressed me to her breast; kissed me: "do let me talk to you, I am soon going away to leave you." I asked, "Where are you going, Lucia?" "Going to the world of Spirits," she answered; then said, "O, Berrien, I think too much of you; I am afraid you will go away and leave me." I said, "Oh no, I will stay & take care of you." "Yes," said she, "You will leave somebody to take care of me, but I am afraid you will get the family away & leave me." I said, "If you get well I will take you along." She answered, "No, I shall never get well; you must take me sick or not at all; take me in a wagon, on a bed." She was still impressed she was not a Christian.

Wednesday, 15th July 1835. Was very feeble; talked very wild; said several times. "I am almost gone." This morning Mother Hull¹⁴ came, bringing Charles,¹⁵ from Bridgewater. I met them at the gate & conducted your grandmother into another room; then went into your Mother's room, sat and talked awhile, then told her, "Lucia, Mother has come; do you wish to see her?" She answered, "It is not my mother; if my mother should come, I should start right out of the body." Your grandmother then came in, & your mother was little, if at all, affected by it, said, "How do you do, Mother," as if she had seen her the day before, & then went on talking in her wild strain of things indifferent to us. She was evidently pleased to see Charles, & took more notice of him than of her Mother. In the afternoon her Mother stood at the foot of the bed, & I said, "Lucia, do you know who that is!" She answered, "I know who it is as well as you do, but for all that I am a crazy woman, & shall die crazy."

Thursday, Cheerful again, sitting up in bed & talking about everything at once. A common theme is the different denominations of Christians, comparing them. Sometimes she thought she belonged to the Baptist Church; then to the Unitarians; then to the Society of Quakers; then to the Dutch Church, and always to the only true church. At evening for a few minutes was quite composed and serious; spoke of her state in hope, but her mind was not clear. Said, "Berrien, you must pray for me. I cannot pray for myself, my heart is bound up. Oh I cannot pray!" Then she prayed fervently in the language of the hymn.

"Jesus, thou art all divine,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee."

Then again, I must pray for her. I told her I tried often to put myself in her place and then to feel for her and to pray for her as I thought she would feel and pray for me under a change of circumstances. She said, "Well you ought to feel so. I can't pray for myself in Bible language. I can pray for myself in the language of a hymn. I pray for my children." This she said with an emotion that she had not shown before during her illness; her chin dimpled and trembled as

¹³ Laurens Hull Jr. (1813-1842), he was an attorney.

¹⁴ Dorcas (Ambler) Hull (1780-1858).

¹⁵ Apparently Charles Fish, who was 5 years old, was living with his grandparents.

though she would weep, but she had no tears. Her conversation was very wild, and I endeavored to persuade her to sleep.

Friday morning, very feeble but cheerful and talked of everything at once. She had for a long time been unwilling to see strangers. Even some of the family she would not suffer to come into the room; and near relations came from Newburgh¹⁶ and could not see her when they earnestly desired it. Myself or your Aunt Betsey¹⁷ she wished to sit up with her every night. We were nearly worn out with our anxiety and watching day and night: so I asked her one day if Mary Conkling, a young woman of her familiar acquaintance, might be invited to sit up with her that night. She smiled and eyed me a long time; then answered in a way that evinced the derangement of her mind. About this time, little Lucia¹⁸ was very sick and we thought she would die. Your mother was very feeble and talked very wild on many subjects.

Sabbath, was much better. The Dr. pronounced her decidedly so, and for the first time gave encouragement that she would recover from her derangement. My hopes were now raised high; but at evening she was worse and my spirits sank. The nurse said she would never get up, and she did not like to hear Dr. Chapman encourage us as he did.

Monday, more deranged again, but passed the day comfortably. Tuesday very wild in her conversation, and she generally appeared sensible of her wildness. One day the Dr. came while I was absent from the house. She told me on my return of his visit and that she had managed to talk pretty straight so that he would not discover her wanderings. Others gave a very different account of the matter, for she had denied to the Dr. that I was her husband or that Lucia was her child.

I was going out a little way to see Mrs. Crane who was sick. Your mother begged me not to go into the room of Mrs. Crane, for she said, there is a notion in the Dutch Church that if a man enters a sick woman's room, he will sicken and die in a year.

Most of her conversation this day was correct -- more so than usual. She complained of pain, she had experienced little pain for some time past.

Wednesday her mind was more composed. Feeble from night sweats that were very heavy and constant; very languid in the morning.

