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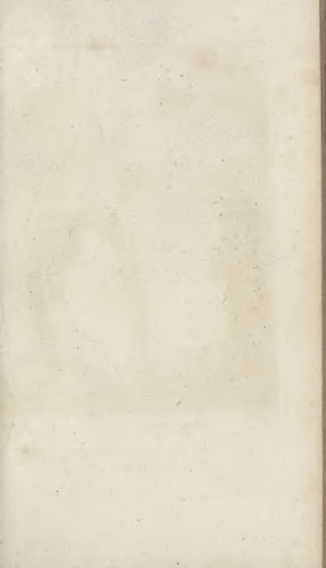
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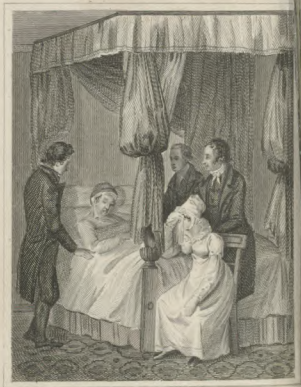












Engraved & Registered by Charles Thomson Currie, Edin'

*Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace, according  
to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

*St. Luke attending his Brother Peter P. 14.*



COMFORT

FOR

THE MOURNER;

OR,

FAITH'S VIEW OF AFFLICTIONS,

EXHIBITED IN

*VARIOUS LETTERS.*

CHIEFLY CONSOLATORY.

WRITTEN BY

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— J. NEWTON,  
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REV. W. B. CADOGAN,  
— DR. BALFOUR,  
— D. DICKSON, &c.

Comfort ye my people, saith your God.—ISAIAH.

*SECOND EDITION.*

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1823.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present Collection of Consolatory Letters has been made with a view to the comfort of the people of God, when under affliction. They abound with precious truths and strong arguments, drawn from the Word of God; and are therefore well calculated to support the mind of the Lord's children in the day of their adversity.

The Writers had themselves often passed through deep waters; and the supports which they experienced from the omnípotent arm of JEHOVAH, and the comforts which they derived from his word, in the seasons of trial, they bring forward for the consolation and encouragement of the household of faith in all future ages.—Besides, they were eminent in the church of Jesus Christ, as men of faith; and as such, were called upon, from the high stations which they held, to make their light to shine before others. This circumstance, connected with the intrinsic value of the letters, must render the present work highly accept-

able to every one whose desire is, that the life which he now lives in the flesh, may be by the faith of the Son of God.

Some of the letters, which were found too long for the bounds of this little volume, have been shortened; but where it has been done, great care has been taken to retain the sentiments of the writer in his own words.

That the pious Reader, in the perusal of these Letters, may derive all the comfort, consolation, and encouragement which they were designed, and are so well calculated to convey, is the earnest prayer of

THE COMPILER.

*EDINBURGH,*  
*March 2, 1822.*

FAITH'S VIEW  
OF  
AFFLICTIONS.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

REV. MR RICCALTON TO DR. R. WALKER

On the importance and advantage of living by Faith.

*Hobkirk, August 16, 1763.*

CONSTRUCTING of Providences is a business much too high for such low beings as we are. Ours is to improve them in the light in which the wise Disposer of all has condescended to put them. The Psalmist himself was quite at a loss while he surveyed them in the light of human wisdom, and in no small danger of misconstruction, till he went to the sanctuary. He was a wise man, and directed by better wisdom than his own, who said, that no man can know love or hatred by all that is before him. The right Christian lives by faith, not by sense; and judges not by what he feels, but by what God hath said; and when he has said, that "to them that love him, all things shall work together for good," it might have been abundantly sufficient though he had never

said more. His bare word is better, and infinitely more comfortable security than all the world can give, either in possession or prospect. But when he has condescended to take upon himself the relation and the part of a father, with all the tender care for the children that we know attends it, we must be bad children, if we do not find ourselves much safer under the direction of perfect goodness, seconded by infinite wisdom and power, than being indulged in our own blind, hasty, perverse inclinations. A wise father will rather choose to have his most beloved child cry bitterly, than indulge him in any playthings that may hurt him; and our gracious Redeemer, among all the kind things he hath done for us, never consulted our interests more than by putting this petition in our mouths, "Thy will be done;" and he practised what he directed, in a case infinitely harder than any child of God can ever feel, "Not my will, but thine be done." We readily acknowledge, that all our concerns are much safer in his hand than our own; why then should we feel uneasiness that any thing should fall out otherwise than we would, perhaps, nay, we may say, certainly we would, very foolishly, have chosen for ourselves? Nothing can mar the Christian's peace and comfort, unless some unhappy mixture of ignorance or unbelief, which always go together; something on which we lay more stress than on the faithfulness of God, who has undertaken kindly to care for all such as dare

trust in him. This world is not our home; and whether we think of it or not, we are only sojourners, or rather travellers, passing through it to the place of our everlasting abode. The worst thing that can befall us is, to be entangled in it, so as to forget we are upon a journey, and to have our hearts so engaged to any thing we meet with here, as to make us loath to part with it; and the best thing that can be done for us is, to keep us from such temptations. Nothing will do that effectually but a full conviction of the vanity and emptiness of all the pleasures and enjoyments of a present life; —nothing but looking and longing for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour, and that happy day, when, by the destruction of these vile bodies, all our connexion with this present world shall be finally broken, and all our hopes and fears from thence, which occasion our present sorrows, shall be no more; and when it will be our wonder how we ever could have been so foolish as to be moved with such shadows of vanity.

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REV. MR HERVEY TO A FRIEND,

With dissolution and eternity in view.

Dear ———

1751.

AND are you very weak? Is sickness in the chamber, and death at the door? Come then, let us both sit down with dissolution and eternity in view; and encourage one another from

the word, the precious word of God. I have as much need of such consolation as you, my dear friend, and may, perhaps, have occasion to use them as soon.

What is there formidable in death, which our ever blessed Redeemer has not taken away? Do the pangs of dissolution alarm us? Should they be sharp, they cannot be very long; and our exalted Lord, with whom are the issues of death, knows what dying agonies mean. He has said in the multitude of his tender mercies, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." This promise authorises us to say boldly, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff comfort me." Psal. xxiii. 4.

Are we afraid to enter into a strange, invisible, unknown world? It is the world into which our divine Master is gone: where he has prepared everlasting mansions for his people, and has appointed his angels to conduct us thither. Having such a convoy, what should we dread? And, going to our eternal home, where our all-bountiful Redeemer is, why should we be reluctant?

Are we concerned on account of what we leave? We leave the worse, to possess the better. If we leave our earthly friends, we shall find more loving and lovely companions!



We shall be "admitted among the innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born that are written in heaven." Do we leave the ordinances of religion, which we have attended with great delight? leave the word of God, which has been sweeter to our souls, than honey to our mouths? We shall enter into the temple not made with hands, and join that happy choir, who rest not day nor night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." And if our Bible is no more, we shall have all that is promised,—we shall behold all that is described therein. If we drop the map of our heavenly Canaan, it will be to take possession of its blissful territories. That city has "no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." O, my friend, blessed, for ever blessed, be the grace of our God, and the merits of his Christ. We shall exchange the scanty stream for the boundless ocean; and if we no longer pick the first ripe grapes, we shall gather the copious, the abounding, the never-ending vintage.

Do we fear the guilt of our innumerable sins? Adored be the inexpressible loving-kindness of God our Saviour! our sins have been punished in the blessed Jesus; "the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." He his ownself bare our sins, in his own body on the tree; so that "there is no condemnation

to them that are in Christ Jesus." O! that we may be enabled, with the Apostle, to make our boast of this Saviour, and to triumph in this faith! "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us."

Is judgment the thing that we fear? To the pardoned sinner it has nothing terrible. The Lord Jesus, who keeps his servants from falling, presents them also faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Observe the sweet expressions, "presents faultless," and "with exceeding joy." Justly, therefore, does the apostle reckon it among the privileges of the Christians, that they are "come to God the Judge of all." For the judge is our friend, the judge is our advocate, the judge is our propitiation, the judge is our righteousness. And is it not a privilege to come to such a judge, as will not so much as mention our iniquities to us, but condescend to take notice of our poor unworthy services; who sits on the great tribunal, not to pass the sentence of damnation upon us, but to give us a reward?—a reward of free grace, and of inconceivable richness.

Let me conclude with those charming words of the evangelical prophet, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her

iniquity is pardoned ; for her Redeemer, her all-gracious Redeemer, hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." May the God of our life and salvation make these scriptures be unto us as a staff in the traveller's hand, and as a cordial to the fainting heart, that we may be strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ ; that we may glorify him in death, and glorify him for death ; because death will introduce us into his immediate presence, where we shall be sorrowful no more, sinful no more, at a distance no more ; but be joyful, and be like our Lord ; love him with all our souls, praise him to all eternity. Let us then be of good cheer ; soon in our heavenly Jerusalem we shall meet again ; because God is faithful, inviolably faithful, and infinitely merciful, who hath promised—promised to you, and promised to

Your affectionate friend, &c.

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REV. MR HERVEY TO A FRIEND.

The subject continued.

Dear ——

I HOPE this will find you a little better in your health ; but if it should find you in a weak and languishing condition, I hope a gracious God will sanctify what it contains, to the comfort of your soul.

Often consider, if you die, you will leave a world full of sin ; a condition, full of frailty, ignorance, and misery ; a body that has long

been a heavy burden, a sore clog, both to your services and to your comforts; and why should any one be greatly unwilling to leave such a state? If you die, you will go into an unknown world; but the comfort is, you have a kind and faithful friend gone thither before; Jesus Christ, your best friend, and the lover of your soul, is Lord of that unseen world. Joseph's brethren were not afraid to go down into Egpt, when they knew that their dear brother was governor of the country. And since your most merciful Saviour is ruler of the invisible world, be not afraid to leave the body, and depart thither. It is said, the spirit of old Jacob revived, when he saw the waggons sent to carry him to his beloved son; and the poor languishing believer may look upon death as the waggon sent by Jesus Christ to bring his soul home to heaven.

But after death comes judgment, and this is terrible. Consider who is the Judge. Was the father that begat you, was the mother that bare you, or the friend that is as your own soul; was any one of these to be the judge and to pass the sentence, you would not be apprehensive of rigorous proceedings; you would expect all possible clemency; mercy, in this case, would rejoice against judgment. But, to our unspeakable comfort, we are informed by the scriptures, that a glorious person, far more merciful than a father, far more compassionate than a mother, far more affectionate than a friend, is to decide our doom;

even the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us with an everlasting love ; who declares, that a woman may forget her sucking child much sooner than he forget to be merciful to those that put their trust in him. For thus it is written, " God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, even Jesus Christ."

The judge calls himself our husband, the bridegroom of poor believing souls. And will the bridegroom deliver to destruction his own bride, whom he has bought with his blood and with whom he has made an everlasting covenant ?

The judge vouchsafes to be our advocate. And will he condemn those for whom he has long interceded ? Will he condemn those for whom he poured out his prayers when he was on earth, and on whose behalf he has constantly pleaded in the presence of God ?

The judge condescends to be our head, and calls the weakest believers his members. And did ever any one hate or delight to maim his own body ?

The judge has been the sacrifice for our sins. And will he consign those to damnation for whom he endured the agonies of crucifixion ? If he has given himself for us, will he not with this gift freely give us all things ? give us pardon at that awful day ? give us the crown of glory, which fadeth not away ?

Farther to confirm your faith, and establish your hope, it will be proper to consider what you have to plead. The proud Pharisee made

his abstaining from gross iniquities, and his punctuality in some external performances, his plea. The blinded Jews went about to establish their own righteousness, and depended on this broken reed for acceptance. But we have a surer foundation, whereon to build our comfortable expectations.

If arraigned on the foot of guilt—great guilt—manifold guilt—aggravated guilt—long contracted guilt, we have an atonement to plead, a sacrifice of unknown value, a propitiation glorious and divine. We have the blood of the Lamb to plead; blood that taketh away not one sin, or a few sins, or a multitude of sins only; but, O delightful truth! taketh away all, all, all sins. Yes, it taketh away all sins from the believer, be they ever so numerous; all sins, be they ever so heinous.

Should the law take us by the throat, and make that severe demand, Pay me that thou owest. It is paid, we reply, by our divine surety. An incarnate God has been obedient in our stead. In the Lord, the Lord Redeemer, have we righteousness. And can the law insist on a more excellent satisfaction? Does not this magnify the law, and make it honourable? By the obedience of one (that is Christ) shall many be made righteous.

Should it further be urged, without holiness no man shall see the Lord: Is not holiness the thing that we have longed for? It is true, we have not attained to holiness, spotless and undefiled holiness; neither could we in

the regions of temptation, and in a body of corruption. But has not our guilt been our sorrow, and our indwelling sin our heaviest cross? Have we not groaned under our remaining iniquities, and been burdened with a sense of our failings? And are not these groanings the first-fruits of the Spirit? Are not these the work of thy own grace, blessed Lord? and wilt thou not consummate in heaven what thou hast thus begun upon earth? Do we not desire heaven, chiefly because in those blessed mansions we shall sin no more; we shall offend our God no more; be no more forgetful of a dying Saviour; no more disobedient to the motions of a sanctifying Spirit? And shall we be disappointed of this hope? It cannot, cannot be. They that hunger and thirst after righteousness, are not filled while they abide in the flesh; therefore there remaineth the accomplishment of this promise,—they will assuredly awake up after the likeness of their Lord, at the great resurrection day, and in another world, be fully, everlastingly satisfied with it.

I must now come to a conclusion. But I cannot conclude without wishing you all joy and peace in believing. Though your flesh and your heart fail, may God be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever. I daily, I frequently make mention of you in my prayers; and, what is better than all, the dearly Beloved of the Father remembers you, now he is in his kingdom. I am, &c.

REV. MR HERVEY TO A LADY,

On her Death-bed.

Dear Miss Sarah,

So you are going to leave us! and will be at your eternal home before us! I heartily wish you an easy, a comfortable, and lightsome journey. Fear not; he that died on the cross will be with you in the valley of the shadow of death. Psal. xxiii. 4.

People that travel often sing by the way, to render their journey more pleasant. Let me furnish you with a song most exactly and most charmingly suited to your purpose: "Who shall lay any thing to my charge? It is God who justifieth me; who is he that condemneth me? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for me." Shall the law lay any thing to my charge? That has been fully satisfied by the obedience and death of my divine Lord. Shall sin condemn me? That has all been borne, all been abolished by the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. Shall Satan accuse me? What will that avail, when the Judge himself pronounces me righteous?—See Rom. viii. 33. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Dan. ix. 24. John i. 29.

But shall I be pronounced righteous, who have been, and am, a poor sinner? Hear what the Holy Ghost saith, "Christ loved the



church, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." What reason have they to be ashamed or afraid, who have neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any blemish? and such will be the appearance of those who are washed in Christ's blood, and clothed in his righteousness. They will be presented faultless, and with exceeding joy, before the throne. See Eph. v. 25. 27. Jude 24.

But what shall I do for my kind companions and dear friends? You will exchange them for better, far better; you will go to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; you will go to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. You will go to God, (your reconciled God,) the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things for you than your heart can wish, or your thoughts conceive. See Heb. xii. 22—24.

Perhaps your spirits are weak, therefore I will not tire you. The Lord Jesus make these sweet texts a cordial to your soul! I hope to follow you ere long, and to find you in the mansions of peace and joy, and to join you in singing praise, everlasting praise, to HIM who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, Rev. i. 5. Into his hand,

his ever-merciful and most compassionate hand, I commend your spirit.—Dear Miss Sarah, yours, &c.

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REV. MR. HERVEY TO A FRIEND,

On the Death of his Brother.

My very dear Friend,

YOUR last found me on the recovering hand, getting strength and spirits, though by slow degrees.

Soon after I received your favour, a messenger came from London, bringing us the alarming news, that my youngest brother was extremely ill. My father's bowels yearned, and his heart bled; but the infirmities of age, and an unwieldy constitution, hindered him from taking the journey. Upon me, therefore, the office fell. Feeble and languid as I was, there was no rejecting such a call. Accordingly, I took coach, and in two days arrived safe at London; where I found my poor brother seized with a most violent fever. He was attended by two eminent physicians; but they proved vain helpers, and miserable comforters. For a considerable time, his stout constitution struggled with the disease, but at last was forced to yield in the dreadful combat. After attending his sick-bed for several days, I had the melancholy task of closing his dear eyes, and resigning him up to death.

O the uncertainty of mortal things! What is health but a glimmering taper, that expires while it shines, and is liable to be extinguished by every motion of the air! What is strength, but a tender blossom that is often withered in its fullest bloom! Often blasted even before it is blown! Who could have thought that I should survive my brother, and follow him to the grave? I, sickly and enervated—he, always lively and vigorous; in flourishing circumstances, and blest with prosperity in his business, but now removed to the dark, inactive, silent tomb; lately married to a beautiful and blooming bride; but now everlastingly divorced, and a companion for creeping things!

Scarce was I returned to Weston, but another awful providence fetched me from home. My very worthy physician, Dr Stonehouse, who lives at Northampton, lost an amiable and excellent wife. She also was snatched away in the morning of life, (aged 25,) and dead, before I so much as heard of her being disordered. At this valuable friend's house I was desired to abide some time, in order to assist in comforting him concerning the deceased; and (if the will of God be so) in endeavouring to improve the awakening visitation to our mutual good.

You will surely say, when you read this account, that I "have been in deaths oft." Once upon the boarders of it myself, and more than once a spectator of its victory over others,—

However, my dear friend, let us not be dismayed. Let no man's, at least no believer's heart fail, because of this king of terrors. Though thousands fall beside us, though ten thousand expire at our right hand, and though we ourselves must quickly give up the ghost; yet the word is gone out of our great Redeemer's mouth, and it shall not return unfulfilled, "I will swallow up death in victory." He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; "he shall say to the grave, Give up, and to the sea, Keep not back;" release my sons from your dark confinement, and restore my daughters to their everlasting Father's arms. Then shall we lead him captive, whose captives we were, and triumph eternally over this last enemy. In the meantime, let us lay all our help, all our guilt, upon the divine Author of our faith, and Captain of our salvation; so shall we no longer be in bondage through fear of death, but, with the saints of old, overcome, through the blood of the Lamb, the dread, even while we sink beneath the stroke, of this our mortal foe.

