



Pringle Del.

Edin. Sc.

Alex<sup>r</sup> Pringle D. D.

PERTH

# SERMONS AND LETTERS

OF THE LATE

REV. ALEX. PRINGLE, D.D.

WITH A

## MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

BY HIS SURVIVING COLLEAGUE,

THE REV. DAVID YOUNG, D.D.



PERTH:

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## MEMOIR.

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THE REV. ALEXANDER PRINGLE, D.D. was born in June, 1752. His ancestors were Border farmers, who, for several generations back, seem to have been men of much respectability and private worth. His father, William Pringle of Blaiklaw, in Roxburghshire, was a true specimen of the Scottish farmer of the olden times, whose servants were, to a great extent, incorporated with his family, and were so treated as to feel that the austerity of the master was, to a great extent, sunk in the kindness of the father and the friend. The father of this reputable man, whose name was also William, held the farm of Yair by a feudal tenure, from his near kinsman, the Laird of Whitbank. Of his family no detailed account can be here given; but his son of Blaiklaw had seven sons and one daughter, most of whom lived to a great age, and the only survivor of whom is Adam Pringle, Esq. late Lord Provost of Perth. Alexander, the subject of this Memoir, was the third son of the family, and is said to have been a high-spirited, manly boy, not easily turned from his purpose, and giving promise, even in childhood, of those qualities by which his manhood was characterized. Being the inmate of a pious family, he was early initiated into the exercise



of prayer, and it would seem that, when very young, he had contracted a love to this exercise. When he was about eight years of age, a pious female servant of his father, who probably watched over the morals of the children, and was, in her place, the guide of their piety, told him one day that she thought he should become a minister, assigning as her reason, that he remained longer at his prayers than did the other boys. He hinted, that his father might be averse to the expense of making him a minister; to which she replied, "Then I must speak to him about it." It is every way likely that she did speak, and that what she said, aided by her prayers to the Father of all, had not a little influence in opening to her young favourite his future course of life.

This incident is but a small specimen of the simple familiarity and mutual respect which bound together the master and servants at Blaiklaw, and to which, as not uncommon in the days of his youth, Dr. Pringle often referred with high satisfaction; contrasting it with the moral degeneracy which has since come over our rural population. "My father's servants," he would often say, "were not only sober and industrious, true to their master, and guides to one another, but men of decided piety, whose meetings for prayer and conference were regularly attended, and whose godly sincerity made them a blessing to all with whom they were connected." This he ascribed, in no small degree, to the treatment servants received in their masters' houses, where they were mixed up with the religion of the family, shared freely of family comforts, were esteemed as fellow-christians by their masters and mis-

tresses, and taught in every way to feel themselves at home. Such was the attention paid to the farm-servants of olden times ; and in general it was well repaid, in the trustiness of their characters, and the generous concern which they shewed for the honour and prosperity of their master's house.

About the tenth year of his age, Dr. Pringle was sent to the High School at Dunse, then under the superintendence of Mr. Cruikshanks, a man of creditable scholarship, and somewhat advanced in life. At this seminary he made respectable proficiency in studies preparatory for the University ; but it was there also, and probably about the thirteenth year of his age, that his religious impressions became fixed and decided. He used to mention the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the fifty-third chapter, and the eighteenth verse of the first chapter of the Prophecies of Isaiah, as portions of the Word of God which then took a deep hold of his mind. So intense, about this time, was his religious exercise, that, active as he was, it destroyed his relish for youthful recreation ; and he used to remain in the school-room to meditate and pray, while his classmates were engaged in games of amusement. In his own opinion, this was the time when he was first brought to a saving reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ. " Ever after this," he used to say, " the Lord kept hold of me, amidst many sad declensions on my part."

Another scene of special religious exercise, on which his memory rested with delight, occurred at Edinburgh the first year he was at College, and about the fifteenth year of his age. He had been attacked by a violent inflammation of the throat, a disease to which he conti-



nued subject till about the meridian of life. His companion and bed-fellow was Mr. Colville, afterwards minister of the Secession Church in Lauder. They were in the habit of keeping family worship together ; and he often mentioned, with a glow of feeling, that one evening during his illness, as Mr. Colville was sitting by the bedside, and singing, at his request, the sixty-third Psalm, preparatory to reading and prayer, he got such a “*grip*” of that portion of scripture that he could never forget it. The eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans being read on the same occasion, the impressions he had derived from it in the school at Dunse were suddenly revived, and he was filled with inexpressible delight. It would appear that on both these occasions the exercise was soothing rather than searching, and this was much the manner of God’s dealing with him through life. Indeed, it seemed suited to his cast of mind ; for such was his constitutional temperament, that, even when his heart departed from God, it was more likely to be won back by the grace of the gospel than stormed into submission by the terrors of the law. From this time forward he looked for, and often experienced, seasons of special fellowship with God, although these were divided by intervals of comparative desolation, which cost him much sorrow and searching of heart, although they seldom shook his confidence in the God of salvation.

From this period, down to the time when he was licensed to preach the gospel, little is known to us worthy of notice. After finishing his studies at the University, in which he seems to have made good proficiency, he studied theology at Alloa under the Rev.

William Moncrieff, then Professor of Divinity to the General Associate Synod, and received his license as a Preacher in the year 1776, being about 24 years of age. Thus he advanced on public service by slow and deliberate steps; and the state of his mind, in the near view of it, is disclosed in the following extract from a letter written by him to a very dear friend, and dated June of the year aforesaid.

“ On Tuesday, the 4th current, I was examined by the Presbytery [with a view to receiving trial discourses], and was very gently dealt with. All was over in little more than half an hour. I got out for a subject [of discourse], 2 Peter, i. 4. I have my preparations for license nearly finished, Mr. Morison [the Presbytery Clerk] being so kind as to inform me of all the subjects, so that my trials *in this respect* will, I think, give me very little trouble. But when I look at what is before me, my spirits are like to sink. Still I think I am in the way of duty; and in the strength of my Great Head I design to go forward, leaving all events to his disposal. I desire to be entirely in his hand, believing that, if he has any work for me in the service of the altar, he will give wherewith to serve him. It well becomes *me* to trust his word.” “ My desire to honour Christ in the work of the gospel is daily increasing, and I am now willing to enter on public service whenever he is pleased to call for me. If this language were spoken before the men of the world, I am sure they would call me presumptuous; but I think I have ground for what I am saying, and can tell it without a blush to my dearest friend on earth. I would not for the world run unsent, or take



up the office of a preacher of the gospel without Christ's commission. O no ! may I rather be buried as deep as the centre of the earth, never more to be heard of in the land of the living." In this extract, we see a strong desire for the Christian ministry, governed by a fear of offending, which every youth, in similar circumstances, should be anxious to imitate ; for, of all the evils which befall the church, by far the most desolating, and, alas, it must be added, not the least common, is a tendency to covet the ministry of the gospel for ease, or honour, or emolument, without caring to be actuated by the spirit which such a ministry requires.

Soon after he began to preach, Dr. Pringle received a call from the congregation of Minihive, in Dumfriesshire ; and not long after he received another from the congregation in Perth, to which the labours of his long and useful life were subsequently devoted. It would seem that he was preaching in Perth at the time when this latter call was given to him ; and, in reference to it, he writes as follows to the friend referred to above :

“ Perth, 29th January, 1777.

“ I would, ere now, have sent my friend an account of what took place here on Thursday last, had I been at home ; but on Tuesday, the week previous, I went to Methven to be out of the way, and preached last Sabbath at Logiealmond. When Mr. Wilson [of Methven] came home from the moderation, he told us that four candidates were on the list.” After detailing the state of the vote, which shows that all the members of the congregation who were present, except 23, gave their

votes for him, while nearly all of the 23 afterwards subscribed his call, he thus concludes his letter :—" So, my dear friend, you see there is more work carved out for the synod. Whatever way it go, I am resolved cheerfully to abide by the synod's decision. The congregation is for two ministers, and I am resolved not to accept of it as a single charge ; but nothing will be done till the synod's determination is known."

The synod preferred this call to that from Minihive, and, to the great joy of the congregation at Perth, he was ordained to be one of its pastors on the 14th of August, 1777. About a year thereafter, he was married to Jane, daughter of the Rev. Alexander Moncrieff of Culfargie, minister of the Secession congregation at Abernethy, in Perthshire. Mrs. Pringle was the youngest of fifteen children born to Mr. Moncrieff by a second marriage. He was first married to a daughter of Sir James Clark of Pennycuick, and afterwards to Jane, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Lyon, minister of the parish of Airlie. Mr. Moncrieff was one of the four brethren who were separated from the Church of Scotland in the year 1733, and founded the Secession Church, with so much honour to themselves and spiritual benefit to the people of Scotland. He succeeded Mr. Wilson as Professor of Divinity in the Secession Church, and was himself succeeded in that office by his own son, the Rev. William Moncrieff of Alloa, to whom reference has already been made.

Dr. Pringle had two sons and four daughters. One of his sons died in infancy ; and the other, the Rev. William Pringle, is a minister of the Secession Church in the United States of America. His two oldest



daughters and the youngest still survive ; but the third died about sixteen years ago, leaving behind her a large family. She was the wife of the Rev. John Jameson, late of Methven, who was the grandson of another of the four seceding brethren, the Rev. William Wilson of Perth.

At the time of Dr. Pringle's settlement the congregation was very large, consisting probably of three thousand souls. The first time he dispensed the Lord's Supper, there were about three hundred young persons and others who applied for fellowship ; two hundred of whom were admitted after suitable examination. His labour about this time was very great, and his situation altogether not a little trying to a young man in the commencement of his ministry. Although he accepted of the charge on the express condition that it was to be collegiate, yet ten years had nearly elapsed ere a colleague could be obtained for him. No fewer than five attempts to obtain one proved abortive. As a matter of course, there was dissatisfaction ; the people were broken into parties, and began to criminate one another ; it was scarcely possible that, in these circumstances, the minister should escape from blame ; he did not escape ; one party or another accused him of opposing its wishes ; and he was subjected to years of harassing vexation, on which he never could look back without pain. After these troubles had continued for a considerable time, he began seriously to inquire what might be his share in the controversy which God was so obviously pleading with his people. This led him to search himself with special prayer and fasting ; and the result was, a conviction,

wrought deep into his mind, that his estimate of the trust committed to him, in the charge of so large a congregation, had been hitherto very defective—that his concern for the wellbeing of souls had been neither so earnest nor so exclusive as it ought to have been—and that, however guilty others might be in causing dissensions, he could neither have peace within, nor expect peace on the field of his labours, till his own sins, as thus discovered to him, were confessed and forsaken.

By the blessing of God on these exercises, his heart was greatly softened, and willingly laid itself very low in devout humiliation. The fruit of them was sweet, and it was abiding. He has often remarked, with holy gratitude, and the blush of self-abasement, that about this time he began to enjoy the gracious presence of God, in his private studies and public ministrations, to an extent which was entirely new to him. This greatly encouraged his heart, and caused him to hope for a happy issue to the course of trial through which he was passing. Before being led to suspect himself, or to deal in earnest with his own heart, he seems to have thought of demitting his charge; but afterwards he resolved to abide at his post, unless they who were over him in the Lord should, without any solicitation from him, deem it their duty to set him free. In this change of mind the hand of God was conspicuously seen; it was the turning point of his pastoral history, and involved blessings to many who were then unborn. As his own spirit was corrected and improved by the power of divine grace, the spirits of his people were improved also; and in a short time measures were taken, if not with unanimity, at least with comparative har-



mony, which led to the settlement of the Rev. Richard Black as his fellow-labourer in the work of the gospel, on the 3d of April, 1787. There is here a lesson to Christian ministers which they all need to study. When contentions come and evil ensues, they cannot be silent, but are bound, by their divine Master, to show the people their sin ; but neither can they speak, it may be, without giving offence to one party, or to both ; and, when so situated, it becomes them to suspect their own hearts and govern their own spirits, to drink deep into the spirit of their Master, and to exemplify, in times of trial, that patient self-denial of which he has left them so rich an example.

The collegiate connection between Dr. Pringle and Mr. Black continued, to the peace and profit of the congregation, and with a measure of mutual affection and esteem, for about thirty-three years, till at last it was dissolved by difference of view about the late happy union between the two great branches of the Secession Church. To this union Dr. Pringle, after carefully considering its terms, became a cordial friend ; for, whatever may have been his previous views, he had lived long enough to see the evils of division, as well as the very insufficient grounds on which even good men are often left to maintain it. He belonged to the committee chosen by his synod to aid in framing a basis of union ; and by his influence with brethren on both sides, by whom he was held in much esteem, he contributed not a little to its consummation. Mr. Black opposed him in this, and, in common with a few others, insisted on stipulations which a great majority deemed uncalled for. When the union was formed he protested

against it ; not considering his protest sufficient, he withdrew from the fellowship of the united church, with a few of the people who adopted his views ; and his connection with his colleague and congregation was, on the 21st of November, 1820, formally dissolved by the Presbytery. That Mr. Black, however much mistaken, was actuated, in taking this course, by a strong sense of duty, there is no room to doubt ; the sacrifice to which he submitted shows that he was disinterested ; and justice to his memory requires us to say, that if his views were indefensible they were honestly maintained. He, also, is now gathered to his fathers, having survived Dr. Pringle a little less than six months ; and it is pleasing to record, that although diversity of view, aggravated, it may be, by some infirmity of temper, did separate them in the church below, yet they still looked on each other, and loved each other, as children of the same family, and heirs of the same heavenly inheritance. During the last illness of Dr. Pringle, they met and prayed together in sweet and holy fellowship, as a foretaste, no doubt, of that higher fellowship where prayer is lost in praise and desire in fruition. As servants in the house of God, they were faithful, each according to his own view of what his Master required of him ; and now they rest in peace, “ waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of the body.”

The vacancy occasioned by Mr. Black's retirement was supplied in rather less than a year, by the call and subsequent ordination of the writer of this Memoir. In the movements which led on to this event, Dr. Pringle took a lively interest ; the unanimity of the



congregation pleased him exceedingly; and it is known that he anticipated from the result considerable satisfaction. Between him and his second colleague a friendship was formed, which, if auspicious in its commencement, was deepened and confirmed by the lapse of years. Few relations of the kind were ever more agreeable; and if, in any degree, "it was the staff of his old age," let God be magnified. This second collegiate relation lasted for nearly eighteen years, and although, as was seemly in the circumstances, Dr. Pringle only took one of the three services each Lord's day, yet he was ever ready to extend his labours, when, by illness or otherwise, his colleague was prevented from officiating. He seemed to have a growing delight in conducting the public services of the church; and even in accepting proffered assistance, which occasionally came in his way, he was more frequently actuated by respect for the fellowship of the gospel than by a desire for personal ease. Of him it may be said, with emphatic truth, not only that love to the gospel, and delight in preaching it, grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength, but that they stood out, fresh and vigorous, to the very end of his declining years.

When, after the fiftieth year of his ministry, the congregation invited him to a public entertainment, and made him a handsome present of plate, he was greatly pleased with this mark of attention from a people who had shown him so much kindness; yet he disliked the public notice to which it exposed him, and felt the whole scene to be like a solemn leave-taking, little expecting that twelve years of pretty active ministration were yet

in reserve for him. Although, during the most of these years, his bodily strength and even agility remained with but little abatement, yet about two years before his death the signs of decay became more and more evident. He felt a degree of fatigue after preaching to which he had been formerly a stranger. His memory, also, began to fail him in preaching, although rarely in prayer; and of this he now and then complained with a submissive sadness which was not a little affecting. The last public service he performed was on the forenoon of the first Sabbath of March, 1839. His disease had then begun to operate, but he insisted on preaching, and would not allow his colleague, who was then also slightly indisposed, to know of his illness till the Sabbath was over. After preaching, he was more than usually exhausted, looked yellow and bilious, but returned to church in the afternoon. His disease turned out to be jaundice; but in so mild a form, that his medical friend had hopes of being able to check its progress. As he had been liable to slight bilious attacks, from which he often recovered with surprising rapidity, his family also indulged hope of recovery; but it was otherwise determined—his hour was nearly come—the messenger had arrived who was to carry him away to his Father's house—and, after an illness of ten weeks, he died in the morning of Sabbath, the 12th May, 1839, in the 87th year of his age, and 62d of his ministry.

These ten weeks were in fine keeping with the deep-toned godliness of Dr. Pringle's previous life, and exceedingly confirming to the Christian friends who had access to his bedside. There was scarcely a



cloud to darken his horizon, except on a few brief occasions, when weakness, or a slight increase of disease, partially disturbed his recollections, or interrupted for a little the tenor of his thoughts. Nor, on the other hand, was there anything of what might be called rapture; the whole scene was marked by holy tranquillity arising from settled confidence in God, and sustained by constant meditation on the promises of his grace. Most impressively was it evident that the struggle with sin was well nigh over ere the struggle with death began; his soul was ripe for glory; and he seemed to have little else to do than to sing with the holy Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 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; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles." There is one exception to this tranquillity, which prevailed but for a little while; and as the pain which it occasioned marks the tenderness of his conscience, it is worthy of being recorded. On being asked, one morning, how he had passed the night? he replied, "I was a good deal disturbed by what I now see to have been a temptation of Satan, inducing me to magnify the usefulness of my past life, in various things connected with the public interests of religion; but after a while the Lord let me see the snare, and these words were seasonably suggested to me, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.'"

His bodily affliction was throughout remarkably mild; of sickness or pain he experienced but little; and even his weakness, although towards the end it was great, was not so oppressive as in many cases it becomes. Of this he often spoke with devout thankfulness. "The kindness of God to me," he would say, "is wonderful, in loosening the pins of this tabernacle, and taking it down so gently. It is all mercy—mercy—mercy." The Supper was dispensed in the congregation on the second Sabbath of April, about a month before his death; and after losing all hope of officiating on that occasion, he seemed anxious to be able to sit down among his people, for the last time, at the Lord's table. In this also he was disappointed; for although he had revived a little ere the day arrived, yet leaving his house, or even his room, was altogether out of the question. Still, he took a deep interest in that season of holy fellowship, inquired about the messages delivered to the people, and thanked God with much emotion that the services of the sanctuary were still carried on. On Thursday, before this dispensation of the Supper, a number of elders were ordained over the congregation, and in this also he felt much interested, the more so, no doubt, that, much to his gratification, Mr. John Jameson, his own grandson, was one of those set apart to office. It was in the forenoon that this service was performed; about the time that public worship began, he fell into a kind of slumber, but after a while awoke, and asked the hour; and being told it was about twelve o'clock, he hastily requested to be set up in bed, directed his daughter to read over to him several portions of scripture which



relate to the office and ordination of elders, and then presented an earnest prayer for the blessing of God on the men who were that day set apart to the office. This little incident bespeaks the man ; the hand of his God had laid him low, but the spirit of the office he had so long borne was still vigorous within him ; and although he could not, as heretofore, preside among his people in scenes of solemn interest, yet neither could he refrain from taking part with them, according to the circumstances in which he was placed. The assemblies of the saints were the home of his heart, and to their God he could say, with a sincerity and pathos seldom surpassed, " Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth."

During his illness, many friends, and these of various denominations, but chiefly of his own session and flock, were admitted to short interviews with him, most of which will be long remembered. In these interviews, he spoke briefly but strikingly to the point. On seeing the faces of individuals, he recollected, with unusual readiness, their personal and domestic circumstances, and shaped his address accordingly, touching freely on their besetting sins, as well as on their trials or mercies ; so that while some retired under the convictions which his parting faithfulness had produced, others were confirmed in the faith, and soothed by the consolations of that gospel which he had so long preached to them from the pulpit, and was now preaching from the bed of death. By these efforts his remaining strength was often much exhausted ; but as he could not be easily induced to desist from them, and as it



pained him that any should be disappointed who desired a parting word from him, his medical advisers judged it best that, to a considerable extent, his wishes should be gratified. Nay, the privilege of speaking for Christ, and beseeching others to cleave to him, amidst the solemnities of his last illness, seems to have been specially desired by him. Not long before his departure, he remarked to his daughter, "I have often prayed to God, in my closet, that he would enable me, on my deathbed, to speak a word in season to those who may come to visit me; and I think that, in a great measure, he has granted my request."

From beginning to end of his illness, his mind was almost constantly occupied with the things of the heavenly world. This earth and its concerns, except in so far as they relate to the church, seemed to have completely sunk from his view. Whether awake or asleep, his meditations turned on "the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God;" and to those about him he often spoke of the happiness he experienced in having the hope of the gospel as the anchor of his soul, both sure and stedfast, entering into that within the vail. "O, sirs," he would say, "what a comfort is it, after a long journey, and sometimes a rough road, to have a home, a happy home, at night, 'an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!'" His previous familiarity with the scriptures was of great use to him on his deathbed. Whole chapters of them, and even books, such as the Epistles of Peter, would pass through his mind with great distinctness; and, by something like a revival of memory, he quoted scripture more accurately than, after care-

ful preparation, he had been able to do in the pulpit during the few last years of his ministry. The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, were passages in which he greatly delighted; he called them his charter; they had been much the food of his early piety, and they cheered and sustained him in age and in death. To a friend who, one day, asked him how he felt, he replied with great interest, "All peace; I have just been going over my charter for an eternal world, and I find all safe in Christ Jesus." Soon after the disease commenced, he became conscious that it was the last messenger, and was so pleased to have it so, that he did not like to hear of recovery. Prayers for it he considered as scarcely becoming; and to one of his daughters, who, one morning on entering his room, said to him, "Father, you look well this morning;" he replied, "I will never look well till I get on my shining garments, which no jaundice can tarnish." The child-like simplicity with which he cleaved to the word of God, and drew his meditations directly from it, even when too weak to read it for himself, was peculiarly edifying. "Read at leisure," he would say, "and let me have time to meditate;" and on one occasion, when the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians was read to him, the words, "that I may win Christ, and be found in him," so completely overpowered him, that, in broken utterance, he said to the reader, "Stop, stop, and let me think!"

His delight in the word of God increased very remarkably after he was confined to the chamber of affliction. "Formerly," he would say, "I was engaged in studying the scriptures for others; but now I have



nothing to do but feed on them for myself, and I find them unspeakably refreshing." On the afternoon of Saturday before the communion above referred to, he said, after getting some refreshment, "I'll go to sleep now; for if the body sleeps in Jesus in the grave, it is surely better to sleep in him here, where soul and body are still united." Then his heart seeming to overflow with heavenly delight, he spoke as follows:—"Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love! O, what a blessed sickness! Come, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of separation, and these mountains will soon be all demolished before me. Then poor, unworthy I will be taken up, and set down before the throne, one of the greatest miracles of mercy.—His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.—O, sirs, I think this is eminently the case with me. Before I lay down here, I never got such clear views of the Lord's kindness to me, and of his providential dealings with me; and it is all from his own sweet word." Although, as already remarked, he suffered little pain, yet he had occasionally a fit of retching, which, connected with his extreme weakness, was a considerable trial to his patience. After one of these fits, he remarked, "I am sometimes like to say, How long, O Lord, wilt thou not relieve thy prisoner? But no: I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. Although the fig-tree shall not blossom—yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

He was full of Christ himself, and eager that all who were dear to him might also be filled with him.



Observing the extent to which the time of his daughters and granddaughters was taken up in attending on him, and on those who called to inquire for him, he one day said to them, with much emotion, "O, it is a sad thing to go through a house like this for a whole day, bustling about your work, and speaking about common concerns, without getting any attention paid to the welfare of your immortal souls. Let the Lord be always before you. Acknowledge him in all your ways, that he may direct your steps. Pray with and for one another. Read the word of God, and meditate upon it."

The last text from which Dr. Pringle preached was Psalm cxvi. 7,—“Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.” This subject, so suitable to his own case, took a deep hold of his mind; and during the early part of his illness he expressed a desire to preach from it again, that he might warn the people of God against those things which tend to draw them away from their rest. All who knew his domestic habits are aware that he attached great importance to the worship of the family, as at once a homage due to God, a testimony against domestic ungodliness, and a special means of sanctifying domestic providences, whether prosperous or adverse. This also shewed itself strong to the end. His grandson, already referred to, was in the habit of coming in to conduct the evening worship at the usual family hour. On one of these occasions he found his grandfather asleep; and as he was now very weak, it was judged expedient not to disturb him, but to worship in a separate room. This accordingly was done,

and on discovering it he felt hurt, and charged the family not to do so again, assuring them that the worship of God, instead of disturbing him, refreshed his spirits; and exacting from them a promise to awake him, if at any time he should be asleep when the hour arrived. A week or two before his death, a tendency to fainting came occasionally over him. On recovering from one of these, he smilingly said to his granddaughter, Miss Jameson, who, being with him alone, was a good deal alarmed, "O, Jeanie, woman, let not your heart be troubled; the end is not just yet; I was only sick a little." On his daughters coming in, he said to them, "O, children, I am very weak." "Yes, father," was the reply; "but your God is very strong; and what a mercy is it that you are so free from pain." "Aye," he rejoined, "mercy, mercy! I have begun to sing of it here, when entering on the dark valley, and it will be the burden of my song throughout eternity."

About three weeks before his death, when it appeared to himself and to others that he could not survive for more than a day or two, he one morning expressed a wish to have every thing said or done which remained on his heart, as to this world, that when death came, he might have nothing to do but simply to meet it in the Lord. With this view he said to his daughter, "I wish you all to come around my bed this evening, that, if I am able, I may commit you all to the Lord, and leave you on his care." His three daughters and three grandchildren came around him accordingly, and after being set up on his bed he addressed them as follows:—



“My dear children, for I consider you all as one family, I am about to leave you; but the Lord will be your guide, your counsellor, and your everlasting Father. See to it that you set him always before you; trust him, and he will not forsake you. I have often exhorted you to pray with each other: now you must do it. Believe me, that in going through this world, nothing strengthens the heart like prayer, and meditation on the word of God. Pray much in secret; that will make other duties comparatively easy. Remember to keep up the worship of God in your family morning and evening. I go away in the hope—I may say in the confirmed hope—of meeting you all in that happy world where there is no separation.” Then, after committing his daughters and granddaughters to the care of Mr. John Jameson, in whose discretion and kindness of heart he placed great confidence, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and said with great solemnity, “I commend you all to that merciful God who has led me, and fed me all my life long in the wilderness, and who, I trust, is about to receive me home to his eternal rest in glory.”

