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no. 1.

Great Bardfield
near Braintree Essex
17. 12. 1882

My dear Brother
Frances Cotton

I do not know when the next mail leaves but cannot longer wait before sending thee a few lines of loving sympathy under thy great loss for great truly the loss must be to thee who the removal of thy dear companion of so many years must have been long looked for by many of us had expected the event some time before it came By the time thou receivest this I fear the offer of my sympathy will seem somewhat out of place but it is not the less warm & sincere than if it reached thee immediately after thy loss. Sister Mary forwarded

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thy letter for perusal and has doubtless written to thee since. Thy tribute to thy dear wife's memory was noble and affecting. She must have been to thee & her Children what few have either the power or ability to be and few can look back upon so long a union: but what a blessed privilege is the Christian to be encouraged at no distant time to look forward to a happy reunion where there will be no more parting and all the free gift of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. I hope thy own health holds good and that it has been permitted thee long before thou gets this to welcome home thy dear Son James B. His company will I think cheer & comfort thee in thy drift state and I believe thou will be permitted largely to partake of the

in testimony & supplication in our meeting as are likewise her Father & Aunt. I suppose dear Isaac Sharp is now in America his communications which reach us through the Friend are peculiarly interesting and if spared to reach his home once more through the goodness of his loving Lord & Master that event will gladden many hearts and raise in them the tribute of praise & thanksgiving. I need hardly assure thee that when thou feels able a few lines will ever prove acceptable. There is one subject on which I do not feel as tho I can write tho some times I am not without a hope tho' I may not live to see it that things may sometime brighten at Nimborne & I can not but think that a little more conciliatory action might have prevented things going as they

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it must not be supposed that no
efforts have been made to bring at
different issues and I believe under
earnest prayer for best guidance in
those efforts now I believe it was best
for both parties to remain as they are
possibly time the great healer and
softener may under the Divine blessing
produce a change of feeling but I
feel sure so their present minds they
could not be happy together

I shall most likely be at Wimborne
again some time in the Spring
from dates Mary thou will have
heard perhaps more recently than
I have. I had a few lines from her
when she sent me on thine for
perusal she was then well as
usual & Rita the same Anna
Maria & her husband had visited
them very recently. I remain now
with much love to thyself & any of

thy family who may be around the
hearth

Thy affectionate sister
Rachel Cotton

I have taken two leaves together
which will account for their being
not matched but I hope the number
may them with some small trouble
in following them

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~~and we see for the not a member~~
he has for years at times attended
our meetings for discipline as he
was so necessary to my brother in law
Richard H. Smith in his state of partial
blindness. having been like a son
~~to him for so long a time that no~~
~~one can think of his not attending~~
~~the meetings with him.~~ Our
number here is small and our
friend Joseph Smith of ~~Helmsdon~~
Saling is often laid by with a very
trying complaint and his sister
Rachel Smith of South Lodge is quite
an invalid. they are both far advanced
in life and at no very distant period
we must look forward to their removal
they are both valuable friends. Joseph
Smith's wife was a Christy. & they have
several in family their eldest daughter
Sarah is Clerk to the Quarterly Meeting
and often acceptably engaged both

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meeting which was held at Ipswich
last fourth day. I had hoped to
have been there but a heavy cold
& inclement weather made it unwise
to undertake the journey abt
53 miles. nine of which before getting
to the Railway would have to be in
an open conveyance. so I was obliged
to give it up. since the union of the
two Quarterly Meetings of Essex &
Suffolk the number attending is
so increased that the number of
resident friends is not sufficient to en-
tertain the guests & a sort of public
free dinner & tea is provided by the
Meeting where the meetings are held &
on this occasion abt 130 sat down to
gether and perhaps a smaller number
to tea as many took that meal at
friends houses. The Spring Quarterly
will be at Chelmsford to which place Arthur
Cash & most likely wife drive his wife

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presence of the Comforter, whose peculiar office it is stated to bring to the mind & show to the afflicted mourner those precious promises which are left on record for ~~our~~ the healing of his wounds. I am now quite settled in and feel thankful to have done so before the inclement season the past ~~season~~ week or two has been very inclement & altho no very large amount of snow has fallen the cold was for a few days so intense that it staid with us longer than is often the case but a change has come & it is milder again. My dear Harriet and her husband have made my fresh residence as comfortable as they can & my bright little Grandaughter often spends a good part of the day with "Grandma" she is an interesting little thing not quite 2½ yrs. while her baby sister

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is thirteen months on the 26th inst.
We are hoping to have two dear old
friends as our guests this week. I miss Deaton
and I am looking for another little
grandchild about the beginning of
the coming year at Canterbury, No 7.
Last week we have had a succession
of meetings in the cause of total abstinence
this night week commenced the course
Walter Robson was the speaker on
that occasion the meetings have been
held in the Town Hall and have been large
gatherings for so small a place. At
the same time meetings have been
held at Finchingfield Dunmow &
some other surrounding neighbourhoods
Robert & Emily Harding were engaged
at Finchingfield. They came over
here to E. D. Smith's at Burgpelt Hall
to lodge & I had a very pleasant visit
from them. They gave me a
nice account of ~~their~~ our Quarterly

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