Should not a sense of Emanuel's love make us more ardently desirous of bringing others to partake of that everlasting bliss which we humbly expect as our final portion; and of which some foretastes have been indulged, even in our present state? Should we not be stirred up, with greater assiduity and love, to warn every man, and exhort every man, that they also may be presented perfect in Christ,

and live for ever in the light of his countenance?—Please to present my thanks to Mrs —— for her kind wishes, and tell her that they are, and shall be most cordially returned by her and your most faithful and affectionate friend, &c.

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REV. MR HERVEY TO A FRIEND,

In great affliction.

Dear Sir,

*Weston, Dec. 1747.*

I TRULY commiserate your variegated calamity; and heartily wish I could suggest any thing which might be the means of administering some ease to your afflicted mind, and of assisting you to reap ample benefit from your distressed situation.

You well know, that all afflictions, of what kind soever, proceed from God. “I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.” (Isaiah xlv. 7.) They spring not from the dust; are not the effects of a random chance, but the appointment of an all-wise, all-foreseeing God, who intends them all for the good of his creatures. This, I think, is the fundamental argument for resignation, and the grand source of comfort. This should be our first reflection, and our sovereign support. He that gave me my being, and gave his own Son for my redemption he has assigned me this suffering. What he ordains who is bound-

less love, must be good : What he ordains who is unerring wisdom, must be proper.

This reconciled Eli to the severest doom that ever was denounced. It is the Lord, and though grievous to human nature, much more grievous to parental affection, yet it is unquestionably the best ; therefore, I humbly acquiesce. I kiss the awful decree, and say from my very soul, let him do what seemeth him good.

This calmed the sorrows of Job, under all his unparalleled distresses ; the Lord gave me affluence and prosperity ; the Lord has taken all away ; rapacious hands, and warring elements, were only his instruments ; therefore, I submit, I adore, I bless his holy name.

This consolation fortified the Man-Christ Jesus, at the approach of his inconceivably bitter agonies ; the cup, which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it ? It is your Father, dear Sir, your heavenly Father, who loves you with an everlasting love, that has mingled some gall with your portion in life. Sensible of the beneficent hand, from which the visitation comes, may you always bow your head in patient submission, and acknowledge with the excellent, but afflicted monarch, Hezekiah, " Good is the word of the Lord concerning me," 2 Kings xx. 19.

All afflictions are designed for blessings ; to do us good at the latter end, however they may cross our desires, or disquiet our minds at present. Happy (says the Spirit) is the man whom God correcteth. (Job v. 17.) And for

this reason, because his merciful chastenings, though not joyous, but grievous, yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. (Heb. xii. 11.) God's ways are not as our ways. The children whom we love, we are apt to treat with all the soft blandishments, and fond caresses of profuse indulgence: and too, too often gratify them to their hurt, if not to their ruin. But the Father of spirits is wise in his love, and out of kindness, severe. Therefore it is said, whom he loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, (Heb. xii. 6.) Would you not, dear Sir, be a child of that everlasting Father, whose favour is better than life? Affliction is one sign of your adoption to this inestimable relation. Would you not be an "heir of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?" Affliction is your path to this blissful patrimony. Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven, Acts xiv. 22. Would you not be made like your ever-blessed and amiable Redeemer? He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and every disciple must expect to be as his master.

Perhaps you may think your affliction peculiarly calamitous; and that if it had been of some other kind you could more cheerfully submit, more easily bear it; but you are in the hands of an all-wise physician, who joins to the bowels of infinite love, the discernment of infinite wisdom. He cannot mistake your case;

he sees into the remotest events ; and though he varies his remedies, always prescribes with the exactest propriety to every one's particular state. Assure yourself, therefore, the visitation which he appoints, is the very properest recipe in the dispensatory of heaven : Any other would have been less fit to convey saving health to your immortal part, and less subservient to your enjoyment of the temporal blessings which may perhaps be yet in store for you.

Should you inquire what benefits accrue from afflictions? Many and precious; they tend to wean us from the world. When our paths are strewn with roses, how apt are we to be enamoured with our present condition, and forget the crown of glory, forget Jesus and everlasting ages? But affliction with a faithful, though harsh voice, rouses us from the sweet delusion. Affliction warns our hearts to arise and depart. The sweeping tempests and the beating surge teach the mariner to prize the haven, where undisturbed repose waits his arrival. In like manner, crosses teach us to long for those happy mansions, where all tears will be wiped away from the eyes.

Afflictions tend to bring us to Christ. Christ has unspeakable and everlasting blessings to bestow, such as the world can neither give nor take away. It is very observable, that scarce any made application to our divine Redeemer, in the days of his abode with us, but the children of affliction. The same spirit of



supineness still possesses mankind. We undervalue, we disregard the Lord Jesus, and the unspeakable privileges of his gospel, while all proceeds smoothly. But when sorrows oppress our minds, then we are willing, we are glad, we are earnest, to find rest in Christ.

In Christ Jesus there is pardon of sins. Sin is a burden, incomparably sorer than any other distress. But Christ has, at the price of his very life, purchased pardon for all that fly to him. He bore the guilt of their sins in his own body on the tree, (1 Pet. ii. 24.) Have they deserved condemnation? He has sustained it in their stead. Are they obnoxious to the wrath of God? He has endured it, as their substitute. He has made satisfaction, complete satisfaction for all their iniquities, (Rom. iii. 25, 26.) so that justice itself can demand no more. O that distresses may prompt us to prize this mercy! may incite us to desire ardently this blessedness! Then it will be good for us to have been afflicted.

Christ has obtained for us the gift of the Holy Spirit (Gal. iii. 2.) to sanctify our hearts, and renew our natures. An unrenewed, carnal mind is ten thousand times more to be lamented, more to be dreaded, than any external calamities. And nothing can cure us of this most deadly disease, but the sanctification of the Spirit. He alone is able to put the fear of God in our souls, and awaken the love of God in our hearts—subdue our corruptions, and conform us to our blessed Redeemer's image.

His divine influences are disesteemed by the darlings of the world, who have nothing to vex them ; but how precious are they to the heirs of sorrow ? They breathe after them as the thirsty hart panteth for the water-brooks. They cannot be satisfied without his enlightening, purifying, cheering communications. This is all their request, and all their relief, " that the Spirit of Christ may dwell in their hearts." Before I close these lines, permit me to recommend one expedient, which yet is not mine, but the advice of an inspired apostle, " If any be afflicted, let him pray." Dear Sir, fly to God in all your adversity ; pour out your complaints before him in humble supplication, and show him your trouble. When the Psalmist was distressed on every side, without were fightings, within were fears, the throne of grace was the place of his refuge ; I give myself to prayer, was his declaration. This method, we read, Hannah took, and you cannot but remember the happy issue. Let me intreat you to imitate these excellent examples ; frequently bend your knees, and more frequently lift up your heart, to the Father of Mercies and God of all consolation ; not doubting but that through the merits of his dear Son, through the intercession of your compassionate High-Priest, he will hear your petitions, will comfort you under all your tribulations, and make them all work together for your infinite and eternal good.—I am, dear Sir, &c.

REV. MR HERVEY TO A FRIEND,

Recommending the Bible and Prayer, as true sources of comfort in affliction.

*Weston-Favell, June 1749.*

So, my dear Sir, the physicians, upon the whole, have given your friend no great hopes of a cure. The apothecary's shop, and the mineral waters, may, they apprehend, palliate the disorder; but that even a palliation, it seems, is not to be expected, without keeping the mind quiet and cheerful; and that this important end may most effectually be answered, the doctors have recommended diversions, travelling, and company, giving a caution, at the same time, I am told, against retirement, so much praying, and poring over religious books.

Now, if cheerfulness be the grand, the fundamental, the only recipe adequate even to the mitigation of this disease, I may venture to assert, that such recipe is to be found (possibly what I declare may be wondered at,) but I aver, it is to be found in the Bible.

That a satisfied, a serene, and cheerful state of mind, will in this case be more beneficial than all manner of restoratives for decayed nature, or cordials for the sinking spirits, I can easily believe; nay, I am farther convinced, that whatever can be contrived by the most solicitous care of the physicians, will probably be rendered ineffectual, without this prime

preparative, this most sovereign prescript. But here will arise a question, how this inward tranquillity may most easily be attained, and most surely established? By company, by travelling, by diversions, the doctors and some others, will reply. I am far, very far from being an enemy to diversions, when properly chose, and used with moderation; but these will no more reach the case now under consideration, than the gentle motions of a fan are sufficient to impel a wind-bound fleet. But what, may it be asked, would I substitute instead of these expedients? I would beg leave (impolite as it may seem, and in a manner exploded) to recommend prayer to God, and the daily reading of the Scriptures. If kind and friendly conversation be judged proper, why should prayer be disapproved? Prayer is an humble, but delightful intercourse with the best, the greatest, the everlasting friend. And has any earthly friend exercised more loving-kindness? Is any earthly friend more able to administer relief than the blessed God?

God has so loved us, that he gave his own Son, dearer to himself than all angels, and all worlds, to die for our salvation. Rather than we should perish for ever, he sent his infinitely glorious Son to take upon him our nature, and suffer the unknown agonies of crucifixion. To show his readiness to succour us in any distress, he styles himself the Father of Mercies, and God (not of some, but) of all comfort. And where is the person from whom we

may more reasonably expect to receive tender and compassionate succours, than from this all-gracious God? If he speak peace, who shall cause disquietude, or what shall destroy our tranquillity? Indeed, if we apply for comfort to any thing lower than heaven, or by any such means as exclude frequent prayer, we neglect the fountain of living waters, and hew to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. The scriptures (and believe me, as I speak from daily experience) are a treasury of comfort. One who had drank deep of the cup of sorrow declares, that they rejoice the heart; and that for his own part, if his delight had not been in the divine law, he should have perished in his trouble. "These things, says the favourite disciple, write we unto you, (not barely that you may have joy, but) that your joy may be full." And St Paul adds, that "whatever things are written by the spirit of inspiration, are written for our benefit; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope;" that blessed hope of eternal life, which is an anchor to the soul in all the storms of adversity; which is the oil of gladness, swimming above all the waves of affliction. By having recourse to amusements, in preference to the strong consolations suggested in the Bible, we act as injudiciously, we shall be deceived as certainly, as if, amidst the sultry heats of summer, we should seek cooling refreshment from a painted

tree, and shun the embowering shady covert of a real grove.

If we are afflicted, the scriptures acquaint us, that our afflictions are the chastisements of a father, not the scourges of an anemy. They give us assurance that the all-disposing Providence, will not suffer us to be afflicted above what we are able to bear. That they shall turn to our good, and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness; that they are light—are only for a moment, and yet shall work out for us a weight, an eternal weight of glory. Can all the volumes of heathen morality suggest, or all the recreations in the world afford, such rational and solid consolation? Can any thing be more (or equally comfortable) than the privileges recorded in that charter of our salvation, the scriptures? There we are told, that as many as truly believe in Jesus Christ, are children of the Almighty; he pities them as a father pities his own children; and that a mother may sooner forget her sucking child, than he can remit his tender care for their present welfare and endless felicity. That, because we are sinners, Christ Jesus, with infinitely more than parental tenderness, bore our sins, and expiated all our guilt, in his own bleeding body upon the tree. Because we frequently offend, and always fail, our merciful High-priest ever liveth to make intercession for us, and to plead his divine merits in our behalf. Because we have many corruptions within, and are assaulted by

various temptations without, we have a promise of the blessed Spirit to subdue our corruptions, and renew us after the image of him who created us. Are these things, I would ask the physicians, likely to deject the mind, or oppress it with heaviness ?

Cheered by the consolations of religion, supported by its blessed hope, the ancient Christians were more than conquerors over all their calamities ; they even gloried in tribulations, because these were the appointed way to the kingdom of heaven. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in the world above, a better and more enduring substance. They perceived with complacency, the decay of their earthly tabernacle ; because there remained for them, after their dissolution, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Perhaps we may not arrive at such heights of heroic and triumphant exultation ; but surely we should try those remedies, which, in their case, were so surprisingly and happily successful.

I cannot conclude without giving you a fresh assurance, that amongst the great number of those who esteem and respect you, there is not one of them who more sincerely regards you than, good Sir, your, &c.

REV. MR HERVEY TO LADY FRANCES SHIRLEY,

After his recovery from great affliction.

Madam,

ACCORDING to my promise, the first letter I write after my recovery, is a letter of grateful acknowledgment for your Ladyship's favour. Recovery did I say? That is too flattering a word. For though my hand is able to hold a pen, my feet are not able to carry me across the room, without some borrowed support.—Indeed I have been extremely ill; hovering upon the very brink of eternity. The doctor was twice sent for by a special messenger, from an apprehension that my dissolution was approaching.

You will probably be desirous to know, how my mind was affected amidst such circumstances of peril and pain. The pain too often disturbed and interrupted my application to his Almighty Majesty. Ah! how unwise is it—rather, how desperately hazardous, to defer the great work of reconciliation with our Creator, to a languishing and dying bed! when the anguish is frequently so strong, that it quite shatters the thoughts, and renders them incapable of attending to any thing but the load of affliction.

With regard to death, I humbly bless the divine goodness, I was under no terrifying apprehensions. It was desirable, rather than dreadful; the thing that I longed for, rather than de-



precated. A believing contemplation of God's infinitely rich mercy, of Christ's unspeakably meritorious atonement and righteousness, enable me to say with the apostle, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!" How great then is the efficacy, and how precious should be the interests of that holy religion, which could support the weakest of creatures, when all earthly succours failed; and could give courage to the most obnoxious of sinners, even when summoned to his final trial!

Let us labour, my honoured Lady, to be rich in grace, and strong in faith, for we know not what trying times may be at hand. We are sure, the end of all things is near, and the Judge is at the door. O let us daily get a clearer knowledge of the all-sufficient Redeemer, a firmer establishment in his merits, and a growing conformity to his image! 'Tis Christ that unstings death. 'Tis this glorious Captain of our salvation that emboldens us to triumph over that last enemy. Old Simeon, having the child Jesus in the arms of his flesh, and the promised Mediator in the arms of his faith, can go down to the chambers of the grave with a peaceful tranquillity. Of the saints, in the Revelation, it is said, "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb." Overcame what? Not only the temptations of life, but the terrors of death, and the fear of eternal judgment. They overcame all, by a believing application of their Saviour's death. St Paul

in that inestimable chapter, the eighth to the Romans, seems to anticipate the arrival of the great day; seems to sit down, and examine what will be the issue of the last trial, with regard to himself. After a mature consideration, he rests assured, that he shall be absolved, when he is judged. And why? because of his own good works? No; but because of God's free unmeasurable grace, and Christ's immensely valuable propitiation. Fixing his hopes solely on this foundation, he dares even to defy every enemy of his salvation. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." May such sweet portions of scripture be the solace of your Ladyship's heart, during the years of prosperity; and the support of your soul, when the day of adversity takes place!

I know not how to conclude this epistle with a more respectful propriety, than by turning what I have just been reading into a prayer—That you may receive, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit of God; that you may know the things which are freely given us of God in Christ Jesus. Which prayer, while it drops from the pen, comes warm from the heart, of your Ladyship's most dutiful and ever grateful servant, &c.

REV. MR NEWTON TO A LADY,

In affliction.

Dear Madam,

LONG and often have I wished to write. The time is now come when I can begin my letter ; when I shall finish it, I know not, as I am every minute liable to be interrupted ; but I shall do my best.

I know not how you are, but the Lord does. May this therefore comfort you, that he who humbles himself to take notice of the worship of angels, has his eye upon your concerns, and his ears open to your prayers, from the beginning to the end of the year. He is a shield round about you, awake, asleep, at home, abroad ; he is your shepherd, your resting place. Such are the privileges of his people, and therefore such must be yours, for I trust you are one of them. Psalm cvi. 4, 5. expresses the desire of your heart : if you have that desire, he gave it you, (for you were not born with it,) and therefore, of course, it shall be granted : for he will not disappoint the expectations which by his own word and Spirit are found in our minds.

He has been mercifully with me likewise, or I should not have been able to write you. I need not tell you, that my chief earthly comfort, the very desire of my eyes, is removed from me. Perhaps the short time I had the pleasure of your acquaintance, was sufficient for you to observe that my affection

for her was not only sincere, but excessive and idolatrous: indeed, it was too much so; yet he was pleased to spare her to me for more than forty years; and, what was still more, when his appointed time came, he enabled me to resign her with some degree of composure, and willing submission to his call.

A thread of extraordinaries has run through my life, and I consider his goodness to me under the late dispensation, as not the least remarkable. My feelings, during her long illness, were often very painful. My loss in her is very great; but he graciously supports me, and I am still helped to say, He doth all things well. I am far from being uncomfortable; my health and spirits are good; I go on with cheerfulness in my usual round of service, as formerly. I have still a thousand mercies and comforts to be thankful for. It is true I sensibly feel her loss, and miss what was dear to me as a right hand. She is seldom five minutes at a time out of my thoughts, when awake. There is a sort of gloom hangs over every earthly object; but it is not very dark and painful; it rather only takes off the glare of the world, which is otherwise apt to dazzle us. The world is too poor to make up my loss; but the promises of an all-sufficient God afford a sure and full resource. In a word, I am as to outward things as well as I wish to be, while I remain here. She is gone before: I hope she is before the throne, and I shall meet her there in the Lord's best time. May

he enable me to make full proof of my ministry, and to fill up my appointed time agreeable to my profession. I seem to have nothing more to ask. Help me, dear madam, with your prayers.—So much and enough concerning myself.