This effort had well nigh accelerated the crisis, but a little repose recruited him, and he lived on for three weeks, exemplifying the power of divine grace, and his own remarkable ripeness for heavenly glory.

Not long after this, as Miss Jameson one day was standing by his bedside, feeling very sorrowful and shedding tears, he looked up and asked her why she wept? “Oh,” said she, “what is to become of us poor children when you are taken away? We never were fatherless till now.” At this he felt displeased, and

looking at her rather sharply, said, "O, Jeanie, have you no faith in the promise of God? Can you not say, 'when my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up'? He who has taken your father home to be with him in glory, and who is now about to take your old grandfather, will take care of you. Put your trust in him, my dear child; he will be better to you than ten fathers; he will keep you while in the wilderness; he will perfect that which concerneth you; he will be with you when you come to the Jordan of death; and he will be your portion for ever and ever." Thus did he check the excesses of sorrow, and invite to confidence in that undying Father whose grace heals the wounds inflicted by his providence, and whose love is a fountain of endless consolation to all who rely on him.

The length of time that life continued, after he was reduced to great debility, was surprising to his medical friends, as well as to others. On the evening before his death, there was little more evidence of its being at hand than there had been weeks before. About midnight, however, a change came over him, which, although slight at first, was so discernible as to induce his daughter in attendance to awaken the rest of the family, who in a little were all around his bed. About three o'clock in the morning he seemed to be a little relieved, and said to them, "You may all go to bed again, for there is no death in the cup to-night." Some left the room, but others lingered; and soon it became evident that he was sinking rapidly. A little after five o'clock in the morning his colleague came in, and on being informed of this, he said, "He is ever



welcome." The scene was sweetly solemn, and invested with a moral grandeur which the mortal eye does not behold. Its sorrows were great, but they were illumined and relieved by that light which the gospel sheds on the bed of death. Children, and children's children, were weeping around, while, in the tranquillity of his sanctified spirit, the venerable object of their solicitude was welcoming death as the portal of life, and waiting till that grace which had supported him hitherto should burst into glory. After his colleague had engaged in prayer, one of his daughters whispered in his ear, "My dear father, Christ is waiting to receive you." "Yes," was his reply, "he will receive me to glory, and he will be better to you than many fathers." Although he now spoke with difficulty, yet he seemed inclined to speak on in that heavenly strain which was so natural to him, when his colleague said to him, "Doctor, you must not speak so much, you cannot stand it now." To this he replied in his usual quick way, although with slow and burdened utterance, "Well, man, speak ye, and I'll hear." This led to the repeating of some passages of scripture in which he was known to have much delight; and at the words, "Fear not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God," he interposed, saying, "*I am thy God!* Man, there is a great deal there!" "Yes," it was replied, "there is more there than can be seen here, and even although you were yonder, it will be beyond your conception; but when you arrive yonder you will see enough." With great energy he rejoined, "Aye, man, plenty, plenty; but I'll not can fathom the half of it." After this he scarcely spoke, and in a few minutes breathed

his last. He had often spoken of the morning of the Sabbath as a desirable season for a Christian to die, and it was the season appointed for him; for his spirit left its tenement of clay just about the hour when he usually rose from bed to enter on the exercises of the Lord's day.

Of the high estimation in which Dr. Pringle was held by the inhabitants of Perth, a very pleasing specimen was given on the day of his interment. Upwards of a thousand persons, decently attired in mournings, attended his funeral. Many of these, as a matter of course, were members of his bereaved congregation, or ministers of the gospel, or other friends of the family who had received invitations; but not a few, who had received no invitation, attended of their own accord, being eager to show this mark of respect for the remains of the man who had so long been an ornament to their city, and in whose character the Christian minister had shone forth so conspicuously. Opposite his house the crowd was great; and the instant his coffin, borne shoulder high, became visible, there was a deep silence, interrupted only by the sob of sorrow, or here and there the wail of an infant in the arms of its mother. Through the whole line of procession, to the place of interment, shops were shut and business suspended, while the streets on either side were lined with people, whose tearful eyes and calm deportment betokened the sadness of their hearts. The city felt it had lost a friend, and so in particular did the members of his own congregation, who, when they saw borne to the house of silence the remains of their devoted pastor, wept for themselves and for their children,



remembering the affectionate fidelity with which he had beseeched and warned them, and sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no more in the land of the living.

On the day after his interment, being the Lord's day, his people were addressed, in the forenoon, by the Rev. John Jamieson of Scone, between whom and Dr. Pringle there had long existed a very intimate friendship, and a strong feeling of mutual esteem. In the afternoon they were addressed by his old friend, the Rev. Dr. Mitchell from Glasgow, and in the evening by his colleague. The passages of scripture on which these addresses were founded are, Gen. xlix. 33; Deut. xxxiv. 5; Acts viii. 2:—"When Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."—"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord."—"Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." The interest shown by the public on the previous day was renewed on this occasion. The church, throughout the day, was crowded to excess, but particularly in the afternoon, when hundreds eager for admission had to retire disappointed; and it is hoped the impression produced will be long remembered, as a call to searchings of heart, and a warning to prepare for that eventful day which is so certainly and so soon to overtake us all.

In personal appearance, Dr. Pringle was peculiarly prepossessing. His stature, although not tall, was above the middle size; his figure compact and well-

proportioned; and his countenance bold, open, and expressive; while his quick and penetrating eye was a ready index to the promptitude of character. With a sound and healthy constitution, he combined great muscular power and proneness to activity, particularly in walking, which, aided by his habits of early rising, and strict regularity in eating and drinking, contributed not a little to preserve him from corpulency, and other unhealthy tendencies which are so apt to creep in upon the man of years. Attention to these things he regarded as, in its place, a religious duty, the neglect of which in others was offensive to him; and when brethren somewhat his juniors complained of their growing inability to walk, he used to say to them reprovingly, "Had you made more use of your limbs in time past, they would have served you better in time to come." Without being a stickler for matters of mere etiquette, he was remarkable for good breeding—the gentleman in deportment as well as in heart; and although, on special occasions, his manners partook a little of that olden formality which latter usage has smoothed away, they sat well on his character, and conciliated respect as well as expressed it.

As "a steward of the mysteries of God," he was well furnished for the service of his Master. To a good understanding and lively imagination, which seldom escaped from proper restraint, he added very respectable professional acquirements. His acquaintance with the Word of God, which he studied much in its original tongues, was correct and extensive; with the details of systematic theology he was quite familiar; and his knowledge of geography and history, common



as well as ecclesiastical, with a considerable extent of miscellaneous reading, opened to him the fields of creation and providence, and contributed not a little to augment and diversify the treasures of his mind. These acquirements he contrived, amidst many avocations, to keep fresh for use by constant study, and brought them out in his ordinary ministrations as occasion required. As a preacher, he enjoyed from the first, and retained till near the end, a high degree of popular acceptance. His commanding appearance and clear melodious voice gave him every external advantage; while the sincerity and heart so conspicuous in his addresses had a happy effect in commending them to his hearers. There were times when he fell below himself; his memory, though retentive, was not always ready; and this, as a matter of course, produced a hesitancy which interrupted the stream of sentiment, and marred the general effect. But when he was free from such embarrassment, as was often the case, there was a fluency and warmth and cogency in his utterance which arrested the audience, and caught them away into deep sympathy with the mind of the speaker.

Although he did not hesitate to preach from little previous study when circumstances shut him up to it, yet he made conscience of rigid preparation for the pulpit, and thought it his duty to write and mandate his discourses even in extreme old age, when a more relaxed preparation would have been much less painful to himself, and as much, at least, to the advantage of the people. Seldom, it is believed, did he fix on a text without seeking it from God in prayer; and when, in connection with prayer, he found a text which opened

with ease and interest to his mind, he proceeded under the pleasing anticipation that God would bless it to the souls of his people. In thus judging from the state of his feelings, however, he was sometimes misled; for when study went ill with him, he was apt to suppose that he had chosen the wrong subject or the wrong way of managing it, and thus, under an impression that God was forbidding him to proceed, he was occasionally driven from his subject when near the hour of public service, and thrown into considerable perplexity. Good men in the ministry of the gospel have often fallen into this snare; they have forgotten that liberty of spirit, although exceedingly desirable, is a very dubious index of duty—that the choice of a subject deliberately made in the exercise of faith and prayer, should, in ordinary cases, be followed out without regard to fitfulness of feeling—and that messages, prepared amidst much difficulty and many painful misgivings, are often remarkably owned of God for the edification of his church.

Although the good man of whom we speak kept strictly within the limits of his office, yet there was an edifying diversity and fulness in his ministrations. For a long time past, at least, he dealt but little in doctrinal disquisition; but in dealing with the consciences of sinners, in pouring the consolations of the gospel into the wounded spirit, and in delineating the varieties of Christian experience, he had peculiar address; and being observant of his own people, as well as of others to whom he occasionally ministered, he recurred to one or another of these topics as circumstances seemed to require; so that, both at home and abroad, he was felt to speak words in season more frequently, perhaps, than most of his contemporaries.



In speaking of Dr. Pringle's personal character, the first thing that strikes us is his piety. This was the leading feature of his character, the secret of his happy superiority to the casualties of this world, and the source of that holy tranquillity which marked his end. He was a godly man—a man of prayer. So much was this the case, that it seems impossible for those who knew him ever to think of him without thinking of the throne of grace. Piety, with him, as with all who possess it here below, had its seasons and its varieties, its high times and its low times; but it was not a thing of fits and starts. No; he was habitually devout. Confidence in God, and delight in praying to him, was deeply wrought into his nature, and gave itself out in fine accordance with the varied circumstances in which he was placed. His piety flowed in contrition, it flowed in supplication, it flowed in heartfelt gratitude for the mercy which followed him; it pervaded his character; it made intercession for the whole family of man, but especially for the church, and for that portion of the church which God had been pleased to place under his pastoral care. Many a time and oft did he pray for his flock, and for his colleague in the ministry, and all the people of God on the earth, when no ear heard him but that which is uncreated, and no eye saw him but that of the omniscient God. From between six and seven o'clock in the morning, the time when he usually arose, till nine, the hour of breakfast, he was generally employed in prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, as matter of personal exercise. Every returning first day of the week he regarded as specially a season for prayer; and the

easy, artless fervour with which he conducted public devotion betokened a reverend familiarity with that heavenly country whence the children of God in this world derive all their supplies. It was his practice, three or four times a-year, to set apart a portion of time for family prayer and fasting. On these occasions his spirit was often peculiarly soft and tender ; while the spiritual necessities of his family, of his congregation, of the church, and of the world at large, were all made the matter of earnest supplication.

The times of dispensing the Lord's Supper were, with him, special seasons of devotional excitement, particularly when it was his turn to preside ; and in presenting the prayer which immediately precedes the distribution of the elements, his spirit was, in most cases, remarkably elevated. His people will not soon forget the earnestness, the fervour, the liberty, the solemnity, with which, on such occasions, he poured out his heart in thanksgiving for the Holy Supper, and in supplication for the blessing of its great Lord on all who were to partake of it. He had great delight in this ordinance ; he considered it as the grand instrument of confirmation and joy to the people of God in this world ; and he found it indeed to be the "Eucharist," for it filled his heart with gratitude and his lips with praise. Of him it may be said, more than of most of the godly, that prayer was the guide of his footsteps, and the solace of his spirit amidst the thorny paths of life. Whatever gave him particular uneasiness in his own exercise, or in his family, or in his congregation, or in the church, or in the world, he not only touched in his ordinary devotions, but usually



made the matter of separate prayer. The apostolic injunction, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God," seemed written on his heart. This injunction he acted out, and he was blest in doing so. His spirit, when ruffled by irritation, was speedily tranquillized by it; he was freed from many anxieties which the less devout have to endure; and he was raised to a degree of heavenliness of mind which made prayer the very element in which he delighted to move. So much was this the case, that a respectable minister of the Church of Scotland is said to have lately remarked, "I have known many men who felt much at home in prayer; but as for Dr. Pringle, he seems just to lift up his hands and enter heaven."

He had a peculiar facility at introducing religious subjects into common conversation—not only at funerals, where scenes of sadness opened the way to it, but also in promiscuous parties, or when travelling, or in his incidental walks. Often did he succeed in this way in arresting the attention of the gay or the frivolous, and in producing a good impression, where brethren in the ministry, of considerable standing, could not have ventured on it. On such occasions his personal worth ensured respect for him where he was known; and even where he was not known, his venerable appearance and obliging deportment were sure to repress every thing like rudeness, and often to conciliate esteem. A variety of incidents, illustrative of this view of his character, occurred in the course of his life; but as many of them, although floating in

the circle of his friends, are not duly authenticated, they cannot with propriety be recorded. One Sabbath morning, about twenty years ago, he had occasion to ride out from Perth to preach in the neighbourhood. After proceeding a little way, he was overtaken by a gentleman, also on horseback, who seemed equipped for a long journey. They soon got into conversation; and on Dr. Pringle expressing his surprise that a person seemingly on secular business should be travelling on the Lord's day, the gentleman replied, that he was a stranger in Perth, and, as the morning was fine, he thought it better to proceed a stage or two than to remain in the inn, especially as he happened to be travelling for the benefit of his health. The excuse was a better one than can often be furnished on such occasions; but it led to a conversation on the sanctification of the Sabbath, which induced the gentleman to say at parting, "Sir, you have convinced me that I am wrong; and I give you my hand, that, except in cases of obvious necessity, I shall not again be found travelling on the Sabbath day."

This is a mere specimen of what was very much the manner of the man. As a travelling companion he was always agreeable, and often facetious, but he rarely forgot what was due to his character as a minister of Christ, and in all circumstances stirred himself up to impress, if possible, the thoughtless or the profane. The good done by him in this incidental way it is impossible for us to estimate; we must wait till the day declare it; but his example points us to a field of usefulness which, by many Christians and Christian ministers, is too much neglected, and which, if cultivated with



wisdom and faithfulness, might yield far more fruit unto holiness than has yet been reaped from it.

It will easily be inferred from what has been said, that Dr. Pringle was a man of very considerable decision of character. Decision was a part of his physical temperament, and it was sanctified by grace into an instrument of usefulness. He might be misled in forming his purpose, but he could not be easily driven from it after it was formed. There was a holy daring about him, which, whenever he saw a thing to be right, urged him on to the doing of it without staying to count the cost; and if the seeming excess of this power sometimes hurried him into indiscretion, there was yet an honesty about him, and a zeal for God, which half redeemed the indiscretion, or caused it speedily to be forgotten. Although decided, he was not obstinate, especially in the latter part of his life. If he had the courage to proceed when he thought he was right, he had also the courage—a much more rare and peculiar quality—to retrace his steps when he saw he was wrong. The mere pride of consistency, or the fear of censure from man, seldom led him astray; and although, in every case of importance, he took time to reflect and to pray before he would depart from his meditated purpose, yet, when treated with that respect which was due to himself, and to the subject which occupied his mind, he was remarkably open to persuasion, and confessed his mistakes with the manly frankness which bespeaks the upright and the noble mind.

Another peculiarity about Dr. Pringle was the very unusual extent to which he was kept free from the infirmities of the aged. Bodily infirmity he scarcely

knew till very near the end of his pilgrimage ; infirmity of temper, which is so apt to grow with years, seemed in his case to diminish with years ; and as to that infirmity of understanding which creeps so surely on with the decay of those organs on which mind in flesh so much depends, his share of it was much less than usually falls to the lot of the aged—as the volume which he lately gave to the public, nearly the whole of which was planned and composed after he had entered on his eighty-fourth year, very strikingly shows. But what requires to be particularly noticed here is that infirmity of character, if we may so describe it, by which the aged are so apt to drop behind their times, or to become fixtures in society ; and from this Dr. Pringle was remarkably free, although he lived in times of onward movement which distanced many of his contemporaries. It is the manner of aged Christians to dislike change just because it is change, without caring to inquire whether it is for the better or for the worse. The very depth and sincerity of their piety is often made the occasion of increasing this dislike ; their habits of thought and practice are not only formed, but consecrated, as it were, by devout association ; and they are usually very averse to be disturbed by what is new. In all the evangelical churches of Britain which are not fettered by human legislation, but have the liberty necessary to going on to perfection, this has been a trial to many of the aged for a considerable time, and particularly for the last twenty years. A spirit of inquiry has been abroad in the church as well as in civil society ; the one has, in fact, been a stimulus to the other ; and while, in many cases, the



result has been a nearer approach to the great standard of belief and practice, yet many of the aged have taken offence. They stand in doubt of their juniors; they are alarmed at the want of reverence for ancient landmarks of human erection; and give themselves up to lamentation over the fancied degeneracy of the times.

Of this feeling Dr. Pringle partook very little. He lived in an age of progression, and he progressed along with it; he saw that the church, in all her departments, has much to learn, and much to unlearn; and when change was proposed, he was not alarmed, but set himself to examine it with the predetermination to adopt or reject it, according to his view of its intrinsic merits. Nay, years, in this respect, seem to have produced upon him the very opposite of their usual effect. As they rolled on, he learned to look more freely about him, and devoutly to compare the present with the past; and thus it was that, instead of contracting, they liberalized his mind, and set him freer from the influence of custom and prejudice than he had been in earlier life. Of the narrow views he had formerly entertained, he became quite sensible, and deeply regretted their interference with the exercise of that charity which Christians in a state of imperfection owe to each other. From these narrow views, however, he was happily delivered, and various incidents in his later history give very pleasing proof of this. He was an old man when the union was proposed between the two great branches of the Secession Church. At first he saw considerable difficulty in the way of its being scripturally effected, and a large portion of that difficulty no doubt arose from the predilections of his early

life ; but he set himself to consider the subject in the spirit of candour and prayer, and the consequence was that his difficulties were removed ; he became a decided friend to the union, and rejoiced in it till the day of his death, as a special token of the divine goodness, and a happy means of strength and prosperity to an important department of the Christian church. It is likely that, at the commencement of his ministry, he was opposed to the *corruptions* of our state churches, rather than to the *principle* of a civil establishment of religion. Afterwards, however, he became more decided in his opposition to that principle ; the discussion of the question about the magistrate's power in religion, which agitated the Secession Church about forty years ago, carried him forward very considerably ; and when, about seven years before his death, the same question was brought into national discussion under the name of Voluntaryism in religion, as opposed to secular compulsion, he hailed that discussion as the harbinger of good, urged his colleague to take part in it, and avowed his opposition to all state churches, as unscriptural in themselves, and grievous obstructions to the progress of the gospel.

When he was first settled in Perth, the Lord's Supper was dispensed only once in the year, and as crowds of people were in the habit of attending, there was a long succession of Table services, and no fewer than eight or nine ministers usually employed, with three separate worshipping assemblies on the Sabbath, and two on the Saturday and Monday. About twenty years after his settlement, the Supper began to be dispensed twice a-year ; after this had continued for a



time, it was dispensed thrice a-year; a few years ago it was extended to four times, with a considerable abridgment of the week-day services, and such an alteration of external arrangements as rendered the exercise of communicating as nearly simultaneous as the circumstances of the congregation would admit. In all these changes Dr. Pringle entirely concurred; nay, he was active in promoting them. He came to see that, however interesting or useful the gatherings above referred to may have been in their day, that day was gone by—that they interfered injuriously with the regular services of congregations—that the extent to which Preaching-days were carried interfered with due frequency in the administration of the Lord's Supper—and that the process of filling and emptying tables created a confusion in the house of God altogether out of keeping with the solemnity of the service which was going on. It were wrong to suppose that he had no difficulty in adopting these alterations; he had, at first, great difficulty; his attachment to the olden practice was strong; it was strengthened by hallowed remembrances of the most pleasing and impressive kind; but when circumstances required him to consider the subject, he took it up on its own merits, and his past attachment gave way to his sense of present duty.

In short, the liberality of his spirit, in all its bearings, grew with the growth of his general character, and remarkably increased in warmth and expansion as his end drew near. In maintaining what he believed to be the truth of God, or due to the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was unbending, and men of dubious

piety or purity could not easily gain his confidence ; but his heart opened to the people of God of every denomination ; he had no difficulty in giving a good man credit for honesty, or piety, or good intention, although he differed from him ; love to Christ, and to the cause of Christ, was ever a passport to his heart and his home ; and often did he please himself with the thought, that after all their party contendings, the true followers of Jesus Christ are much nearer to one another than they are aware of. It were superfluous to speak of his zeal for the spread of the gospel, for that is known to all who knew him. Being himself a partaker of redeeming mercy, he was anxious that all the world should partake of it along with him ; and as he felt himself approaching the confines of eternity this anxiety gathered strength, breaking out frequently into earnest supplication, and in appeals to his people on behalf of the heathen, which they will not soon forget. To Bible and Missionary Societies, and measures for reclaiming the heathen at home, he was ever a devoted friend, keeping himself familiar with the history of their operations, and doing every thing in his power to promote their success. In the Foreign Missions of our own church he was profoundly interested ; he regarded them as the commencement of an auspicious era in her history ; and when they touched himself in a tender part—when the Lord called to them an excellent youth on whom he greatly doated—he made the sacrifice although it cost him a pang, and willingly bade his grandson\* a last farewell, that he might go far hence to the Gentiles. Most ardently did he long for the conversion of the Jews, as an event

\* The Rev. Mr. Jamieson, of Goshen, Jamaica.



fraught with unspeakable benefit to the cause of Christianity ; and not only did he study with great care, the modern history of that people, and the reports of Christian efforts on their behalf, but kept himself till the last, or at least till very near it, at the head of a little private circle, which sent its annual contribution to the society for their conversion.

Dr. Pringle was as remarkable for his confidence in Providence as for his reliance on the promises of grace. These two, indeed, usually go together ; and in his case their union was beautifully exemplified. The delightful truth, that “all things,” in providence as well as in grace, “work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,” had a deep hold of his mind. The consequence was, that while he was alive to adverse providences, whether national or local, public or private, and observed them very closely, he seldom, if ever, fell into despondency. No : when the storm of adversity beat heavily upon himself, or upon others around him—and during the years of his pilgrimage there came much evil as well as much good—his heart found rest in the God of its salvation, and sang to itself in strains of heavenly hope, as well as of holy resignation, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble ; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.”

The great political movements of Britain and of Europe are a department of Providence in which he took a lively interest ; not because he cared for politics as a mere matter of human speculation, but because he considered Europe, and particularly Britain, as the scene pointed out by prophecy, on which God will do great things for the establishment of civil and religious liberty ; and in this way for the advancement of the spiritual reign of Christ on the earth. He did not believe that piety will prosper to any extent till faith is emancipated from human authority ; nor did he expect that this emancipation can be effected till, in countries called Christian, the principles of civil liberty, and the proper sphere of civil rulers, are better understood. With him it was matter of confident belief, that political despotism, particularly in its encroachments on religion, is the grand obstruction to those reforms in the church which are necessary to render her a nursery of piety. Thus, the zeal for civil liberty which burned in his bosom through life was kindled from the altar of his piety ; and as, towards the end of his life, he was actuated by a strong conviction that great changes for the good of the church are now at hand, his interest in the great questions which are agitating our own country was sustained to the last. Not long before his death, and when it was supposed that he had bidden adieu to all such matters, he one day said to his colleague, “ Sit down, and tell me about public events ; for since I lay here I have fallen out of the world, and do not know what the Lord is doing ;”—and after being informed about a number of things, chiefly in answer to ques-



tions put by himself, he said, referring to a change of her Majesty's Ministers which, about this time, was attempted, "Well, well, the Lord will do his own work, but he will do it in his own way."

But he delighted in contemplating the providence of God on a small as well as a large scale—in relation to individuals and families, as well as in relation to nations or the church. He considered himself and his family as pensioners on Providence; and when difficulties occurred, of which he had his own share, he confidently anticipated that God would provide. It was his manner to carry all such difficulties to the throne of grace, to spread them out before Him who feeds the ravens and makes the lilies to grow; and often had he the high satisfaction of receiving a temporal mercy, sweetened and enriched by the consideration that it was sent in answer to prayer. Many instances of this kind occurred in the course of his life; but there was one which struck him very particularly. A good many years ago, a demand was made on him for a considerable sum of money, which, in point of fact, he did not owe, and the payment of which he might have easily resisted. After reflecting, however, on the circumstances of the case, he resolved to admit the demand, but was greatly perplexed by the consideration that he had not the means of meeting it. This led him to spread out his complaint, and to seek direction where the solace of his sorrows had so often been found; and a short time thereafter, as he was retiring from a meeting of the Bible Society, an individual who knew nothing of the case, and from whom he had previously no expectations, put a small parcel

into his hand, saying, "There are a few notes to you; give ten of them to the society, and keep the rest for your own use." On going home and examining the parcel, he found that, after deducting the ten pounds for the Bible Society, there remained the exact sum referred to above. It was not in every case that his difficulties were so remarkably removed; but so submissive was his piety, even in cases of sore bereavement, that whatever pleased God, in matters connected with his lot in life, soon came to be pleasing to him; and in this way he learnt, after the manner of the apostle of the Gentiles, in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content.

It will easily be supposed that so close a student of Providence would make many references to passing events in his public ministrations: and it is well known that Dr. Pringle was not only much in the habit of this, but managed it with peculiar skill. The maxim, that Providence is the handmaid of grace, was ever present to his mind, and it was his daily aim to reduce it to practice. Sometimes he would interweave a reference to cheering or trying events with his ordinary course of instruction; at other times he would choose a subject suited to the circumstances in which he, or his people, or the general community, happened to be placed; and on these occasions he seldom failed to produce a deep impression, magnifying to his audience the goodness of God, or unfolding the vanity of earth and its attractions, and setting the importance of eternal things in a very striking point of view. His allusions, in prayer, to passing providences were very instructive; and although they might sometimes be rather



minute, or now and then embrace an incident known to himself, but too recent or remote to be generally understood, yet, upon the whole, they were greatly edifying, as a development of his own devotional habits, and a specimen of that pious emotion with which the Christian should ever contemplate the ways of God upon the earth.

