**Friday, March 17**

I met with a friend today, who called me “resilient.” What do I think, how would I characterize myself lately? Confused.

I wondered if I left my situation, would I be able to process my grief and anger, or would I become stuck in my current feelings? As painful as all of this is, it does seem to be accomplishing something. Maybe I’ll learn to trust, without having to be at the center of decision-making in all matters.

**Sunday, March 19**

I feel like I have my life back. I need to examine my life from a higher perspective, from the standpoint of love, compassion, and gentleness, while being aware of and open to signals, while practicing discernment. I need to heal, to know that I am a universal being, whole. I am capable of releasing the outer skin of my present identity and finding a new rhythm in my life.

**Tuesday, March 21**

I’ve been living the seventh-day Sabbath without it being a “religious conviction.” But my body, mind, and spirit feel better for it. So, I’ve been reading early Quaker writings and re-read portions of Ellen White’s *Early Writings*. Early Quakers did all agree that the Sabbath fell on the seventh day, not first day, although they followed the laws of the time and the common practice of resting and holding corporate worship on first day. But they didn’t view one day as sufficient, so they held meetings for worship on 2 days each week. To my knowledge, and to the knowledge of others I’ve consulted, no other Quaker has written on the seventh-day Sabbath
since Elias Hicks addressed the question in 1842 (pre-EGW). Below are the Bible passages and the justifications Quakers wrote between 1650 and 1812 against the observance of Sabbath.

Matt. 11:28

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

[i.e., Christ is himself the Sabbath]

Rom. 14:5

Some judge (esteem) one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

Gal. 4:9-11

Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again? You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.

Col. 2:16-17

Therefore do not let anyone (judge) condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Heb. 4:9-10

So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God’s rest also cease from their labors as God did from his.
Early Quaker thought seems to have been: that the Jewish Sabbath was a “sign and figure and shadow” (Fox) which became the substance of God with Christ; that Christ is the end and fulfillment of the Law for everyone that believes; and that Christ is the Sabbath and the Temple, the day of rest. If we accept Christ, then observing the Sabbath is a practice contrary to that acceptance. Accepting salvation means essentially that we cease from labor in some sense—George Fox said that, “our rest is in Christ, the body... the Saints’ rest is in the substance of Christ.... Here all men rest from their works, and every soul that believeth hath entered into his rest” (6). “Christ [is] the second Covenant, the perpetual and everlasting rest” (7). “Christ... sanctifies man and brings him to rest and peace with God before daies was” [i.e., as it was at the beginning of Creation] (10). “Christ made all things new, he ends the Law, ... he ends the [previous] Covenant...and ends the Sabbath” (11). “The devil will lurk in a shadow, or a type, or a sign, or figure, ...to keep people from the body [i.e., Christ]” (16). “Paul nor the Apostles no where commands the Saints to observe the Jews Sabbath day” (18).

The Sabbath was previously an outward day but with Christ became altogether spiritual, moral, and perpetual; all days are alike holy in the sight of God (Keith). A specific day or time of worship is not holy, because all days and times are holy (Barclay 349). Thus, we should feel our hearts brimming with thanksgiving and praise constantly, and we should rest continually in God.

My questions: When Paul used the words “sign/figure/shadow” in relation to the ordinances and the Sabbath, did he mean that they were “predictors” which were fulfilled and embodied in Christ (Fox)? When early Quaker writers used the word “superstition” what does that mean? Did the commandments and ordinances have significance only for the Jews from Moses to Christ (Israel needed the Commandments because they were disobedient?), and Christ
superseded those (he was the end of the law and gave us 2 commandments (love God, love our neighbors as ourselves--the other commandments Jesus mentioned in Matt 19:18: “Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness”) but no mention of keeping the Sabbath)? The Sabbath as “a sign between me and the children of Israel forever” (Exod. 31:17) was never said to any other people in the Bible (i.e., Christians in the New Testament).

Willis wrote that, as he was “Lord of the Sabbath,” Jesus would have reproved his disciples if he had meant to perpetuate the observance, instead of justifying the breach of it (24). Why didn’t he reprove people for breaking the Sabbath or any of the ordinances?

Yet we do need to set aside time to listen for God in community (“corporate worship”) and be freed from our “outward affairs” and rest. Fox said Apostles and early Christians meeting on First day did not call it or establish it as Sabbath, nor did they bid believers to keep Sabbath (9). Elias Hicks referred to the “emptiness” of rites and outward ordinances and called the observance of a seventh-day Sabbath “hurtful,” “irrational, non-essential, and contrary to truth” (353).

We don’t talk about God “changing his mind” but we do say that we get new pieces of information or new understanding—but it seems like the prophecies EGW received contradict Paul’s understanding and are “regressive” or “reactionary.” How do SDAs address this? Was not Jesus, as Christ, the fulfillment of the Law? Why then look to the commandments and ordinances? Why did EGW have those visions?

My thoughts regarding the Biblical texts above:
• Rom. 14:5-14:6 Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Paul seems to regard these principles, along with dietary ordinances and avoiding wine, as unnecessary. In Rom. 14:23 it says "But whatever is done against one’s conscience is sin," so if EGW’s prophecies have convinced the SDAs, then not to observe the Sabbath would be a sin for those who are persuaded.

• Col. 2:16-17 This also means not to let anyone condemn you if you DO observe these things.

• Heb. 4:9-10 [actually look at all of Heb. 3 & 4] Why couldn’t this also be used to justify observing the Sabbath? One Adventist stated that this passage looks to back to Genesis and also forward to rest as “salvation in God’s presence at the end of time.”

It seems to me that I need to keep living seventh-day Sabbath without trying to make intellectual sense of it right now. It’s an embodied way of living, not a theological issue per se – it is a relief, not an arguable discussion point. Yet it is spiritual. It is a kind of willingness, an assent rather than a creed or doctrine or tenet. So I don’t think I’m convinced in a rational way, yet my body and spirit are giving signs of a consent made flesh.

**Sunday, March 26**

For me, as with early Quakers (and many other denominations), one day for corporate worship isn’t enough. I also need time to study with a group. My primary day for corporate worship is first day (Sunday), with the Friends; my day of study and also secondary day of worship is seventh day (Saturday), with the SDAs. My primary day of rest and refraining from commerce or