Your complaints and conflict in yourself, should humble, not discourage you; for Jesus came to save, not those who can help themselves, but those who cannot; not those who have something to say in their own favour, but those who are wholly destitute of any plea, but that which he provides for them. If you should tell me of a physician, of whose skill and care you had a high opinion, and should add, I should certainly apply to him, and doubt not but he would cure me, if nothing ailed me, but I am so ill I cannot think of trying him; how should I understand you? If you were not ill, the physician, though infinite, could be of no service to you. You are a sick soul, “Come unto me, I will heal you;” only you must wait, for he seldom heals instantaneously. I trust you will try him, and determine to look to him, and to him alone. You may have need of patience, but do not think it humility to question his compassion and faithfulness. Be willing to bear the cross he may appoint you. Afflictions deserve to be ranked among the means of grace, for we seldom get good, or go on well long without them. I am your affectionate friend and servant, &c.

REV. MR NEWTON TO MISS S——

On resignation in affliction.

My dear Madam,

I THANK you for your condolence; I still need your prayers, and invite you to join me in praising the Lord, for his gracious support afforded me. A loss like mine cannot be made up by any thing this world can yield. I feel it, as I did at first; but through mercy, I am satisfied with the Lord's will, and in all other respects, my cup of blessings is full and running over. I have good health and spirits; many pleasing connexions; I am still enabled to preach with acceptance, and I hope with some usefulness. What more can I wish for in such a state as this? or who can have more cause for thankfulness, or less for complaint than I?

A while ago, Mrs —— gave me some hopes that I should soon see you in London. This would give me pleasure. But it is no great matter; yet a little while, and, I trust, we shall meet to part no more, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest; where there is but one name, one song, one joy. Amongst the innumerable company of the redeemed there, we likewise hope to meet with some who were near and dear to us upon earth. They are gone but a little before us; we are following. Time is short; let us pray for skill to use the balances of the

sanctuary aright, that we may weigh the afflictions of the present life against the glory that shall then be revealed. How light and momentary are the one, when compared with the exceeding weight and eternal duration of the other !

Let us commit ourselves, as sin-sick souls, to the care and skill of our infallible Physician. He does nothing in vain ; if we are in heaviness, there is a need-be for it. He adjusts his medicines (the trials we meet with) to the nature of the disease, and the strength of the patient ; and though for our good he sometimes causes grief, he will surely have compassion. If the way is unusually rough, he provides shoes of iron and brass, and he has cordials to prevent us from fainting. Indeed, if we consider ourselves as sinners, or compare our state with that of thousands around us, we cannot say we are dealt hardly with. If we had liberty to alter his plan concerning us, we should only spoil it, for he does all things wisely and well ; and therefore, so far as our wishes are contrary to his will, we must certainly be mistaken. How often may it be said of such short-sighted creatures, "Ye know not what ye ask." If things went not, as we are apt to say, so bad with us, they would probably be much worse very soon. Perhaps the very thing we are afraid of, is the very mean the Lord designed to preserve us from some unthought-of snare, which Satan was spreading to entangle our feet.

Were it not for unbelief and self-will, we might be comfortable from morning to night, and every day in the week. We want to have things go our own way, but they will not. A child, if crossed about a toy, will often cry, and refuse to be pacified. We are "but children of a larger growth." We hope that God is our Father, and heaven will be our home: but there occurs some crooked thing which we cannot make straight, and if we do not cry over it, we are sadly put out, (as they say,) and for a season, the sun shines upon us in vain. And yet, perhaps, this very crook in the lot is one of our chief and most needful mercies, and for which, if we knew all, we should have double reason to be thankful.

Indeed, my dear Madam, it should not be so with us, nor is it necessary. It is true we have need of patience, but patience may be had for asking. The gospel is in itself, and therefore should be for us, a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care. The Lord can give us, if we seek him earnestly, such a fixed dependence upon his wisdom, power, and goodness as shall prove an anchor to our minds, and keep us tolerably composed and quiet, whatever winds or changes we meet with upon the turbulent sea of this world. Oh! to believe, that we are always under his eye and direction; that the very hairs of our head are numbered; that every seeming hindrance shall prove a real help, and every present cross a seed of future comfort! How desirable is



this! and yet this is no more than the scriptures warrant us to expect, if we have committed ourselves and our all to the Saviour.

May the Lord bless you indeed, and give you the best desires of your heart. I beg you to mention my affectionate respects to Mrs W. and to believe me sincere when I subscribe myself, dear madam, your affectionate friend and servant, &c.

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REV. D. DICKSON, SENIOR, TO A FRIEND.

Recommending the Lord Jesus as a Physician of infinite value.

My dear Friend,

*Edin.* 1811.

ALTHOUGH I trust, and am persuaded, that you have infinitely more tender and availing sympathy than mine, I could not hear of your distress while attending your young friend under deep and complicated affliction, without writing you a few lines, to express the concern I wish to feel for you both, in such trying circumstances. Were you within my reach, a personal visit would not be wanting; but as this is altogether out of my power, let me converse a little with you by letter, as if I were really present in your habitation of sorrow. In such a case, I would naturally begin with inquiring into the nature, progress, and probable consequences of your young friend's *bodily* complaints; for which, however, having

little or no medical skill, I durst hardly venture to give any prescription; and would, therefore, hasten to attend to what is more in my own line, the state of her soul. In this respect, perhaps, I should find that, in her own apprehension, at least, all is wrong, insomuch that she may be ready to say, "My strength, and my hope is perished from the Lord." But is it then really so? No; a *Saviour*, and a *Great One* is near to deliver. The sound more alarming than that of Sinai's loudest thunder, which proclaims, "Thou hast destroyed thyself," is immediately succeeded by that still, small, and most encouraging voice, from above the mercy seat, "In me is thine help:" Yes, "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," of whom, let it be allowed that your afflicted friend is among the chief.—This the Apostle readily acknowledged to have been *his* character. Nevertheless, *he* was saved of the Lord; and for this cause, says he, "*I obtained mercy*, that in me first Christ Jesus might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe in him to life everlasting." Though, therefore, the case may be sad, it is far from being desperate. Though the maladies of the soul may be more numerous, and far more distressing than those of the body, "yet there is balm in Gilead, and a Physician there." In the righteousness, blood, and

Spirit of Jesus, there is a sovereign healing balm for every distemper. He, indeed, is *the physician of infinite value*, of consummate skill, of almighty power, of the tenderest divine compassion, and of unbounded grace.— He is, besides, a *free* physician, who not only requires no hire, but who will accept of none. Yea, such is his readiness to help, that instead of even waiting for an invitation, he offers his gracious aid, saying to the poor afflicted soul, for whom is no help from man at all, “Wilt thou be made whole?” If we only make known our situation to him, and trust ourselves implicitly to his care, we shall assuredly be safe. He is in every view *able and willing* also to save *to the uttermost*. His gracious language is, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” *Him that cometh unto me*, I will in *no wise* cast out. Should it be said, as is really the case, that we are wholly impotent, that we cannot come to him, he hath promised (John xii. 32.) that he will *draw* us to himself.—What encouragement in return for us to cry, *Draw us, we will run after thee! Behold, we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our GOD!* Or, if this language should still seem too confident, let the discouraged and tempted soul endeavour to imitate the exercise of Peter in the storm, (Matt. xiv. 30, 31.) when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, *Lord save me!* And his prayer was not in vain, for im-

mediately Jesus *stretched forth his hand* and caught him, and said unto him, "O thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt?" May He who "ruleth even in the raging of the sea, and when the waves thereof do roar, stilleth them again—who is also the author and the finisher of faith," may he still the risings of unbelief, and the temptations of the wicked one, so shall the most tempestuous storm be changed into a peaceful calm. When he giveth quietness, who can give trouble?

Perhaps, my dear friend, these remarks may come too late for your afflicted cousin, whose accumulated distress of soul and body may render her incapable of attending to any thing that you can suggest. But they may be encouraging to yourself, in endeavouring to commit her case and your own to that compassionate Redeemer, who is "*touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, who knoweth your frame, and remembereth you are dust—who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till He bring forth judgment unto victory." That the Lord may sanctify all his ways of dealing towards you, and may be your strong-hold in the time of trouble, and at length compass you about with songs of deliverance, is the heart's desire and prayer of yours, with sincere regard, &c.

REV. W. B. CADOGAN TO MRS DEAN.

## On Domestic Affliction.

Madam,

I WAS sorry to receive such an account of your house as you sent me in March ; but then I thought, as I do now, that if you and your house are serving the Lord Christ (as I trust you are) all will be well : for who ever served such a Master, without being constrained to say, " He hath done all things well ?"

It is the privilege of a Christian, however sorrowful, to be always rejoicing ; for God in Christ, seen and known by faith, is the fountain of eternal joy. Even when he sends chastisements, which do not seem for the present joyous, but grievous, we know that he is love : this is his name, and this his nature. He changeth not, whatever changes there may be in our condition ; " and having loved his own, he loveth them to the end." There is in one respect, therefore, a perfect sameness in the condition of a believer : he may say of every dispensation, this is love. Look, therefore, upon the late visitations in your house, as so many fresh mercies flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. You have perhaps discovered them to be so before now ; afflictions, which, however light, and but for a moment, are sufficient in the hands of an almighty and all-bountiful God, to work for you and your servant, " a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

You and I, dear madam, must learn to take up our cross, and to follow Jesus: his sufferings increased every day, from his birth in a manger, to his death upon the cross; and the moment that he suffered most, was almost the moment of his departure, when he cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Do not wonder, therefore, if your trials should increase in the decline of life; look upon them as trials of faith; and depend upon it, that faith is more precious than gold which perisheth, and will be found, though it be tried in the fire, to the praise and honour of its author and finisher Jesus Christ, at his appearing.

Mrs C. who is well, joins with me in kind regards to yourself and all your house, and all our Christian friends in your neighbourhood. I am, dear madam, very sincerely yours, &c.

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REV. H. DAVIDSON TO MR BOSTON,

On the Death of his Mother.

Very Dear Sir,

*Galashiels, 1732.*

YOUR several letters came safe to hand, and were very acceptable. This comes to inform you, that the good old woman my mother went home to her own, the better country, this morning between three and four o'clock. She took her bed upon the Lord's day even-

ing ; had a fever pretty high, but retained all her senses to her dying hour. How cruel is our love ! how blind and inconsiderate is our affection ! We would prefer the small advantages, or greater gains, we reap from their abode with us, to their entire satisfaction and complete happiness,—a very great, but common solecism in true friendship we are often guilty of. However frightful and ill-favoured death appears to the eye of sense, it is viewed by faith as the messenger of our heavenly Father ; and when the Christian opens its hard cold hands, and looks into them, there are to be found gracious letters full of love, bearing an invitation to come home ; a call from the New Jerusalem to come up and see. When death with the one hand covers our eyes, and deprives us of the light of the stars, with the other it rends in pieces the veil, and so makes way for our being set immediately under the refreshing beams of the Sun of Righteousness, without the least appearance of a cloud, through the long day of eternity. Now that his way is in the sea, and his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known, we must believe loving-kindness in all the mysterious passages of providence, and we shall in due time see a wheel in the wheel, and be taught how to decipher the dark characters ; we shall, with an agreeable surprise, perceive an all-wise providence, in all its intricate, oblique, and seemingly contrary motions, to have been a faithful servant to the divine promise, so that we must say amen to hea-

ven's disposals, and cry out in the dark and gloomy night, Hallelujah. My affectionate respects to Mrs Boston, with yourself, are offered by him who is, very dear sir, your's very affectionately in the straitest bonds, &c.

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REV. S. PEARCE TO MR W——

On Divine Faithfulness in Affliction.

Dear Mr W——

My Master has no need of me just now, or he would not now silence me; but I am in good hands, and in the midst of my imprisonment can shout with joy unspeakable, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God reigneth!" So wise, so just, so good is He in whose hands my breath is, and whose are all my ways, that I am perfectly satisfied with all his blessed will: nor would I have it otherwise, were an alteration in my power, so long as my Father seeth it best to continue the heavenly discipline. During my affliction I have tasted much of the sweetness of the promises, and my soul has been fed as with marrow and fatness. I have sometimes hesitated in encouraging my people to rely on the fulness of the promises in all cases, because I feared, that if He should lay me by as a broken vessel, my revolting heart would be dissatisfied, and complain; but verily, now I know, that God can render submission as happy as exertion, and call forth the passive graces to as good purpose for the joy



of his people, and the glory of his grace, as the more active ones.

O sweet affliction ! sweet affliction ! I could not but frequently exclaim, when my health was at the lowest ebb, and at the moment when I thought I should not see my dear people again, till I met them on the hill of Zion. Yes, where my Lord Jesus is, there are, there must be peace, and joy, and confidence, whether it be in the sanctuary of praise, or on the bed of languishing. It is heaven to see his smiling face. I would not have been without this trial for the Indies ; it has taught me more of my Bible, and of my God, than seven years more study could have done. " O trust in the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him." I consider now, though I am young, my best days are over ; but I cannot describe to you what solid satisfaction I feel in reflecting, that my best days have been devoted to the service of my blessed Jesus.

But do not let my dear brother imagine, that on this I build my hope ; no, my only foundation is the Rock Christ Jesus. Affectionately yours, &c.

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REV. DR BALFOUR TO MR AND MRS D.

On the Death of his Son, while under their care.

Sir,

I BEG you will let me know particularly how you, Mrs D. and family are. I can

say with truth, that from the moment I received the very severe shock, anxiety about you all hath mixed itself with almost all my tears and prayers on my own account. I once thought of making a personal inquiry for your family this morning, but have delayed it till to-morrow morning at breakfast, that I might by these few lines prepare you and myself for that interview, and explain my situation and views more fully than I perhaps may be able to do at meeting. If my intended visit is, on my own account, or in any view disagreeable, freely tell me; for nothing is more remote from my mind, than giving the least degree of pain to any one of you. So far am I from looking with an evil eye on West Thorn, as the devoted source of my distress, that the loss of my dear rash boy appears to me attended with many alleviating circumstances, which it probably could not have been attended with any where else, not even at home. The time, the divinely appointed time, was come for his removal from the tender embrace and insufficient care of a too fond parent; and since this was the desire of his and my (I dare not say, unjust or unkind) heavenly Father, I adore and bless his name for enabling me to acquiesce with perfect satisfaction in his sovereign will. I know that this high uncontrollable will of God took effect amidst all the immediate attentions and exertions which a parent's eye, or a parent's hand, could

have thought of, or employed for his safety. Instead, therefore, of one reflection, I now most sincerely give, and, if able, will in person give with my whole heart, the most grateful acknowledgments to you and all about your house, for flying to the instant relief of my perishing child.\* That holy, just, and good God, who frustrated all these kindly endeavours (which I shall never forget,) thus taught you, and teaches me, that he does all things according to the counsel of his own will. I only feel for the distress it has brought on you and worthy Mrs D——, and because you participate so much of my sorrows.

I now wish, my dear captain, to set before you some of those consolations and supports, which have relieved and upheld my otherwise sorrowful and sinking spirits. The God who visited me with this sore calamity is, I assure you, and hath been, to me the God of all comfort. He comforts them who are cast down; yea, when afflictions abound, his consolations are made much more abundant. He hath comforted me, by fixing my attention on his divine perfections, and his gracious characters, designs, and relations. I see there can be no evil or rashness in any part of the plans or operations of infinite wisdom; nor cruelty or unkindness in the intentions or conduct of him who is infinitely righteous, good, and merciful; no disappointment in trusting the promises of unchangeable love and in-

\* He was drowned in the river Clyde.

violable truth. I desire, therefore, to kiss the sovereign rod, and him who hath appointed it, remembering his exhortation “not to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when rebuked of him.”

I hope then that you and Mrs D. will not be afraid to meet with me. I shall endeavour to comfort you, as well as myself, with the consolations which are in Christ Jesus: they are strong, they are everlasting; and when the streams of created comfort are dried up, whither should we go, but to the uncreated fountain of divine eternal love and truth. This is a fountain which ever pours forth a fulness of gracious influence, adapted to all situations. Whatever other designs there may be of this mournful visitation, this surely is one, to teach us the vanity of this life, and the precarious nature of all earthly connexions and joys; and to rise in thought, pursuit, enjoyment, and hope, to an invisible, yet all-sufficient God, our only proper portion.

What is this world, with all its riches, honours, pleasures, and connexions, without God? A vanishing shadow. But if this God be our God for ever, what can we want that is good for us? “Though our house be not so with God, yet if he hath made with us an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure,” we may well add, “this is all our salvation and all our desire, although he make not our worldly house to grow;” or with the prophet Habakkuk, “although the fig-tree should

not blossom, &c. yet we will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation." O how divine is that religion, that presents such truths to the mind; how solacing its comforts, how soothing and exalting its prospects! "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." Let us, my dear sir, look forward to the bright morning of the resurrection, which will turn all our sorrows into joy, then shall all the faithful and their companions in the faith of the Lord, appear with him in glory. How wonderfully changed their form! no more corruption in them, no tendency to disease or death, no possibility of any future separation, shining in all the perfection of unfading beauty, spotless purity, and immortal honours. What a meeting of Christian friends! Then the unravelled labyrinth of Providence, the unfolded mysteries of redemption, and the displayed glory of their Saviour and God, will open such scenes of resplendent greatness and grace, as shall more than satisfy them with regard to all past events, the most overwhelming and confounding; yea, and fill them with present, growing, and eternal admiration. Till that clear and complete revelation of God and his ways is made, let us in all circumstances manifest the work of faith and the patience of hope.—These views, and their practical and comforting influence, are not only necessary in the day of adversity and trial, but are equally requisite to enrich and sanctify the joy of prosperity.

I trust you will not be offended at the freedom with which I have written, or the earnestness with which, as a friend, more than ever concerned for your best interests, I now beg leave to recommend these things to your chief study and care. In the habitual reverence of the venerable name, holy ordinances, and adorable providence of God, you will find a pleasure amidst the vicissitudes of life, which the world cannot give nor take away. Be assured, that I most sincerely wish health, prosperity, and every good thing, to you, Mrs D. Mrs. W. all your family, their tutor, and all your dependents; that you and all yours may be among the happy, eternal admirers of God and his glorious grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ, is the prayer of, dear sir, your most affectionate and dear friend and servant.

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REV. DR. ERSKINE TO DR. BALFOUR,  
On the Death of his Son.