In discharging the duties of the pastoral office, Dr. Pringle was most exemplary. He had chosen this office in his youth; and neither the maturer judgment of his after years, nor the many difficulties he had to encounter, ever induced him to repent of the choice. Next to a personal interest in the gospel, his highest ambition was to proclaim it to others; and when it seemed good to the Holy Ghost to connect him with that flock of which he was so long an under-shepherd, he was eager to promote their best interests, and studied to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful;" and at this attainment he, through grace, arrived, although not, as he often confessed, in all its perfection, yet to a degree highly creditable to the Christian ministry, and encouraging to those who come after him in the discharge of its arduous duties. The preaching of the gospel he ever regarded as the leading part of a minister's work, and to it he gave his chief attention, making conscience, as already hinted, of preparing for it with great care, and taking pains to diversify his messages with doctrine, and reproof, and correction, and instruction in righteousness, as circumstances seemed to require. He felt that, in order to seasonable

preaching, there must be intimate acquaintance with the people—with the state of their knowledge—with their spiritual attainments or deficiencies, their domestic circumstances, and the temptations to which they are exposed; and this led him to be very assiduous in the more private duties of his office.

The good old Scottish practice of *diets* of examination, and of pastoral visitation from house to house, he kept up with great punctuality, not only in the prime of his life but even in extreme old age. It was only about a year before his death that he fell materially behind in these services, and so great was the importance he attached to them, that he could not be induced to give them up sooner, although both his family and many of his people entreated him to do so, as they saw he had no longer strength to sustain them. In his attentions to the afflicted he was also most exemplary. To the house of mourning, and the bedside of the sick or the dying, his visits were ever welcome, and ever willingly paid to the utmost of his power. Many, who could have borne witness to him in this respect, are fallen asleep; but not a few survive whose hearts can tell, not only of the holy fidelity with which he probed the consciences of the afflicted in cases where he stood in doubt, but also of the kindliness of affection, with which, in cases where he had little doubt, he soothed the spirit of the dying Christian, sympathizing with his infirmities, correcting his mistakes, or fanning the flame of his heavenly delight. Nor did he content himself with spiritual ministrations to those whom God had touched with affliction, but gave liberally of his substance, in cases which were known to require it, or



stirred up others to give for the supply of their temporal necessities. The poor he considered as committed by Christ to the affectionate care of their brethren; and so deep was his conviction that every thing external connected with the church should be provided by her own members, that, when his own hand could no longer be stretched out to give, he directed his family to see to it, that his weekly contributions for the poor and for missions, as well as for other things connected with the congregation, should be punctually continued till the end of his life.

Next to the preaching of the gospel, that part of his pastoral work in which he most delighted was the religious instruction of the young. At an early period of his ministry, he began to have separate classes for the young, one for males and another for females, which met every week, during the months of winter and spring. In these classes he laboured with much delight; and, to a very gratifying extent, he reaped the fruit of his labour in the spiritual improvement of his charge—the lambs of the flock—which is ever an object of tender interest to the right-hearted minister of Christ. His winning way of addressing the young soon gained him their confidence; and in bringing down religious truth to the level of their capacity he was peculiarly skilful. As a matter of course they became strongly attached to him, and expressed their attachment in a variety of ways, alike gratifying to his feelings and creditable to their own. The pastoral attention to the young, which, early in his ministry he thus exemplified, has now become general in the churches of Britain; it is one of the most auspicious signs of our

times ; a change of which he often spoke with delight, as likely to operate very powerfully on the religious improvement of the church at large.

Thus did it come to pass, that with the young and with the old—with all, according to their circumstances—he was constantly endeavouring to make full proof of his ministry ; and it pleased God to place him in circumstances which tended not a little to cheer him on. His people knew his worth, and esteemed him very highly in love, for his work's sake. Whatever might be his trials with individuals—and who, in so wide a field of labour, can expect to be free from trials?—the congregation, as a body, appreciated his character, consulted his feelings, and showed a laudable concern for his comfort and success. Their affection for him—which was great—showed itself most when it was most needed. Repeatedly did they come forward, in the most frank and liberal manner, to supply his wants, when unforeseen occurrences had brought him into pecuniary difficulties ; and even at the time when his public labours began to be diminished, they made a handsome addition to his stated income, which was continued without abatement as long as he lived.

Although, as a member of Church Courts, Dr. Pringle seldom entered into prolonged discussion, yet his piety and weight of character gave him great influence with his brethren. In attending meetings of Presbytery and Synod, he made conscience of punctuality ; his opinions on matters of business before them were always listened to with respect ; and often did he succeed in bringing cases of very considerable difficulty to a wise and amicable issue.



Such is a short account of the man who occupied so long, and so efficiently, a place among the ministers of the Secession Church. Had he no infirmities? He had, and he knew that he had; he saw and confessed them every day. His temper was naturally quick; and his bold determined spirit, which could not easily brook resistance, occasionally got the better of him, especially in the earlier part of his life. His faults, however, which were few, and generally connected with good intentions, were lost to the eye of charity in the luxuriance of his Christian graces. And how delightful is it to reflect, that whatever they were they are his no more; they dropped from his spirit when it let fall its mantle of clay; and now he is joined to that mighty throng who stand "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

Although the numerous duties of his pastoral charge left Dr. Pringle little leisure for authorship, yet this medium of usefulness in the cause of his Lord was not altogether neglected by him. In the year 1781, he published a very useful little tract, entitled, "THE DUTY OF PRAYER RECOMMENDED, WITH SOME THOUGHTS UPON SOCIETIES FOR PRAYER AND RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE," chiefly for the use of his own congregation, and as a means of aiding his oral instructions on a subject which through life he had much at heart. In 1796, or about the time when, in some of the British Churches, the spirit of Missions began to

show itself in some vigour, there came from his pen a much larger production, "ON PRAYER FOR THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN ALL THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES, AND FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL AMONG HEATHEN NATIONS." While this work gives an interesting view of the state of evangelical instruction in most of the churches of Europe and America, at the time when it was written, it also exemplifies the heavenly delight with which its author hailed the beginnings of revival, and the importance which he ever attached to the prayers of the godly, as the grand means of preparing the church for her own extension and prosperity. About twenty-seven years ago he published another work much larger than either of the former, and entitled, "A PRACTICAL VIEW OF CHRIST'S DIVINE AND MEDIATORY CHARACTER." This volume was intended as an antidote to what he considered as "new and dangerous opinions," vended about the time of its publication; and, independently of its controversial bearings, which produced but a local and transient excitement, it gives a view of the mediatory character of Christ, which is well fitted to be permanently useful.

His largest and last work, however, entitled, "SCRIPTURAL GLEANINGS," a volume of between five and six hundred pages, and published only about nine months before his death, is that in which posterity is likely to feel the deepest interest. With the exception of that part of it which treats of the being and attributes of God, this work was planned and composed by him after he had entered on his eighty-fourth year,—an achievement, the literary labour of which has seldom been attempted at so advanced an age. On this



work the Christian public have already pronounced a favourable verdict. It is an epitome of the doctrines which its author preached as well as through life endeavoured to practise; and there is little doubt it will long be read, not only by his own people, who delight to recognize in it much of his wonted manner of address, but also by many in various communions who never listened to his living voice. It not only traverses the whole field of revealed truth, but, without the stiffness or formality of system, divides it into suitable compartments, and is so executed as to keep up a succession of thought so rapid and sketchy, and yet so satisfactory, that while the less informed are encouraged to proceed, the man of intelligence is pleased and edified.

Still there is a desire expressed by not a few, that something in shorter compass and still liker the man—some little Christian keepsake, exemplifying the blunt but holy simplicity with which, especially in latter years, the warm strains of piety flowed from his lips—might be provided for them. In compliance with this desire, the following Sermons and Letters have been put to press, not on account of their literary merit—for to this they make no pretensions—but because they call up the living man in all the ease of his heavenly habitudes, and are likely to be read by many of his friends as a softly cogent admonition to be followers of them who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises.

# SERMONS.

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## SERMON I.

Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,  
Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.—  
LUKE ii. 28, 29, 30.

It is a fact fully attested in the history of militant saints, that although there is a substantial sameness in the leading traits of their character, yet there has, in all ages, been found a striking variety in their exercises, their experiences, their trials, their attainments, while in this world. Many passages of scripture, I apprehend, warrant us to conclude, that when they arrive at their Father's house above, they will be able to remember and record all the way which the Lord led them in the wilderness, to prove them, and try them, and humble them, and do them good. May we not, then, hope to hear Abraham tell over both what he saw and what he felt on the mount, where he received his Isaac safe from the altar? and listen to Jacob while rehearsing the interesting particulars of the gracious interview he had with the angel at Peniel? and when all the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles,



and martyrs, with the whole assembly and church of the firstborn, shall, with all the confidence and liberty of saints made perfect, unbosom their inmost thoughts and recollections to one another, that all may unite in one harmonious anthem of praise and thanksgiving to God that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever?

But our text invites us to contemplate the singular attitude and exercise of a saint on earth, and to listen to the rapturous praises and fervent prayers which he sent up to God on a most singular occasion. The name of this saint was Simeon. As scripture is silent concerning his genealogy, it would be vain to hazard conjecture; only, it is probable he was a person of some eminence among the few fearers of God in those times, as he was brought forward to give so clear and explicit testimony to the divine character and honour of the Redeemer when only a babe in his mother's arms, and that, too, in the presence and hearing of all the priests and people then in the temple. His character is drawn in these few emphatic lines—"He was a just man, and devout, and waited for the consolation of Israel."

A remarkable circumstance is recorded concerning him, ver. 25, 26,—“The Holy Ghost was upon him, and it was revealed unto him, by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.” We are not told when Simeon got this interesting revelation; but it assured him of two things—namely, that he should see the Saviour in the flesh before his death; and that this remarkable sight would belong to the concluding scene of his mortal life. Let us now contemplate the good old saint's holy rap-

ture when he received the full accomplishment of the prophetic revelation formerly granted him. “He took him (the Lord’s Christ) in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”—I shall call your attention,

First, To Simeon’s attitude and action, in taking up the child Jesus in his arms;—and,

Second, To his exercise: Praising God, and praying for his departure from this world.

I. With reference to his attitude and action, when he first saw Mary bring her holy babe into the temple, he seems to have been suddenly moved by the Holy Ghost to know that this lovely infant was the Lord’s Christ, formerly so designed in the revelation given concerning him. In an ecstasy of holy joy and delight, he quickly advanced to meet the happy mother, and gently lifted the tender babe from her bosom, and took him in his arms.

There are some peculiarities in the circumstances and external conduct of Simeon, on this extraordinary occasion, which never did and never will again take place in the case of any other believer. But these are recorded by the Holy Ghost, both as a testimony of the Lord’s favour to this holy man, and as an instructive lesson to the followers and friends of Jesus to the end of time. They that honour God, he will honour. The obvious lessons which we may learn from this interesting scene are,

1. That Simeon clearly knew this child was the pro-



mised Messiah, the Saviour of the church.—He no sooner saw him, than he instantly concluded that this child was the incarnate Son of God, whom all the patriarchs and prophets had been long expecting to see, and had not seen him. Two very important lines of Christian character here present themselves to view, common to Simeon and every believer:—First, They all obtain a saving knowledge of Christ. Simeon immediately knew that this child was the Saviour sent from God;—and, Secondly, He obtained this knowledge from the Holy Ghost. This is clearly hinted in ver. 27. He came by the Spirit into the temple, just when Joseph and Mary entered with the child. There are no doctrines more prominently brought forward in the word of God than these two, viz. that the knowledge of Christ is absolutely necessary to salvation, and that such knowledge can only come from God, by the saving illumination of the Spirit. It is this alone which distinguishes true knowledge from that speculative and notional acquaintance with the doctrines of the gospel which many acquire by mere human education and study. These may illuminate the mind and store the memory, but they never shed any renovating influence on the heart. The knowledge which the Spirit of God pours into the soul is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus. Now, each true believer is as really the subject of this internal illumination of the Spirit as was good Simeon.

2. Simeon believed in the Lord with all his heart.—He held the blessed babe in the arms of his body. This was the literal fulfilment of the promise formerly given him; but it was only an outward sign of some-

thing far more important and spiritual. While he clasped the body of the Saviour in the arms of his flesh, his faith embraced him as his Saviour and his God, and thus led him with delight to exclaim, "I have seen thy salvation." His eyes saw, his hands could handle, the body of his dear Lord; but his faith realized and terminated on the person, the divine character, and work of the Saviour. In this there is an exact resemblance between Simeon's exercise and that of all saints. They see not, they handle not, the body of their Lord; but by faith they see him in the glass of the word; they embrace him too in the arms of their affection, saying, "My Lord, and my God! My beloved is mine, and I am his." I do not say that the faith of believers always acts with the same degree of strength and evidence. The mind may often be darkened with temptations and unbelieving perplexities, and then it staggers at the promise. But even then it will put forth its trembling finger to touch if it were only the hem of Christ's garment, and the compassionate Saviour will not reject this feeble effort,—Matt. ix. 20.

Saving faith is always represented in scripture as that active principle in the soul by which we receive and rest on Christ alone for salvation. Hence it is figuratively set forth as coming to Christ—looking to him—leaning on him—trusting in him—eating his flesh and drinking his blood. All these varied forms of expression are intended by our Lord to simplify and explain the nature of this exercise, and bring it down to the level of the weakest capacity in the church. It consists simply in a cordial reception of Christ in his person, righteousness, grace, and fulness, as he is freely



offered to us in the gospel,—John i. 12. “To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.”

3. Simeon's faith wrought by love.—The act of taking the child in his arms strongly expresses the ardour of his love to Christ. We naturally attach the idea of strong affection to the action of the mother, when she presses the babe to her bosom. So was it now with this good man. His love to Christ ran out in such a strong current, that he took the Saviour in his arms and pressed him to his bosom. The Lord himself explains the woman's caresses, who washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, as a strong expression of her ardent love to his person,—Luke vii. 38. He also showed his peculiar love to John at the passover supper, by admitting him to lean on his bosom. It is so also with the grace of faith, when it acts with liveliness and vigour. It always terminates on Christ Jesus in the word, and embraces him with strong spiritualized affections. Hence says the spouse, “I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go.” When Jacob found him at Peniel, he refused to let him go until he obtained the blessing. Faith is said to work by love, first toward Christ Jesus, as immediately presented in the gospel, and then, through him, it ascends to God himself as its ultimate object. “By him,” says the apostle, “we believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”

4. Simeon made a noble confession of his faith in

Christ.—The murderous intention of Herod against the Saviour was not yet known in Jerusalem. But it must have been generally known that the priests and rulers, and Rabbis of the Jews, were all expecting a temporal Messiah to appear in great external pomp and power, to set up a worldly kingdom, and free that nation from the Roman yoke. It was, therefore, a very bold and noble act of Simeon's faith, to stand forward in the midst of these proud and haughty rulers and priests, with the infant Saviour in his arms, and proclaim him the true Messiah who had, only six weeks before, been born in a stable at Bethlehem, and laid in a manger. But true and strong faith can leap over all mountains of difficulties, and beat them small as the dust. When we believe with the heart unto righteousness, we can then with the mouth make confession unto salvation, in the face of all enemies and dangers. The blind man, whose eyes the Lord had opened, was not afraid to go to the bar of the Jewish council, and plead the cause of the Saviour in the face of his bitter foes,—John ix. It was a sign that the faith of Joseph and of Nicodemus was very weak when they dared not confess their Lord in the Jewish council. But at last their faith triumphed over their fears, when they boldly stepped forward and put honour on the very corpse of their dear Lord at his burial.

5. Simeon's heart was filled with joy on this occasion.—While he held the blessed babe in his arms, his soul was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory: "He took him up in his arms, and *blessed God*." The word signifies both to bless and give thanks. His soul was wrapt up in an ecstasy of holy wonder at this as-



tonishing manifestation of the love of God, in sending his own beloved Son into our guilty world, in human nature, to finish the redemption of sinners; and he was amazed, also, at the goodness and condescension of God, in honouring him to see this great sight, and to give an open testimony to the honour of the Redeemer ere he should close his eyes in death. He was thus filled with all joy and peace in believing, and vented the joy of his heart in a song of praise and thanksgiving. It is so also with the believer when he obtains a spiritual view of the King in his beauty: "Though we see him not with the mortal eye, yet believing we rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.—We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

Let me now ask you, Christian reader, Have you got a hold of the Saviour by faith? This is an inquiry of the last importance to your present comfort and your eternal felicity. Thousands in Judea heard of him; multitudes, in all the cities and villages of that land, both saw him and heard him proclaim the message of mercy;—nay, some were the subjects of his miraculous cures, who did not believe on him. He once cured ten lepers, and only one of them returned to give God thanks. You must not deceive yourselves, by imagining that because you have sat under a gospel dispensation all your days—have heard the gospel of salvation proclaiming, in your ears, the doctrines of eternal life—nor believe that the mere intellectual knowledge of these doctrines—you must not suppose, I say, that any or all these attainments do amount to what the scriptures denominate a *reception of Christ*.

Our Lord, in the parable of the man who sought the goodly pearl, says, that when he found the field where the pearl was, he sold all and bought that field, and so obtained possession of the pearl of great price. So the sinner who has got possession of Christ by faith, has been brought to give up all for his sake; to give up not only the world and all its allurements, so far as these would rival Christ in his affections, but he must also put down and cast off every passion and principle of corruption in his soul, which would oppose the reign of grace in his heart and life. His language must be, “Yea doubtless I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him.” Have you, then, been brought to make this choice for eternity? Why, then, you have got a saving discovery of the suitableness and excellency of Christ as a Saviour—you have actively accepted of him as your own Saviour, according to the free offer made of him in the gospel—you have done this under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, who can only persuade and enable the sinner to believe—and then you will not be ashamed to confess your love to Christ before an evil and gainsaying world.

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## SERMON II.

## SIMEON'S PRAYER, WITH CHRIST IN HIS ARMS.

“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

EVERY thing which we see and hear, in this remarkable passage, is altogether singular and extremely interesting. This was the first time the Saviour of the world had appeared in his own temple. He was the great Lord of that temple ; and an ancient prophecy foretold, that Messiah would fill it with his glory. Though he was carried into it only in swaddling bands, yet he was recognized and greeted by two distinguished witnesses, under an immediate impulse of the spirit of prophecy, viz. Simeon and Anna. Good Simeon was so transported with what he saw and felt, that he ardently prays for a present dismissal from this vale of tears, to his eternal home in his Father's house. It is always very interesting and instructive to witness what passes in the deathbed-scene of a fellow-mortal—especially of a near and beloved relation—and still more if that relation be a lively saint, dying with his eyes fixed on heaven, his Saviour enfolded in the arms of his faith, and his lips filled with the high praises of his God. And such was Simeon, standing in the temple with Jesus in his arms, praising God, and praying for his dismissal from this sublunary scene.

We can easily imagine a case which has often occurred in common life. A child of a family has left his father's home—has traversed many foreign countries—struggled through many difficulties—weathered many storms—narrowly escaped many dangers—at last returns homeward, and arrives on the summit of a mountain, from which he has a distant view of his father's house, where he hopes to spend the remainder of his life, in peace and comfort, in the bosom of his beloved family. The cheering prospect fills his soul with joy and rapture. Such was the transporting view which Moses got on the top of Pisgah; and such was Simeon's, now standing in the temple, when, with the Lord of the temple in his arms, he cried out, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." And no wonder, when we reflect on his present high attainments. He held God incarnate in the arms of sense; his faith clearly perceived the divine dignity of the child born and the son given. What more could he enjoy on earth? what higher could he expect in heaven, except the more full manifestation of the same glory, and a more adequate capacity for perceiving and enjoying it in the upper world? "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." There are four ideas here expressed, which demand attention, viz.

I. The denomination which Simeon gives to death—*a departure*.

II. His prayer for death—"Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart."

III. The kind of death for which he prays—"Let thy servant depart in peace."



IV. The argument with which he urges his prayer —“ For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

I. Let us consider the denomination which Simeon gives to death. It is *a departure*.

At death the soul departs from the body. It is literally so both with the righteous and the wicked : death is the termination of the union now subsisting between their soul and body. But the term here employed includes two ideas, which are only applicable to the death of believers, namely, the liberation of a prisoner from confinement, by the act of a righteous judge; and the departure of a ship from her moorings, when all things are prepared for the voyage. In none of these senses does any sinner die. Not the former; for God, the righteous judge, does not dismiss him from prison as a liberated captive. No: his guilty spirit is driven away in his wickedness as a condemned criminal, to be shut up for ever in the inner prison of eternal darkness. In the departure of the sinner at death, he is dragged away and delivered over to the tormentors, bound under the chain of the curse of an angry God. His dead body is left behind, and may be deposited in the grave with all the honours of a pompous funeral, yet the curse of God rests upon it, and it will be brought forth at the general resurrection, reunited to its own spirit, to receive that awful sentence from the lips of the righteous Judge, “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

How different is the departure of a child of God when his soul is separated from the body ! He dies

in peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Saviour comes and receives his departing spirit; the Holy Ghost, who has completed his sanctification, fills his heart with the joyful anticipations of a happy immortality; and his spirit departs in the well-grounded hope of being ever with the Lord: "They shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their body, each one walking in his uprightness,"—Psalm lvii. 2. Their body they must leave behind, and nature may shrink at the prospect of being unclothed with the outer garment of flesh and blood; but as it is the established law of their heavenly Father, they bow in submission to his good and sovereign will, consigning their dust to their Saviour's keeping, in the assurance of a happy resurrection at his second coming.

I said that we may consider the term *departure*, in the text, as a figure borrowed from the conduct of mariners setting sail from a foreign shore. In this sense, the word *departure* is taken actively. All hands are busy completing the lading; while some lift the anchor, others unfurl the sails; and when all things are ready the vessel floats away. Human life, in this world, has often been compared to a voyage at sea. The body is a frail bark launched on a sea of trouble, at our very entrance on life. We are constantly exposed to all the varieties of calm and storm—of sudden squalls and cross currents. These occurrences are the common lot of saints and sinners. But the grand difference is this, they are bound for quite opposite shores. The believer has taken out his clearance for Immanuel's land; he sails by the chart of the holy word of God; the Lord himself is his pilot; the gale which carries



him forward to the desired haven is the influence of the Spirit; and his anchor is faith in the promises of God. He may meet with some cross blasts in Providence, but his vessel cannot sink until he arrive at the shore of glory. There the body cannot as yet enter, because flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. It must be laid in the dust, to be dissolved and ultimately refined and purified, that it may be brought forth, on the morning of the resurrection, in all the beauty and glory of its resemblance to Christ's own glorious body. The prospect of this happy reunion may cheer the departing spirit of the child of God, even in the moment of his departure.

But oh, how different the sinner's voyage through life! and how immensely different his departure at death! He sets sail without needle or compass on the stormy ocean of human life. A God of grace hath provided all things needful for every Christian voyager; but the proud sinner will not stoop to take the benefit of the provisions of mercy. He will launch out in the fulness of his own sufficiency. For a season, through the patience and forbearance of God, he may float along the smooth surface of a calm and prosperous external lot—he may flatter himself that he is approaching the haven of eternal rest—but ere ever he is aware, the heavens above him begin to gather blackness, the stormy wind blows, the waves of affliction dash over his little frail bark, and it is broken to pieces on the rocky shore of eternity. He then discovers, to his utter confusion, that he had been all his life steering in a wrong direction. Instead of taking the course leading to the haven of eternal rest, he had pursued the way to everlasting

destruction; and now his wretched spirit departs into everlasting darkness, and leaves the wretched body to be imprisoned in the grave, to be brought forth, at the second coming of Christ, to receive, in union with its kindred spirit, the last sentence of condemnation from the lips of the great Judge of the quick and the dead: "The wicked shall be cast into hell, and all the nations that forget God. These shall go into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

At death the believer takes his departure from this present world of sin and sorrow. At our birth we are constituted members of the great family of man. This holds true of both saints and sinners. They compose a mixed society, out of which the church of God is selected, and prepared for glory. But at death the children of God are for ever separated from all sublunary connections, relations, and pursuits. For,

1. They depart for ever from the society of ungodly men.—The church of God, though not of the world, is yet in the world; and not a few, even of them who are the children of this world, creep into the church under false pretexts, and greatly mar her spiritual beauty as well as disturb her peace. The great Head of the church hath ordained that the tares should grow among the wheat until the harvest. But at death the believer departs to that pure society around the throne, who have all washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Nothing which defileth, or is unclean, can enter there. Abraham, in the parable, told the rich man that a great gulph was fixed between the righteous and the wicked in the fu-



ture world ; so that there could be no intercourse kept up between them,—Luke xvi. 26-31.

2. They depart from their dearest relations on earth. —The domestic and social relations which subsist in the present life constitute a sweet bond of union, and prove a strong stimulus to these reciprocal duties and kind offices of mutual friendship which embalm human society, and give a peculiar zest to the intercourse of life. What a miserable world would this be were all the endearing bonds of our social relations dissolved ! Were there no father nor mother, brother or sister, friend or favourite, the parts of the moral world would be thrown loose from one another, without any strong bond of attachment to love, and serve, and sympathize with any around us. But at death all these endearing relations are for ever terminated. They served the purpose which God designed by them while the believer lived on earth. When the disembodied spirit arrives in heaven there will be no occasion for them. In that happy world there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but the saints will be as the angels of God. A spiritual relation between the eternal Father and his spiritual children, between the Lamb in the midst of the throne and all the members of his mystical body, both in heaven and on earth, formed and preserved by their common interest in the Divine Spirit, and their delightful and holy fellowship with the angels of God, will consummate their everlasting felicity, and cement their hearts to God and to each other in the strongest bonds of pure and perfect love. It sometimes occasions a sore struggle, even to the dying believer, to quit his hold of those dear relatives who have entwined them-

selves around his heart by many kind offices of tender regard. But as death approaches, and the glories of the heavenly world open to his view, he is enabled by faith to roll them all upon the Lord, and to depart, singing as he goes, “ Whom have I in heaven but thee ; and there is none on earth whom I desire beside thee.”