Thursday more sane than for a long time -- talked of domestic matters with good calculation & reason; spoke of her children, of her prayers for them and her confidence that she was heard in their behalf.

July 23^d. My birthday. Night of the 22^d I slept in the room & no one watched. The night of the 23^d Mother Hull slept in the room, and I for the first time in July went to bed without my clothes; during the whole time the weather had been exceedingly warm. This day your mother shed tears several times; -- never once before during her sickness.

Friday. Sane for aught I could see. Complained of pain in her back. Tolerably sane Saturday & Sabbath.

Monday morning she said, "I do want to hold on a little longer because it is the wicked who shall not live out half their days."

¹⁶ 5 miles distant.

¹⁷ Perhaps Elizabeth Fish.

¹⁸ Lucia Hull Fish, who was born in June 1835.

July 27th. The Doctor spoke more favorably of her continuing than at any previous time. Thought she might live until cold weather. She began to have some natural feeling in her limbs & did not seem flighty. Had blisters laid on her breast to relieve pain.

Wednesday July 29th. I took my little Lucia from home to board at the house of Mr. James Murray. She lived no more with us to this day. At this time my situation was very uncomfortable at Canterbury as they had another minister and I felt exceedingly desirous to remove my family. With your Mother's consent I determined on leaving home for Liberty, in Sullivan County. It was exceedingly hard for us under the circumstances to be separated so long. I went Thursday; returned Tuesday; found your Mother cheerful and comfortable. She had for the first assisted herself a little in getting out of and into the bed.

Wednesday I attended an ordination at New Windsor. There was to be preaching at Canterbury in the evening. I went home for a moment before the services; went to her bedside -- "Lucia, how do you feel?" She gave me one look, then turned her face away in a manner that too plainly indicated she was not so well. She had been talking and weeping much in the afternoon; her conversation had been about her death & separation from her friends. After the evening service the Dr. came to see her. I went with him into the yard as he went away. "Doctor, how do you find her?" He said "Failing very fast." I knew that she felt discouraged from a fullness upon her lungs. He said, "An abscess has formed upon her lungs to a considerable extent. I should not be surprised if she should not live until morning. She may linger 48 hours." I was surprised & told him so. He replied, "The circulation is extremely feeble now at the extremities." I had been alarmed before, and thought to guard against false appearances. But I could not¹⁹ this. My heart was greatly moved. I told several in the house; then told your Mother. She received the intelligence with more composure than any of the rest of us. I sat up with her that night, and she slept much of the time.

August 7th (Friday). She was exceedingly languid; had scarcely any appetite; complained of difficulty of breathing -- fullness of the lungs, and we were expecting every hour the breaking of an ulcer that would take her out of the world. About ten o'clock she asked me to pray with her alone: was low-spirited; troubled with doubts & fears of her spiritual state. Wished me to talk to her. I did so until her mind was relieved. I said "Lucia, what do you want that I am accustomed to forget when I pray with you?" "I don't know of anything," she said. "You must pray for my Father's family that they may be saved. I want you to pray for me that I may be sanctified. I do not know that I have any choice about it whether I shall recover, or die, or lie here sick. I did wish to go. I felt anxious about it, but I do not now. Thy will be done. I can say so. Still I have a desire to live. Oh yes I desire to continue with you" putting her hand on my forehead & stroking back my hair -- "and I would be with my dear children, but I can have it all with the Lord."

Tuesday, Aug^t 18. Since the last date she has been comfortable in her body & in mind most of the time; full of peace; more difficult reconciling her mind to stay & be a burden to the family & friends than to die. Often expressed her fears that her patience would not hold out waiting the hour of her departure.

And indeed it was a long time to be in daily expectation of death: but this was only the beginning of this trial.

¹⁹ There is a blank space here, as if he intended to go back and supply the right word later, but failed to do so.

Sept. 1st. Since the last date she has been very feeble, often weeping and mourning over her spiritual state, and wishing some comfort from the reading of "Village Hymns." When I would begin a hymn, she knew it from the first line, & would complain they were too strong for her. She could not bear them in her weak state. One day she called me to her bed. "Now read some hymns for me, & I will not be so naughty as I am sometimes, complaining of them." She was pleased with those I read, and then said, "Ye angels who stand round the throne; Saints stand there too." I resumed reading. "Oh stop" she said, "I cannot bear that. I am only a wreck, you know. One or two dashes, & I am gone." Spoke of my going away to preach. "Don't go far. I am very weak, & I want you here when I go. I want you to be the last object I see, if it is the Lord's will."