Reverend Sir,

I SINCERELY sympathize with you on your heavy and unexpected trial. I have drunk deep in the same cup. Of nine sons, only one survives. From what I repeatedly felt, I can form an idea what you must feel in so promising an only son being taken from you. I cannot, I dare not say, weep not. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, and surely he allows you to weep; surely there is a *need be* you

feel heaviness under such a trial. But Oh! let hope and joy mitigate your heaviness. I know not how this or a former trial shall work for your good, but it is enough that God knows. He that said, "all things shall work together for good to them that love God," excepts not from this promise the sorest trial. You devoted your son to God, you cannot doubt that he accepted the surrender. If he has been hid in the chambers of the grave, from the evil of sin, and from the evil of suffering, let not your eye be evil when God is good. What you chiefly wished for him, and prayed in his behalf, was spiritual and heavenly blessings. If the greatest thing you wished for is accomplished at the season, and in the manner infinite wisdom saw best, refuse not to be comforted; you know not what work and joy has been waiting for him in that world, where God's servants shall serve him.—Should *you* sorrow immoderately, when you have such ground of hope that he and the other parent are rejoicing in what you lament? I know nature must have vent; and I believe suppressing its emotions in such cases is not profitable either to soul or body; but I trust, though you mourn, God will keep you from murmuring, and that you shall have to glory in your tribulation and infirmity, while the power of Christ is manifested thereby.

Adieu, my dear and much esteemed friend. I know I suggest what has often occurred to yourself; but we are much hurt by not im-

proving in their proper seasons the most plain known truths. I am affectionately yours, &c.

P. S. Do not write to me: this is a time for conversing as much as you can with God and heaven; and yet a time, when well meant, but ill directed friendship, hinders, instead of administering relief.

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REV. D. DICKSON, SENIOR, TO A LADY,

On the death of her Daughter.

My dear Madam,

HOWEVER unavailing my tenderest sympathy, I cannot refrain from expressing the deep concern which I felt for you and your worthy husband, on hearing of the renewed, and very painful stroke with which it hath pleased a *sovereign, yet still gracious* God, to visit you. Amidst the agonizing pangs of strong natural affection, I trust you will be kept from entertaining hard thoughts of *him*, or of his *all-wise* and *righteous* procedure. Let neither Satan, nor unbelief, tempt you, from the severity of your trial, to suppose that the Lord is rebuking you in *wrath*, and chastening you in *hot displeasure*:—It cannot be so, while he leads you to see his hand in this dispensation, and makes you at least heartily desirous, quietly to acquiesce in his sovereign appointment. Although his way is in the sea, and his path



in the deep water, so that his footsteps are not known; even when we cannot *trace*, there is abundant reason still to *trust* the working of his invisible hand; seeing in faithfulness it is declared, that, without any exception whatever, *all* the paths of the Lord are *mercy and truth*, to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. Alas! you may say, “We have not been mindful of his covenant; and often have we turned aside from his testimonies;” but, even allowing this to be the case, you must not write bitter things against yourselves: He who *knoweth all things*, knoweth, that an interest in his covenant, is *all your salvation and all your desire*. That you have also taken *his testimonies as your heritage for ever*; and therefore, amidst lamented short-comings, let them be still for your comfort, and in midst of sorrow let them bring rejoicing to your heart. You cannot at present understand *all* the designs of the Lord in this trying dispensation; but what you *know not now, you shall know hereafter*; and I have no doubt, you will not only be enabled to *say*, but at length will *see*, that *He hath done all things well*. Then perhaps you will find reason to join the afflicted poet, who thus addressed the supreme Disposer of events,

“For all I bless thee, most for the severe, her death.”

But it is not to be expected, neither is it required, that you should at once rise superior to distress! the truest resignation is quite consis-

tent even with the acutest feeling of affliction, as appears from the most illustrious of all examples, exhibited in the language and conduct of our suffering Lord; even *He* was heard to say, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me*; nevertheless, added he, *not my will, but thine be done*. Indeed, without feeling our trials, and feeling them deeply too, there would be little or no room for the exercise of patience. "Therefore," said the apostle Peter, "*now, for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*" But what shall I say then, to alleviate your sorrow? Let me, for this purpose, remind you, my dear Christian friend, that the grounds of submission, and the sources of comfort, which were suggested to you under a former heavy trial, still remain the same; as are also the power and grace of the Holy Ghost, *the divine Comforter*, who alone can bring them to your remembrance, with their proper and soothing efficacy. May *He* himself revive your drooping spirit, when all that I can say, and even all that his *own word* reveals, without his influence, would otherwise prove of none effect.

What a consolation is it to think, that you have no reason whatever to mourn for the loss of your darling child, on *her* account? You had often endeavoured to give her to the

Lord; and though neither in the time nor way that you might have wished, yet He has *now*, in the strongest manner, testified his acceptance of the gift, by taking her home to himself, and early removing her from a world lying in wickedness, to dwell in a better country; and to spend the residue of her never-ending years in Emanuel's land, where sin, and sorrow, and pain, and death, are known no more. When you are able then to think, from what a world of temptation she has escaped, and to what a state of perfect safety and blessedness she is so soon raised, the very strength of your affection, *over fond* as it might be, should tend to reconcile you to such a painful bereavement. How light, even with all its aggravations, how light *your* trial, in comparison of what Job, Aaron, Eli, David, and others have been called to endure, from the abandoned life, and untimely death of profligate children? How much better if they had been early hid in the grave, or never at all seen the light! All this you will acknowledge is true; but still you may say, "The circumstances of our affliction, both now and formerly, have been peculiar: how sudden and unexpected the stroke! by occurrences seemingly accidental, and almost ere we were aware, our beloved children have been snatched from our embrace:" perhaps in the last instance, too, the suffering might be uncommonly severe, but *such was the will of your Father in heaven*, who hath an undoubted right to do what seemeth

good in his sight. I am persuaded that in the hours of surprise and sorrow, you would find him still to be your Refuge and your Strength: while the scenes of distress may often recur to your mind, solace yourself, that they are now for ever past, and have been certainly succeeded by scenes of unutterable joy. Let this thought cheer you under the melancholy blank which you must daily observe in your diminished circle, that thereby one more has been added to the redeemed family above. When, in passing through this valley of tears, another *sweet little* stream of creature-comfort has failed, I hope you will be brought still nearer than ever, to the inexhausted and inexhaustible fountain of living waters. Amidst the ravages of death, that great devourer, when permitted to exercise his unrelenting power, how rejoicing to know that the *Lord liveth*—his years fail not: He will be better to you than all earthly comforts, and according to his word of promise, he will give you *a name, and a place in his house, better than of sons or of daughters, even an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off*. When we think of his amazing love, in not *sparing* his own Son, but delivering him *up unto death* for us, should it not make us willing to part with *any* thing, or *every* thing, that He may see meet to demand? How encouraging to reflect on the *constancy* of his regard towards his people:—It varies not, neither with their outward circumstances, nor even with their inward frame; *for the*

*mountains shall depart, &c.* Isaiah liv. 10. Having then feebly endeavoured to act the part of *Barnabas*, a son (or minister) of consolation, let me hasten to conclude with exhorting you, as he did the people of Antioch, *that with purpose of heart you would cleave unto the Lord.* "He will give strength unto his people. He will bless his people with peace. Though he may cause grief, he will have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies." From the love he has shown us, and the grace he hath given us; from the experience of his people, and the declared laws of his word, "*we know that all things work together for good,*" &c. If we are spared a few weeks, I hope to see you face to face. In the mean time I think you will not doubt my sympathy with Mr — and you, on this trying occasion.

That the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, and in him the *God of all grace, of peace, of patience, of consolation, and of hope,* may be ever with you, is the heart's desire and prayer of yours, with much regard, &c.

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REV. J. FLAVEL TO MR AND MRS E. C.

On the Death of their Son.

DEAR FRIENDS,—Our affections are one, and so in a great measure have been our afflictions also. You cannot forget, that in

the year lately past, the Almighty visited my tabernacle with the rod, and in one year cut off from it the root and the branch, the tender mother and the only son. What the effects of those strokes, or rather of my own unmortified passions were, I have felt, and you and others have heard. Surely I was as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: yea, I may say with them, Lam. iii. 19, 20. "Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me."

I dare not say that ever I felt my heart discontentedly rising and swelling against God. No; I could still justify him, when I most sensibly smarted by his hand: if he had plunged me into a sea of sorrow, yet I could say in all that sea of sorrow, there is not a drop of injustice, but it was the overheating and overacting of my fond and unmortified affections and passions, that made so sad impressions upon my body, and cast me under these distempers which soon imbittered all my remaining comforts to me.

It was my earnest desire, so soon as I had strength and opportunity for so great a journey, to visit you: that so (if the Lord had pleased) I might both refresh, and be refreshed by you, after all my sad and disconsolate days; and you cannot imagine what content and pleasure I projected in that visit! But it proved to us (as all other comforts of the same kind ordinarily do) more

in expectation than fruition; for how soon after our joyful meeting and embraces, did the Lord overcast and darken our day, by sending death into your tabernacle, to take away the desire of your eyes with a stroke; to crop off that sweet and only bud, from which we promised ourselves so much comfort.

But I will not hold you longer here; I have only a few things to desire for and from you, and I have done. The things I desire are,

*First*, That you will not be too hasty to get off the yoke which God hath put upon your neck. O desire not to be delivered from your sorrow one moment before God's time for your deliverance be fully come. Let patience have its perfect work; that comfort which comes in God's way and season will stick by you, and do you good indeed.

*Secondly*, I desire, that though you and your afflictions had a sad meeting, yet you and they may have a comfortable parting. If they effect that upon your hearts which God sent them for, I doubt not but God will give them a fair testimony when they go off.

How sweet is it to hear the afflicted soul say, when God is loosing his bonds, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted!"

*Thirdly*, I heartily wish that these searching afflictions may make the most satisfying discoveries; that you may now see more of the evil of sin, the vanity of the creature, and the fulness of Christ, than ever you yet saw.

Afflictions are searchers, and put the soul upon searching and trying its way, Lam. iii. 40. When our sins find us out by affliction, happy are we, if by the light of affliction we find out sin. *Blessed is the man whom God chasteneth, and teacheth out of his law.* Psalm xciv. 12.

*Fourthly*, I wish that all the love and delight you bestowed upon your little one, may now be placed to your greater advantage upon Jesus Christ; and that the stream of your affection to him may be so much the stronger, as there are now fewer channels for it to be divided into. If God will not have any part of your happiness to lie in children, then let it wholly lie in himself.

*Fifthly*, That you may be strengthened with all might in the inner-man, to all patience; that the peace of God may keep your hearts and minds, labour to bring your hearts to a meek submission to the rod of your father. "We had fathers of the flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much more be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?" The apostle calls that excellent fruit which the saints gather from their sanctified afflictions, *The peaceable fruit of righteousness*, Heb. xii. 11.

*Lastly*, My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may die daily to all visible enjoyments, and that by these frequent converses with death in your family, you may be



prepared for your own change and dissolution, when it shall come.

O friends ! How many graves have you and I seen opened for our dear relations !

Our dear parents are gone ; our lovely and desirable children are gone ; our bosom relations, who were as our own souls, are gone. And do not all these warning knocks at our doors acquaint us, that we must prepare to follow shortly after them ?

O that by these things our own death might be both more familiar and easy to us ! The oftener it visits us, the better we should be acquainted with it ; and the more of our beloved relations it removes before us, the less of either snares or entanglements remains for us when our turn comes.

My dear friends, my flesh and my blood, I beseech you, for religion's sake, for your own sake, and for my sake, whose comfort is in great part bound up in your prosperity and welfare, that you read frequently, ponder seriously, and apply believingly, these scripture consolations and directions which, in some haste, I have gathered for your use ; and the God of all consolation be with you. I am your most endeared brother, &c.

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REV. A. FULLER TO A FRIEND,

In the prospect of losing his Son.

My dear Friend,

I FIND by a letter, that you are in con-

stant expectation of losing your son. Since the time that you and I corresponded, our circumstances, temptations, and afflictions, and almost every thing else pertaining to us, have undergone a change. We have each had a portion of parental care; and now, having passed the meridian of life, we begin to taste the cup of parental sorrow. We often talk of trials, without knowing much of what we say. That is a trial, methinks, which lays hold of us, and which we cannot shake off. If we say, "Surely I could bear any thing but this!" this shall often be the ill that we are called to bear; and this it is that constitutes it a trial. And why are afflictions called trials, but on account of their being sent to try what manner of spirit we are of? It is in these circumstances our graces appear, if we are truly gracious, and our corruptions, if we be under the dominion of sin; and too often in some degree, if we be Christians. When I have experienced heavy trials, I have sometimes thought of the case of Aaron. He had two sons, fine young men, colleagues with their father; God accepted of their offering, and the people shouted for joy; every thing looked promising—when, alas! in the midst of their glory they sinned; and there went out a fire from the Lord, and devoured them. Well might the afflicted father say as he did, *And such things have befallen me!* yet he held his peace. I say, I have sometimes thought of this case, when I have been heavily afflicted; and

have employed my mind in this manner : Such things befel Aaron the servant of the Lord, a much better man than I am : Who am I, that I should be exempted from the ills which are common to men, to good men, to the best of men ? Such things befel Aaron as have not yet befallen me. He had two children cut off together ; I have never yet lost more than one at once. His were cut off by an immediate judgment from heaven, and without any apparent space being given for repentance : thus have not mine been. Yet even *Aaron held his peace* ; and shall I murmur ? *The just shall live by faith.* God is telling us in general, that all things work together for good to them that love him ; but he has not informed us how, nor is it common under afflictions to perceive the good arising from them. It is afterwards that they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. If the Lord should remove your son, perhaps you are not without hopes of his salvation ; and if the event should cause you to feel more than you have yet felt of the perishable nature of all things under the sun, and draw your heart more towards himself and things above, where Jesus is, you may have occasion in the end to bless God for it. God knows we are strange creatures, and that we stand in need of strange measures to restrain, humble, and sanctify us. Give my love to your afflicted child, and give me leave to recommend to him, Him in whom alone he can be saved.

REV. P. HENRY TO HIS COUSINS,

On the Death of their Children.

Dear Cousins,

THIS is to you both, whom God hath made one in the conjugal relation, and who are one also in the present affliction, only to signify to you, that we do heartily sympathise with you in it. The trial is indeed sharp, and there will be need of all the wisdom and grace you have, both to bear and improve it aright; you must bear it with silence and submission. Surely it is meet to be said unto God, "I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." He is sovereign Lord of all, and may do with us and ours as pleaseth him. It is not for the clay to quarrel with the potter. It was a mercy you had children, and comfort in them so long; it is a mercy you have yet one another; and your children are not lost, but gone before—a little before, whither you yourselves are hasting after. And if a storm be coming, it is best with them that put first into the harbour. Your children are taken away from the evil to come, and you must not mourn as those that have no hope. Sensible you cannot but be, but dejected and sullen you must not be; that will put more bitterness into the cup, and make way for another, and perhaps a sharper stroke. You must not think, and I hope you do not, that there cannot be a sharper stroke, for God hath many

arrows in his quiver. For examples of patience of the like kind, we have two eminent ones in the book of God ; these are Job and Aaron. Of the latter it is said, Lev. x. 3. he " held his peace ;" and that which quieted him was what his brother Moses said to him, " This is that which the Lord hath said, I will be sanctified ;" and if God be sanctified, Aaron is satisfied ; if God have glory from it, Aaron hath nothing to say against it. Of the former it is said, Job i. 20. he fell down, but it was to worship ; and we are told how he expressed himself, " The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord." He acknowledgeth God in all ; and indeed, after all, this is it, my dear cousins that you must satisfy yourselves with under this sad providence, that the Lord hath done it ; and the same will that ordered the thing itself, ordered all the circumstances of it ; and who are we, that we should dispute with our Maker. And as for improvement of this affliction, (which I hope both of you earnestly desire, for it is a great loss to lose such a providence, and not be made better by it,) I conceive there are four lessons which it should teach you ; and they are good lessons, and should be well learned, for the advantage of them is unspeakable.

1. It should for ever imbitter sin to you. It is sin, sin, that is the old kill-friend ; then how should you grow in your hatred of it, and endeavours against it ; that you may be the death of that which hath been the death of your dear

children; I say the death of it, for nothing less will satisfy the true penitent, than the death of such a malefactor.

2. It should be a spur to you, to put you on in heaven's way. It may be you were growing remiss in duty, beginning to slack your former pace in religion; and your heavenly Father saw it, and was grieved at it, and sent this sad providence to be your monitor, to be more humble, and holy, and heavenly, and self-denied, and watchful, abounding always in the work of the Lord. O blessed are they who come out of such a furnace thus refined; they will say hereafter, it was a happy day for them that ever they were put in.

3. You must learn by it, as long as you live, to keep your affections in due bounds toward creature comforts. How hard is it to love, and not to over-love; to delight in children or yoke-fellows, and not over-delight! God is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to any other.

4. It should be a means of drawing your hearts and thoughts more upwards and homewards; I mean your everlasting home. You should be looking oftener now than before into the other world. In the midst of life we are in death; what manner of persons ought we then to be? Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, be your support under, and do you good by this dispensation, and give you a name better than that of sons and daughters. Yours with all affection, &c.

REV. J. HOWE TO A LADY,

On the Death of her Daughter.

Dear and Honoured Madam,

DID you think two or three months ago, such a trial was so near? Such sad futurities God in mercy hides from us, that we may not afflict ourselves before he afflicts us. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. But though he give us not certain predictions of such evils, lest he should troment us, he gives us fore-warnings, lest he should surprise us. He hath told us we must once die, and not *when*; that life is a vapour, that all flesh is grass; that the beauty or glory of it is but as the flower of grass—withering things. He hath asserted his own dominion over the lives and over the spirits of all flesh, as the God of them, to lodge and dislodge them when, and where, and as he pleases. And who are we, that we should grudge him that dominion, or so much as wish that we could have wrested that part of his empire out of his hand? But when he afflicts, it is good to consider what it is for. He made all things principally for himself; he made us but secondarily for one another. If his principle design in making such a creature was not to please me, his principle design in taking it away was not to displease or afflict me. He hath his own greater and higher end, in governing his own creatures, to glorify himself upon and by them in a greater world than this. Many afflictions are for trial; and that, in such cases, is an awful thought!