3. At death they depart from all the pleasures and pursuits of this life.—While the children of God remain on earth, they are entrusted with their Lord’s talents, and get a commission to occupy them. A certain sphere of usefulness is appointed to each servant, which he ought to fill up, to his Master’s honour and the good of others, and he must fill it up if he would wish to receive the joyful sentence at last of “ Well done, good and faithful servant.” The people of God must mingle with others, in the common and lawful occupations of life, connected with the several stations in which they move. The conduct of the sluggard is as inconsistent with Christian character as that of a carnal worldling ; the worldling makes the world his god, but the Christian must subordinate the things of earth to his spiritual and eternal concerns. He may go to his farm and his merchandize on proper occasions, but he must go in the spirit of a Christian, who sets the Lord always before him ; and if he practically do so he is safe, although the last messenger may meet him in the house or in the field, and call him away at once from all these objects of pursuit. He must obey the summons, depart, and leave all his worldly schemes, to be perfected or neglected by others who may succeed him. Moses led the children of Israel to the plains of Moab, but there he had to leave them, deliver them over to Joshua, and go up to Nebo and die there. But,



4. At death the believer departs from all the sorrows of life.—Who can count the long catalogue of sorrows which sin has brought upon a guilty world? Our days are said to be few and full of trouble: the holy disciples of the Redeemer have often a great share of them. “Many,” says the Psalmist, “are the afflictions of the righteous.” Christ warns all his followers to expect them: “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” He makes special use of them as means, under his direction, for promoting their sanctification; but at death they are finally delivered out of them all. Death is the last enemy which shall be destroyed. They leave the cross behind them in Jordan, and get the crown of glory set upon their head, and all tears shall be wiped from their eyes. Into that happy world to which they go, neither pain, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor death, can enter; but the Lamb will feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water, and they shall sorrow no more at all.

5. The believer at death departs from all his spiritual enemies.—I said before, that he departs from an ungodly world, whose inhabitants often prove sore enemies to the people of God; but his spiritual enemies are his most dangerous foes. He is no sooner brought into the family of God by conversion, than the devil employs every method, by stratagem and force, to draw him aside from the paths of holiness. He studies the characters of the people of God, and knows well their vulnerable points of attack—their besetting sin—their favourite lust—their constitutional sinful bias of temper. He knows well how to adapt his temptations to their natural infirmities or acquired evil habits; and thus even strong believers have been often cast down by

him. But at death the child of God for ever departs from this region of temptation, where the prince of darkness hath his seat. The body of sin and death is for ever put off; indwelling corruption is purged from the soul; and the departing spirit appears before God completely washed, sanctified, and justified—without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. The spiritual bride of Christ enters the King's palace, all glorious within, and covered with raiment of needle-work,—Psal. xlv. 13, 14.

6. At death believers depart from the present means of grace.—The exalted Head of the church hath ordained a system of external means of grace, admirably adapted to the state of his church on earth, for gathering in his chosen vessels from the world lying in wickedness, and for building them up in holiness into eternal life,—Eph. iv. 11-13. “He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come to the unity of the faith, and to the knowledge of the Son of God, into a perfect man.” These means have justly been compared to the scaffolding employed in the erection of a great building, which is taken down when the building is completed. It is completed, with regard to each believer, when he is removed from the church on earth; he is then made perfect in holiness, and immediately passes into glory. What may be the form of administration in the upper world, we cannot say; but the scripture clearly teaches us, that the dying saint leaves behind him all the external means of grace which were so precious to him in his passage



through life. The reading of the word of God, the preaching of the gospel, the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, secret and social prayer, are the appointed mediums through which God communicates his gracious influence to the souls of his people on earth, and by which they hold communion with their heavenly Father; but when they go home to their Father's house, these external means are no more needed: when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part is done away. There will be no occasion for prayers, for bibles, nor for ministers of the gospel, when they shall stand in the immediate presence of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and see him as he is. Nay, more, the very exercise of those graces, which are denominated *militant*, will cease in that happy world. The internal principles of faith, hope, repentance, patience, &c. which take the lead, and constitute the very life of the Christian's exercise in this world, will there have no object directly to call them forth to exercise. These graces essentially belong to the constitution of the new man in every believer, and will forever remain in their principle in the glorified saint; but how they can be exercised when the promises are all fulfilled, the prayers of the believers all answered, and their enemies all subdued, we cannot easily conceive. The apostle, indeed, represents the departed souls of believers *waiting* for the adoption, even the redemption of their bodies from the dust, at the second coming of Christ,—Rom. viii. 23. And the Apostle John represents the souls under the altar, who had been slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held, crying with a loud voice, saying,

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth,”—Rev. vi. 10. But both these passages refer to events yet future with respect to the bodies of the saints and the external state of the church of Christ on earth. But, in this particular, I am contemplating the heavenly state in all its perfection, as distinguished from the present imperfect state of believers in this world; and the apostle thus distinguishes them, “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. Now abideth faith, hope, charity; but the greatest of these is charity,”—1 Cor. xiii. 12, 13.

7. The believer at death departs from his body for a season.—This seems to have been immediately in Simeon’s eye at this time. The death threatened, as the penalty of the Covenant of Works, included temporal, spiritual, and eternal death, as the punishment of sin. But the substitution of Christ in the room of sinners secured deliverance to all believers from spiritual and eternal death; and a holy God was pleased to appoint that all his chosen people should pass to future glory through the dark vale of natural death, and leave their earthly tabernacle to moulder in the dust until the general resurrection. Hence said he to Adam after the fall, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” The apostle seems to have this law directly in his eye, Heb. ix. 27, “It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment.” He is speaking of Christ’s appearing once, in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, in order to deliver his people from spiritual and eternal death; but



as for temporal death, he did not intend to deliver them from it, seeing God had ordained, by a law posterior to the fall, that all men, both saints and sinners, should once die, and leave their dusty part behind them in the grave until the resurrection. But what a vast difference between the death of the godly and the wicked! The sinner leaves his miserable remains in the hand of divine justice, locked up in the prison of the grave, to be brought forth, at the second appearance of Christ, to receive its eternal doom, in union with its miserable soul; while the precious dust of the believer shall be raised from the grave as a bride adorned with the lovely image of her glorious Husband, to celebrate the everlasting espousals in the palace of the King of Glory. The assured hope of this happy consummation may well cheer the departing spirit of the child of God when entering the dark vale of death. The righteous hath hope in his death. He sleeps in Jesus; and his very flesh may rest in hope of a joyful resurrection.

How many interesting recollections, child of God, may this subject suggest to you. You are not yet at home. You are still wandering in a waste and howling wilderness—a land of drought and the shadow of death—walking among the graves and sepulchres of the dead, and the last messenger pursuing you every moment, waiting the commission to summon your soul to depart to the eternal world. Consider, then, your latter end, and apply your heart to wisdom. Despatch the work of every day in the season thereof; night cometh, when no man can work. The present day, the passing hour, may be the last. Leave nothing until to-morrow which should be done to-day, as you know not what a

night may bring forth. Above all, be sure to have your eternal concerns settled every night, lest you should be called to depart ere the dawn of another morning. Keep your eye constantly fixed on the death and resurrection of Jesus, as your only stay and polar star in view of passing through the valley and shadow of death. By his death he destroyed death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. He went down to the chamber of the grave, to prepare for the reception of all the members of his mystical body; and he rose again to secure the happy resurrection of all his people in due time. Keeping this in your view by faith, you may welcome the king of terrors, and sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? For me to die is gain. I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

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### SERMON III.

#### II.—SIMEON'S PRAYER FOR DEATH.

"Lettest thou thy servant depart."

It may here be premised, that death, abstractly viewed, cannot and ought not to be an object of prayer to any mortal. We have a natural desire, implanted in us by God himself, to seek, by all lawful means, the preservation of our natural life. Self-preservation has been often styled the first law of our



nature. We have this law in common with all the animal creation. Every living creature has a natural abhorrence of death. Nay, the voice of God, in the moral law, accords with the dictate of natural conscience in this; for his command is, "Thou shalt not kill." He hath, indeed, given man liberty to take away the life of inferior animals, as one source of food to the human race; but no man may take away the life of man, except in self-defence, or as a punishment on criminals, justly condemned for capital offences against the laws of the country. If so, then the inquiry is, In what light should we view the exercise of Simeon, praying for his departure out of this world? It may be remarked more generally,

That death belongs properly to the broken covenant, and is to the wicked the execution of its dreadful penalty, consigning them over to eternal ruin. For such to wish or pray for death is to pray for the consummation of their everlasting misery. But even with respect to believers, although its qualities and consequences be entirely changed by their union to Christ, yet death in itself, even to them, is the effect of sin; it is still their enemy, and the last enemy with which they must grapple. It hath no sting to a believer, because Christ, by his meritorious and triumphant death, fully satisfied the holy law, and bore the curse for them. It is clear, then, that it cannot strike any child of God as the messenger of vindictive justice. This power is taken away by the death of Christ, their surety. Yet it strikes the body of the believer dead, by bursting asunder the bond of union between soul and body; and this separation gives such

a shake to the whole person, that even the holiest believer recoils from it. It is the violent separation of the two constituent parts of human nature, endeared to one another by the closest natural union and a most endeared sympathy. Death, therefore, in itself, cannot be an object of desire to a believer, and consequently is not to be prayed for. Nothing can be an object of desire to a rational creature except things which are viewed as intrinsically good, but death is the very opposite of good. Again, things which may be directly prayed for are all the fruits of Christ's purchase, and belonging to the Covenant of Grace; but Christ came not to purchase death, but to destroy it. But does not the apostle say, that he desired to depart, and to be with Christ?—Phil. i. 23. And again, 2 Cor. v. 2, "That in this earthly house we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"? He does; but in a following verse he guards us against supposing that he had any wish to part with his earthly frame: not, says he, "that we would be unclothed; but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Were it lawful to desire and pray for our death, then it also would be lawful to use means for procuring it to ourselves; but the command of God not only prohibits murder, but requires us to use all lawful means to preserve our own life and the life of others.

Is it asked, may we not pray for death, in order to be freed from great and agonizing trouble? I reply, that the sharpest trials are the visitations of God, even to his own children. He gives these trials their commission, measures their quantity, and marks out their duration.



We may lawfully employ all proper means for alleviating their pressure as natural evils, and ought to pray for God's blessing on them, and may ask also the mitigation of their severity, provided we go to our heavenly Father's throne in a humble and submissive spirit; but to pray for death, merely to be delivered from pain and sorrow, is the expression of a proud, peevish, fretful, and impatient spirit, indicating that we are wearied of the cross. It is constructively saying to God that he is an hard master, afflicting us more and longer than we are able to bear, and that we are wiser than God. We find God reproving Job, Jeremiah, and other saints in scripture, for this very fault. Why should a living man complain, as a man, for the punishment of his sin? On all occasions we should adopt the language of the church—"I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he arise and plead my cause;" or of David, "Here am I, let the Lord do what seemeth him good."

These things being premised, let us now look more particularly at the exercise of good Simeon in this prayer. And,

1. He pours out this fervent prayer with heaven directly in his eye, and Jesus in his arms.—None can properly form a judgment of the exercise of this good man, unless he has been brought into a situation somewhat analogous to his. But let the child of God be admitted, like the spouse, to sit down under the shadow of the apple-tree, under the banner of the love of Christ—that is, let him be admitted to intimate and sensible communion with God in Christ Jesus—and then he will feel the desires of his soul naturally soaring

aloft, and earnestly longing to depart to be with Christ, which is far better. It is really impossible for a saint on earth to be admitted to intimate communion with God, and not desire immediate and perfect fellowship with him in his exercise. This was eminently Simeon's happy attainment on this occasion, when he breathed out this fervent prayer; and it will also be the ardent desire of each gracious soul when elevated above the enjoyments of this imperfect state. The apostle expresses himself in very similar language, 2 Cor. v. 6-8, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

2. This prayer is presented to God in very humble and submissive terms—"Lord, *lettest* thou thy servant depart."—He has not even a wish to move one step from the place where he stood without the Lord's permission. Why, says he, "I am thy servant; and while I love thy service, I feel a strong desire to be at home with thee; but I leave the whole determination of the matter with thyself. If it be thy sovereign will that I should depart, I am willing to leave this mortal state, and go instantly home to be for ever in heaven; but if not, thy will be done." This, Christian, is the proper style in which we should address our heavenly Father, in reference to all temporal events, both comfortable and trying. We have no warrant to ask any temporal blessing in positive language, because we have no absolute promise assuring us that God will certainly bestow it upon us. We have general assur-



ances that God will give what is good. We are directed to pray for daily bread ; but the quantity must be left entirely to God himself. In reference to spiritual blessings, however, the case is different. God has been graciously pleased to give believers absolute security that all these shall be certainly conferred upon each individual believer, either in time or eternity,—Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

3. This is the prayer of a servant who supposed that his work on earth was done—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart."—His words plainly indicate the state of his heart. He had been forewarned by the Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ ; and now that he had both seen and got him in his arms, he views the great design of God in lengthening out his life on earth as fully accomplished, and so he begs to be loosed from his earthly tabernacle : "Lord, *now* lettest thou thy servant depart." As if he had said, "Now that thy word is fulfilled in me, and fulfilled to my utmost satisfaction—now that I have been honoured to see and embrace the great Messiah in human nature—I ask no more ; I consider my work on earth as finished. I pray thee to loose me and let me go." We are not told whether Simeon's request was immediately granted or not ; but it is plain that his mind was much in the same state with that of the Apostle Paul when he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God will give to me, and not to me only, but to all them also who love his appearing,"—2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. However desirous the child of God

may be to go home to his father's house, yet, if he is in proper exercise, he would not wish to leave this world ere all his work for God on earth was finished. It was this very thought which reconciled the holy mind of Paul to tarry a while in the church, at the expense of postponing his own personal enjoyment of heavenly happiness. He knew it would have been far better for himself to depart and be with Christ in heaven ; but then he saw that the infant Christian churches could not well want his presence and ministry. He was thus in a dilemma which to choose ; but the Lord solved his difficulty, and showed him that he should abide yet a little season in the church, for the furtherance and joy of their faith.

4. This is the prayer of one who had got above the fear of death : “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart.”—He speaks to God as one standing on the brink of the grave, anxiously waiting to obtain a literal sight of the Saviour in human nature, according to the revelation formerly given him. He had probably been calculating, many a day before this, upon receiving the accomplishment of the promise, as the sign of his dismissal from earth to heaven ; and now when the promised blessing arrived, he speaks as one who had set his heart and house in order, and was ready to depart at his Lord's call. He knew that he must meet with the king of terrors ; but, with heaven in his eye, and the Saviour in his arms, death had no terrors to him. “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart.” What a vast difference between Simeon's exercise and that of Hezekiah, when the Lord sent him a message of death by the prophet Isaiah,—Isa. xxxviii. 1. : “ Set



thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." The king turned his face to the wall, and prayed, and wept sore. The apostle informs us that some of the Lord's people are all their lifetime under bondage through fear of death,—Heb. ii. 14, 15. But death loses all its terrors to the child of God, whose faith directly terminates on the meritorious death of Christ on Calvary—on his triumphant victory over all the powers of darkness—and on the power of his intercession in heaven. He died to deliver them from the fear of death, by depriving it of its sting ; and he lives in glory, praying that they may be all brought home to behold his glory.

This subject, then, presents to our view an example of one both ready and willing to die. Let me ask, hast thou attained this happy degree of sanctification, Christian reader? Of all the events to which mortals are exposed in this world, death is certainly the most interesting. It is the connecting link between time and eternity. It is the concluding step of our worldly pilgrimage, and lands us in eternal weal or woe. These eyes, which may now survey the beauties of a surrounding world, will then be sealed up by the cold hand of death, to be opened no more until the sound of the last trumpet summon the dead to awake and to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. All our other bodily members will be laid under a long embargo, to act no more until the dead be raised from the grave to receive their final sentence. At death we leave behind us all the former associates of our labours, our pleasures, and our sorrows—the friend of our bosom, dear to us as our own soul. Believers must leave

behind them even those ordinances of grace which had often been as the house of God and the gate of heaven to their soul; their pastors, who had, under God, espoused them to Christ, and often been the instruments of feeding them with knowledge and understanding; and they must also depart for a season from those Christian companions with whom they often took sweet counsel, and went to the house of God in company. Nay, death will tear asunder the two constituent parts of our nature; and the body, which was the dear associate of the soul in all the actions of life, shall be left behind to moulder in the grave until the second coming of the Lord. And this separation, too, must be effected with a degree of violence from which even the sanctified nature of a child of God shrinks.

Now, if these things be so, I ask, Christian, are you making preparation for this solemn and deeply interesting result? The text exhibits to our view the example of one standing on the watch for the coming of the Lord, with his lamp trimmed, and his light burning, longing to depart. But observe, 1st, That he holds Jesus in his arms. Have you believed unto salvation? Have you received the unspeakable gift of God as all your salvation and all your desire? Are you watching and warring against corruption within and temptations from without? 2d, Simeon was praying. If you be a believer you are a man of prayer. If you have received the spirit of adoption you will be taught by him to cry Abba, Father. This will be your daily exercise. You will delight in drawing near to your father's throne. 3d, This good man was looking out for the coming of his Lord. It is very strange



and affecting to observe how few, even of the professors of religion, seem to be on the out-look for the coming of the Bridegroom. We are daily witnessing the ravages which death is making among our neighbours, our acquaintance, and our near relations. We are called often to accompany some of them to the brink of the grave, and see their lifeless remains deposited in the dust; and yet the multitude can witness this solemn scene with as much indifference apparently as if they had got an exemption from death and the grave. Now, are you, like Simeon, looking for the coming of the Lord? Are you hasting through the work of every day, as if it were the last which you had to live? Go on then, Christian, in your work of faith and labour of love, and in due time you shall reap, if you faint not.

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## SERMON IV.

### III.—THE KIND OF DEATH FOR WHICH SIMEON PRAYED.

“Let thy servant depart *in peace*.”

THE scriptural character of the people of God is, that they are men of peace. They live as much as possible in peace with all men; as blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine

as lights in the world. As they love the truth and the peace while they live, it is natural that they should desire to die in peace. And O, how important is it to have the mind composed and serene when the soul is entering the passage to the eternal world! It is presumable that Simeon, during his life, had been a man of peace, and now he is desirous to finish his course in the enjoyment of peace. Let me then inquire into the nature of that peace which he so earnestly prays for.

1. It is to die in peace with God.—This is to understand and use the term *peace* in its highest and most noble sense. Sinners may possess a degree of quiet in their mind, may have much external tranquillity in their lot, and may even have no bands in their death, and yet be utter strangers to peace with God. This peace is the distinguishing privilege of the children of God. It enters the soul in regeneration, when the God of peace takes possession of the heart by the Spirit, and proclaims to the guilty conscience, “I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.” But how is it consistent with the rectoral holiness of the eternal Jehovah to grant peace to rebel sinners? I answer, the gospel plan of reconciliation clearly settles this difficulty. It exhibits the plan of salvation as originating in the sovereign love of God, and represents him as openly declaring to a guilty world, “I know the thoughts which I think toward you: thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” But how was this great design of mercy to be accomplished? Here the great doctrine of mediation is brought forward. God spared not his own Son, but gave him to be the great substitute and surety of a



chosen company of human transgressors. He was appointed to bear their guilt and their punishment at the hand of justice, and redeem them unto God by his blood. On this great work he came at his incarnation, finished it by his death on the cross, and the God of peace brought him again from the dead at his resurrection, that he might preach peace to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh. Now this short outline of God's plan of peace directs the sinner's view, first, to the sovereign love of God as the grand source of our peace, and then to the atoning blood of Christ as the meritorious cause of our peace with God; and this in perfect harmony with the whole gospel revelation. Hence says the apostle, "Christ is our peace." Again, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Again, "Justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." This peace is brought into the soul by union to Christ through faith, which brings us to remark,

2. That to die in peace, is to die in the possession of internal peace.—This thought is intimately connected with the doctrine of the preceding particular. When the sinner enters into a state of peace with God in justification, the peace of God enters his soul in a work of begun sanctification. "The peace of God," says the apostle, "which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." It is a sense of sin pressing the guilty conscience which fills the sinner with terror; but the application of the blood of Christ to the soul purges the conscience

from dead works, and the believer enters into a state of peace. Whence is it, then, may you say, that we often find some of the most eminent saints in scripture complaining of the want of this internal peace? I reply, that we must distinguish between the actual possession of a privilege and the present enjoyment of it. How often do we see a person really possessing natural life, and yet wanting the present enjoyment of it. Bodily distress, mental derangement, or some unexpected disaster in his lot, may deprive him, for the present, of all his peace and quiet. It is so also in the Christian life. Sore personal affliction, a sore stroke of God upon his worldly comforts, a very small derangement of his mental powers, or the hiding of God's face for a season, or the assault of temptation, may so becloud the Christian's mind, darken his evidences, and perplex his spirit, as to rob him of all present peace. Such was the sore trial of Job, David, Asaph, and others. But did they lose their peace with God? No. The Redeemer says to all his saints, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you; let not your hearts be troubled, neither be afraid." We must, then, distinguish between the Christian's possession of peace and his present enjoyment of that peace;—the former belongs to his state as a believer, but the latter to his exercise and experience as a lively believer. "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" but if the child of God do not keep closely by wisdom's ways, or by the law of God, in the way of duty, he shall not experience internal peace. If he walk contrary to God, God will also walk contrary unto him; yet, after all,



he declares, "I will not take away my love from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." They only have great peace who keep his law; nothing shall offend them. But I remark,

3. That to die in peace is to die in the exercise of faith.—There is clear evidence that Simeon's faith was now predominant in his exercise. He could say to God, "I have seen thy salvation;" and therefore he could say, "I am not afraid to meet the king of terrors. I desire to depart, if it please thee, O Lord, to let me go." Now, Christian, this is the only way in which any soul can comfortably meet death. It is said of the ancient patriarchs, that "these all died in faith." It may be affirmed of every genuine believer, that he also dies in faith; but then there is a great difference between dying in union to Christ, with the grace of faith existing in the heart, and that grace in lively exercise. In many instances the faith of the children of God may be so overpowered with bodily trouble, and the powers of the mind so paralyzed, that the dying believer is incapable of the vigorous actings of the gracious principles in his heart; yet he dies in Christ, and falls asleep in Jesus. By dying in the exercise of faith I mean, the believer's meeting the last messenger under the protecting shadow of the shield of faith, or depending on the atoning blood of Christ for defence against the sting of death, and for acceptance at the bar of God. In this manner the dying saint can repose his departing spirit on the bosom of his loving Saviour, bid a cordial farewell to a surrounding world, and welcome the joys of immortality, now opening to his view. It was thus that Stephen, and Paul, and many of the

martyrs for religion, triumphed over the king of terrors in their last moments ; and even without going to such exalted examples of triumphant faith, we may often witness the cool, steady, and established believer, meeting death in the firm confidence of faith, when his exercise does not rise to joy and triumph. He meets the last enemy, wrapt in the righteousness of Christ, and leaning on the staff of the promise, and thus he quietly reclines his head on his deathbed pillow, in the sure hope of a joyful resurrection ; he departs in peace to rest in his bed, in the firm hope that his soul will walk in uprightness among the nation of them that are saved.

Mark the distinction, Christian, between a state of peace with God, and the internal experience of peace in the soul. The former consists in the removal of all the legal grounds of quarrel which a holy God had against the sinner before conversion ; but, by his union to Christ as his justifying head, God views him as now clothed with the righteousness of the surety, and fully accepted in the beloved. God is at peace with him in Christ Jesus ; and this peace is his sure, permanent, and unchangeable privilege, because God rests in his love. But internal peace of conscience, arising from experimental assurance of our interest in the love of God, is a fruit and consequence of faith, which often accompanies the exercise of that grace, but is also often wanting. How often did the Saviour blame his disciples for the weakness of their faith ? He said to Peter, “ O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? ” There is a species of assurance in the very nature of faith ; but it is only assurance of the truth of the



divine testimony and promise which we believe; whereas assurance concerning our interest in the good of the promise arises from the internal evidence of sense and feeling, confirmed by the testimony of a pure conscience, and accompanied with the external evidence of a holy life. It is easy to see how all this bears on the believer's peace, both in life and death. Does he walk by faith? does he live a life of faith upon the Son of God? Then "God will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid upon him; because he trusteth in him." Troubles may arise—the waters may swell up to the brim, but they shall not overwhelm his soul. Deep may call unto deep, but if faith be in present exercise, he can, like Peter, walk to Jesus on the top of the billows. When death approaches with his summons, he can meet the messenger, saying, "I will not fear, though I go through the valley of the shadow of death: for thou, my God, art with me; thy rod and staff they comfort me." He may not be filled with the raptures of sensible comfort, but his heart is staid on the Lord his God, and he can quietly breathe out his last prayer on earth in the words of the Psalmist, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." I knew a young man, who died in his seventeenth year, who said to a friend asking him how it was with him now, when he was on the brink of the eternal world? He immediately replied, "My sense is as dead as a stone; but my faith is as firm as a rock." In this manner a believer may die not only safe, but even glorify God in his death;—in this manner the ancient patriarchs seem to have died,—Heb. xi. 13. There is no record of

any thing remarkable said by the most eminent saints mentioned in scripture when they came to die. When the Christian has been honoured to give a living testimony to the truth of religion and the glory of God, little seems to be left for him on his deathbed but to seal his testimony with his dying breath; yet the Lord is pleased, on some occasions, to favour some individuals with remarkable enlargement and comfort on their deathbed; sometimes, perhaps, to put honour on dying believers themselves—or for the sake of some witnessing the scene—or to leave a strong testimony against some prevailing sin—or for confirming others in the faith and profession of the gospel—or to leave some careless and loose professor without excuse—or, in fine, for reasons of his own which we cannot now understand. God giveth no account to us of many of his matters; but we may rest in this, that to die in faith is to die in peace with God; and so an entrance shall be ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Though to some the entrance will be more abundant and glorious than to others, yet they shall all die in faith.