At this date there was a great diminution of strength, and an abscess broke. She appeared in a kind of fit which was succeeded by a severe chill. Was more feeble: raised an unusual quantity from the lungs, but gradually recovered. Such turns continued about once in four or five weeks till the close of her life.

Wednesday, Sept. 2^d. Grandmother Hull & Charles returned to Bridgewater. Your mother bore the separation with much fortitude.

Sept. 9th. Your mother so well that I began to meditate seeking a home, & trying to remove her. The physicians & all friends thought it impracticable. Resolved on removing if possible. I wrote to your Grandfather²⁰ & asked him to take charge of your mother & convey her to his house in Bridgewater. November 12, 1835, she started for Oneida County. She was then very unwell indeed; unable to sit up except for a few minutes at a time, but was as well traveling as in any one place. Through the winter her health was pretty uniformly the same -- slight changes -- her friends who called were all surprised to see her so cheerful. Her mind was in a calm peaceful state although there was reason to expect her death soon.

The last of March, 1836, we removed to Hartwick, Otsego Co.²¹ Your mother rode in a sleigh on a bed; was fatigued, but soon recovered. She had been in the practice of sitting up an hour at a time two or three times in a day for months past; sat with us at table, but soon after our arrival at the parsonage in Hartwick, she was taken worse, & could not do so any longer. Occasionally she did sit up at table but not uniformly. We had during this period many seasons of alarm, thinking death was near, and she was always made acquainted with it, if, indeed, she was not the first to discover the unfavorable symptoms. And as it drew near the close of her life when these symptoms of the last stages of pulmonary consumption frequently made their appearance, she would talk about them as unmoved as though it were some common event portended by them. During April & May she was assisted into her rocking chair to sit while her bed was made. Early in June she became too feeble to do this longer. I would then take her in my arms and sit with her while her bed was being made & then lay her down. She was exceedingly emaciated; she had enjoyed a pretty good appetite, but her flesh was all gone. About the middle of June she could no longer sit up even in my lap; a bed was provided near hers; the nurse & myself would take her carefully on our hands, for she was very sore, lying so long; thus we removed her from one bed to another. Her cough was at this time very distressing, & raising phlegm was very difficult for her.

²⁰ Dr. Laurens Hull.

²¹ This is a distance of about 140 miles.

June 26th, Sab. Evening -- She had a spasm upon her lungs that distressed her exceedingly; another in the night still harder. She had before this often said in relation to her death, "It cannot be long now; and when you pray alone with me, do not hesitate to speak of it freely; it does not disturb me to hear it."

Tuesday night she awoke me saying -- "A light! The lavender!" I rose & said, "Do you want the lavender?" She made a noise with her lips but cd. not speak. I knew she was in a nervous fainting fit; hasted with a light -- she was lost -- but became conscious in about ten minutes.

30th June, I was absent in the afternoon. She had a hard spasm upon her lungs; was in great distress; the Dr. was called. After the spasm she breathed very hard for an hour, until her extremities were cold, & she thought she was dying. When I returned she had recovered but was very feeble. She rested quietly that night. We had no watchers -- not even a light burning.

July 1, 1836. -- The anniversary of the day in which we had watched so intently over her in Canterbury. She complained of sore throat; very difficult for her to swallow any liquids. At 12 o'clock that day I was in my study; the nurse called me, I hasted down & found your Mother suffering under a spasm of the lungs. She said to me, "I hope this will be the last." The spasm soon went, and was not so hard, Maria said, as the one the day before, but the difficulty of getting breath was very great. Every breath cost her a great effort. As I sat by her side & fanned her I said, "Lucia, it is very hard to lie and breathe so." She looked at me and with as much of a smile as her distress would allow, said, "Berrien, you don't know anything about it." I had now an apprehension she would not recover again, but had been so often alarmed that I strove against it, and really expected her to revive. I am persuaded her mind was affected in the same way. After awhile she began to grow cold, her hands & her feet. I said, "Lucia, do you know your feet are cold?" She said, "Yes." "Will you have them warmed?" "No." She then cast her eyes on me, and continued to look for some time with much kindness & affection. It was the last look of the kind. I said "I do not know there is any kindness in wishing your life prolonged under so much disease." "Oh, none at all." The sweat stood heavy upon her forehead. I attempted to wipe it off. She could not bear the touch; said it increased the difficulty of breathing. Soon after this she ceased to raise any of the phlegm that settled in her stomach & throat, & there was less apparent effort for breath. I said, "Lucia you appear to breathe easier. Do you breathe easier?" She shook her head -- No. Her finger nails were now blue, & the cold and blueness had extended farther. She raised her hands, folded them, looked at them and laid them down. She was now speechless. I thought her manner said this is death. I asked, "Shall I send for the Doctor?" She shook her head -- No. Emily was at home. Thomas had just returned from school. Edward was there. I said, "Shall I send for Edward?" She nodded, Yes. I sent at once, for until this moment I was expecting her to revive. Emily went. As we sat by her, Maria said, "Do you think she is dying?" I answered "She cannot breathe so, long." I will ask her; Lucia, do you think you are dying? She nodded, Yes. It was perhaps two minutes from this time when she strangled. I thought she would raise; assisted to raise her up, but the phlegm stopped her breath; her countenance changed, and she was gone!