“ The jealous God hath me now under trial ; how can I bear ? how can I submit ? how can I behave myself towards him when he afflicts ? Whether will I venture to contend with him, or be sullen or morose towards him, because he hath bereaved me of a child I delighted in ? whether have I better loved him or my child ? The trial may be manifold of my faith, of my patience, of my fear of him, of my love to him ; and, I may add, it may be intended for a trial of gratitude, and a mighty trial that is.”—We are required in every thing to give thanks ; and Job did it, and said, Blessed be the name of the Lord, when with all his substance, he took away all his children at once ; “ the Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away,” The injunction, “ In every thing give thanks,” signifies, there is in every thing some matter of praise.— I know not so immediately what was in this case ; but if there were, as I have heard, great indications of early piety ; if there were grounds to hope there was a work of regeneration wrought, there is infinitely more matter of thanksgiving than of complaint. What had the life of a child been without this ? it were better never to have been born ! It is a far greater thing if he hath taken her as his own child, than if he had left her to you only as yours. If you have faith to look into the unseen world, and behold her taken into the society of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect, how much more hath God done



for her and you, than if he had left her to your care and provision in this wretched world ! We are told there is joy in heaven for the conversion of a sinner, much more for the glorification of a convert. That joy ought to swallow up, in very great part, your sorrow. The good Lord frame your spirit suitably to these things ; in whom I am, your truly respectful servant, &c.

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TWO LETTERS FROM MISS HILL TO LADY  
GLENORCHY.

The sure way to conquer Death.

*July, 1765.*

You say you wish to overcome the fear of death. In order to this, I would advise you to examine whether you are really building upon the only sure foundation of hope ; and what that hope is, the apostle expressly declares in the following words : “ Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ ” Try then, whether, as lost and undone in yourself—deeply sensible of the natural apostasy of your heart from God—weary and heavy laden with the burden of sin—and renouncing all hope and help in your own righteousness, repentance, resolutions, &c.—try if you really rest upon Christ as your only Saviour, relying solely upon his blood applied by the Spirit to pardon you, his righteousness imputed to justify you, and his grace to be given to sanctify you.

It is this Jesus, my dear friend, who has conquered the only enemies we had to fear ;

he has disarmed death of his sting—looking to him we may overcome all fear of its approach, for when he is our friend, death is no other than an advantage; if he is our life, we shall surely find death our gain. The following questions I have found useful to myself: if we are able to give a comfortable answer to them, death cannot be to us a king of terrors, but a messenger of peace. Have earthly or heavenly things the chief place in our thoughts and affections? Do we prize that great salvation which the gospel offers to sinners, beyond every thing else in the world? Are we crucified to the world, and the world to us? Are we dead to its pleasures, riches, honours, and esteem? Does the humble temper of the meek and lowly Jesus reign in us? Is his service our delight; is sin our burden? Are we hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Are we taking up our cross daily, denying ourselves, and following Christ? Are we working out our own salvation with fear and trembling? Are we giving diligence to make our calling and election sure? Blessed indeed is the person who can say, *I find this to be my case.*

#### SECOND LETTER.

The Christian's Privileges under trials.

*August 30, 1765.*

IT gives me great concern to hear of your bad state of health. May that God, in whose hands you are, command a blessing on the means used for your recovery! or, if it should be

his will that this sickness be a sickness unto death, may you, as you see the outward man decaying, see the inward man renewed day by day! The Lord has merciful intentions even in his most bitter dispensations. Whom he loveth he chasteneth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. May you, my dear friend, be enabled to see *love* in his rod, as well as *justice* in his dealings; and may the bitter cup which he has given you to drink be so mixed with sweet ingredients, that you may look forward with comfortable assurance that all shall work together for good! It is the Lord, he cannot mistake your interest.

Christ is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever, and may be safely trusted. All he has done—all he has suffered—all he is now doing, is in behalf of the believer; and therefore although we walk in darkness, and see no light, though we even walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet may we trust in the name of the Lord, and stay ourselves upon our God. His people may seem to suffer the same things as others do, but he wonderfully supports them, sanctifies their sufferings, and changes their very nature, so that they come from love, and taste of love. All their crosses are marked with love. In the hour of affliction his language is, "I will be with thee in trouble." When conflicting with the great enemy, listen to his declaration, "Stand still and see the salvation of God." When visited with sickness, hearken to his

promise, "I will make thy bed in thy sickness." When oppressed with poverty, his cheering voice proclaims, "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich." When ready to faint under losses and bereavements, this is his language, "I am thy shield and great reward." Even at the approach of death, the voice from the excellent glory declares, "He that believeth in me shall never die." And to complete the bliss, even when standing at the judgment-seat, the divine Redeemer says to all his believing people, "Lift up your heads with joy, for now your redemption draweth nigh."

The two preceding letters, (both much abridged) and also the one inserted page 88, are extracted from the "*Life of Viscountess Glenorchy*," by Dr Jones;—a most valuable work lately published.

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REV. R. WINTER TO A FRIEND,  
On the Death of his Daughter.

*London, Mar. 7, 1782.*

WITH sincerity of heart I thank my dear friend and brother for his letter, which breathes sympathy and friendship upon the bereaving, mournful event.

It was a true report which you heard of the gracious dealings of God with my daughter Addington in her lingering illness. When she had the sentence of death in herself, and was given over by others, instead of being terrified, it was a pleasure to her. Permit me to repeat some of her dying expressions :

"It must be free grace indeed that saves such a sinner as I am, for I have been, and am

a very great sinner. What the saints enjoy in heaven, I know not, but soon I shall." One morning, upon being asked what night she had? she said, "A terrible one to my body, —nothing but cold sweat, pain, and languishing; but if it pleased God to continue such consolation, and to smile upon me as he did last night, these pains would be easy to bear. Dying work is hard work indeed to nature. O the pain, the bliss of dying! It was a sight of glory I was favoured with, and the hope I shall be very soon there. I am extremely ill, and almost at home." At another time: "I hoped to have begun an everlasting Sabbath to-day; but if it be to glorify God, I hope I am willing to linger a little longer, though it be but now and then to say a word for him. The sting of death is quite taken away; the thought of returning back to the world makes me shrink, though it were to enjoy health, friends, and every blessing I ever possessed."

She told one who came to take a last farewell, that "the ground of her peace was not what she felt, but the unchangeable faithfulness of God." Speaking of the sufferings of Christ, she said, "My sins greatly added to the weight which he sustained; they would have crushed me for ever, if he had not borne them for me." At a time when she was convulsed, she said, "Welcome, convulsion fits, or any thing else which the Lord is pleased to send. I know I shall be as happy as I have a capacity to be. I am dying, but cannot die.

Come, Lord Jesus, I want to be gone. There is sin in every thing I say or do; but, oh! what a mercy that there is a righteousness for sinners! Christ is precious, he is very precious. When he was dying, he cried, ‘ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!’ that I might now feel his presence! Call in every one in the house, that they may hear how precious Christ is in a dying hour.” When they were come to her bed-side, she earnestly desired each one to beware of sin, and exhorted them to make sure of an interest in Christ, &c. and then she said, “ This is the happiest hour I ever felt; it is transporting. Blessed be God, I can see Jesus. Satan has nothing at all to do with me now; and if he should assault me, I know that I shall come off more than a conqueror. What happy, happy work is dying! O glorious hour! O blessed abode! I shall be near and like my God,” &c. At length she expired, calling on the Lord, as her God, to receive her,—“ My God, take me!”

Through the whole of her illness, her mind was preserved from the least roving; and the nearer she approached to death, the greater was her heavenly mindedness. I preached on the occasion from 1 Cor. xv. 57. Blessed be God for giving me such a child; and I hope I can say, now that he has taken her away, “ Blessed be the name of the Lord!”

It gives me pleasure to hear that the interest of Christ is on the revival in your parts. I join with you in thanksgiving for your fa-

mily-mercy. Beware of substituting the creature in the room of God. Your affectionate humble servant and brother, &c.

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REV. DR OWEN TO LADY HARTOP,

On the Death of her Infant Daughter.

Dear Madam,

EVERY work of God is good ; the Holy One in the midst of us will do no iniquity, and all things shall work together for good unto them that love him, even those things which are not joyous but grievous ; only his time is to be waited for, and his way submitted unto, that we seem not to be displeased in our hearts, that he is Lord over us. Your dear infant is in the eternal enjoyment of all our prayers, for the covenant of God is ordered in all things, and sure. We shall go to her, she will not return to us. Happy she was in this above us, that she had so speedy an issue of sin and misery, being born only to exercise your faith and patience, and to glorify God's grace in her eternal blessedness. My trouble would be great on the account of my absence at this time from you both ; but this is also the Lord's doing, and I know my own selfishness wherever I am. But this I will beg of God for you both, that you may not faint in this day of trial ; that you may have a clear view of those temporal and spiritual mercies wherc-

with you are yet intrusted, all undeserved, that the sorrow of the world may not so overtake your hearts, as to disenable to any duties, to grieve the Spirit, for it tends to death. God in Christ will be better to you than ten children, and will so preserve your remnant, and so add to them, as shall be for his glory and your comfort; only consider, that sorrow in this case is no duty, it is an effect of sin, whose cure by grace we should endeavour. Shall I say, be cheerful? I know I may. God help you to honour, grace, and mercy, in a compliance therewith. My heart is with you, my prayers shall be for you; and I am, dear madam, your affectionate friend and unworthy pastor, &c.

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MR STEVENSON TO THE REV. MR ADAM,

On the Death of his Children.

Reverend and dear Sir, *Barbeth.*

I REMEMBER I was a stranger in the land of Egypt, and know something of the heart of a stranger. I therefore humbly desire to cast in my mite of Christian sympathy with you and your kind spouse, under that afflicting dispensation, the death of your dear children. You will grant, I have drunk deeper in that cup than you have yet done, having only, of seven pleasant, healthful, and hopeful children, one little girl left; having laid in the grave



three sons and three daughters, all of an endearing age, four of them between fifteen and twenty years. These lately pleasant bodies say to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, my sister and brother. With them we have buried a great part of our worldly comforts, hopes, and projects. Oh ! what a dark veil doth death and the grave cast on all human glory ! It cannot descend after them into the dust.

We return from the grave to our house. There perhaps we find Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are not. Here an empty coat, there an empty bed. We sit down at our table. The olive plants are amissing. The wind hath passed over the flowers, and they are gone. These beautiful lambs that used to play through our houses and fields, and sweetly diverted us with their familiar conversation, and loving embraces, we see no more.

But we are called, not to sorrow as those who have no hope. To the true Israelite within the bond of God's covenant, a bright side of the cloud appears, and he may justly rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Let us enter into our closet, the proper place for giving vent to our lawful passions, and where I have experienced the greatest relief ; there, having offered the sacrifice of moderate sorrow and contrition, especially for sin which brought death into the world, let us, upon the wing of faith, see with faith's eye, the blessedness of

the dead in Christ, rejoice in their joy, and triumph with God's inheritance. Let us view our dead relations and children, concerning whom we hope, in the good-will of God to men, that they were chosen of the Father, redeemed by the Son, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Let us view these olive plants, transplanted from the stormy barren soil of this world, into the heavenly paradise, and flourishing in the courts of the New Jerusalem. Let us view the pleasant lambs eating the fruit of the tree of life, and drinking the waters of the river that flows from beneath the throne of God and of the Lamb. Let us view them in the bosom of the good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep, and carries the lambs in his bosom. Let us view not only their angels who ministered to them here on earth, and carried their souls to glory ; but even themselves beholding the face of their heavenly Father, admiring and worshipping Him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb, for ever and ever. Let us view their bodies spiritual, immortal, incorruptible, made like to Christ's glorious body, joyfully united to their souls, now satisfied with the likeness, and with the full enjoyment of God. If many descriptions of the heavenly glory are metaphorical, in this the condescension of God appears : for how otherwise could we conceive of these things in our present state and capacity? But that glory infinitely exceeds all metaphors, and is a glory yet to be revealed.

May the chief Comforter come unto you, and abide with you! May he bring meat out of this eater, and sweet out of this strong trial!

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WM. COWPER, ESQ. TO HIS COUSIN,

On the Death of her Husband.

My dear Cousin, *Olney, Aug. 1769.*

A LETTER from your brother Frederick brought me yesterday the most afflicting intelligence that has reached me these many years. I pray to God to comfort you, and to enable you to sustain this heavy stroke with that resignation to his will, which none but himself can give, and which he gives to none but his own children. How blessed and happy is your lot, my dear friend, beyond the common lot of the greater part of mankind; that you know what it is to draw near to God in prayer, and are acquainted with a throne of grace! You have resources in the infinite love of a dear Redeemer, which are withheld from millions; and the promises of God, which are yea and amen in Jesus, are sufficient to answer all your necessities, and to sweeten the bitterest cup which your heavenly Father will ever put into your hand. May he now give you liberty to drink at these wells of salvation, till you are filled with consolation and peace, in the midst of trouble. He has said, "When thou

passest through the fire, I will be with thee; and when through the floods, they shall not overflow thee." You have need of such a word as this, and he knows your need of it; and the time of necessity is the time, when he will be sure to appear in behalf of those who trust in him. I bear you and yours in my heart before him, night and day, for I never expect to hear of distress, which shall call upon me with a louder voice to pray for the sufferer. I know the Lord hears me for myself, vile and sinful as I am, and believe, and am sure, that he will hear me for you also. He is the friend of the widow, and the father of the fatherless, even God in his holy habitation; in all our afflictions he is afflicted, and chastens us in mercy. Surely he will sanctify this dispensation to you; do you great and everlasting good by it; make the world appear like dust and vanity in your sight, as it truly is, and open to your view the glories of a better country, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor pain; but God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes for ever. Oh, that comfortable word! "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction:" so that our very sorrows are evidences of our calling, and he chastens us because we are his children.

My dear cousin, I commit you to the word of his grace, and to the comforts of his holy Spirit. Your life is needful for your family; may God, in mercy to them, prolong it, and may he preserve you from the dangerous

effects which a stroke like this might have upon a frame so tender as yours. I grieve with you, I pray for you ; could I do more, I would ; but God must comfort you. Yours, in our dear Lord Jesus, &c.

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MRS BURR, DAUGHTER OF PRESIDENT EDWARDS, TO HER MOTHER,  
On the Death of her Husband.

No doubt, dear madam, it will be some comfort to you to hear, that God has not utterly forsaken, although he has cast down. I would speak it to the glory of God's name, that he has in an uncommon degree discovered himself to be an all-sufficient God, a full fountain of all good. Although all streams were cut off, yet the fountain is left full. I think I have been enabled to cast my care upon him, and I have found great peace and calm in my mind, such as this world cannot give nor take away.

I have had uncommon freedom and nearness to the throne of grace. God seemed sensibly near, in such a supporting and comforting manner, that I think I have never experienced the like. God has helped me to review my past and present mercies, with some heart-affecting degree of thankfulness. I think God has given me such a sense of the vanity of the world, and uncertainty of all sublunary enjoyments, as I never had before

The world vanishes out of my sight. Heavenly and eternal things appear much more real and important than ever before. I feel myself to be under much greater obligations to be the Lord's than before this sore affliction. The way of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus has appeared more clear and excellent; and I have been constrained to venture my all upon him, and have found great peace of soul in what I hope have been actings of faith. Some parts of the Psalms have been very comforting and refreshing to my soul. I hope God has helped me to eye his hand in this awful dispensation, and to see the infinite right he has to his own, and to dispose of them as he pleases.—Thus, dear madam, I have given you some broken hints of the exercises and supports of my mind, since the death of him whose memory and example will ever be precious to me as my own life. Oh, dear madam, I doubt not but I have your and my honoured father's prayers daily for me; but give me leave to entreat you both, to request earnestly of the Lord, that I may never despise his chastenings, nor faint under this his severe stroke, which I am sensible there is great danger of, if God should only deny me the supports that he has hitherto graciously granted.

I must conclude with once more begging, that as my dear parents remember themselves, they would not forget their greatly afflicted daughter, (now a lonely widow,) nor her fa-

therless children. My duty to my ever dear and honoured parents, love to my brothers and sisters, from your dutiful and affectionate daughter, &c.

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LETTER TO MRS. G——

On the Death of her Husband.

My Dear Madam,

*Feb.* 1801.

THE news of Mr G——'s departure to his Father's house, deeply affected the friends of Jesus here. We were not prepared for receiving such intelligence; for we knew not that he had been sick, till we heard he was removed to the land of rest. We could not weep for him, but for your loss and ours. We are left behind in a land of sin, sorrow, and suffering, while Jesus has for ever separated him from all these, and put songs of inexpressible joy into his lips. However, even when you reflect upon the glory and bliss into which he has entered; even when you consider the gain he has got, by the exchange of worlds, I know you will sigh in consequence of the loss you have sustained. You cannot but feel his absence; but I know One, and you know him, who is able to compensate for the loss of ten thousand husbands. Yes! you reply; had I the constant persuasion of his love, and enjoyment of his presence; could I unreservedly and entirely cast myself and

my children on his care ; could I constantly mount up to his Majesty on the wings of faith and love, I should be perfectly happy, I should kiss even *this* rod, and bless my Jesus as the appointer of it. My dear madam, that same Jesus who gave you this knowledge, and created such desires within you, can, and will satisfy them, if you only trust in him. He has no pleasure in our pain, but rejoices to do us good.

Your friend is not removed so far from you as your feelings may suggest. He is at the very side of the Saviour ; and the Saviour is at your right and your left hand. Perhaps part of his happiness in heaven, for a fews years to come, may arise from beholding the Lamb, answering the prayers he put up for you and yours, while residing on the footstool. O the amazing graciousness of my Lord to me ! (says he.) There he is dispatching a ministering spirit to put it into the hearts of some of his servants on earth, to sympathize with my family I left behind ; and there is the mansion the Lord has prepared for my partner in life, who for a time must remain in yonder world. Did she know the attention which the Lord of all pays to her, did she know the glory into which she is soon to enter, with what transports would she take down her harp from the willow, and sing to the honour and glory of the great Redeemer ! Let us suppose, that by this time the ministering spirit has re-



turned from the world, and is heard relating the accomplishment of his mission. On seeing this, your friend raises fresh hosannahs to the Son of David.