## SERMON V.

IV.—THE ARGUMENTS BY WHICH SIMEON URGES  
HIS PETITION.

“Let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

IN these words there are two arguments employed to enforce his petition; but as the petition is one, I shall consider the arguments in conjunction. They clearly intimate,

1. That he kept the promise of God in view while he thus prayed.—It had been revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ,—ver. 25, 26. On the fulfilment of this prediction was his death suspended; and now that this had been accomplished, he prays for the fulfilment of the other part of the promise. He considered the promise of Christ's appearing to him in the flesh as the certain prelude to his departure, and the one having taken place he felt himself warranted to pray for the other. May we not, from this, draw the general conclusion, that the word and promise of God are the only rule of acceptable prayer. He hath there told us what he will do for us, what blessings he will confer on us for Christ's sake, and what we may ask of him in prayer. If we ask what he has not promised to give, we go beyond the limits which he hath prescribed, and so cannot hope for an answer of

peace. Our Lord's direction is, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

2. He took God at his word.—God had told him that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Well, says he, "Lord, I have seen him—I am now embracing him in mine arms: O, let me now depart in peace, according to thy word." This particularly marks the actings of Simeon's faith in his prayer. It is the prayer of faith which God will regard and answer. Whatsoever things ye desire, says Christ, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. But to believe that we shall receive them from God necessarily supposes that we have God's word before our mind in the prayer, and that our faith is resting upon it as the ground of our confidence before him. This was Jacob's plea in supplicating God's presence and protection when he was about to meet his brother Esau and his armed followers. Jacob drew near to God in prayer, and pleaded the promise which God had given him twenty years before at Bethel: "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea,"—Gen. xxxii. 12. We may repeat the word of God in prayer—we may repeat many precious promises with ease and fluency—the simple repetition of them is not praying, in God's account, unless our faith recognise them as the gracious declarations of God to us in particular, and rest on the truth and faithfulness of the great Promiser, that he will make them out to us for Christ's sake in his own time.

3. Simeon expected and waited for his death in the



way of the promise: "Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart, according to thy word."—He viewed his death as wrapped up in the bosom of the promise that he should obtain a sight of the Lord's Christ before death should be permitted to summon him to depart. Having now received the greater blessing, he humbly cries for the lesser. Death is indeed a common event to all men; but it comes in a very different channel to saints and sinners. To the sinner it comes as the executioner of the curse of a broken law, to summon the guilty criminal to the bar of the righteous Judge to answer for all his crimes. Death is therefore to him an object of terror. But to the believer it comes as a summons signed with a father's hand, calling home a beloved child. Death is, in itself, an enemy still; but being deprived of its sting, it cannot materially injure the child of God; nay, it is made subservient to his eternal advantage. A physician frequently mixes up rank poison with such ingredients as convert it into a powerful medicine to the diseased patient. Such is death to the child of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ having drank the bitter cup of death to the bottom, filled full with the wrath of God due to us for sin, he has destroyed death, and robbed it of its power to hurt his people. Its precursors may indeed cause great pain to the clay tabernacle. If faith be weak and hope tremulous, even the spirit of the dying saint may quail at the prospect before him; but he shall die in safety and land in glory, singing, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? If we are Christ's, all things are ours, death as well as life. To die is gain. Nothing, not even death itself, can

separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. This good man had got all which he wanted and wished for on earth.—“Let me now depart, O Lord, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” As if he had said, “I have seen all that the holy patriarchs, and prophets, and saints of God, have been looking and praying for these four thousand years; I have seen the greatest blessing ever conferred on our guilty world—the most signal display of thy glory among the children of men. What more have I now to look for or expect? O, let me depart in peace.” He had not seen the actual redemption of the church finished on the cross; but having seen the incarnate Saviour entering on his great work, his faith could easily conclude that the whole design of God by him would be most certainly accomplished, though he could not anticipate the manner in which the glorious achievement should be executed. He saw, with wonder and delight, the commencement of the great undertaking in the appearance of the Messiah in our nature, and could entertain no doubt as to the full execution of what remained of the glorious plan. In full reliance, therefore, on the power and faithfulness of God, he requested permission to depart to his heavenly rest: “Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart.”

5. His present view of Christ made him willing to die: “Lord, lettest thou thy servant now depart; for I have seen thy salvation.”—What would this good man have thought had he been called to depart before he had got this confirming sight of the Lord’s Christ? Must he not have departed amidst great perplexities as to his own exercise and experience, and question-



ing the truth of God's gracious promise? But now that he had received a confirming testimony of the truths of the promise, and the veracity of the Promiser, he longs to depart to that happy world where he should eternally celebrate the loving kindness of the Lord, and his faithfulness to all generations. If we appeal to fact and observation, it will be found universally to hold true, in the experience of the saints, that the nearer they live to Christ in their daily exercise, and the clearer their views are of him when they come to die, so much the more willing are they to depart, and to be with him for ever in heaven. It is only when faith is weak, when love is cold, when hope is feeble, when their evidences for eternity are dark, and when they are too much engrossed in the cares or pleasures of this world, that the people of God are reluctant to depart from time into eternity. Many of them may be heard saying, If we were sure of landing in heaven, and of being ever with the Lord, then we could welcome death. But, believer, why are you not sure of this? why are you in the dark as to this great concern? Have you not yourself to blame? Has not God set life and immortality before you in the gospel? are you not daily invited to believe unto salvation—to receive Christ by faith, and so walk in him—and then, by a patient continuing in well-doing, to hope for glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life? But then you must give diligence to make your calling and election sure, by a life of faith on the Son of God, and by evidencing the genuineness of your faith in a holy and heavenly conversation. You have often heard of believers being troubled with doubts and fears as to their eternal state; but these may be all traced up to their

own practical declinings from God and holiness. They have great peace who love the holy law of God: nothing shall be a stumbling-block to them. The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

6. He hoped for a clearer manifestation of the glory of Christ, and the mysteries of salvation in the heavenly world.—He said, “Lord, let thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;” intimating that he expected to receive no clearer discovery of the mysteries of salvation in this world than he had already got. He had seen the Lord in the flesh; but on leaving this world—on leaving behind him the Saviour’s bodily presence, in order to finish the great errand on which he came—he anticipated, with joy and transport, the far more clear and full development of the wonderful plan of redemption in the heavenly world. Here we only see through a glass, darkly; but there face to face. Many a time the saints have felt a reluctance to depart when the messenger of death put the summons into their hand. Even Moses once and again begged permission to go over Jordan to see the good land of promise, and that goodly mountain, and Lebanon, after God had repeatedly told him that he should not be permitted. Hezekiah wept sore when he received the message of death, and earnestly prayed for a respite; but Simeon, now standing with the Saviour in his arms, longs to be gone, that he may contemplate in the light of glory the mysteries of that salvation which now began to open to his mind, while he looks upon the holy child now in his arms.—This subject may teach us,

1. That nothing can fill the soul of a sinner with



spiritual joy but a saving sight of Christ, and salvation through him. We hear nothing of Simeon's former character and exercise, except that the Holy Ghost had revealed to him that he should see the Lord's Christ ere he died. He was doubtless a good man, and waiting for redemption in Israel; but now that the promise is accomplished, and that he had got the infant Saviour in his arms, he is filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It was the most joyful day that ever Zaccheus saw in this world, when Christ called him down from the sycamore tree, went with him to his house, and said, "This day is salvation come to this house." It is said Zaccheus received him joyfully,—Luke xix. 5-9. And no wonder. The Saviour entered his house, and the joys of salvation entered his heart; and how could he fail to be joyful?

Reader, have you got a spiritual discovery of Christ and his salvation? A sight of him in the flesh is not now to be expected,—the heavens must retain him until the restitution of all things,—and though this were possible, it could not, of itself, save your soul. Thousands saw him in the days of his ministry on earth, who died in their sin. Paul had a visible sight of Christ in his glory, on his way to Damascus; but it only confounded and struck him to the ground. He imputes his saving discovery of him to an internal and spiritual manifestation to his soul, which he afterwards received. Hence says he, "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me,"—Gal. i. 15, 16. It is only by the internal manifestation of the spiritual glory of Christ to the heart, by the Holy Spirit, that the dar-

kened understanding of the sinner can be illuminated to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus,—2 Cor. iv. 6. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Now, have you received this divine internal manifestation? Then it follows,

2. That those who see Jesus by faith find complete salvation in him.—Simeon could say, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Such as were in the temple could see the babe in his arms; but Simeon saw the great mystery of redemption now brought to light in the appearing of the Saviour in our nature. He saw the Sun of Righteousness now risen with healing in his wings, and that he was come on the errand of saving a guilty world. Now, this is a discovery only got by faith. This grace sees things which are invisible to the natural man. It looks at the Saviour as embodying in himself all the blessings of salvation: to procure them by his meritorious death as a Priest—to reveal them by his word as a Prophet—and to apply them by his spirit to the heart as a King. Have you, Christian reader, got this saving sight of Christ? If so, then you have seen that all the promises of God are in him yea and amen; and that it is his special work to dispense all the blessings of the covenant to his chosen people. You may adopt the last words of the holy Psalmist, “He hath made to me the everlasting covenant; it is all my salvation and all my desire.”

3. That saving faith approaches the throne of God with humble confidence through Christ Jesus.—Good Simeon no sooner got Christ in his arms than he



looked up to the throne of Jehovah, saying, "Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Christ affirms, "that no man can come to the Father but by him." He hath removed all legal bars out of the way of the sinner's access to God by his great sacrifice. A new and living way is now consecrated into the holiest by the blood of Christ, and every believer may draw near with a true heart and in the full assurance of faith. You, believer, are accepted in the beloved, and you may call him your Father and your God in Christ Jesus. You may ask what you will at his throne, provided you only ask in faith. By Christ, says the apostle, we all have access by one Spirit to the Father. O, let us daily improve this noble way of access.

4. Hence see how a child of God may die in peace and comfort: By a firm reliance on Christ, and looking forward to the land of promise.—In this holy attitude Simeon, with the Saviour in his arms, looks up to his heavenly Father and cries, Lord, let me now depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. As if he had said, "Thou hast sent thine only-begotten Son into the world to repair the breach which sin made between thee and guilty man—to destroy the works of the devil—and, by dying, to open a safe passage home to thy eternal kingdom. Thou hast, according to thy promise, favoured me with a sight of him; and now I long to depart in peace." When Israel passed through the Red Sea, the pillar and cloud went before them into the midst of the passage which the Lord opened for them; but when their enemies pursued them into the passage, it is said the pillar of

cloud and fire came and took its station between Israel and the Egyptian army ; but the dark cloudy side of the pillar was turned toward the Egyptians, while its bright side was toward Israel. So, believer, may you expect that when you pass through the dark valley of death, the Lord will enlighten your darkness, and land you safe on the shore of eternal peace and joy. We may suppose that when the people of Israel saw Jordon overflowing all its banks, they had many anxious thoughts how they could get over to the land of promise. But when the day came that they must pass over, they had only to march forward, keeping their eye fixed on the ark stationed in the middle of the passage, and then to behold the fruitful plain on the opposite shore. And thus they all passed over dry-shod. It shall also be so with you, Christian, if you look to Jesus by faith in the hour of death, and keep your eye fixed on the heavenly inheritance reserved for you beyond the grave.

This is all very well, may some one say ; but the great question is, How may I attain and maintain preparation for my departure out of this world ? I reply,

First, You must be at peace with God.—The gospel proclaims peace to sinners in Christ Jesus ; it proclaims peace on earth and glory in the highest. God's own proclamation from the excellent glory is, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I well pleased." He hath also committed the word of reconciliation to men, to proclaim to all this important fact, " That God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses." Now, the great question which each gospel hearer should consider, and seriously



consider, is, “Am I reconciled to God?” The testimony of scripture is, that each descendant of fallen Adam is in a state of enmity against God,—Rom. viii. 7. Some sinners show their enmity more openly than others; but all the unconverted are enemies in their mind against him. To such God himself declared there is no peace: “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Now study to have this great point ascertained, whether the peace of God as yet rules in your heart. If so, then,

Secondly, You have accepted of Christ as your peacemaker.—He was sent of God to make peace by the blood of his cross; he actually accomplished the great undertaking; and to show that his Father was well pleased with him and his great sacrifice, he, as the God of peace, brought him again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. Now there is no way by which a guilty creature can enter into peace with God but by union to Christ, his beloved son. “Justified by faith,” says the apostle, “we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” He is our peace: his own declaration is, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.” All the redeemed in heaven, and all saints on earth, have received this precious gift from Christ; and the great God is at peace with them for Christ’s sake, and says, I am pacified towards you for all that ye have done. But the question is, are you at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ? have you, by faith, accepted the offers of peace and pardon proclaimed in the gospel, and cordially said, I am the Lord’s? It is here where a multitude of professors fatally mistake. The voice of the word, of

conscience, and of providence, proclaims the necessity of being at peace with God ; but many will not take God's appointed method of attaining it. They attempt to make peace with God in their own way, by forsaking the open practice of some favourite lusts—by professing sorrow for them—by commencing external reformation—beginning to pray—to read the scriptures—to attend public ordinances—and thus they persuade themselves that God is at peace with them, while sin retains its secret dominion in their hearts. But genuine peace with God commences by demolishing the strongholds of sin in the heart, casting down imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,—2 Cor. x. 4, 5. The spirit of grace brings the peace of God into the conscience, purging it from dead works, purifying it with the peace-speaking blood of Jesus, and thus shedding abroad the love of God on the heart of the redeemed. The captive sinner is thus laid low in his own sight at the foot of the cross, crying, Guilty, guilty ! God be merciful to me a sinner ! I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, O my Father ; but thou hast graciously pardoned ! Not to me, not to me, but to thy name be all the praise ! Then,

Thirdly, You must prosecute a life of practical holiness.—It is an established law in the house of God, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Eliphaz gave a sound counsel to Job, chap. xxii. 21, “ Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace ; and thereby good shall come into thee.” As a man's spiritual peace begins at his first gracious acquaintance



with God, so it can only be enjoyed in life and at death by a holy walking with God. He meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness. God will never finally cast away those whom he hath chosen ; but if they practically depart from him they shall know, in experience, that it is an evil and bitter thing to have forsaken the Lord their God, and gone astray from the paths of peace and holiness. But blessed is the man that delights in the law of the Lord ; he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper.

Fourth, You must be given to prayer.—Faith is the first vital act which the renewed soul puts forth, and it first flows out at our Father's footstool. The first breathing of the restored prodigal was, " Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." God assured Ananias that Saul of Tarsus was now a new creature ; " for behold he prayeth." The last thing said concerning Simeon is, that he sent up this fervent prayer to God when standing on the brink of the grave. Prayer is one special mean of maintaining daily fellowship with God, and obtaining all those spiritual supplies which your soul absolutely needs ; nay, our Lord directs us daily to pray even for our daily bread. Every good gift, and every perfect gift, cometh down from our Father in heaven ; and surely when the soul is about taking its departure for the eternal world, it is highly proper then to close the interesting scene by committing our all for time and eternity into the hand of Him who keeps Israel. In this manner Jacob, David,

Stephen, and our blessed Lord himself, met the last messenger and triumphed over him.

Poor sinner, your present condition is most lamentable! The God of heaven has formed your body, has given you a rational and immortal soul, and has preserved you in life while thousands around you have been summoned into eternity. You live in a land where the light of the glorious gospel is shining around you, and inviting you to come to the Saviour; but you are living without God, neglecting the great salvation, forgetting the great concerns of your immortal soul, and practically saying, "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of my own heart, adding drunkenness to thirst." But shall it be so? No, no: God hath said and sworn that there shall be no peace to the wicked. Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished. O bethink yourself ere it be too late; a God of mercy is yet waiting that he may be gracious unto you; he is rich in mercy and ready to forgive. His own declaration is, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon." Though your conscience tell you that you are among the chief of sinners, be not discouraged. Jesus declares that he is mighty to save—able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him; but you must come, and come with the finger on the sore, crying, "For thy name's sake pardon mine iniquity, for it is great!" and a God of mercy meets you saying, "Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them as snow; though they be red like crimson, I will make them as



wool." When the best robe was put upon the prodigal, his kind father saw no spot on him, but set him down to feast with his family on the fatted calf. Delay not; time is flying, and the door of mercy will soon be shut. Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation. "The spirit and the bride say, Come; and whosoever will let him come, and take the water of life freely."

## LETTERS.

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TO THE AUTHOR'S BROTHER, MR. W— P—.

PERTH, 1781.

MY DEAR WM.—I received yours some weeks ago. I acknowledge I have been too long in writing; but if you consider how busy I am during summer, you will not be surprised at my long silence. From the 1st June to the 1st September I have so much public and congregational work upon my hand, that I have not an half-hour to myself. I hope your children are now all recovered from small-pox; and that you have this as a new matter of song added to all former instances of the Lord's kindness to you and your family. It is a melancholy distemper, but so much the more is the Lord's goodness displayed by preserving in and delivering from it. The harvest is now over here, and the season was very threatening at the beginning, although latterly it has been remarkably favourable. But neither mercies nor judgments seem to have any effect upon us. The generation are growing more and more secure and hardened, notwithstanding all the alarming providences passing over us as a nation. We had none of the insects you mention, although last year they did prodigious hurt to our corns; but this, like many other judgments, passed over us unnoticed.



We have ground to fear that the Lord is about to make out his threatening, Isa. xxvi. 11,—“Lord when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed; for the fire of thine enemies shall consume them.” In a former letter I attempted an answer to your first question about the little success of the gospel, notwithstanding the clear dispensation of it. Your second inquiry is more difficult, as it goes into the deeps of Christian exercise, to which, alas! I am such a stranger. However, as it equally concerns us both to know it, I shall now send you a few thoughts upon it. You ask, How may one know whether he is growing, standing still, or backsliding, under the means of grace? As for your middle state, I apprehend there is no such thing in fact as a *standing* still. Persons must either be growing in grace or going back with a continual backsliding. Not to make progress more or less in the Christian race is to decline and go back. Your question, therefore, has but one side, viz. When may a believer be said to be growing in grace; or, how may he know that he is so? The following thoughts are what occur to me at present.

1. The believer is growing in grace when he is adding grace to grace. For proof of this you may consult 1 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. A man, you know, is said to grow in knowledge when he gets acquainted with new objects of knowledge. When a man grows in riches, he adds pound to pound, house to house, and one estate to another: so, in grace, the believer grows, when to his faith he adds virtue, &c. &c. The young child does not walk safely and erectly all at once; but first he goes by a hold, then ventures alone for a step or

two, until at length he acquires the art by practice. So the Christian goes from grace to grace, and the exercise of one grace leads to progress in another: "Tribulation worketh patience," &c. &c.—Rom. v. 3, 4, 5.

2. The believer is growing in grace when new degrees of strength are added to the same graces. Of this we have a clear instance in Abraham's faith. At first this grace was but weak, and a fear of danger made him deny his wife in the land of the Philistines; but when his faith grew stronger he faced every danger without dismay: "He staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God." At first, when the faith of the disciples was weak, every little trial put them all into confusion; but after they received the Spirit they could glory in tribulation, and meet all the terrors of persecution and death, because their grace was strong.

3. The believer is growing in grace when he cleaves faster to Christ, and rests more and more on him. Christ is the vine, you know, and believers are the branches; and the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can the believer except he abide in Christ. "I am the green fir tree," says Christ; "from me is thy fruit found." The more we cleave to Christ in duties and ordinances, so much the more will we grow in grace. It is union to Christ that quickens grace at first, and it is communion with him that makes it to prosper.

4. A believer is growing in grace when he is fruitful in good works. Good works are the genuine fruits of grace; faith without works is dead, says the apostle. You know a fruit tree cannot be thriving when it brings



forth nothing but leaves; so when the Christian abounds more in leaves than fruit, more in the profession than the power of godliness, he is in a declining state.

5. A believer is growing in grace when he brings forth fruit under trials and opposition. It would be a sign that a tree is very vigorous were it to blossom and bear fruit even in the winter season, amidst frost and snow. Such a thing is not to be expected in the natural world, but in the spiritual it is very common. In many instances, a believer's graces never grow faster than when the stormy blast of temptations and fiery trials blow in his teeth. For instance, consider the exercise of Jacob, Job, David, &c.

But to these marks of growth I subjoin the following cautions:—

1. All saints grow not equally in the same graces. There is a diversity of graces among the saints, as well as of gifts. One is more remarkable for one grace, and another for another. Abraham was remarkable for faith, Moses for meekness, Job for patience, Peter for zeal, John for love, &c. &c.; although, wherever any one grace is growing, all the rest grow in a certain proportion, though some one of them may appear more than the rest.

2. A believer is often growing in grace when, to appearance, and in his own apprehension, he is declining. There is not less growing in winter than in summer, although there is not the same evidence of it. The sap descends into the roots, and these cleave faster into the soil, and this is as essential to the tree's prosperity as a growth in branches and leaves. Just so with the Christian. The Lord, to correct him, may

for a season overcloud the sun of his comfort, tryst him with humbling and self-emptying providences, and thus bring him to cleave faster to Christ, and to think more of him and less of himself.

More might have been said on this interesting and useful subject; but what I have said may suggest other things in your own meditations. If we were really growing in grace, we would not be difficulted to find marks of it in ourselves. Farewell.—Ever your loving brother,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1782.

MY DEAR W.—Your last favour came safe to hand, fraught with the very sorrowful news of our dear father's death. It struck us very much, it was so unexpected, although we foresaw it would be the issue of the distress. I believe it would occasion the same surprise to you, who were around him, as is generally the case when death comes. Had I thought his end was so near, I would have paid him a last visit, however inconvenient. As the hurry of the funeral is now over, I beg you will send me a particular account of our father's exercise. Did he consider death as near? Did he seem to have comfort, and speak freely about that solemn change? Now, my dear brother, we are left of father and mother; but we have ground to pray that the Lord would take us up, and to believe that he will do so. He is a father to the fatherless and the orphan's stay. When we are stript of any earthly comfort, it would be well for us could we turn to God



and take him as our up-making portion. His name is the repairer of breaches. When parents or friends die, it is comfortable that we may sing and say, God lives, blessed be our rock. A faith's persuasion of our interest in the best friend is the best cordial under every bereavement. This is a new and a very loud call to consider our latter end. O that we were wise, and understood this! We have no reason to quarrel with divine providence in any case, much less in one like this, seeing we have been so highly favoured by having our parents so long. How many are left orphans from their mother's womb, or very soon after! Let us be thankful, and study through grace to be followers of their good example, and to remember their godly instructions.

We must all have our share of personal and family trials; but the Spirit saith, Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. The Lord's own people suffer no loss by their trials; they all yield a good crop of precious fruit at the end of the day. And how could you and I fill up our measure of the sufferings of Christ, left behind for us to bear, without them? His own children shall not be condemned with the world, and therefore they must be chastened when others are passed by. I suppose you have been engaged in sacramental work last Sabbath. I hope the King was at the banquet: and O, what joy does his presence diffuse among the guests! it makes a time of feasting and gladness. We have like work in view, and crave a place in your prayers.—I am ever yours,

A. P.

## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1789.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I would have written you sooner about my distress and recovery, only I understood you knew about both. I have very great reason to bless the Lord for the mildness of the visitation: and I think he told me something about the ground of the quarrel, as well as about the removal of it. A father's rod may be sharp, but it is medicinal. To be without chastisement is no sign of sonship. I am far from saying that my exercise was as it ought to have been, or as I would have wished it; yet I think the Lord helped me to some measure of thankful submission to his will, and now that he has restored me to my public work, he is bearing my charges. I'm sure he never employed any one in his vineyard more weak and unworthy; but I shall be the most ungrateful creature in the world, if I do not, with my living and dying breath, thank him, that he has been a kind and liberal Lord and Master to me. Help me to praise him for his kindness!

I hope it is going well with you in your spiritual exercise. A life of communion with Christ is a most pleasant life—it is a heaven upon earth; but it requires much care, watchfulness, and diligence, to maintain it. Our gracious Lord is holy, and he cannot, he will not hold fellowship with his people, unless they walk in the way of holiness. The deceitful, wicked, and carnal heart is so very treacherous and cunning, that it is not an easy thing to keep it with the Lord. Even when the believer is striving with all diligence, it will turn



aside after its crooked ways ; but the watchful Christian will hold on his way, and, when his heart turns aside, will, by faith, prayer, and self-examination, endeavour to bring it back to a centering in the Lord himself. I believe the experience of all saints will attest, that nothing will keep the child of God lively but daily communications of grace from above. These, my dear brother, are to be got in the way of frequent and fervent prayer ; the reading of the scriptures in secret, accompanied by meditation ; and a conscientious attendance on public ordinances. “ Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness.”

I am sorry to learn from your last, that you are not bearing so well with the present trial the Lord sees meet to lay upon you. Sure I am, our kind Father in heaven both sees it, has sent it, and, I hope, will sanctify it for good to you in the end. If God appoints the bounds of our habitation, does he not work out all the necessary crosses as well as the comforts in our lot ? And does he not all this in the exercise of infinite wisdom ? Is it like a son, a child of his family, to spurn at the cross, and endeavour to run from it ? No ; it is both very sinful and dangerous. If his own children attempt to flee from one trial, they may be sure a greater will soon overtake them. But to wait on the Lord in the day of trial is the short cut, both for obtaining comfort under it, and a sanctified deliverance from it in due-time.