At this moment Emily and Edward came; and while there was still some action of the muscles on the face of our dear dying Lucia, we kneeled by her side and held her cold hands in ours, and tried to commit her spirit to God, while we cast ourselves upon his mercy.

If not profitable it may still be innocent to say a word of her appearance at the moment of death. She lay partly upon her side, her hands a little raised & her eyes started out considerably more than usual. It was too late to gather much from the expression of the countenance for death had set his seal there; but still in the whole attitude of her face and especially of her eyes, there was a strong indication that she saw something new and wonderful! Upon her face was depicted nothing of joy; nothing of fear, but still solemn wonder! I do not say that the bodily organs assist the departing spirit to form acquaintance with unseen things. I only say this was the irresistible impression on my mind made by what I saw; and I feel confident this change in her position & features was not the effect of bodily pain, for I do not think she felt any pain beside the difficulty of breathing.

She died on Friday at 1:30 p.m. The following Sabbath was our communion season. She had been looking forward to it with anxiety: arrangements had been made to have some of the church members present at 5 p.m. Sabbath, and the ordinance of the supper administered to her. On Tuesday she asked me what day of the week it was. "Oh, what a long week!"

Do not think it strange, children that Mother said nothing at her death to you, or about you. Nothing to me; not one farewell; nothing about her hopes. Consider that this was all done a year before -- July 1st, 1835. There was nothing left undone. Her children were all thought of; her friends and relations also. Her dying testimony to the excellency of religion was fully given, and having lived upon the very brink of Jordan with the Canaan of rest in sight a whole year, she had nothing to do but to pass over. God did not require of her a second melting farewell to friends, a second dying testimony to the truth of religion and its power to sustain the soul in the day of trial.

You are all so young now, my dear children, that you cannot estimate the loss of a pious praying Mother. I deeply feel for you, but trust her prayers for you will still be remembered. When your mother was well, she was accustomed to pray herself with me, for you after our family worship; and so when she lay upon a sick bed, and could not take part in the way of our former practice, she would very commonly groan aloud when you were mentioned in prayer: so greatly anxious was she for the salvation of the children she so much loved.

Your Mother was a woman of good common sense, of constant piety, of warm heart in the friendships of life; and she bore her long protracted illness with a meek & quiet spirit.

That you, my dear Children, may all be Christians and lead useful lives, and that we may be an unbroken family in heaven, is the prayer of

Your affectionate Father.

I should have mentioned that during this whole period from the 9th of June, 1835 to the 1st of July 1836 your afflicted Mother never had the privilege of walking at all. There was a little time during the winter when she bore some weight upon her feet but it was not walking.

Epitaph.

"Here rests in hope

Lucia

Wife of Rev. J. B. Fish
Died 1836

Aged 31

And is this death 'Tis victory to die.
I mount on wings, I soar above the sky.
On the full glory of the Godhead gaze,
With saints and angels kindling in his rays."²²



This ends the account of Rev. John Berrien Fish. His son Edward Fowler Fish copied it and added the following:

Mother lies buried in the little burying ground at West Hartwick, N. Y. I visited the place in 1876 and gathered from the mound that covers her dust a wild strawberry blossom. I had not seen the sacred spot for thirty-five years. Shall I ever see it again. That I cannot tell, but I shall see her soon.

Edward F. Fish

²² This epitaph was written by Rev. John Berrien Fish. The gravestone still stands, and is legible. It is in what is now called the Robinson Cemetery.