These ideas are not altogether fanciful ; I think they are not inconsistent with the revelation of God. Were it not for the Bible, they never could have existed in my mind ; and should your meditation run in this, or similar strains, the Lord will not rebuke you, but you shall thereby be more disposed to glorify him in this trouble. The cattle upon countless hills are his ; and what worldly good is good for you, that he can and will give. Only try him, by trusting him, and as sure as you breathe he will bless you, and be a husband to you, and a father to your little ones. Millions of widows, now in the mansions above, could mention multitudes of marvellous works, which Jesus wrought for them in the days of their widowhood. These are gems in the crown of Jesus. A few more of these hours or years, and all of us shall be joined to our fathers ; our dust shall be mingled with those of a thousand generations. May we delight to do, or suffer his will, while we tabernacle here below, remembering that to be present in the body, is comparatively to be absent from the Lord.

I commend you to God and the word of his grace. May we be followers of them, who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises. I am yours truly, &c.

REV. J. BROWN TO A LADY,

On the Death of her Husband.

Madam,

LITTLE did I expect to have received the news of the death of my long esteemed friend, and your long-beloved husband, as the answer to my line; but the Lord knows, that our thoughts are but vain; it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. Behold, madam, the vanity of creatures! they leave us when we have most need of their help. Now the created staff of your family and old age, has, by death, like a broken reed, run into your hand, and pierced your heart with many sorrows. But you need not sorrow as those who have no hope. Your loss is his gain. The ransomed of the Lord has gone up to Zion with songs, has obtained joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing have fled away. Why should you, for a short-lived and selfish comfort, grudge his being for ever with the Lord? His closet-wrestlings, prayers, and tears, are now exchanged for the high praises of his God. Now for him is come salvation and strength, the kingdom of his Lord, and of his Christ. Now your partner of life and children, like mine, cry from the grave, Make haste, and come away. Be a follower of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. Now you are passing through fire and water; make sure it be to the wealthy

place. Thus, though floods of water may swell to the brim, yet they shall not overwhelm your soul, nor once come near you; and you, as the daughter of the King, shall enter the palace above, with gladness great, and mirth on every side. Who knows, but in this very year of death, you and Mr — may meet, not as husband and wife, but as redeemed members of Christ. Thrice joyful meeting! You never came into such deep waters of trouble as now; but remember, many of the sweetest promises suit us only as in trouble, such as Psal. xci. 15. and cii. 17, 20.; Isa. xli. 10—18.; and xliii. 2.; xlvi. 4.; Deut. x. 18.; Job v. 17—19.; Psal. lxxviii. 5. and cxlvi. 7—9.; Jer. xlix. 11.; Phil. iv. 19.; Heb. xii. 5, 6.; 2 Cor. iv. 17. Be it your care, therefore, to be a *widow indeed*, that trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications night and day. 1 Tim. v. 5. You have no longer Mr — to talk with, to whom you may impart your griefs, burdens, and cares; but Jesus saith, “Let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance;” let all your wants be on him. “Cast your burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he will give grace and glory. It is but a little, little while, and he that cometh will come, and will not tarry.” May he powerfully say to your soul, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.”—May heaven’s richest blessings be on you and your offspring. With kind respects, and sympathy, I am yours, &c.

## MISS HILL TO LADY GLENORCHY.

A Covenant God a refuge in trouble.

MY dearest friend,—You should not be alone, if I could be with you, nor suffer one pain if I could relieve you, or bear them for you. But what am I saying? It is good for you that you have been afflicted; such trials spring not from the dust, but are the appointments of an all-wise God, who intends them for your benefit. It is God, my dear friend, your unchangeable covenant God, who loves you with an everlasting love, who thus visits you. O how completely miserable must they be under outward crosses and trials, who have not a God to fly to in time of trouble, and a certain hope that he will be their guide and counsellor in every time of need! Blessed be his holy name who has given you experimentally to know, that each stroke with which you have been chastised was sent by a loving father's hand. No words can express what I feel of love and gratitude to him who has made you a partaker of the divine nature, and who with his abundant love drew you with his loving kindness out of the horrible pit of your sinful corrupt nature, and made you an heir of glory, washed you in his own precious blood, stripped you of your own worthless garments, and put on you his own best robe, his spotless righteousness, calling you his own, and uniting you to himself by the most indissoluble bonds! O what mercies are these! Join with me in praising God for the boundless ocean of his love!

What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits? All we can do, the sacrifice of our whole selves, is too little; yet Jesus will accept the mite, the free-will offering, however poor and mean. O let us from this moment begin to live to Jesus, our Friend, our Shepherd, Advocate, Surety, Saviour, Father, and our God; let us with all our might, with all our strength, begin to live to Jesus, that we may die to Jesus, and be for ever with him! Upon what a firm basis are the hopes of every believer built! Not a sudden thought, not a hasty decree, but the everlasting love of the great Almighty Jehovah, who so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son to die, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life. Can we fear he will ever leave or forsake his people, when he has declared he never will? Can we suspect he will suffer them to fall a miserable helpless prey to their enemies? No; so long as he sits in heaven, they must be safe and happy.

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REV. W. B. CADOGAN TO ALEX. MURRAY. ESQ.

On the Death of his Wife.

My dear Sir, *Reading, Dec. 17, 1789.*

THE post of this day conveyed to me your melancholy and pleasing letter:—melancholy, as it brought the account of a loss, which must and ought to be severely felt;—but pleasing, as it represents the state of your own soul to be such as must infallibly turn every loss into gain. Faith working by love is the true phi-

osopher's stone, which turns every thing into gold: as the gift and operation of God, it is itself pure sterling gold, the value and virtue of which are known, when it is tried in the fire.

It is then found to be much more precious than gold which perisheth, and it will be brought out to the praise, and honour, and glory of him that gave it, at the appearing of its author and finisher Jesus Christ.

This world is a world of trial to all; one Lord presides in it, who knoweth how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished, and deliver the godly out of temptations to be glorified for evermore. How different are their characters, pursuits, and ends! How happy, my dear sir, are you whom God hath taught the truth which is after godliness! the truth, as it is in Jesus, which makes us free from sin and death. This is the great antidote to the poison of him, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning; as a lie separated us from God, so its opposite, the truth, brings us to him. The faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation is, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;" and they who can trust God for this, may trust him for all things; they may trust him for love unchangeable and everlasting; and that love is the secret spring of all his dispensations towards them. Nay, it is not always the secret spring, for his presence with them in trouble often lays it open to their view. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and when thou goest through the fire,

thou shalt not be burnt ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." When the three captive Jews were cast bound into the burning fiery furnace, what a sight presented itself to the tyrant who had put them there ! " Lo ! I see four men walking loose in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." The consequence was, that when they came out, not a hair of their head was singed, nor had the smell of fire passed upon them.

The same Son of God has promised to you and me, " Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He hath no where said, in the world ye shall not have tribulation ; but he hath said directly the contrary, and his name is " Emanuel, God with us" in all. He hath engaged, as a refiner's fire, to purge away all our dross, and to take away all our sin, and to give us his own righteousness, salvation, nature, &c. upon which the smell of fire cannot pass, nor any changes, or losses, or crosses, make the least alteration. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us ; and " I am persuaded that neither height, nor depth, nor life, nor death, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Here are the wells of salvation, and with such sources open to us, with faith to have constant recourse to them, we need not doubt but that where our afflictions abound, our consolations shall abound also, and that infinitely and infinitely more.—W. B. CADOGAN.

REV. W. B. CADOGAN TO JOHN MEECH, ESQ.

On the Death of his Wife.

My Dear Sir, *Reading, Feb. 9, 1795.*

I NEED not tell you how sincerely Mrs C. and I sympathize with you. Your loss is great, and so is ours; but "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;" and though it be hard for flesh and blood, it is easy for faith to say, "It is the Lord, and blessed be his name." It is the Lord, my dear sir, who hath done this, not against you, but for you, in loving-kindness and in tender mercy; not for his pleasure, but for your profit, that you may be partaker of his holiness. I pray, therefore, that his Spirit may be your comforter, that he may take of the things of Jesus, and show them unto you; and help you with them to improve this visitation to his glory, and to your good. Writing to a Christian friend, I can preach to you, not only patience and resignation, but peace and joy; not a forced submission to what you could not avoid. For who is there that knows what is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him, and does not wish to be perfect and complete in it all? Is it his will concerning us, that seeing his Son, and believing on him, we should not perish, but have everlasting life? This is love from everlasting to everlasting. Is it the severest trial of our faith? It is part of the same will. Is it a death-blow to our earthly comforts? It is



part of the same will, with a view to the sanctification of our persons, as of vessels of mercy made to honour. Is it any thing that forbids us to lay up treasures upon earth? It is that which commands us to lay up treasures in heaven, and to have our hearts surely fixed, where true joys are to be found.

I know that it is easier to preach than to practise; but I know of One who is almighty to save, support, and keep you. May this eternal God be your refuge, and put underneath you his everlasting arms! May he guide you with his counsel, and afterwards receive you to glory! May he teach you to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!" Then flesh and heart may fail, but God is the rock of our heart, and our portion for ever.

Pray, say every thing kind from Mrs C. and me, to Mr and Miss W. and accept yourself the best wishes and prayers of, &c.

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REV. T. BOSTON TO MR W. HOG,

On the Death of his Wife,

Dear Sir,

*Etterick, Nov. 21, 1730.*

I HAD yours, with the melancholy news I was fearing, and wish I could bear a part of your burden, which I doubt not presseth sore. It will be your wisdom to consider it as the work of God, your God in Christ; being per-

suaded, that according to the measure of that persuasion, so will the Christian carriage under the rod be. Oh, what kind of hearts do they imagine themselves to have, that can think to employ them for one moment on the creature, further than they can fill them with a God in Christ in its room and stead? By any experience I have had, I judge the heart of man to be such a hungry craving thing, that it will part with nothing, but for what it takes to be as good, or better, than what it gives up with: so that the gospel-offer embraced by faith, and the benefit of it claimed, must of necessity be the most sovereign remedy against the heart's hankering after the withdrawn comforts of the creature. Afflictions, even the severest, are appointed means of sanctification, which, I am persuaded, is as great a mystery as our justification. The promoting the growth of the new creature requires the bearing down and subduing the old man; and to this effect, even short and long trials, all have enough ado. As to the situation of your outward affairs, your present circumstances put you in much need of direction from the Lord, as you remark. But, dear sir, is it not a great privilege to be allowed to come to the great Counsellor in all our straits? And you may go to him with your greater and smaller matters; for all is comprehended in the word. Prov. iii. 6. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path;" both the precept and pro-

mise take in all. I speak the more confidently of this, that sometimes I have seen, in such circumstances, I could not have known where to have fixed my feet, had not the doctrine of grace pointed out to me a sure ground.—I am, dear sir, yours very affectionately, &c.

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REV. MR MUIR TO MISS N——,

On the Death of her Father.

Madam, *Cumnock, Dec. 1758.*

YOUR present trial arises from what is the true commencement of your father's triumph and perfection. Taking the dispensation in this point of light, to grieve and to sin would be the same; for, if we rejoice at the conversion of sinners, why be sorrowful at the glorification of saints?

Yet I am aware, that your loss, abstractly considered, is a source of distress. It would be impiety to feel no sorrow; and an attempt to reason you out of it, would be fruitless and foolish. Far from endeavouring this, I would rather mingle my tears with yours. However culpable the after conduct of Job's friends, I have often admired the propriety of their first interview with him. Instead of beginning with arguments of a comforting nature, like men of tender feelings, and who wished to bear their friend's burden, they lift up their voice and wept, and none spoke a word to him, for

they saw his grief was very great. Grief hath a period wherein silence is the truest sympathy.—Yet constitutional difference may render different applications needful for the same disease ; and grounds of encouragement simply suggested, may have some influence, even in such circumstances.

Need I suggest, as (where suitably improved) the infallible specific in all such cases, that the Lord liveth? Whatever comforts we enjoy, are they not all derived from, and dispensed and continued by him? What though particular effects be removed? The glorious cause remains ; and remains as willing to help, ready to uphold, and capable of administering to our needs as ever. It is the Lord who renders comforts comforting to us ; and if He makes the breasts of the creature in our view run dry, can He not open other sources, even of creature-consolation? Yes, though he should open them in rocks, whence they may be least expected.—Or can he not, by such dispensations, wean the soul from creatures, and make the whole desire terminate in himself ; in whom is all we can need, all we can wish, all we can enjoy? Having Him, we have all : without him, the creation itself, (the things in it we most esteem not excepted,) would be a poor, a puny, a miserable all. Does He live? What then of the Christian's hope and comfort can die? What deduction can take place from their happiness and portion? Nay, madam, the very death of creature-comforts is an evi-

dence that the Lord liveth, and a consequence of it. As the tender-hearted parent of his ransomed family, he weighs all their pains and all their pleasure in an even balance, without permitting the one or the other to exceed the precise degrees, which, to infinite wisdom, sovereign goodness, everlasting love, seem best for each of them. In the execution of his fatherly plan, particular members of his family may feel present anxiety and tribulation: yet, the consideration of his hand in it, and that he liveth, should have a sweetly-silencing influence, making us, with Aaron, hold our peace, or, with Eli, say, "It is the Lord,—let him do what he pleaseth."—I am sensible these things are sooner said than done. But the Lord liveth, the source of covenant-grace, for directing and enabling to such exercise all the weary travellers of hope.

The crowning ingredient in this cup of Christian consolation, is the blessed assurance, "And because I live, ye shall live also." So said our dear Emanuel; and as sure as he said it, he will perform unto all his servants that word of grace, on which he now causes them to hope. Many circumstances in the Christian's lot wear at present a death-like aspect, and blessings come under such disguise, that the love of a Father, the grace of a Saviour, and the accomplishment of the promise, are not discovered in them. But because the Lord liveth, these very circumstances, death-like as they are, shall contribute towards their

spiritual life, and to each of them singly, issue in life eternal. Then the former things will be done away, and the immediate visions of Jesus shall banish every feeling of pain from any remembrance of former sorrow. Then all the children of the kingdom shall meet, and shall live with their living Lord, no more to part from, or to pain one another to eternity. O life truly divine! How happy the people! how happy the person who is in such a case! how happy they whose God is the Lord! May your father's God be your God for ever, and your guide even unto death!

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DR. DODDRIDGE TO A LADY,

On the Death of her Brother.

1724.

My heart is so full of the thought of your brother's death, that I know not how to command my pen on any other subject. Believe me, madam, I see that heavy affliction in many of its most aggravated circumstances. But need I mention them to you, who have no doubt a much tenderer sense of them? Or need I mention those common consolations which Christianity affords us under all our calamities, or those which the circumstances of the case before us do most peculiarly admit? I know you have already given them their weight, and are well furnished with consolations upon

this head ; having been obliged by such afflictions frequently to have recourse to them.

No doubt, you have often been thinking, that, as we are Christians, we are not to be so much concerned about the different kinds of providential dispensations we are now exercised with, whether of a prosperous or a calamitous nature, as about the correspondency of our behaviour to them. The law of Christianity, not to say of nature itself, requires, that we should not only be silent and composed, but cheerful and thankful under our afflictions. This indeed is what the generality of Christians are wanting in ; but that is no proof that it is an irrational or impossible demand, but rather a sublime attainment in religion. It is evident, that nothing can be more grateful to God, and edifying to the world, than to see that a Christian, under the heavy pressure of calamity, can not only restrain the excess of sorrow, but can mingle praises with his tears, and love and rejoice in his heavenly Father, even when he feels the smart of his correcting rod. Let me suggest a few hints upon this head.—

God hath seen fit to take away your brother : and is not this a proper season to be thankful that you so long enjoyed him ? No doubt, you have been thinking of his character in the most advantageous particulars of it ; and perhaps have considered it as a great aggravation of your affliction, that you have lost so excellent a brother. Do you not reflect,

that the more excellent he was, the more surprising was the goodness of God in bestowing him upon you, and continuing him so long with you? When you say, it may be with tears in your eyes, how few are there in the world that could have sustained such a loss! what is it but to say in other words, how few are there in the world on whom God ever bestowed so valuable a friend as he gave to me? Let common sense judge, whether that be matter of complaint or praise.

You should be thankful to God, that for so many years you had a constant share in his prayers. No doubt but his prayers are still in remembrance before God; and as he most frequently asked these blessings for you, which are of the most excellent and permanent nature, much of the good effect of these addresses may be still behind. You know not how many refreshing visits of his grace, how many favourable interpositions of his providence, how high a degree of holiness in this world, and of usefulness in the next, God may now be preparing to bestow upon you, in answer to the prayers of this excellent man.

Once more: Let the Providence of God in removing your brother be improved to a more thankful sense of his goodness in continuing your surviving brother, whose lot is cast so much nearer to you. If you take the matter in this view, it will bring your passions to a balance.

You see, madam, you have cause of thank-



fulness, though your brother be dead ; and that many of the considerations with which you feed your sorrows, are capable of being made subservient to the nobler exercises of gratitude and love. But what if I should advance still farther, and say, that the death of your brother should not only allow you to be thankful for your other mercies, but that itself should be made the matter of praise ? I think I should say no more than the Apostle hath said, when he exhorts us “ in every thing to give thanks.” Nay, I should say no more than, I am confident, your deliberate reason must subscribe to.

Are you not the servant of God, and have you not yielded yourself to him ? When you daily consecrate yourself to God, you give up every separate interest of your own ; and resolve all into this one great petition, that his name may be glorified, particularly in all you are, and all you have. Now, do you imagine, that God would have removed so eminent a saint, so useful a minister, and afflicted a numerous and religious family, as well as a multitude of sympathizing friends, if he had not known that it was for his glory ? When you have been saying, as you have daily said, “ Father, thy will be done ;” were you not then praying for the loss of your dearest comforts, even for the death of your brother, and of every other friend you have, upon supposition that it were the will of God ? You certainly were ; unless you meant to say, Let thy will be done, so far

as it is agreeable to my own. Now I leave you to judge, whether the answer of prayer be the matter of complaint or of praise.