You may say, according to this mode of reasoning, a person should use no means for removing trials when sent, but indolently wait the issue. I do not say so. A believing dependence on God is highly consistent

with the use of all lawful means for obtaining relief; nay, not to use such means is presumption, and not faith. But then we must be sure that the means we use for the removal of trials are lawful, and agreeable to God's word and will.

I assure you the Lord is performing the thing that is appointed for you, and the trial will continue no longer than is necessary. To kiss the rod is the only safe course. Take care of consulting with flesh and blood. Remember me at the throne.—Farewell, my very dear brother!

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1792.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I see you are still complaining of deadness, darkness, and barrenness, under the means of grace, and of the workings of a carnal corrupt heart. I am not at all surprised that you have cause of complaint: “What will you see in the Shulamite, but, as it were, the company of two armies.” The Christian's heart is a field of battle, where grace and corruption are in constant conflict. It would be strange, indeed, if this should not cause much uneasiness, especially as grace is often foiled in the contest. It shall at last be crowned with victory, but in the present state seems often to be driven from the field. Hence the darkness and despondency of saints. When they find corruption more prevalent than grace, they are ready to cast away their confidence, and say their hope is perished from the Lord. But this is as unreasonable as if an army should cast down their arms, and give up all for lost,



when only a few skirmishing parties are worsted. David spake unadvisedly when he said, "All men are liars," just because the promise was not so soon accomplished as he expected. I know the common reply made by a doubting saint to such a doctrine as this—"I could hope for victory at last too, were I sure that I am a true believer." The answer is short:—If such a person be not a believer, how comes he to have such a daily conflict with indwelling sin? A dead man is past feeling; grace struggling is as really alive as grace triumphant. I never expect to meet with a believer free from complaints while in this world, and do not wish to meet with him, provided his complaints always centre in himself.

Your case, I assure you, is not singular. The weakness of grace and the strength of corruption will be matter of complaint till we arrive at the measure of the stature of perfect men. May the Lord enable us to hold on in the conflict to the end! Grace is sufficient.

I hope by this time you have heard from your sons after landing at New York. The Lord, I hope, will prosper them. It would be a sore pull for you all to part with them. For feeling parents to part from children, probably for life, cannot fail to go very near the heart. But there are many reconciling considerations in your case; and I think it is none of the least of them that they seem to be removed from the scene of heavy trials, fast coming on us that remain. They will not want troubles of various kinds, but I hope they will be taken care of and supported. As for us, that awful passage seems to be on the eve of accomplishment, Zeph. i. 12-18. But the Lord will take care of his

own in the worst of times. Even when he roars out of Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, he will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Considering the peculiar nature of the controversy now carrying on, seriously exercised Christians will be very much helped of God if they are enabled to keep quiet, and make no sinful compliances on the one hand, nor imprudent appearances on the other. We need much grace and direction. No doubt we may expect hardships and difficulties; but the Lord can bridle the fury of men and devils. Much of our crop this season is very light, but it far exceeds our expectation, and farther still our desert. We had the Lord's Supper dispensed here last Sabbath. The Master's presence, I hope, was experienced by not a few. He outwardly countenanced his work very much. Let us praise him. —Farewell. Ever yours, A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1798.

MY DEAR BROTHER—Your favour came the other day, bringing the tidings of our friend's rapid decline. What shall we say? It is the will of the great Sovereign Lord. 'Tis a very quieting thought to the serious Christian, that a hair of his head cannot fall to the ground without his Father's appointment and direction. We would think that her life could be ill spared, and no doubt she will be very much missed by our brother and his young family; but if our heavenly



Father studied our worldly convenience and inclination in the management of his providence, we would never meet with any trial or disappointment at all. Blessed be his name, that he works according to the counsel of his own will, and can bring his children to acquiesce in those disposals that are most cross to their worldly interest.

How often has he turned the wilderness of trial into a fruitful field! I am anxious to know if she is resigned to the will of the Lord? if her exercise be in any measure lively? and if she enjoys the consolations of Christ, and has good hope through grace? This will make the prospect of death very light and pleasant to herself, and ought to comfort us who are left behind. You should not fail to be as useful to her as possible, and bring eternal concerns before her as she may be able to bear it. As to your worthy old friend, he is, I hope, rich in faith and experience. To be sure, past attainments cannot be a pillow to the Christian's head on a bed of death, nor a staff to lean on in going through the valley of the shadow of death,—nothing, nothing but a present resting on Christ in the promise can be our support in life or at death. But it is pleasant to hear an aged and experienced believer going off the stage, like old Jacob, telling all around him of the Lord's former loving kindness. O my dear W. matters are fast going to wreck in this nation,—our rulers seem to be judicially infatuated by God,—the day of the Lord's controversy with this wicked land seems to be come,—the general failure of the last year's crop,—the present scarcity and dearth,—this mad and iniquitous war,—the total stagnation of trade,

—the general bankruptcy taking place,—the present frowning season, which threatens a famine,—with a great number of other things taking place,—are all so many previous strokes of wrath going before the more awful pleading of God's quarrel. I'm persuaded some very sharp stroke of national calamity is just at the door. The Lord only knows what it will be. Our great concern should be to hide in the munition of rocks, and study to be found in the Lord's way when he cometh out of his place to punish. We have no security against the deluge of temporal calamities; but the ark of the covenant is prepared as a safe hiding place against the deluge of divine wrath. All the friends of Jesus shall be safe come what will. Luther was wont to say, in time of public danger, that the Lord would hide him either *in* or *under* heaven. When he saw danger approaching, he used to cry, Let us sing the ninety-first psalm. Our Lord is a good stronghold in the time of trouble, and he knoweth all them that put their trust in him. Give us all a place in your prayers.—Yours truly,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1799.

MY DEAR BROTHER—Yours, announcing the removal of your father-in-law, came in course. Our kind Lord has given him a passage to eternal rest, which few comparatively are favoured with. All saints die in a state of peace with God; but many of them are chastened with sore pain, and often sit under a cloud. He,



on the contrary, seems to have enjoyed a calm serenity of mind, and also a great degree of external ease while the earthly tabernacle was dissolving. He was a Christian very remarkable for equanimity and composure, a man of very tender conscience, and one that lived near the Lord. You have much cause of thankfulness that the Lord spared him so long as a blessing to your young family, and a very exemplary Christian to all around him. It should be our great concern to be followers of them who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises. I may say an amiable head of your family is taken away; but our everlasting Father lives to be our guide and portion in life and death. As an aged instructor is, by an all-wise Providence, removed from your young family, I hope the Lord will enable you to double your diligence among them. You have much cause to be thankful for what is promising among them. May the Lord make them more and more your joy and crown of rejoicing!

You are at present, I am sorry to learn, smarting under a very sharp trial from one of your family leaving you, going to sea. This has a particular language—it brings a special message from God; and I hope the Lord will tell you the meaning of the dispensation, and help you to improve it aright. Parents may learn very much of the mind of God about themselves, both in the way of correction and comfort, in the conduct of children toward them. It must be confessed that there is often a dark veil hung over divine management, which neither faith nor sense can remove while here. In such cases it becomes us to adore sovereignty, and

live on our Lord's words to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." But in other cases, when word, providence, and conscience, concur in telling us that the Lord is displeased, our immediate duty, and comfort too, lies in turning to the hand that smiteth, and seeking the Lord. His reproofs are great blessings to a saint. There is not a sorer judgment out of hell to a wicked man, nor under heaven to a believer, than for God to cease to be a reprover, or to say, Let him alone. I have often found, in my own experience, that all was well externally and in the view of others; when, alas! a deep consumption was begun within, and the heart sadly entangled with some lust. The attentive Christian will often find this to be the case upon a careful examination, when all the outward forms of religion are kept up. I do not say this is the case with you; I hope not. But to make a strict examination can be no loss to you, but I hope great gain. Did you ever read Owen on Indwelling Sin, and on Mortification and Temptation? I would recommend the serious perusal of these choice pieces to you.—Ever yours in love,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1807.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I confess you have cause to blame my long silence. I have often been favoured with tidings about your family, and I am still grieved to learn your anxiety about your son. Like them that have gone before us, you have your mixture of crosses



and comforts. When the Lord gives children, and spares them with us, we are under the strongest obligation to train them up for him. But yet, after all our anxious care about them, our instructions and prayers, we must be taught that something more is necessary in order to make them comforts to us. The Lord often makes use of our children as a rod for correcting us for our past miscarriages, and a very sharp rod it is. But though this should not be the case, we must be taught to reverence divine sovereignty in the disposal of our offspring, both with regard to temporal and eternal concerns. They sometimes take courses which are trying in the meantime, but which the Lord turns out for good in the issue. Many a day good old Jacob mourned for Joseph as for one lost, and yet you know how very comfortable was the end that was brought about by this dark providence. Who knows what may be brought out of this event, though indeed very trying for the present. Let us try to wrestle at the throne, that the Lord may pursue your son with mercy, keep him from sin, and bring him back to himself as another gained prodigal. You have much comfort in your other children, and should not take it amiss if the Lord see it meet to try you in him.

I was very happy to see J. so well at the synod; but he must take more exercise for the sake not merely of himself, but the church. He is a very valuable and promising young man. You and I, my dear W. are far advanced on our journey, I hope, to a better world. O what a happy attainment is it to be daily ripening for, and to have clear views of, a safe landing! It is by faith that the believer first enters

into rest, and it is in the exercise of faith in Christ in the promise, that we grow in meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. Assurance of the love of God naturally springs out of believing. It is a most prevalent and pernicious notion, now-a-days among us, that assurance is only the attainment of first-rate saints, and that others need not expect to enjoy it: hence they rest satisfied without it, and neglect the proper means of obtaining it; whereas the Spirit directs all to seek it,—2 Cor. xiii. 5. I believe that none fail of obtaining it who seek it in the way of faith, in the promise, by prayer, meditation, and close and frequent self-examination.

Now to come to the crosses of this world of a more trivial nature. I am very sorry to learn you have met with such a sharp stroke upon your substance, from your neighbour. This is a new lesson to you, my dear brother, and to me also, not to cumber ourselves with the things of this world. How soon does an all-wise Providence blow up our fairest prospects! It is very natural for the anxious, proud heart to suggest a number of very idle reflections on such events as this, and our best friends are very apt to cast them in our teeth; such as, You had no call to enter into such close habits with this Mr. —, nor to give him so much credit; you might have suspected and foreseen what was coming, &c. But such reflections are now of no avail, except it be to make you more cautious for the future. If you could have foreseen and prevented this loss, the trial had not come, and you would have wanted an opportunity of profiting by it, which, I hope, the Lord will make you experience. If you have not seen



“Williams’ Diary,” I would recommend it to your perusal. It will show you how much good the Lord brought to that godly man by sweeping away two-thirds of all he had in the world. Worldly losses have often been overruled for raising the heart to God himself, and deadening the affections to the things of time. I believe such events seldom take place in the Christian’s lot ; but he has cause to look back and reproach himself for having given the world, in one shape or another, more room in his heart, more of his time and attention, than was meet for a disciple of Jesus ; and when that is the case, God, and religion, and eternal concerns, are too much shut up to a corner.

It is very amazing, and should be very humbling to us, to think by how many ways and wiles the carnality of the heart prevails against the children of God, to draw them off from a holy frame, and from a close walking with God, by a keen and restless pursuit of what is called a lawful occupation. The thing itself is lawful, but we are in danger of sinning by the degree of our ardour in its pursuit. I don’t charge you with this, though I know you are constitutionally sanguine. O, W—, cry to God that this stroke on your substance may bring a deadly stroke on the corruptions of your soul, and then the loss will prove ultimately a great gain. Seek counsel of God as to the means of relief which you should employ ; he can bring you out of all difficulty, and, what is far better, he can give you faith and patience to bear the cross, and grace to support you comfortably under it. In a very little you and I will be done with seen things ; and it were well if we could be taught, by all these occurrences, to live more

for eternity. This is the best, by far the best life. You have only lost a little of the dross—the best treasure cannot be lost. It is surprising how little of this world's good things will satisfy a holy, humble, contented mind.

Ponder and pray over<sup>1</sup> Heb. xiii. 5,—“Let your conversation be in heaven,” &c. We are living in evil times; but the forty-sixth Psalm is a song for such a season. Let us mind one another at the throne.—I am ever your loving brother,  
A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1801.

MY DEAR BROTHER—As a series of trying dispensations are passing over your family, it is my duty to give you an expression of our most sincere sympathy with you all.

• I shall begin by mentioning the very trying case of poor C—. We were very much grieved to hear that the Edinburgh physicians could be of so little service to her, but much delighted to hear that she is in a calm, resigned state of mind. I hope it springs from gospel principles. Nothing can yield real support to the soul at any time—nothing can sweeten the bitter waters of affliction—but the love of God shed abroad in the heart. Tell her, from me, to go straight to Jesus, as her only physician: he rejects none that come to him. He may not be pleased to remove the disease, but he can make it a great blessing to her soul. If it prove the mean, in his hand, of awakening her to a deep and saving



sense of her need of Christ, of the value of her soul, of the sweetness and suitableness of the word, and of the evil of sin, especially the sins of the heart, this will be the best visitation she ever met with. I might say the same to J— under her continued infirmity. I hope she is blessing the God who brought her down to the mouth of the grave, and has been pleased to raise her up again. Let her read Matt. ix. and inquire if she has got such a sweet intimation as the happy man there spoken of got from the Saviour's lips. M— was in the furnace also, but the Lord had mercy on her, and soon restored her to health. I hope she has been often inquiring at her own soul why the Lord chastened her, and whether she left the dross behind her? It is a great matter to come out of a trial in a cleanly way.

As for you, my dear brother, these dispensations are speaking loudly to you, and I hope they have sent you often to your knees, and that there you have got your burdened soul poured into our heavenly father's bosom. There is no cordial like this in the day of trouble! Let not earthly troubles sit too heavy on your mind. If we can trust a good God for all spiritual and eternal things, it may seem strange that we hesitate to trust him with our worldly concerns. A full cup of temporal blessings is not promised; but faith can credit the God of grace for all that is really good for us. Little will serve you and me in this world; we have been richly provided for hitherto, and let us trust him still. Put all your confidence in your best friend: you know him well, I hope. Keep his way, and you shall be remarkably carried through. Many have had cause to bless God that they were sent to the school of

affliction ; for sanctified tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope : deliverance will come in the best way and at the fittest time. It seems the Lord has been smiting and trying A— also : may he be caught among the thorns ! Sovereign grace is as able to reach his heart in the West Indies as in Scotland. We that are parents have many causes of anxiety, and many calls to pray for our families. We should imitate the example of Job, and every day present our spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise to God on their account. Farewell, my dear brother !—  
Yours, A. P.

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## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1813.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I think you never write me unless I lay you under the necessity of answering mine. You should think on my numerous engagements, and not stand upon empty forms. The older I grow I find that I have the more to do, and I am not sorry at it, as I never feel so happy as when immersed in my good Master's work. I am now reckoning on the approaching termination of my poor labours in the Lord's vineyard, and that I have much need to redeem time lost in my youth, and likewise many lost opportunities. After all, it is a consoling thought that we have a more noble ground of hope for acceptance with God than the very best doings or experiences of the holiest of saints. I am sorry to learn that still C— is no better. What shall we say ? The medicinal waters of Siloam had no efficacy till the angel of the covenant



troubled the pool. I hope she has learned some useful lessons in this furnace which all the doctors in Scotland could not teach her,—viz. to love Christ more, to hate sin more, to prize the word more, to value the world less, to pray more frequently, more fervently, more humbly, and more confidently. If trials send us into ourselves to see, feel, and deplore our heart plagues, our besetting sins—if they send us away to the word for light, direction, and support—if they send us up to God himself, by faith and prayer, for help, healing, and comfort—they are undoubtedly sanctified trials, yielding the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and we may thank God for them, though they may be very sharp to flesh and blood.

I should be very happy if my young afflicted niece would write, and let me know how it is going with her soul. Though we may never again meet in this world, a little epistolary correspondence may be useful to us both. Let me know in your next how you keep your health. You and I are now far advanced in life; we should be looking over Jordan, and expecting the midnight cry.—I ever am, in sincere regards, yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1816.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I hope you will excuse my not answering your letter sooner. You say that you find it a difficult thing to write a letter even to a friend. I assure you that the difficulty lies in overcoming your aversion. Could you prevail on yourself to take the

pen in your hand, and write down your thoughts to your friend just as they occur, and as you would speak if you saw him face to face, you would never want matter, particularly when writing to a Christian friend. Look within to your own heart, and without to Christ in the word, and you will never want a subject. You are usually rather in the complaining way ; this is the common breath of Christians in our time, and I rather suppose it has been the way in every age. There are a few highly favoured saints in God's house who live near himself, see his goings, and sit under his banner, while the generality of his family are kept, not by him but by their own sinful hearts, at a greater distance and on shorter allowance. Their faith and patience are put to the test by various occurrences which prove very trying. The Lord sees it best to let them feel that they are in the wilderness and the field of battle. Heaven at last will more than make up for all ; but I am fully persuaded we would have more light and comfort in our Christian course were we more about God's hand, more at his throne wrestling for the blessing, and more engaged in searching for him in the word. The great evil is, that though we feel matters not right between God and us, we either sink into a listless indifference or into despondence : both are equally dishonouring to God and hurtful to ourselves. The directions of God are these, " Seek and ye shall find ;" " then shall ye seek me and find me, when ye search for me with all the heart ;" " he meeteth him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness." Our great concern should be to learn more and more the heavenly art of living by faith on the Son of God ; and such a



life cannot be without some measure of joy, peace, and assurance. May the Lord teach us more the mystery of this happy, happy life !

Some time since I heard that you had got some account of your son A—'s death, but had no certainty as to its truth. I am sorry to say it is too true. I was last week visiting friends at Dundee, and met with a gentleman there, direct from Grenada, who was perfectly well acquainted with him ; he was often visiting in his house, and used to talk over Scottish affairs with him ; he knew that A— was my nephew, and was anxious to give me the information ; he says he died of a decline in April last. It is a melancholy satisfaction to be assured of the fact as to this trying event. You know where to look for direction and comfort. When death enters our families, our sovereign Lord only asserts his divine right to take whom, and how, and where it pleases him. Your late son had his course to run, and the event shows where it was to end. Who knows but mercy may have followed and apprehended him even in that Sodom : the Lord has his small remnant in these wicked islands. Our chief concern should be to improve this dispensation for God's glory and our own spiritual benefit. You and I are now old ; yet, by this event, we are taught that the young and vigorous may be arrested, while the old and grey headed are spared for a little. Let us all be concerned to get into the ark without delay. The believer in Christ shall never taste of the second death.

This is a most adverse and threatening season ; a great deal cut down but almost none got in, although it is now the 30th of September. If we have a day

or two fair, a deluge of rain succeeds. The Lord is angry with Britain and with Europe ; he is pouring out the vials of his indignation ; we may therefore expect to drink of the bitter cup. Matters seem to be hastening to a sad crisis with this country. Our duty and safety will be to enter into our chambers, and abide there for a little moment until the indignation be over past. Let us be much at the throne.—Ever yours,  
A. P.

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## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1820.

MY DEAR BROTHER—You know that my dear partner in life has been very ill for some weeks. Her complaints had baffled all medical skill ; and the sovereign Lord called her home yesterday morning at seven o'clock. But I cannot, I dare not complain, after forty-two years' loan of such a pleasant companion in this vale of tears. God himself lives to be my stay, my guide, my counsellor, my all. The remainder of my journey must be short,—I am looking out for the coming of the blessed bridegroom.

He showed much mercy to my dear fellow-traveller in her last moments. Her pain was much mitigated—her mind was calm and resigned. I cannot say that she had much comfort ; but she had no fear from the apprehension of natural death. She was very much in prayer, and had the full possession of her mind to the last. The breach in this family is great ; but the Lord is the healer of breaches. She is taken away, but he has left me daughters to sooth my mind in the



decline of life. Let us have your prayers, that we may be enabled to improve this loud warning for quickening our pace toward the goal. Let us keep our eye on the great forerunner, who has entered within the vail. Let us lean on his arm and press forward. "We shall reap, if we faint not."

Your<sup>1</sup> concern and mine now, my dear brother, should be to honour God in all services and trials. But I am afraid that you are under the temptation of withdrawing too soon from active life. I don't mean that you should still persevere in the bustle of the world, as the Lord has kindly given you a son to relieve you of this burden; but you should employ your energies in useful pursuits. For instance, you have been long an active member of the congregation and session—attend to the public interests of religion—attend all meetings of session when able for it—embrace every opportunity for encouraging and stimulating the young in a religious course—try to be as useful as you can in your own family, especially among careless servants brought under your charge.

You will find it for your health to take a little exercise every day in the field: the mind loses its spring of activity when the body sinks into an inactive state. Time is a very precious talent which the Lord requires us to occupy. No man in this world, though even laid on a sick-bed, should live unto himself. Excuse these hints from a brother. It is my earnest desire that you should be fat, and flourish even in old age. Our comfort is, that precious Christ is the green fir tree; from him is our fruit found. We can have no life, nor sap, nor fruit, without living

daily on him, and for him. May the Lord enable us both to aim at this in the daily exercise of faith and diligence in prayer! Farewell, my dear brother!—  
Ever yours, A. P.

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## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1822.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I learn, by your son, that you are feeling the decays of old age creeping on. After traversing this vale of tears threescore and fifteen years, you have reason to wonder that you retain so much strength, and particularly that your mind is so vigorous. You see the great kindness of God in providing a son and daughter to guard and comfort you in the decline of life. You may now occupy yourself only about the concerns of a better world. To feel ourselves disentangled from the cares of this life, to have some kind friends to relieve us from the necessity of attending to them when we are bowing down to meet the grave, is a great comfort.

But while I mention this as a favourable circumstance in your lot, you and I know that something more—something infinitely better—is necessary to carry on the heavenly life to perfection in the soul. When the blessed spirit of grace forms the new man in the heart, he will certainly carry on his own work. It may seem to make very slow progress—it may get many backsets from temptation; but the hand of our great Zerubbabel hath laid the foundation, and he also will lay on the copestone. We must never forget, however, that we are also to be workers together with



God. The Spirit of God, by Jude, verses 20, 21, marks out our duty: "But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." If we would make progress in the Christian life, we must live daily at the throne of grace in fervent prayer. This will fan the flame of divine love in our soul, and keep us in the frame which Jude recommends. In this way, death will neither be a surprise nor a disappointment to us. O, no: it will bring us to our father's house—our Redeemer's presence—to the delightful and eternal fellowship of holy saints and angels—where, I hope, we will meet and recognise many of our once fellow-travellers who have gone home before us. It is pleasant to encourage one another with these delightful prospects while we are by the way. I would have been happy to learn, by a line from yourself, how you seem bearing up under these infirmities; but I fear I will not enjoy that pleasure again. May we often meet at the throne!—Your loving brother,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1823.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I now find that no entreaties will prevail on you to drop me an answer to my letters; and this has the effect of making me write more seldom than I otherwise would. An occasional letter from a distant friend is as a voice crying for an

answer. It is a stimulant to duty. What is an epistolary correspondence but two distant friends conversing together according to their circumstances? We have both been long on the road of life—have seen and felt many of its vicissitudes—have, I hope, tasted somewhat of the grapes of Eschol—and are now approaching the confines of the promised land. We have made a very bad use of time—of opportunities—of the mercies and trials that have passed over us, if we have nothing to say to one another concerning the way by which the Lord hath led us these seventy years in the wilderness. I think I hear you replying, “Yes, yes; I own that I have made a bad use of all the special privileges and opportunities which God hath graciously conferred on me.” I most cordially join in the same acknowledgment; but we may be useful to one another even in the way of reciprocating our complaints. It gives relief to a mind oppressed with woe, to get it emptied into the bosom of a friend.

We old people are in danger of falling under the influence of gloomy impressions and too retired habits, because we cannot now recall the vivacity of youth, and the genial flow of animal spirits; but we should recollect that none will expect this of us,—it would be unseemly. We may be grave and yet cheerful, communicative without being loquacious. May the living Head of the church make you all lively members of his body mystical! Farewell!—Ever yours,

A. P.



## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1827.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I have various reasons for continuing my correspondence with you; for, besides the claims of relationship, we are, I hope, fellow-travellers toward the heavenly Jerusalem,—and the pleasure of conversing together by the way is great. While the two disciples talked together by the way to Emmaus, the Lord himself drew near and joined their company.

I ask you now again, my dear brother, is your soul prospering? I have no doubt that you have long ago cast all your spiritual cares on the Lord; nevertheless, we must take care also, 1st, That we abide in Christ by faith and humble dependence, drawing all our supplies from him alone, of grace and strength for duty; 2dly, We must take care that we keep the King's highway. There are many by-paths, many enemies waiting for our halting, and seeking to retard and mislead us, but above them all are our heart-corruptions. You have freed yourself from external entanglements; but I daresay you feel that it is not so easy to disburden your soul, and keep the door shut against the intrusion of vain and carnal imaginations, even at these times when you would wish to be wholly with God. It is a mournful fact in Christian experience, that "when we would do good, evil is present with us." But our daily concern should be to watch, and wrestle, and pray that the enemy may be restrained, and at last cast out. 3dly, We should daily be on our guard that we fall not from our first love—spiritual decays often creep very

insensibly upon us. We, in old age, cannot expect the same flow of feeling, even in religion, as when we possessed the warmth of youth ; but, at our day, the exercise of faith, hope, and humility, may be more pure, and firm, and steady, than when the affections of the heart made a greater stir. When a fire is first kindled, there is sometimes a greater flame than heat ; but when it is burnt through, the flame is less and the heat greater. The great point which we should strive after is, that the heart become more humble, more spiritual, and more heavenly ; and nothing will bring us to this but a daily living on the Son of God, a growing acquaintance with the mind of God in the word, and frequent intimacy with God in prayer.