I may add, that there are certain views, both with relation to him and yourself, which will further evince your obligations to thankfulness. With regard to your brother, you easily apprehend a foundation for thankfulness, though perhaps you have not considered his present happiness in that particular view. You believe, with the greatest reason, that death was inconceivably advantageous to him, and that, now he is absent in the body, he is present with the Lord. Now, with all your tender friendship, can you question whether it be your part to rejoice with him in that glory and felicity which he now enjoys? Or, can you imagine, that you are to be so much concerned that he is not with you, as to forget to rejoice that he is with God? Was it more for you to lose a brother, than for the Apostles to part with Christ himself? And yet he says the very same thing which shocked you so much a few lines above; "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father."

You must now give me leave to add, that you have reason to be thankful for this dispensation of Providence, not only from a principle of zeal for God, and friendship for your brother, but from a regard to your own personal interest. The Gospel teacheth its sincere professors to regard every providence as a mercy when it tells them, that "all things shall work

together for good to them that love God ;” And therefore, though you could not see mercy in this particular stroke, religion would nevertheless require you to believe and acknowledge it. But cannot you yourself perceive some mercy in it? Has it not, as you are pleased to intimate in your letter, an apparent tendency to wean your affections from this world, and to raise them to the heavenly felicity? Do you not find the thoughts of death more tolerable, more delightful to you, since God has removed so powerful an attractive, and translated it to heaven? Now, if an indifference to this world, and a most affectionate desire of a happy immortality, be an important branch of the Christian temper ; if the scriptures are so frequently inculcating it upon us, and we so continually praying for the increase, and lamenting the deficiency of it, how reasonable is it that we should be thankful for those providences which of all others, have the greatest tendency to promote it?

I write these things, madam, not with the coldness of a stranger, but with the tender sympathy of a friend ; and with so much the greater sympathy, as, since I began this letter, I have lost a very agreeable and valuable person out of my congregation, with some circumstances which render the stroke peculiarly surprising and afflicting.

May God teach us so to bear and improve all our afflictions, both in ourselves and our friends, that we may have reason to reflect

upon them as the most valuable mercies of our lives; and that they may fit us for that happy world, where we shall be above the need, and then, undoubtedly, above the reach of them!

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REV. DR. OWEN TO MRS POLHILL,

On the Death of a Pious Relative.

Dear Madam,

THE trouble expressed in yours is a great addition to mine. The sovereignty of divine wisdom and grace is all that I have at this day to retreat unto; God direct you thereunto also, and you will find rest and peace. It adds to my trouble that I cannot possibly come down to you this week; nothing but engaged duty could keep me from you one hour; yet I am conscious how little I can contribute to your guidance in this storm, or your satisfaction. Christ is your pilot; and however the vessel is tossed while he seems to sleep, he will arise and rebuke these winds and waves in his own time. I have done it, and yet shall further wrestle with God for you, according to the strength he is pleased to communicate. Little it is which at this distance I can remind you of, yet some few things are necessary. Sorrow not too much for the dead: she is entered into rest; taken away from the evil to come. I dare not say this chastise-

ment was not needful. We are not in heaviness, unless need be ; but if God be pleased to give you a discovery of the wisdom and care that is in it, and how needful it was to awaken and restore your soul in any thing, perhaps in many things, in due time you will see grace and love in it also. I verily believe God expects, in thus dealing with you, that you should judge yourself, your sins, and your decays ; but he would not have you misjudge your condition. But we are like froward children, who, when they are rebuked and corrected, neglect other things, and only cry that their parents hate and reject them. You are apt to fear, to think, and say, that you are one whom the Lord regards not, who are none of his, and that for sundry reasons which you suppose you can plead. But, saith God, this is not the business, this is a part of your frowardness. I call you to quicken your grace, to amend your ways, and you think you have nothing to do but to question my love.—Pray, madam, my dear sister, my child, and care, beware you lose not the advantage of this dispensation ; you will do so, if you use it only to afflictive sorrows, or questioning the love of God, or your interest in Christ. The time will be spent in these things, which should be taken up in earnest endeavours after a compliance with God's will, quickening of grace, returns after backsliding, mortification of sin and love of the world, until the sense of it pass away. La-

bour vigorously to bring your soul to this two-fold resolution. 1. That the will of God is the best rule for all things, and their circumstances. 2. That you will bring yourself to a fresh engagement to live more to him; and you will find the remainder of your work easy, for it is a part of the yoke of Christ. I shall trouble you no farther, but only to give you the assurance, that you are in my heart continually, which is nothing; but it helps to persuade me you are in the heart of Christ, which is all. I am, dear madam, your very affectionate servant, &c.

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REV. J. BARKER TO DR. DODDRIDGE,

On his Death-bed.

Sir,

*July, 1751.*

LESSINGHAM, Neal, and Barker are too nearly interested in that precious life, which now appears in danger of being cut off in the midst of its days, to hear of its waste and languishing, without great concern and fervent prayer to God. Consent to stay with us a while longer, my dear friend, if it please God. This is not only needful to Northampton and its adjacent towns and villages, but desirable to us all, and beneficial to our whole interest. Stay, Doddridge, O stay, and strengthen our hands, whose shadows grow long. Fifty is but the height of vigour, usefulness, and honour.

Do not take leave abruptly. Providence hath not directed thee yet on whom to drop thy mantle. Who shall instruct our youth, fill our vacant churches, animate our associations, and diffuse a spirit of piety, moderation, candour, and charity through our villages and churches; and a spirit of prayer and supplication into our towns and cities, when thou art removed from us? Who shall——But I am silenced by the voice of him who says, “Shall I not do what I will with my own? Is it not my prerogative to take and leave, as seemeth me good? I demand the liberty of disposing of my own servants at my own pleasure.—It is yours to wait and trust; mine to dispose and govern. On me be the care of ministers and churches; with me is the residue of the Spirit.—Both the vineyard and the labourers are mine. I set them to work, and when I please, I call them and give them their hire.”——With these thoughts my passions subside; my mind is softened and satisfied:—I resign thee, myself, and all to God, saying, Thy will be done!——But now for the wings of faith and contemplation. Let me take thy hand, dear brother, and walk a turn or two in yonder spacious regions. Yes, it is so; we read it in the book of God, that word of truth and gospel of our salvation, that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. The one ruined his posterity by sin; the other raised his seed to immortality. This poisoned the dart, and inflamed the wound to death; but Jesus

Christ redeemeth us from captivity. See, thou Christian minister, thou friend of my bosom, and faithful servant of God, see the important period when the surprising signs, and descending inhabitants of heaven, proclaim the second coming of our divine Saviour! The heavens open, and disclose his radiant glory.—Hear the awaking trump.—See the dead in Christ arise glorious and immortal—leave corruption, weakness, and dishonour behind them; and behold their Lord and Head seated on his throne of judgment, attended and surrounded with the ministers of his power and pleasure, and shining in all the fulness of celestial glory;—not only see, but share his victory and lustre,—partake of his image and influence. And behold the demolished fabric reared again, stately and ornamented, illustrious, permanent, and durable—to demonstrate how entirely death is vanquished, all its ruins repaired; and what was once meat for worms, is now a companion of angels. For when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality, every eye will be fastened on the mighty Conqueror, and every voice and harp be tuned for that triumphant song, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Yes, Doddridge, it is so. The fruit of our Redeemer’s sufferings and victory is the entire and eternal destruction of sin and death. And is it not a glorious destruction? a most blessed ruin? No enemy so formidable—no tyranny



so bitter—no fetters so heavy and galling—no prison so dark and dismal—but they are vanquished and disarmed:—the unerring dart is blunted and broken—the prison pulled down and razed. Our Lord is risen, as “the first fruits of them that slept.”—How glad should I be to hear that God is pleased to prolong thy life on earth, to declare these glorious truths, and teach us to improve them! In this, your friends with us, and many more in every place, join, and make it our common petition to the great Disposer of all events. Use every means you can for the recovery of your health, for the sake of your friends, among whom is your faithful and affectionate, &c. J. BARKER.

[The Doctor was so affected and melted into tears of gratitude and joy, with the friendship this letter expressed, and the divine consolations which it administered, that it was apprehended his tender frame would have sunk under it.]

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FOUR LETTERS.—DR. STUART TO MRS DICK,  
 Recommending, under Dejection, the Gospel as the true  
 source of Comfort.

LETTER FIRST.

Dear Madam,

I SINCERELY compassionate your distress; and as my occupations, and your short stay in town, do not permit me to have the pleasure of spending much time with you, I thought of employing a little time this evening, in express-

ing the feeling I have for the dejection of spirit which you labour under. There is no question that your heavy afflictions and serious cares have much influence in producing this; and I know from experience, that the state of your health must exceedingly affect the cheerfulness and serenity to which the gospel calls us, and which it gives us, whatever distresses we labour under, and however heavy laden with care, guilt, and want of spiritual strength.—Now let this be a settled persuasion with you; your joy will always be that which is felt in the midst of sorrowing. And this is not peculiar to you; the peace which Jesus promised, and which the Comforter confers, is not like that which the world looks for. The same voice which said, “In me ye shall have peace,” said also, “In the world ye shall have tribulation;” and it will be found, that the nearer and dearer we are to Jesus, the more tribulation we shall endure; and indeed, that the peace and consolation which flow from the faith and hope of his gospel, can scarcely be enjoyed in circumstances of outward ease and felicity. As your mind, if I mistake not, is naturally feeble, your tendency will always be, to faint under the divine chastening. But consider how the Lord addresses us as children, “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.” He makes us, in a sense, judges of the fitness

of his conduct ; and if we are really conscious, that when not afflicted we go astray, that chastening alone keeps us attentive to his word, should we not rather deprecate freedom from it, and pray only for the accomplishment of what is sure as his being, that we shall not be tried above what we are able ;" that his consolations shall abound as our afflictions abound ; and that tribulation shall work patience, experience, hope, &c.

I trust these are your prayers and your experience ; though, I doubt not, you often cannot pray, and know no experience but that of a mind tossed with various tempests, and not comforted. Nothing, I am sure, will contribute more to keep you so, than the least doubt and darkness respecting the gospel, as a message of grace and promise of eternal life to the ungodly ; to the soul without strength even to apprehend it ; in fine, to the chief of sinners. If a suspicion, however slight or transient, arise in our hearts of any thing contrary to this, wo to our comfort if it meet a moment's entertainment, and is not seen in its true colours, as a foe that would shake our standing in the grace of God. If I understood aright, the obstructions in your way to a quiet mind, were all of that nature. But what signify feelings of weakness, of deadness, and the like, if we are to believe to be saved, as Abraham believed to be a father, above and against the course of nature. While we view the gospel as offering relief (I shall not say *to him that worketh*, for

there are many who preach and feel very self-righteously while reprobating salvation by works, but) to those only who are properly disposed towards it, we can never be at ease. If we think some serious exercise of soul, consisting of various and laborious efforts required to lay hold of that truth by which we are saved, we are losing sight of its nature, which expressly relateth to the man, who, unable to work, (in which is included unable to feel,) believeth on God who justifieth the ungodly. When we are persuaded, indeed, that this wondrous manifestation of the grace of God is true, we become possessed of the consolation, the strong consolation, to impart which, God swore by himself to confirm the immutability of his counsel; and here feelings, works, and all their fruits begin; as they are matured and kept alive by continuing in the faith, grounded and settled, not moved away from the hope of the gospel. It is the contrary doctrine, meeting with the natural bias and ideas of your mind, which detain you in circumstances far different from that freedom and peace of soul which the pure gospel imparts to the unentangled believer. There must be some error in a doctrine which leaves those who receive it, and are even much influenced by it, in a situation so different from what was universally produced and diffused by the word of the truth of the gospel, when at first preached and believed.

Read, I beg of you, the things recorded for

our learning ; viz. the account of the reception of the gospel at first ; and where will you point me an instance of this without the relation of instant joy, and of instant profession of their believing. But can there be joy in that breast, big with the apprehension of God's wrath and threatening against sin, in which the hope of deliverance and eternal life resides not, with application, equally personal and special, as doth that sentence of God ; and could there be that steady confident profession made, which the jailor and his house, the eunuch, &c. made, if the same hesitations took place with them which fill our minds, from the notions of faith and christian experience we are taught to entertain.

All this you may think not well to consist with exhortations to make our calling and election sure, and with the fear of falling short, which it is our duty and our safety to entertain. But how are we to make our election sure, but by holding the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end, and by abounding in all the fruits of righteousness which the truth works effectually in those who believe ? Nor is holy fear unfriendly to stedfast confidence, for what time we are afraid, our souls trust in God, and avoid every thing which would realize those fears. David was afraid he should perish by the hand of Saul, although the Lord had often preserved him from it, and had promised him the throne of Israel after Saul's death. His fear, so far from weakening his

assurance in this promise, taught him to avoid its object; and this became the means by which it was accomplished. "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me, than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand." 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.

My time is out; and though I find I have written an unconnected miscellany, I yet send it, as I am afraid I shall scarcely be able to have any very long conversation with you. May the Lord keep us in the faith, and lead us to the Hope of the lost! It would give me much pleasure to hear from you. And I am, madam, yours, &c.

*Edin. March, 1784.*

C. S.

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LETTER SECOND.

Dear Madam,

I HAD the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 2d, and would have thanked you for it sooner if I had had leisure. I am sorry to hear that you still continue in distress. We can ill discern the special purposes of our outward troubles, while exercised with them. We are called meanwhile to live by faith, and to endure as seeing him who is invisible; they shall afterwards work the peaceful fruits of righteousness. Our experience may teach us the

necessity of them ; so that regard for our own true and highest happiness, no less than the character of him who appoints their kind, degree, continuance, and measure, ought to produce submission and entire resignation to our heavenly Father, who chastens, not willingly, but for our profit. I believe, it is from the clear views and steady persuasion of the gospel alone that this and every good fruit is produced. I am sure, in the many struggles against the will of God of which I have been guilty, I have had reason to suspect blindness of mind, and unbelief of heart concerning it, to be at the bottom of the whole. Were you settled about the truth, and saw and felt that this imparts consolation of itself to the wounded spirit, you would, I know, overcome the dejection to which your present perplexities dispose you. At the same time, it rejoices me to see the degree of hope that you express ; and I trust and pray that the God of hope may fill you with all joy and peace in believing. It is not to be wished, nor is it possible, that this may set you above fears, lest your heart deceive you. We cannot be safe without this fear : " Blessed is he that feareth always, he that hardeneth his heart (against it) shall fall into mischief : the exhortations to it given believers are very many." Heb. iv. 1, &c. But then there is a difference between the fear which leads to say, " Depart from us, for we are sinful men, O Lord !" and that which causes us to cleave, and confines to the hope

of the gospel. May the Lord cherish this fear in our hearts, for by casting this off before him many have perished ! I see you perplex yourself with things, the pernicious effect of which I am well acquainted with ; that is, *how* to believe and accept of Jesus as your Saviour, &c. But, dear madam, do you not read the gospel, Mark xvi. 15, 16. &c. is not this declared, as Jesus commanded it should be, to every creature ? Hath not he who believes this gospel the promise of salvation, which, as contained in one commission and sentence with the gospel, is as true as it is ? Indeed, conceiving not that salvation is of faith, that it might be by grace, this word "believing" hath been supposed to be an exercise as arduous, to the full, as were the works of the law. But the scriptures every where represent faith in God, to be in nothing different from faith in man ; unless in so far as he whom we believe is incapable of being the object or author of deceit, and the things credited on his authority are of infinite importance. The simplicity of this view of the matter may fill us with astonishment at the unbelief of our hearts, and their horrid darkness which can doubt or obscure so bright and self-evident declarations. Indeed, it is not by the blindness, great as it is in individual minds, that Satan hides this truth from us : we are fortified by reasonings against it, as well as by simple ignorance. We have got rid of those which Satan employed when the gospel was first preached ; but in their



room, oppositions to the faith and to our salvation, [not less dangerous, and perhaps more specious, have extended as far almost as the gospel of God. How comes it to pass, that temptations in exactly the same form do not appear to have affected the peace or safety of the first believers of the truth? The poison of error spreads and eats as doth a canker; it works silent and unobserved like leaven; but our confidence is, that if we lack wisdom, God giveth liberally and upbraideth not. Let us ask then in faith, and it shall be given us!

I have written you, my dear madam, in a hurry, because I see I should not soon have another opportunity. I beg to hear from you, and to know the state of your health. I am, dear madam, with sincere regard, your most obedient servant.

*March 6, 1784.*

C. S.

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LETTER THIRD.

Dear Madam,

I RECEIVED your letter of the 10th this moment, and cannot delay expressing the concern and sympathy I feel for you in your deep afflictions, which are enough to shake the firmest mind. Yours, naturally so tender, and already so broken with storms, I wonder not that they overwhelm with perplexity and confusion. In these circumstances, it is not the time for you to think, or for me to write, of any thing, save of Him who tenderly bind-

eth up the wounds of the afflicted, and of that balm which he pours into them, healing all their pain, and soothing all their anguish. I trust you will be thus dealt with; and when it pleaseth our Lord to give you that peace which is enjoyed by committing all to him, Phil. iv. 6, 7. and that possession of soul which results from it, I shall willingly undertake to lay before you reasons from the word of God for all that I asserted in my letter; but it is not mine to convince; that is the peculiar office of the Lord, who hath equal access to the understanding, as I trust you shall experience he hath to the heart.

Remember, my dear madam, that the storm is changed into a calm by his command and will. Remember that it is he who sends that storm. It may seem to arise from another quarter, and the intention of creatures in raising it may be opposite to that of the Lord (see Isa. x. 5, 7. xii. 20, 21.) but it shall not proceed further than is necessary for the execution of his purposes; and the remainder he will restrain, while he acquires praise for himself by all that he permits to take place. Think not, because the Lord afflicteth, that he is indisposed to heal. "He maketh sore, and bindeth up; he wounds, but his hands make whole." Job v. 19. An afflicted and poor people they have ever been, who trust in the name of the Lord. This is the very situation which calls for our trust. It teaches us feelingly its necessity, while it gives us to know the stability

of that support on which we are directed to lean under every pressure. Must not his grace be sufficient for us, which cannot be perfectly displayed, but in the weakness, unworthiness, and temptations of its object? And if his grace be revealed for our support, though the youths faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fall, shall we not wait upon the Lord, assured that we shall thus renew our strength, and mount up as on the wings of the eagle? You will know, I doubt not, under your present heavy trial, a great deal of the unbelief and opposition of your heart. But where can you carry this, but to the same throne of grace, to which I trust you are directed with all your distresses? Thither are we called to come, for mercy and for grace, in time of need. It is guilt which brings us into need of mercy; it is weakness, temptation, and affliction, which make us stand in need of grace; for both, the Lord calls us to come to him with confidence. Confusion of face, indeed, may cover us; but the ground of confidence is, that Jesus, who hath borne the darkness and dreadful sorrow to which we were doomed, hath been set free; the Lord hath accepted his offering; he delights to show mercy through it; and Jesus hath passed into the heavens, a merciful and faithful High Priest, touched with the feeling of every distress we deplore, having been tempted in all respects as we are, yet without sin. The single sentence, 1 Tim. i. 15, &c. refutes all the ideas and objections you may

make, from the considerations of your guilt and unworthiness. If that be a faithful saying, these must be false ; not that the faith of the gospel is adverse to conviction of sin. I believe, on the contrary, that we shall never truly, fully, and ingenuously mourn for sin, till our consciences are at peace by the faith of the gospel, and so are taught to look to him whom we have pierced as our Saviour, Ezek. xvi. 60, 63. Zech. xii. 10. Acts ii. 36—41. &c.

This ingenuous contrition and brokenness of heart, is something very different from a mere dispiriting and discontented sense of deficiency and short-coming. This, and the slavish fears arising from it, may often proceed from imperfect views of guilt and corruption, and secret repining at our inability to satisfy for the one, or to repair the other. When we are not fully convinced of our being totally lost and undone, we naturally wish and strive to do somewhat for our recovery ; and as the hope of this is deceit, we land either in presumptuous or despondent self-righteousness, according (in general) as our tempers are sanguine, or inclined to melancholy. The defects which persons of natural sadness experience in this warfare, are dreadful indeed ! But the sorrow arising from them doth not work repentance, &c. When taught that we are utterly ruined, and that we are without strength, we welcome, on the contrary, the news of him who is able to save unto the uttermost ; whose blood makes perfect, as pertaining to the con-

science, at the same time that it delivers from the wrath to come. I pray that the Lord may instruct you more fully whose blood this is, and what countless demonstrations he has given of its being accepted, that so you may serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all your life. I entreat to hear from you. Be assured I shall not cease to pray for your support and comfort. Ever, dear madam, very truly yours.

*March 12, 1784.*

C. S.

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LETTER FOURTH.

Dear Madam,

You observed in your last letter, that after reading what you had written, you had not said what you intended: in recollecting my letters, I find I have reason to say the same thing; and having a little leisure just now, I have looked over what you have written me, and if I can, will attempt to reply distinctly to the difficulties and distresses you describe from your first to your present letter. But before I do so, it is necessary for me to say that the word of God is the only thing which furnishes me with these replies. If to this, or to the obvious sense of this, the authority of men, or their opinions respecting the meaning of the passages I shall mention, is opposed, I have nothing to add but "Thus it is written." Reasons against any view I may suggest I shall be ready to consider, whoever hath mentioned

them ; but if we are in earnest about the salvation testified of in the scriptures, we shall be fully satisfied with their decision of the way of obtaining this, though it should disagree with the opinions we have been taught, or have entertained. May the Lord open our eyes, and bring our hearts to perfect submission to his word ! Divine power alone can do so ; perpetually disposed to misapprehend and to let it slip, that alone can ingraft it in our hearts, to which it is naturally foreign as the fruit-bearing scion to the wild tree which receives it.

In your first letter you say, " I hear of a complete Saviour offered to the chief of sinners, but *how* to believe and accept of this offered Saviour as *my* God and Saviour, I find not." Now, my dear madam, I would remark on this sentence, that if by hearing of a complete Saviour you mean, as the scriptures often mean by the phrase *hear*, believe (as in John x. 27. Matt. xvii. 5,) then you profess in this sentence, (*i. e.* the first part of it) the faith of the gospel ; for that Jesus the Son of God is a complete Saviour, that the chief of sinners are invited to trust in him as such, with the most positive assurance of being saved, is the gospel. See Acts xiii. 32—40, xv. 7. compare with x. 34—43. 1, Cor. xv. 1. &c. And if this be the gospel, you see it supersedes the question altogether, *how* to believe and accept of him as your Saviour ; for this gospel is preached to every creature : *i. e.* every crea-

ture is warranted and called, on pain of eternal condemnation, to trust in him for their own salvation and eternal life. The name by which this truth is peculiarly distinguished imports as much, for GOSPEL is an old English word, the same with "glad tidings;" and what glad tidings can a sinner hear, which afford him no hope of Salvation? If the testimony of Jesus be gospel to every creature, it must show that a ground of hope is laid for every creature who trusts in it, as personal and sure as is the fear of wrath entertained in his conscience. If this does not come home as hope to one, how does it come to another, or to any soul in the world? For the God of hope, fills with hope and peace *in believing*, all his comforting influence is conveyed by the word, and is already contained in it, however blind we may be to its gracious contents. It is indeed true, that it is no where testified in the scriptures, that any particular person is in a state of salvation; This is the object of hope not of faith, which, though inseparable, are distinct. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. But as the testimony of Jesus, the perfect Saviour of the chief of sinners, is open to all, and the salvation of him who believes this, is also testified, what is in *your* way against trusting him for your own salvation? Not the doubtfulness of the testimony, for it is impossible for God to lie; not your own guilt and inability, if this testimony be true, see Rom. v. 6, &c.; not the might or cunning of the adversary, for it is written, John x. 27—30. Rom. viii. 32—39. &c.

In this confident persuasion of the truth, and unmoved entertainment of the hope of the gospel, you will feel as little occasion to ask, Do I believe this? as for him to ask, Do I see the sun? who basks in his beams, and perceives his splendour, and discerns every object by means of it. But there is something implied in the way you express your difficulty ("how to believe and accept of him as my God and Saviour I find not,") as if in believing there were an effort to excite the mind to a certain pitch of persuasion, or rather to a certain state or disposition, conceived to be saving faith, or the peculiar cordial acceptance of the Saviour by which the children of God lay hold on him, and whereby they are distinguished from others, who merely give a speculative assent to the scriptures. Now here it may be necessary for you to attend to it, that faith, I mean divine faith, always refers to a divine testimony; *i. e.* we can believe nothing to be the word of God, which God hath not revealed: and faith in his word, even that faith which purifies the heart, works by love, overcomes the world, in short, by which we are saved, is in its very nature the most plain of all things, being merely, the esteeming the testimony of God to be true and judging him faithful who has promised. This excludes all ideas of laborious exertion to acquire it, or to perform it; however this be implied in the expressions, "I desire to believe," and "I endeavour to believe," so common in the mouths of professors. Faith follows the perception of



evidence necessarily, and I may say positively on our part, when that evidence is 'plain and certain. In this case (as Mr Walker,\* I remember, has happily expressed it in one of his sermons) "divine truth enters the mind as light doth the eye, which may be rather said to impart itself to us, than to be discerned by us." What if some believe, and others believe not? it does not therefore follow, that the one worked themselves up to this, while others would not undertake the arduous labour; but only, that the gospel is hid from those that are lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded the mind, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into them. This, however, is no more an argument of the doubtfulness of the gospel, or of the obscure nature of faith in it, than is the ignorance or imperception of the blind of the reality of visible objects, or of the mysterious nature of vision. For what, if some believe not, shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? And with respect to a speculative assent to the scriptures, I believe there is and there can be no such thing, although this may be professed or may exist, where their real sense and import are not understood. If the gospel be a practical thing, it must influence the heart and life whenever it is understood and believed. Those may profess belief who have it not, from the effect of education, interest, &c. and when

\* The late Mr Walker, of the High Church, Edinburgh.

any fall short, and depart from the faith, whatever appearances there may have been, we are assured that they understood not what they professed. Matt. xiii. 19—23. Indeed, how could they, if the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, were the rocks on which they were wrecked: for the first thing almost believed in christianity is, that if any man will come after Jesus, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him.

I purposed, my dear madam, to have said a great deal more on other difficulties you have mentioned, but I am tedious already; and as I cannot shorten things by writing them over, having no time for it, I send it as it is, although I have before, I suppose, repeated much of what I now say. I beg to know if you wish me to continue my design, and to suggest most freely any thing which you think obscure or objectionable. May the Lord teach and support you. Ever yours, with great regard.

*March 14, 1784.*

C. S.

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LETTER FROM A DYING FATHER TO HIS  
CHILDREN.

Dear Children,

You may receive this from me, as perhaps the last you will ever receive. I bear you on my heart in affliction, and in prayer to

the Lord. But what shall I say to you, as I am not likely to survive but a few days? How shall I address or admonish you? I cannot tell what it is to pass the swellings of Jordan, though on the verge of it; and if I arrive, through the merits of my Redeemer, in the heavenly land, neither can I return to tell you of those endless glories. My prayer and desire is with the church in the Canticles, "Make haste, my beloved, be thou like a roe or young hart on the mountain of spices." Shall the captive long for his ransom, the mariner for his harbour; and shall not the people of God long to be in the bosom of Christ, when there is nothing below, but what is surrounded with snares! My dear children, my desires for you are, that you would make it your chief business to study Christ's blessed word, and your own hearts, and beware of Satan's plots to allure and destroy your souls. Meditate on eternity more than ever, and endeavour, through the aid of divine grace, to be more inwardly sincere than outwardly glorious; to live, rather than to have a name to live. Labour to be thankful for your mercies, and faithful in your places, humble under divine appointments, fruitful under precious ordinances, as your means and mercies are greater than others, that the name of the Lord may be glorified in you, and you in him; that your judgments may be sound, and your lives unblamable, till the day of Christ. Pray for your departing father, that he may derive

fresh strength from the Lord in his dying moments; that as Zion's sorrows are mine, I may have refreshing views that Zion's joys are mine also, "a crown of glory that never fadeth away;" that we may view with pleasure, unexperienced here, the faces of each other in the regions of bliss, never, never more to part! The Lord enable you to persevere in every good work, and bless you with every needful blessing in time and in eternity! Such is the prayer of your loving father.

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REV. J. C. TO A FRIEND,

On his Death-Bed.

Dear ——,

Dec. 29, 1807.

THE present declining state of your health, urges me to lay before you, for your serious consideration, matters of the last importance. I choose to do it in writing, because you can have recourse to it more frequently, than to me personally.

You know I have for many years been intruding upon you, with warning and counsels, which I gave in as gentle, at the same time in as faithful a way as I could; and I believe my brother C——, who has been many years in the land of silence, did the same; but none of them, so far as I know, produced any permanent effect. I fear you are now going to make the experiment, whether the princi-

ples I have stated, from the revelation of God, be true or false, It is an awful hazard, to postpone the serious consideration of so momentous a matter, to an unalterable state. If any thing in the present world be inexpressibly important, it must be that which respects the soul of man, the immortality of which few doubt, either in civilized or savage countries.

If the soul of man shall survive the wreck of time, and shall exist for ever somewhere, it ought to be the most earnest inquiry of every man, where that state of existence is likely to be, whether heaven or hell; and how the former is to be obtained, and the latter escaped. Search all the records of philosophy for a satisfactory solution of these, and you will search in vain. The subject far exceeds the grasp of corrupted, unaided reason. Men who will not submit to the direction of revelation in such matters as these, get into a labyrinth of mystery and darkness, from which they cannot get out; but life and immortality have alone been fully disclosed by the gospel of Jesus. There we are presented with the only authentic history of God and of man; the creation, original felicity, the ruin, and the recovery of man. There the rights of God are published, and the miseries of fallen man most faithfully delineated. All its statements respecting the nature and present circumstances of man, uniformly accord with our experience. References are constantly made to the feelings of men, and to visible existing circumstances.

If God be infinitely good and merciful, (and who can deny it?) whence then must arise all those miseries to which we are subjected? The Bible tells us, they proceed from our guilt and pollution; that men are become wicked, and that God is angry with the wicked every day, being of purer eyes than to behold iniquity with connivance or indifference. Indeed, however pleasing sin may be to the touch or taste of man, it is abominable and disgusting to a holy God; and he has expressly prohibited it throughout his immense empire; and those who commit it notwithstanding his prohibition, do it at an awful peril, viz. Jehovah's righteous indignation. One single offence exposes to everlasting misery; for having offended in one point promulgated in his law, God holds us as guilty of breaking the whole of it; and the sinner is declared utterly incapable of making the smallest reparation to injured insulted Deity.

Here probably you will be disposed to ask, How then can men obtain happiness and peace? The scripture answers the all-important inquiry. It declares that the Son of God died for the ungodly, to atone for their offences, and to procure absolution. But how, say you, am I to obtain an interest in his death? The same revelation from God commands you, as lost, miserable, and wretched, to believe that his Son died for sinners, and to hold your confidence in the truth of this wonderful fact, even to the end of life, and you shall be saved.

Perhaps you ask, how shall I know that I believe it? The matter is so immensely important and interesting, that joy and peace will as naturally succeed the faith of it, as light necessarily attends the rising sun. You will love God for sending his Son; you will love the Son for giving his life a ransom for the souls of men; you will bless and praise him for his grace and goodness, and esteem it your honour and interest to comply with all his commands.

Perhaps, if you become at all concerned about this important matter, you may imagine you are too late to come for mercy to the Saviour. Not so; for the scriptures represent his grace as boundless: there is a plenitude of mercy in him, surpassing all your conception. Spurn away such a thought from your mind, as derogatory to the glory of Jesus, who waits to be gracious to sinners. Indeed, you cannot honour the Saviour in any period of life more, than by placing the most unreserved confidence in him, for pardon, acceptance, and eternal life. He glories in pardoning the guilty, in snatching men as brands from the very mouth of the eternal burning.

Think of nothing now so much as the word of God; it is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. Leave your wife, your children, but especially your own soul, to the care and keeping of a holy God. He alone can deliver you from death, and from going down to the pit, from whence there is no redemption.

You stated it as your opinion at our last interview, that, if a man had not been guilty of any flagrant crime or crimes, he surely had not much to fear. If you turn to Genesis vi. 5. you will find the reason mentioned, why God destroyed the old world. It is said, God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil continually. This proves that evil thoughts, as well as words and works, expose men to the righteous judgment of God. If you consult also Matt. v. 28. you will find our Lord clearly stating the spiritual extent of Jehovah's demands in his law. But had we no other sin than not having believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God, that of itself would ruin us for ever. But now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. I commend you to God and the word of his grace. Believe me to be yours sincerely.—J. C.

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MRS GILL TO THE REV. DR JOHN ERSKINE.

The last letter she ever wrote.

*Feb. 27, 1771.*

FROM my dying pillow, I now in all probability take leave of my much-valued correspondent. To my bed I have been confined near twelve painful weeks, and am brought to the dust of death. Physicians and friends



have done their best, but God has withheld his blessing.—He is great, he is holy, he is wise, in all he doth by me; and if, through the infinite riches of his free grace, (that grace which was the spring-head of man's redemption,) and through the infinite value of a dying Saviour's atonement and purchase, my horrid, guilty, wretched soul be pardoned, justified, and cleansed, then, my respectable sir, we shall, I trust, meet before the throne of God and the Lamb, and there commence an acquaintance free from all alloy or sinful imperfection. Sublime in kind, noble in degree, will the friendship be. But O, the bliss of bliss will be, to be admitted to a view of infinite perfection, as it will for ever appear through the person of the adorable Jesus; to have our whole minds conformed to his likeness, and to be used by the blessed God as mediums, through which his glory shall shine to eternal ages. Methinks I long for that period, when we shall join the general anthem of all the heavenly choir, in low, but exalted prostrations; and ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and might, and dominion, and all our personal and collective blessedness, to God and the Lamb, for ever. Amen and amen. I am expecting a call into the invisible world, that unknown region. The prospect is grand, awful, and all-important, and sometimes I am all amazement.—I have no hope in any thing but the value of a Redeemer's blood, and the free mercy of a

God who is just, even when he justifies the vilest of sinners, on the sole account of that propitiation. Oh sir! let a glorious Christ, in his whole character, and in his whole mediatorial glories, be more and more the subject of your preaching, and may you win many souls to him. Farewell, dear sir—fare you well, in time and in eternity. I beg leave to commend the religion of Christ to all your children.—May they be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus! Your dying friend. S. G.



THE HUMBLE SOUL EXERCISING TRUST AND  
CONFIDENCE IN GOD, IN SEASONS  
OF AFFLICTION.

IT is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes. Psal. cxviii. 9.

I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in him will I trust.

Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence, I shall not be greatly moved. Psal. lxii. 1, 2.

Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord; quicken me according to thy judgments.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them.

Out of the depth have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice; let thine ear be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Psal. cxix. 75.

I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy; for thou hast considered my trouble: thou hast known my soul in adversities.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me. Psal. cxxxviii. 7.

I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Psal. xxvii. 13.

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. 2 Cor i. 3, 4.

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the

things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Look upon mine affliction, and my pain, and forgive all my sin. Psal. xxv. 18.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. Psal. ciii. 2—5.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John i. 7.

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Isaiah xii. 2.

The Lord liveth; and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Ps. xxiii. 6.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but

God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Psal. xc. 1.

Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people ; O visit me with thy salvation. Psal. cvi. 4.

The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation. Ex. xv. 2.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. 1 John iii. 1.

In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 1 John iv. 9.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day.

It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?—I am persuaded that neither things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. viii. 35, 38.

This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.

I know that my Redeemer liveth.

When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Luke ii. 29, 30.

We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?—Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings—in Christ. Eph. i. 3.

Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus.

Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

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