By your debility, you are cut off from waiting on God in public ordinances. Be not discouraged ; the God whom you serve can, and I hope, does, sweeten your solitude. These are very gracious words,—Isa. xl. 29-31 ; xli. 17, 18 ; xliii. 1-5. I might quote many others ; but I know that the blessed Bible has been your stay for many years, and you know where to find its precious cordials. May the Divine Spirit bring all things to your remembrance ! One of my tried friends in this place, who has been twenty-eight years on a bed of affliction, said one day to me, while visiting her, “ O, Sir, I have been in deep waters ; but faith has long legs.” Yes, it can wade through the deepest waters of affliction, and yet keep the head above ; and I hope you can say, Though weak in body, I am strong in faith and hope. Could we keep a firm hold of the promise of God, we would stand steady amidst all difficulties and dangers. You have a kind friend by you, saying,



“ Fear thou not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.” O, trust the faithful Promiser ! He cannot and will not lie. He rests in his love. All the faithful who have gone before us, have found this world a thorny wilderness at the best ; but in patience they got safe to the land of promise. We are going on well here ; my colleague and I are happy together. Farewell !—Ever your loving brother, A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1828.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I am happy to learn you are much the same in your body as when I saw you last year. An ordinary measure of health is a mercy far too little prized, until we are laid on a bed of sickness, and made to drink the bitter fruits of sin. When the most holy and the most humble and active believer looks back upon the days and years he has spent, and, upon the whole, spent in doing the work which God called him to do, how many blemishes will he discover in his very best doings ! how many blanks, in which nothing was done at all, for the honour of God, or the good of our neighbour ! and how many misdoings may he charge himself with before God ! Were not salvation wholly of grace, from first to last, we could have no hope. The Arminian system may please and sooth the pride of the corrupt heart, while the sinner is gliding down the smooth current of external prosperity ; but when he is laid on the brink of eternity, with nothing to support his fainting soul but the baseless fabric

of his own good doings and good intentions, what a deplorable prospect must he have before him! The genuine Christian, who has his hopes for eternity built on the finished work of Christ, and glories only in the cross of Christ as the ground of his confidence, may calmly look death and judgment in the face, and say—"My Redeemer hath answered all the demands of the law for me: he hath finished transgression, and brought in everlasting righteousness: he is the Lord my righteousness and strength; yet I am not without the law to God, but under the law to Christ. I love the law because it is holy, and it is my study all the day to keep it, as the evidence of my title to the everlasting kingdom; but I renounce all dependence on my best works, and depend entirely for acceptance at the judgment-seat on what precious Christ hath done for me." This, dear brother, is the sure foundation of hope, on which you and I may rest with confidence in life and at death. It is an unspeakable mercy that our covenant God hath laid this stable foundation of rest for us. Let us, by faith, cling to it, whatever waves may pass over us. "The foundation of God standeth sure:" nothing can shake it. Our unbelief may deprive us of comfort, but it cannot make the word of God of none effect. Though we believe not, he abideth faithful, and cannot deny himself. If you find any staggerings in your exercise, any misgivings of heart, through the want of internal evidence, go directly to God, in the gospel testimony and promise; put in your claim as a poor sinner, coming to his throne for mercy, and grace to help you in time of need, and trust him that he will do as he hath



said, and will do it because he hath said it. This is the stronghold of faith which he will never reject.

These few hints I desire to take to myself; and whether we ever meet again in this life or not, I hope to meet you in that happy world where the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick. Let us meet often at the King's throne on earth. Farewell!—Ever yours,

A. P.

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### TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1829.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I learn from a friend that you have met with a fall at your own door. That we old folks should sometimes stumble and fall is no wonder: the frailties of old age enfeeble the external frame, and we are less able to keep the balance even. Well, this should daily tell us that the outward man is perishing, that it must soon be dissolved. Can we say, with the apostle, we “know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”? To be able to say so, on good grounds, will keep our minds in peace and quiet when we approach the confines of eternity. It is so far from being presumption in God's children, who have said amen to the everlasting covenant, and accepted the great salvation, to use such language, that it is their incumbent duty to use it, and in this way to give evidence that they hold fast their confidence stedfast to the end: yes, to hold it fast, although it should be only as a drowning man would hold a rope cast to him from the shore.

But true scriptural confidence does not arise from our former experience : no, it arises from a present belief of the promise—from a present improvement of Christ in the promise—from the resting of the soul on his atoning blood and sacrifice for eternal life, accompanied with the exercise of practical holiness. The Apostle Peter exhorts to give diligence to make our calling and election sure, but he also tells us to be diligent in hope.

Although clouds and darkness pass over us, we should never give way to despondency : nothing dishonours God, or displeases him, so much as this. How often does our Lord blame his disciples for their want of confidence ! He said to Peter on the sea, “ O thou of little faith ! wherefore didst thou doubt ? ” Encourage yourself in the Lord your God : say every day, “ This God is my God for ever and ever, and he will be my guide even unto death. ” Cast your burden on the Lord : sing Ps. lxxiii. 24-28, “ Wait on the Lord ; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. ” You and I, with our sister, have been long spared, to see almost all the companions of our youth, the partners of our bed, and some of the branches of our respective families, laid in the dust. It is now a serious inquiry, Why are we so long left to wander in this weary wilderness ? It is clear that our work on earth is not yet done ; but are we doing whatsoever our hands find to do with all our might ? Ah ! I fear none of us can answer in the affirmative ! We are each moving in a sphere of his or her own. I hope, too, that we are all, in some measure, serving the same glorious Master ; but many a time my heart reproaches me for numerous failures. As to personal and eternal concerns, you and



I are on a perfect level. Our great business should be, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, remembering always that it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Thanks to our great and gracious Redeemer, that he hath left nothing for us to do in the way of working out a title to eternal life! This was a work only competent to himself, and he completely finished it on the cross. But much—very much—is required of us to be done, in order to evidence that we are heirs of salvation; and our great comfort is, that we are workers together with God, without whom we can do nothing. But if we would enjoy his gracious influence, we must put forth our weak and withered arms at his command; and as our time is short, let us daily trim our lamps, and be going out to meet our blessed bridegroom.

May all your family have their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace! This will prepare them for going through the snares and troubles of life with ease and comfort. May divine mercy compass you all!—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1830.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I occasionally hear, by indirect channels, that you are tottering about, leaning on your staff: I hope you are keeping a firm hold of the staff of the promise of God. He has condescended to confirm his word by his oath, “that by two immutable

things we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us."

None except the true Christian can know the secret consolation which flows from faith in the promises of God. They are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. They tell us both what our covenant God is in himself, and what he will be and what he will do for us, both in time and in eternity. They also assure us, that even our own felt unworthiness and remaining corruption shall not prevent the overflowings of his infinite love and kindness to our souls. When we look within, we may, in our best times, see so much vileness, coldness, and carnality, as might justly provoke the Lord to cast us off for ever. But the blessed Bible is full of gracious declarations, assuring us that he rests in his love; that though the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, yet his loving-kindness shall not depart, nor his covenant of peace be removed. When a child of God reads such precious words coming from the mouth of Him who cannot lie, what peace and consolation fills his soul! The captious and ignorant disputers of this world say that such doctrines tend to licentiousness, and encourage the Christian to sin. But, in their ignorance, they speak evil of those things which they know not. They never felt the heart-constraining love of Christ in producing the deepest abhorrence of all sin, and earnest pantings after perfection in holiness. My dear brother, live near to the fountain-head of all gracious communications by faith and earnest prayer; drink daily out of the pure river of the fountain of the waters of life, which flows from beneath the throne of God and the Lamb!



You cannot go to drink at the stream which makes glad the city of God in public ordinances, but you have free and ready access to the stream which runs in every page of the Bible. You can read it, and plead it at the throne. In this way silent sabbaths will be days of joy and feasting unto you.

I have had a letter from my son, in America.—The Lord has tried him in various ways, and he has also crowned him with many mercies. I entertain the hope that he has been forming him, by these dispensations, for future usefulness in the church. He is now about to be settled in a congregation. O carry him to the throne, that the Lord may make him useful in bringing many sinners to Christ!

Now I must conclude by again reminding you, that you have reached the utmost term of human life marked out in Scripture; and for some years past you have found, in experience, that your threescore and ten, and now your fourscore years, are, indeed, years of labour and sorrow. Yet I hope, that though your outward man is withered and wasted with old age and growing infirmity, the inward man is renewed more and more. You and I cannot be far from the goal of life, where our race must end; but I hope we are running for a sure prize, secured to us by the death of our glorious Redeemer. Our great forerunner hath for us entered within the vail, and is saying, "Father, I will that these whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Farewell, my dear brother!—Yours,

A. P.

TO THE AUTHOR'S BROTHER, MR. T— P—.

PERTH, 1813.

MY DEAR THOMAS—By a letter from W—, I am sorry to learn that you are again cast into God's furnace. But though I most sincerely sympathize with you in your affliction, yet I dare scarcely vindicate my expression of sorrow. What God does is always best; and if he designs to prove you, to humble and try you, that he may do you good, O what a happy issue will the affliction have! We have been looking for your arrival here for some time, and flattering ourselves that the change of air might be beneficial. But it seems God is ordering matters otherwise; and what shall we say? "It is the Lord," said Hezekiah; "let him do what seemeth him good." He knows best when, and where, and how to afflict. There are several links in this chain of providence extremely observable; such as, that you should have left London at this time—that you should have come to Scotland with the hope of gaining strength—that you arrive at our elder brother's house—and that there you should be laid down on a bed of distress, which may prove the bed of death.

The Lord is able to raise you up again. Let us not forget the remarkable deliverance he lately wrought for you. He can do it again: but, my dear T—, the safest course for you is to be looking out for death. Permit me now to ask you, Have you made any provision for death and eternity? This is the most solemn, important, and deeply interesting step you ever took. To appear before the eternal Judge without an interest in Christ, and his all-perfect righteousness, is an awful



and overwhelming thought! Think on our Lord's words to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God." Again, he says to the disciples, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." I doubt not that your conscience is telling you, that you have spent above thirty years in London in a very careless and thoughtless manner. But I must tell you, dear brother, that it is not yet too late to flee to the door of mercy, and knock, and cry aloud for pardon and forgiveness. Jesus, our merciful Redeemer, has brought in sons at the eleventh hour. There is room for you in God's family. Jesus is able to save to the uttermost: his blood cleanses from all sin. You are yet a prisoner of hope: you cannot honour him more than by fleeing to him, and employing him as your Saviour. Open your mind freely to your brother W—; he is able to give you wholesome advice; and it may be the Lord has brought you under his roof that he may be made a spiritual director to you in your present distress. But run to Jesus himself as your only counsellor. Gracious acquaintance with him will fill your mind with a joy and peace which pass all understanding. We all sympathize deeply in your affliction;—and I ever am, dear brother, yours,

A. P.

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TO THE AUTHOR'S NEPHEW, THE REV. J— P—.

PERTH, 1799.

MY DEAR NEPHEW—I readily acknowledge that I have been too long in answering your last favour,

especially as it was written from the furnace of affliction. I find that an overgrowth has been the immediate cause of your distress. This has proved fatal to many a young person; but it seems that in your case the sovereign Physician has been pleased to bless the means of recovery. I hope you are now out of danger; but, my dear J—, the chief point is, to improve the providence aright. You have been rubbing shoulders with the grave. Can you sing that note in good Hezekiah's song, "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back"? That godly man had been just delivered from the *grip* of the king of terrors by a miracle, but he reads love both in the trial and deliverance. The love of God pulled back his body from the mouth of the grave, and his soul from hell: "Thou hast loved my soul from the pit of corruption." He lost nothing in the furnace but his sins. What a singular mercy to have the health of the soul promoted, even by painful remedies! If the Lord has been setting you on the brink of eternity, in order to show you the emptiness of all created things, and to bring you to more close dealings with Christ for salvation, you will have cause to thank him for the trial. General notions about religion, and general exercises about salvation, are like to banish all serious concern from among professors. None had more need to be on their guard against this prevailing spirit than ministers, and those studying for the ministry. If the devil can get a set of men brought into the ministry, with orthodox heads and graceless hearts—with a moderate stock of litera-



ture—with acute parts, but strangers to Christian experience—I say, if he succeed in this, then woe to the church of Christ! Be concerned, my dear J—, to make sure work of being in Christ. He demands your heart—he will be pleased with nothing less—earnestly invite him to come in, and take the throne there. You will never feel any solid pleasure in his service until you see the glorious Master, and taste the sweetness of his constraining love. I hope you are already acquainted with him; but press after more and more intercourse. This is only to be got by living on him daily in the word. Study the scriptures, not merely as a student of divinity, but also as a Christian, seeking the good of his soul.

May the Lord direct all your studies to his own glory, and confirm your health, and spare you for much usefulness, when I am sleeping in the dust! I have not time to enlarge. We are pilgrims, I hope, to the better country; and though we meet sometimes with foul weather, it is no more than has befallen our precursors and fellow-travellers. We would not see half of our heavenly Father's kindness and care about us by the way, were we not oft in perils in the wilderness. It is a great mercy for us that we are often so hedged up that we cannot, by any foresight, escape them. I hope for good accounts from you.—I am most sincerely yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1800.

MY DEAR JAMES—It gives me heartfelt satisfaction to learn that your health is so far re-established that you

can resume your studies ; but I must repeat the caution, that it is needful to study with moderation. Your plan of procedure seems to me very proper. I sincerely wish and pray, that the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ may rest upon you, and richly store your mind both with all needful graces and gifts.

I am glad to hear that the presbytery is giving you discourses. I need not tell you about the pressure of public calamities on this country, for all know it. March is nearly ended, and there is very little seed sown. In high grounds the earth is completely covered with a deep snow, and not a furrow *teeled*. The cattle and sheep in the Highlands are dying fast for want of food. The scarcity and dearth of provisions is extraordinary : the poor can get a little barley, but no oatmeal for some weeks back. No potatoes. How dismal the prospect for six months yet to come ! But the Lord is righteous. This is one of the judgments of the latter times. In 1792 we attempted to starve the whole nation of France, consisting of twenty-five millions of people, and now a righteous God is serving us with our own measure, pressed down and running over. But we see not his just hand in the controversy.

Since the above was written, your father's letter has reached me, with the tidings of your increasing distress. I would, therefore, remind you, my dear friend, of your heavenly Father's kindness to you. You remember that word, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." We are so foolish as ordinarily to connect God's love with health, strength, and external prosperity. But the wise orderings of our Father's



administrations are often the reverse. Read and consider Heb. xii. Precious metals must be well refined.

I dare say you are satisfied that you need this trial, and perhaps you may be reading the voice of reproof in it for past transgressions. Well, be it so. Adore the tender care of a kind Father, who is not ceasing to be a reprover. He might have said, "Let him alone;" and then, where had you been? He has, I hope, been speaking to your conscience by the word, and now he is speaking to you by the rod. This is very like fatherly discipline: thank him for his paternal care—welcome his visits—kiss the rod. You may say, these advices are easily marked down on paper; but not so easily copied in practice. I admit it: but, my dear J—, I will tell you what will make the last as easy as the first,—sickbed-grace coming along with the trial. It was no more in Paul's power to glory in his infirmities than it is in yours or mine, unless that precious word had been made out to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." This staff put into your hand will enable you to go through your trial triumphing. Now what hinders you taking hold of it? It is brought to you in the word of grace: the promise is to you and me. Have we not as good warrant as the great apostle of the Gentiles to claim the good of the promise, and to believe the great Promiser? Has he not said, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be"? The great work of a child of God, under the cross, is, to stand on the ground of the promise, and leave God to take his own way in providence. Be much in prayer: there is no relief like that which comes from a God of grace seated on a throne of grace.

This sweetens the bitterest waters of affliction, and keeps the soul calm amidst the roaring billows. Cast the anchor of hope on that within the vail, and you need not fear shipwreck; none perish that trust him. Leave the issue of this trouble with the Lord. Your loving parents and connections are crying for your deliverance; but we must cry submissively. What is good the Lord will give. We know to whom the issues from death belong, and he can deliver in seven troubles; but a blessing on the trial is infinitely preferable to a deliverance from it; and to be with Christ is far better than to abide in this vale of tears. I hope the Lord is preparing you at this school for greater usefulness in the church below; but if he should be pleased to meeten you by it for the church above, sure you will be a vast gainer. I leave you wholly in his hands, hoping the next letter will bring me the intelligence of your recovery, if it so please the wise Disposer of events. May the Lord direct your heart to the love of God, and to a patient waiting for Christ!—I am affectionately yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1802.

MY DEAR JAMES—Your acceptable favour came duly to hand. You complain, with some degree of justice, of my deferring to answer your letters. I have no apology to offer except a multiplicity of cares pressing daily upon me.

I am thankful that your mother is continuing to recover. I hope her valuable life will be spared for a sea-



son, in kindness to your father and family; but our dearest earthly comforts are held by an insecure tenure; and yet they are the best that a child of God, in suitable exercise, would wish for,—viz. his heavenly Father's pleasure. What happy persons would we be, could we live up to the sense and spirit of the third petition of the Lord's Prayer! It is often good to bear the yoke in youth. Early afflictions have been most blessed dispensations in the experience of many; and, if I am not mistaken, you may say so, to the praise of sovereign grace. I can read in your two last letters, the most satisfactory marks of a soul broken, emptied, and lying low before God. May your heart be always kept in this happy frame by a daily life of faith on Christ, and much intimate communion with him in his grace and comforts. Nothing in this world—not the heaviest trials of life—will wither the root of pride and vanity, and other heart lusts; nothing will do it but vital influence, derived from Christ to the soul by the word and spirit. The more we live upon him by faith, the less will sin live in us; the more also will the life of Christ be manifest in our mortal bodies, and in our daily practice. I hope your health is more confirmed, and that your studies are prosecuted with pleasure. Try to make a proper selection of books. There are two sorts of books that should be avoided,—viz. such as would not increase your stock of knowledge, and such as would vitiate the mind. All trifling publications belong to the former class; and the world is filled with these in every department. Your own discernment and taste will point out to you the *pernicious*. All the time spent in improper reading is lost. You

will find some difficulty in obtaining a sufficient supply of good authors ; but a few well chosen are better than a multitude taken promiscuously. Remember always my former advice,—reserve a proper quantum of time for recreation.—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1803.

MY DEAR JAMES—I received your acceptable favour, and am happy to observe that the Lord of the vineyard is emptying you more and more of that vile principle, which has been in many, many instances a worm at the root of very promising gifts and graces, and brought on very sad rebukes from God. There is no frame of heart more offensive to God, or more unsuitable to the office and work of a gospel minister, than high and self-sufficient thoughts. Pride of gifts, and even of graces, has often provoked the Lord to trample many great and good men in the dust. I believe more ministers have fallen victims to their spiritual pride than any other class of men. Wherever the Lord intends to make a man useful in his service, he will have him humbled or lay him low by one mean or another. The Lord has been pleased to follow a way of his own for effecting this happy end in you ; I daresay you are now well pleased with the way which he hath taken. But while the Lord has been performing a kind work upon you, take care of misconstruing him. He is holding you up to the wind that he may winnow you, and blow away your



chaff, and show you your own emptiness ; but his design is not to drive you from his work. No, it is to fit you for his work, and to teach you the need of the staff of the promise in the very entry of your public service. You remember that our Lord allowed his apostles, in their first mission, to take nothing with them but what they required for present use,—no gold, no silver, no brass, only one coat, one pair of shoes, and a staff in their hand,—and you remember the honourable testimony they afterwards bore to their kind Master's liberality—"They lacked nothing." You have only now to learn what you will need to be learning all your days, "To trust the Lord and go forward." You cannot think more meanly of yourself than thousands have done before you ; but let not unbelief get shelter under the cloak of humility. You will find Zion's King possesses a bountiful, royal heart towards all his faithful servants.

I am sorry to hear that your mother is so frequently attacked with her old complaint. Such is her kind Physician's will ; and he never administers a needless dose.—I am ever yours, in warm regard,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1803.

MY DEAR JAMES—Will not impeach me with neglect in failing to fulfil my promise sooner.

I hope that now the tide of feeling is ebbing, and faith, accompanied by patience, resignation, and rest in God, has succeeded. I do not blame you for feeling

the bitter stroke of a dear, gracious parent's death. Not to feel a trial, and such a trial, argues a heart greatly deficient, if not devoid, both of humanity and religion. But our danger arises from indulging the feeling to excess. When faith keeps its proper place in the soul, grief for our greatest worldly losses is counterbalanced by a sweet joy in the Lord. This fills the mind with an object infinitely attractive and glorious, and leads the attention away from what is gloomy and grating to our feelings. Abraham never appeared so great as on the mount, when, at God's call, he bound his beloved son, laid him on the altar, and had his paternal hand lifted to inflict the mortal wound. He was enabled to triumph over all the feelings of a fond parent's heart, over all the false reasonings of flesh and blood, and over all the proud disputings of unbelief: he was "strong in the faith." You have, indeed, lost a very dear, a most deservedly dear mother; but your everlasting *Father* lives. Could we bring faith to that rich, emphatic, tender, and endearing name, what would it not find wrapt up in it! What love, what compassion, what tenderness, what care and comfort does it bespeak! You are, I hope, going to this full fountain with your empty pitcher: draw and drink to the full, and you will go on your way rejoicing, even in tribulation. How is your father carrying under this sore stroke? I expect to hear from him soon. I hope the Lord, who comforteth those who are cast down, will stand by him, and speak comfortably to him in the wilderness. The loss will be heavy to you all, but he will need special sympathy. Are you entered on your trials for



license? Do you read any particular lesson in the removal of your mother, just at the time when you are about to enter on public work?

May the great Counsellor of Israel guide you in all your ways! Farewell!—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1804.

MY DEAR JAMES—Both your letters I received, and must delay no longer to answer them. I bless the Lord for bringing your mind to a determination respecting your call. What difficulties soever may cast up in your after lot, I hope you will always have the consoling reflection that they are the wise orderings of the Lord, and you had no active hand in procuring them. Our great concern should be, to know present duty, and to leave events with the Lord. Lot's choice was extremely natural: "He lifted up his eyes, and beheld the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere; *and he chose him all the plain.*" But how much cause had the good man to regret his rich choice! How far to be preferred the quiet life and bleaker lot of Abraham! That you will meet with difficulties in our good Lord's work at N—, may be well supposed; but where would you have escaped them? Nay, what thriving servant of Christ would wish to want them? Should I have consulted my inclination, I could tell you where I would have wished you to have been stationed; but we shall have cause in the issue to say, that the Lord's orderings

are best. And if the great Counsellor go before you, he will smooth the way, or guide you through thorns and briars. I am such a stranger to the people and the place, that I can venture to give you no advice, except in general,—1st, To take heed that all stand well between God and your own soul. If there be a breach here, nothing will go well in your public administrations. 2d, Study to level your ministrations directly to the conscience of your people. A plain, practical, and searching ministry has been usually most useful to souls. 3d, Study a faithful and impartial exercise of discipline. Should you observe any of your people, or hear of them, beginning to swerve from the path of holiness, neglect not to deal *first* with them by honest and private admonition. 4th, With regard to your neighbour in the ministry, endeavour to maintain a good understanding with him as much as possible. If he has peculiarities, cover them on all occasions so far as you honestly can. This will have the best effect both among your own people and among his. May an unction from above descend on you on Wednesday se'ennight!—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1804.

MY DEAR JAMES—Your letter reached me in course, but I have been so engaged that I never found time to answer it so particularly as it merited till now.

I have seen Mr. G— since his return from N—, who gave me an account of what passed at your settlement.



I am glad to see that your mind is deeply impressed with the importance and difficulties of your work and situation. For your encouragement, I will refer you to two passages discoursed upon last Sabbath and Monday at this place. Our Lord's Supper was then dispensed in this congregation. The first passage I refer you to, was Psal. xxxii. 8,—“ I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye.” A promise more full, more suitable, and sweet to faith, you will not find in the book of God. It plainly looks to believers in dark and difficult times ; but the promise of safe conduct is absolute. Observe the marginal reading : mine eye shall be upon thee. It is the language of a loving father to a poor, weakly, staggering, bewildered child. The child, perhaps, does not perceive that his father's eye is upon him at the time. Unbelief and temptation may whisper, “ My way is hid from the Lord.” But no : “ I will counsel thee ; mine eye is upon thee.” In the faith of this we may face any work or difficulty. The other text was, Phil. iv. 7, taken in connection with verse 6. The important exhortation is, “ Be careful for nothing.” We both know, from experience, how much the heart is teased and torn asunder by sinful and excessive anxiety. The great antidote which the Divine Spirit prescribes is, to commit all matters to God's management, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving ; and the happy consequence will be as expressed in verse 7,—“ The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus,”—shall garrison the heart in Christ Jesus. No where shall we find solid and

lasting peace but here. As I am on this subject, I may tell you, in confidence, that I thought I got near the throne on the evening of the fast-day, in secret, and got leave to look into, and wonder at, the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of Christ, in coming my length, and burying my great and numberless sins out of God's sight. At the communion-table on Sabbath, although I felt nothing of a lively frame, I was helped to say amen to the everlasting covenant, and got leave also to put the King in remembrance of you, and got a hold, I trust, of Isa. xlii. 16, in relation to you. Fear not, my dear nephew, you serve a kind and bountiful master. Try to live near him, to depend singly upon him, and make large demands upon his fulness.

Are you not struck with the strange, awful, and hopeful aspect of Providence at this time? I should imagine that no one who will be at the pains to read his Bible, and will compare present events with Rev. xvi. but may be satisfied that the sixth vial is at least begun to be poured out. I don't think the history of Europe presents us with such a number of emperors, kings, and princes on the field at any one time. It is not for us to say how long this great struggle will last, nor what turns it may take; but the issue, I apprehend, is not dubious. Let the Lord do his own work; our duty is to stand still, and see the salvation of God. The storm is fast making toward us. Blessed are they that watch and keep their garments clean.—Ever yours in sincere regard,

A. P.



## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1805.

MY DEAR NEPHEW—Matters are going on with us much in the usual way. We are loaded every day with mercy, and every day we grieve the kind Giver. If I do not deceive myself, my hardness of heart, my coldness, my ingratitude, my pride, my unbelief, are my burden; and I sometimes get the length of bewailing my case before the Lord. But yet mine enemies are lively—they are strong; and they that hate me are multiplied. The conflict, however, is hopeful. Our dear Lord has got the victory, and insured success to all his poor followers. I'm often sore wounded, but not forsaken. My good Master's work is more and more pleasant to me. I have cause to blush for my poor services; but the Lord pities for his name's sake. I hope you are going on in the strength of the Lord God, and can say that you lack nothing. I can give you no plan about visitation. It is common for every minister to take his own method; and, perhaps, the best way may be, to vary it frequently according to circumstances. The great object of it should be, to stir up all to the duties of personal, family, and public religion. If there be occasion for particular dealings with individuals, it may be better to take them apart, and deal closely with their consciences. In a congregation formed like yours, I should think it very proper to enrol all regular attendants on ordinances, when they wait on your diets of visitation. It is common to catechise all children; and I should think it might be very proper for you, and useful, to spend an afternoon or

evening, once a-week or fortnight, in catechising young persons in public.

I most feelingly sympathize with you in consequence of your late visitation; but I am happy to learn that our kind Lord hath countermanded the rod. Two things should keep our mind quiet under all vicissitudes—namely, that every event was marked out by unerring wisdom, and that all shall be made conducive to our eternal good. No class of servants in our Lord's family needs more training at the school of trying experience than ministers; and if the Lord makes any use of us, he commonly leads us now and then to Bo-him. I see you are breathing more ardently after more holiness: may this happy frame be deepened and preserved, and you shall neither want comfort nor success. I am becoming more and more sensible that no state of mind is so congenial to our Christian character and ministerial work as a humble, single, confident dependence on God in the promise. We shall be covered with confusion—and so we should—if we go to the Lord's work in our own strength; but, in the other case, we shall not be disappointed. I am forgetting myself, and what you required of me. I bless the Lord for your recovery.

With reference to your missionary dilemma, I am precisely of your mind. I feel a conviction that we in the Secession do perhaps too little; but I am convinced that we cannot be said to be altogether neutral. If we, as a body, do not formally co-operate in missions to the heathen, individuals do; and I conceive all of us may, in a pecuniary way at least. The formation and management of the London Society are such, that I, at



least, have not freedom to go along with them as a member, for the reasons you mention; and I have consulted lately with some, both in the Establishment and Independent connection, who have scruples, although they act along with them. When I mentioned my difficulties to them, they urged me to draw up the outline of a plan in which we in the Secession and others might consistently join in the great work, without committing ourselves to what we think objectionable. I don't conceive it impossible to devise such a plan, but have never yet thought closely on the subject. Would you turn your attention this way, and I will send you my views upon it more fully. I suppose a good many have joined the London Society, because they can find no other on the field with which they can co-operate. I have thought also that the Lord is employing the Secession in the same work on a small scale, by spreading the gospel in Orkney and the wilds of America; and I suppose there are few congregations among us but are going on very actively with the Bible Society.

There is much affliction around me among my brethren, and the Lord is saying to me, "Behold, I come quickly." It is my desire to go out and meet him. Kind love.—Ever yours, A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1820.

MY DEAR NEPHEW—I engaged to write you after the meeting of synod. It could never have been supposed that so few would have been stumbled and car-

ried off at such an important and wonderful change in our church as the union of two such extensively-spread and widely-separated bodies.

The Lord keeps his vineyard night and day, lest any hurt it. O that he may also water it every moment ! The communion was dispensed in this town last Sabbath. Mr. Aikman and I exchanged our assistants, which has given general satisfaction. All seems to be peace, and harmony, and love. O that a fresh gale from the four winds were sent forth upon us ! I think we have much reason for hope : our scattered bones are brought together in the valley, and covered with sinews, flesh, and skin. Let us ministers prophesy over them, and cry, “Come from the four winds, O breath of the Lord !” This is certainly a very remarkable era : may the Lord enable us to make a suitable improvement of it, both in our exercise and ministry !

JUNE, 1821.—Our Presbytery met on Tuesday, and appointed the ordination of my colleague on the 17th of next month. The Lord has so mercifully displayed his own management in all the previous steps which have led to this result, that I am often made to stand still and wonder at his goodness to me, and to this congregation. But if the Lord do not fill the church and the heart with his own glory, all will soon go to wreck. May the God of grace and peace rest with you !—I ever am your loving uncle,

A. P.



## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1837.

MY VERY DEAR NEPHEW—I learn from Mr. R—, that you have been visited with a bilious fever. This was our Father's rod with which I was chastened in 1795. It brought me to the brink of the grave; but I will never forget, through grace, some useful and some sweet lessons which the Lord taught me in that furnace; nor can I, without the most culpable criminality and stupidity, forget how soon I departed from the fountain of living waters, and betook myself to cisterns. O, Sir, the human heart, even where the good work is mercifully begun, is a very mystery of iniquity. When we look at Paul's disclosures (Rom. vii.), we may weep and groan over our own sad and shameful experiences; but we must not despair. Nothing but rich, omnipotent, sovereign grace can deliver us from the pit of corruption at first, or keep us from falling into final destruction at last.

These thoughts refer to my own former case; but I hope the latter class of them will not be exemplified in you. I hear you are coming out of the furnace: may our great and gracious Physician bring you out as gold seven times purified, and spare you many years for future usefulness in the church.

I may also let you know what I am doing in the close of my long life. It has been impressed on my mind to commence a small work—viz. a cursory view of the work of God in the church, from the first revelation of grace in Paradise down to the ascension of Christ. You may be sure it can only be a mere gleaning on

this great field: no pretensions to anything new or great: but our great Master has often perfected praise from the pens, and out of the mouths, of babes and sucklings. I am near a close in writing, and will soon issue it from the press, and leave all in our gracious Master's hand. I have been attacked by my old complaint the week before the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, and of course was shut out from the sanctuary; but the work of God was acceptably, and, I hope, successfully carried on by my excellent and warm-hearted colleague, and by the condescending kindness of our gracious God. I have been very gently handled in this chastisement: love to my soul, and pity to my poor, withering frame, have carried me through with remarkable ease and quiet. I am now trying to tune my harp to some of the sweet songs of Zion.

I for some time, through this week, thought that this messenger was sent to lay the axe to the root of the tree; but convalescence is begun, and it would seem that I am not yet ripe for the better world, and that my poor service is not yet done. It becomes me humbly to wait, and watch in faith and patience: our times are in our Father's hand; and I trust him that he will perfect that which concerns me. He is filling my lot with many mercies. Among others, with a growing interest in the hearts of a loving people—with the unwearied, kind attentions of my loving children and grandchildren—and, what I account better than all these, increasing pleasure in our Lord's blessed work. O, my dear J—, help me to praise him! My days are near a close; and though we should never again meet on earth, let us hope to spend an eternity together.—  
Yours,  
A. P.



TO THE REV. DR. F——R OF P——Y.

METHVEN, 1808.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND—I embrace this opportunity of conveyance to tell you that you are much on my heart under this fresh and severe bereavement. It is Archbishop Leighton, I think, who has somewhere remarked, that the Lord deals with his people like a wise commander, who picks out his most trusty and skilful warriors for the most dangerous and important undertakings. You are younger than I am in years, but much older and more matured in Christian experience; and our kind Lord knows that you have strength given you to bear a burden of trials which would crush me to atoms. I can say nothing from personal acquaintance; but, from information, I find that you have lost an invaluable treasure.

Be it so, my dear friend. You have enjoyed this gift of God as long as infinite wisdom and love judged it proper you should; and setting flesh and blood aside, I believe your settled judgment, reason, and faith would not wish to have retained the dear pledge of love a moment longer. I cannot speak from experience when I address you on this occasion. The wife of my youth is still, through the peculiar mercy of God, spared with me; but I can say that I have been in deaths often, though not in Paul's sense. Even since last synod I have been led to think that my race was nearly run. I have been riding for relaxation, and am coming round again. I may wear a little longer, but the day is at hand, and I am calculating on the near approach of eternity; and have deposited life, wife, children, church,

and all, in our Lord's trusty hand. Let him dispose of all in his own way.

I know that it is one thing to say so when we are not taken at our word, and another to meet the trial itself. But grace is sufficient, and our Lord's condescension is infinite. I hope my dear friend is now experiencing the kind support of tender mercy in this hour of need. You rested sweetly under the grateful shade of the gourd,—now when it is withered, go directly to the broad-spreading shadow of the Rock of Ages. No storms below, no casualties, can deprive us of this cooling and refreshing retreat, if faith be in exercise. May the Lord, that comforteth them that are cast down, support you on this trying occasion! You have the prayers and Christian sympathy of many; and, what is far better, I hope you have the everlasting arms around you. Your motherless children are the Lord's heritage, and he will take care of them.

Remember me most affectionately to your good and aged mother. I hope she can sing the close of the ninety-second Psalm. Farewell, my very dear brother! —Your most sympathizing and loving friend,

A. P.

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TO MRS. J——N, EDINBURGH.

PERTH, 1807.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I was grieved to learn yesterday the particulars of your present distress. Though it be Saturday, I have laid aside my preparations to express my most sincere Christian sympathy with you under this visitation. I have been trying to follow the course



of the two good sisters at Bethany, when their brother Lazarus was sick : they sent and told Jesus. I hope he is already with you, with his left hand under your head, and his right embracing you. There is no friend, no physician like him : a glimpse of his lovely face, a word from his blessed mouth, is a reviving cordial to the drooping soul. Should he be carrying toward you as he did to that good family—that is, trying your faith and patience by delaying a comfortable visit—you must not call in question the Saviour's love. His kind heart was equally warm toward Lazarus and his sisters, when he abode beyond Jordan, as when he came to their house in Bethany. We are too apt to measure Christ's love by the varying rule of our own sense and feelings, or to imagine that his love to us is greatest when he manifests it most, and when we taste its sweetness most. But this is a great mistake. He rests in his love : it is always the same, whether we experience its gladdening effects in the soul or not. The great thing which Christ blamed Martha and Mary for, was the weakness of their faith : “ Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God ? ” Faith in the promise of grace is the grand anchor-hold of the gracious soul at all times, and is especially suited to a dark and trying season. When waves and billows are going over us, and deep calling unto deep, faith can look to God in the promise and say, “ Though he cause grief, yet he will turn again and have compassion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies. My heart and my flesh faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” When we do not feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts as for-

merly, it is glorifying to God, and a noble stay to the soul, to believe the love which God hath toward us,—that is, to look directly to God in the promise, and believe the blessed testimony of a faithful God with application to ourselves. This would keep the mind calm and serene amidst the greatest fights of affliction.

Many a believer has had that word made out in his experience, Isaiah xxvi. 3, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.” But the objection recurs, “My troubled, or unsettled, or stupid mind is not stayed on God, and therefore I want peace.” But why is it not stayed on him? We will not credit the divine testimony. We see and feel our heart disorders, and conclude that such things are inconsistent with a gracious state. But where is the Christian—where was he ever found—who had not cause to bewail the plagues of his heart? The grand distinguishing trait of the Christian life is, that we wrestle every day with spiritual wickedness.

But, my dear Madam, where am I running? What I have said may be a little suited to your former complaining frame; but let me now hope, that as your affliction abounds, your consolation also abounds by Christ Jesus. If so, you will be hailing and welcoming the approaching Bridegroom. The safety of Israel, in passing Jordan, was, that the ark stood in the midst of the channel until old and young had set their foot on the land of promise. You know the significance of the emblem. Study to keep your eye on our great High Priest. He has already passed over, and has assured us that an entrance shall be ministered to us abundantly into his everlasting kingdom. He is infinitely kind and



faithful, and will do as he has said,—Isa. xii. 10. Fear thou not, “for I am with thee.” To his paternal care I commend you. “As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him.”

All here join me in affectionate sympathy and earnest prayers for your gracious support, and recovery too, should the great Physician so see meet. My dear friend, stand still and observe the doing of the great Angel of the Covenant. I know somewhat of your feelings; but try to sing Psalm xlv. 1, 2, 3. May the Lord be with you!—I am yours, A. P.

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To Mr. J——, EDINBURGH.

PERTH, 1808.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Some weeks ago I had a kind letter from Mr. ——, giving me a particular account of Mrs. ——’s situation. He, I understand, wrote by your desire. Please to thank him, in my name, for the trouble he took to inform a distant friend, deeply interested in one so dear to us all. The Lord has honoured her to be very useful in her day. Could the earnest wishes and prayers of the saints ward off the king of terrors, I believe your life and her’s would be long preserved.

But our Sovereign Lord does whatsoever pleaseth him in heaven and earth, in the sea, and all deep places. One of the best of men said that he would not live always. All saints agree with him: “To depart, and be with Christ, is far better.” Tell my good friend, from me, not to fear. Do I say, Tell it her from me?

Nay, tell her so from the mouth of the Lord. It is very observable that a vast number of the precious promises begin with this caution and inhibition, "FEAR THOU NOT." (See Isaiah xli. 10-14; xliii. 1, 2; and xliv. 2, 3.) But where could I stop, should I recount the whole? Now our compassionate Father clearly foresaw, from everlasting, what a company of poor, timid, unbelieving, and discouraged creatures his people would be in this valley of tears—how ready they would be, under a cloud of desertion, in the hours of temptation, and under sharp bodily affliction, or when looking into their hearts and exercises, to cry out, "My hope is lost!" No, says a God of mercy, "*Fear thou not!*" "Be not dismayed." Such trials are amply provided for in the covenant. Infinite wisdom marked them out for the heirs of promise. Infinite love has laid up provision in Christ, and brought it near to us in the word, for such seasons. 'Tis true, that for the present we may not enjoy the comfort of the promise. Our faith may be weak—we may look too much, like Peter, to the rolling waves and the roaring winds. But our dear and compassionate Lord will not allow his poor doubting disciple to sink for all that. The waves may swell up to the brim, but they shall not overwhelm his soul. His body, his outward and inward comfort, may be overwhelmed; but his soul is in safe keeping. His better part, his eternal interests, are in safety. "The Lord," says the Psalmist, "shall keep thy soul; he shall preserve thee from all evil." Tell our dear distressed friend to encourage herself in the Lord her God.

At evening-time it shall be light. It was very un-



reasonable and groundless for the disciples to dread shipwreck on the sea of Galilee when Jesus was in the hinder part of the ship. He seemed not to be caring about them—he was asleep. This was so ordered for the trial of their faith. They, like us, were too much led by sense. Had they remembered his Godhead they had not feared. Let us try to keep in view his everlasting, unchangeable love, and rest here under all storms and darkness. Trials are going around. While I write, good Mr. I— of Milnathort's son is dying in the next room,—I don't think he will see the morning. His father is carrying like a Christian who has committed his all to God.

I shall be happy to hear from you concerning our worthy friend in the furnace. My tender love, sympathy, and poor prayers are for you both. May the Father of mercies support you!—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, Aug. 1815.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I was much concerned to learn from Mr. — that you had been visited with a very severe affliction a few weeks ago. It pleased the Lord to stay the rough wind in the day of the east wind. I hope the waters of Marah have been sweetened. The cup of affliction is very unpalatable to our natural man, but the bitterest drugs are often the most powerful.

We must be taught by experience that sin is a very bitter thing, and that it cannot be brought down and

purged out without some very strong doses. But our kind Father's hand always mixes up the potion. You know, I hope, whom you have believed: you may persuade yourself that he will faithfully keep that which you have committed unto him.

You and I are now far advanced in our wilderness course: it behoves us much to be on the outlook for our Lord's coming, and to have all ready for the last call. We will find it the only way to attain peace and comfort in life and at death, to study daily to maintain a life of faith on the Son of God. This sweet life consists in going to Christ *for* all, and *with* all—in giving him absolute credit for all that he has promised, whether it be well or ill with us in present exercise—and taking in good part all his dispensations, whether trying or comfortable. Let us try to learn more and more of this blessed exercise.

Thanks to the kind Physician for your late deliverance! May the Lord spare you long for a blessing!—  
Ever yours, A. P.

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#### TO THE SAME.

PERTH, May, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I left you last Saturday in a gentle furnace. Duty called me away. I lost all knowledge of your situation the moment I turned my back. This letter will tell you what place you retain in my heart. The very best friends on earth are poor empty cisterns; let us take our hearts off from them, and keep them fixed on that blessed and glorious Friend, who not only loveth at all times, but hath pro-



mised, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." He has, of late, put you frequently into the furnace; he knows there is much dross about us; we need to be melted and tried; but, like a skilful refiner, he stands by, observing and directing the process, and scumming off the dross. Trust him, Sir, that he will not lose a single particle of the good metal. There are two openings by which he takes out his tried gold: the one is toward time, and the other toward eternity. You and I have often been put in and drawn out again by the former; but the time is approaching when we must pass through at that side of the furnace which opens into eternity; but let us not be afraid, the same kind Lord presides in both worlds. I hope we have both committed our souls to his everlasting keeping, and may rest assured that he will keep that which we have deposited in his hand. My dear Sir, endeavour to live and lean on Christ in the promise, and you may firmly trust him that all will be well.—Yours truly,  
A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, Sept. 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Having a leisure hour, I embrace it to fulfil my promise of sending you a few lines to tell you, that through the goodness of God I got safely home the day I left you, and found my family all well. I did not meet a smiling spouse at the door, to welcome me as formerly; but I do not complain of a gracious God for taking her home to that happy place whence she will never go out. I cannot

help feeling the blank, but I must not dwell on it. It is better to look up to him whose name is God-All-sufficient. What shall I now tell you? My good colleague\* has begun to preach by himself! \* \* I really feel much disappointed and sorry that he has taken this step. Long intercourse and harmony had brought us into settled friendship; but in this hour of temptation he has burst through all bonds. I have no doubt that he acts from a sense of duty; but I have as little doubt that he is striving against the work of God. The healing of our breach† is one of the most remarkable events since the Reformation. Some are disposed to cry it down, and heap many hard sayings on our heads; I much dread they are fighting against God. The time seems to be at hand when the Lord will gather his scattered sheep into one fold; they are beginning to look one another in the face with more complacency than formerly. The public meetings for spreading the Bible, and sending the gospel to perishing sinners, have been blessed of God for bringing the friends of religion together, and showing them that they are members of the same body, and should not keep at such distance from one another. The coming of Christ to build up his fallen-down tabernacle, in the latter days, will be accompanied with the gathering together of the scattered fragments of his church into one body; and I think it is a token for good that the gathering work is beginning with that body who hold the clearest testimony for Reformation prin-

\* The late Rev. Richard Black.

† The union of the two great Branches of the Secession Church, then just effected.



ciples. I am sorry that any—especially such as I have long enjoyed intimate fellowship with—should stumble at this great work of God. May the Lord, who hath chosen Jerusalem, level all mountains before them, and make them to see light clearly in his own good time!

I know that you have been in difficulties. My serious advice to you is, carry all your stumbling-blocks to God, weigh them in the balance of the sanctuary, and deliberately consider if you could venture to stand upon them in a dying hour. Your time and mine is far gone; and it is a great matter to have all clear for eternity when the last messenger arrives.

I commit you both to the care and counsel of that great and good Friend who never will fail nor forsake us. Your complaint, I hope, is no worse. We have a wise and compassionate Physician: trust him.—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, Sept. 1822.

MY DEAR MADAM—I reached Perth the day I left your hospitable home; learned that my daughter, Mrs. J—, was very poorly; went off that afternoon to Methven, and found her very ill indeed; severe inflammation;

\* \* \* \* \*

pulsation, 160. But she is in a kind Father's hand, who cannot do us any wrong; nay, who has assured us that all things shall work together for good. We think she could be ill spared from such a numerous young family; but we are apt to lay too much of our dependencies on creatures. God lives, and it shall be well with them that fear him, come what will. Yet we have much cause to bless God for creature comforts.

I think there is every ground of hope that this useful life may be a little longer spared; but we have been called to slacken our hold, and wait in faith and patience. She has continued since Wednesday calm and easy, and slept well. Help us to praise the great Physician, who can make a way in the deep—a path in the mighty waters! He showed her much mercy when at the worst. Her recollection was but very slightly affected, nor is she yet laid on the bed of death. “The goodness of God endureth continually.”

I hope Mr. J— is getting better, or, at least, is no worse. He and I are arrived at that period of life when we may expect the monitors of death will be now and then uttering their voice. But there is a cheering voice, sounding far above them, saying, “I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive again, and live for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.” Let us listen to this sweet proclamation, and cherish a desire in God’s time to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

Is Mr. F— better? Tell him, from me, that there is a Physician above the sky, who cures all manner of sickness and diseases both of soul and body, and cures them all gratis. O that all sin-sick souls would be persuaded to apply to him by faith and prayer! May grace, and mercy, and peace, be multiplied to you from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ! Farewell!—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, Oct. 1822.

MY DEAR FRIENDS—You would receive the notice of the heavy stroke sent upon the Methven family.



Having this opportunity, I embrace it, to say that Mr. J— is bearing it, and carrying under the severe bereavement, like one who has given his whole heart (even the throne of it) to Christ himself. Never was a man more happy in a dear partner ; but when the Sovereign Lord told him, by the trying event, that she was to be no longer his, he meekly bowed submission to the divine will, and is now leaning on that powerful arm which can carry through the deepest waters. It was, indeed, a very trying and unexpected blow to me and all the family. We were foolishly anticipating that for many years to come she would be our stay and comfort. But man's thoughts are vanity. It was our consolation to observe clear and decided evidences that the Lord had made her ready for the immortal crown. Psal. xxvii, 1, Jer. xxix, 11, and Psal. cxxxviii, were frequently in her mouth as she was going along the valley of the shadow of death. On the morning of the day of her departure, she sung the twenty-third Psalm in company with a few of the family ; and, in some of the notes, her melodious voice rose above them all. During the preceding night the fever had been much in her head, but the Lord granted her a lucid interval of about an hour, and when family worship ended she desired the children to be brought into the room.—(Three of them were at Perth.)—She addressed them in succession, and gave them a few suitable advices. The scene was very moving—it was over ere I arrived. I had been preaching at Kinkell the Sabbath before, and did not arrive till eleven o'clock, forenoon. By this time the delirium had again returned. My dear M— knew me, but said nothing to me in answer to a

few suggestions from my bleeding heart. She took her flight on high at two o'clock in the afternoon. I hope the Lord is helping me to kiss this sharp rod, and sing with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" Eight young children are left behind, having lost one of the best of mothers; but they have a good father on earth yet left over them, and our Father in heaven claims special interest in, and extends peculiar care towards, fatherless and orphan children.

You expressed so deep a concern about my late dear daughter, when I last parted from you, that I thought it would gratify you to send a particular account of her last illness and her deathbed exercise. The Lord has done it, and he cannot do wrong; nay, he does all things well. This is another link loosed which might have enchained me too closely to this earth: I would now arise and trim my lamp. I have no doubt that you are giving us a place in your prayers. Continue to do so. We will, I hope, soon mingle our praises together, with the blessed company around the throne of the glorious Lamb!—Yours sincerely, A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, Nov. 1825.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I cannot suffer my grandson to go to Edinburgh without inquiring after you, as I left you both poorly. I hope by this time you are both recovered, by the kind ordering of the great Physician. I trust your spiritual strength is recruited and invigo-



rated by this gentle rod. Many have had occasion to say, with the apostle, "As our outward man decays, the inward man is renewed." This is a happy experience. The Lord's chastisements to his children are all intended for their spiritual profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness. There is so much dross about the best, they need often to be cast into the furnace: the great Refiner will have every speck of pollution removed from his jewels ere they be laid up in the heavenly cabinet. He knows the best means to be employed: let us believe that all, under his wise direction, shall work together for good.

We have had another pleasant communion. I trust we had the great Master's presence; and O, it is sweet when the King brings in his own bride into the guest-chamber, and causes her spikenard send forth its fragrance. We in this land, and we in the Secession, are a highly-favoured people—if we be found, at last, cumberers of the ground, woe will be unto us!

My best wishes and poor prayers ascend to the throne for you all. May your souls prosper! and when you go to the footstool of the King, remember me.—I am yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, Aug. 1831.

MY DEAR MADAM—The tidings of your late husband's removal reached me some time before Mr. F—'s kind letter arrived. I no sooner heard of the event, than I determined to express my sympathy with you by letter, but have been prevented by a pressure of

work. You have lost a kind husband, and I a kind friend of forty years' standing; but, my dear Madam, we have good cause to hope that he has gone home to be ever with the Lord, and is now singing the new song among the nations of them that are saved.

Though we are yet on the footstool, two things may comfort us. One is, that though our dear fellow-travellers are taken from us, with whom we took sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God in company, our everlasting Father, Husband, Friend, and Saviour, assures us that he will never leave nor forsake us. Another is, the promise, "I will come again, and receive you to myself." We both beheld our dear late partners fall asleep in the arms of a loving Redeemer. Though they be dead to us, they are alive, we have reason to hope, within the vail, and their dust is resting in hope of a glorious resurrection. Let this blessed hope concerning them, and concerning ourselves, cheer our spirits as we pass along this valley of tears.

It is observable, that the doctrine of the resurrection is the grand cordial which the Lord administered to weeping Martha,—John xi. In the bitterness of her grief, she saluted her Lord in these words—"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Ah! little did she know the gracious designs of her Lord in that dispensation, both toward her and toward her brother. "Thy brother shall rise again." I know it, said Martha; "he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Well, said Christ, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou



this?" The proper lessons we may learn from this instructive passage are—1. That it is only in the exercise of faith that we can meet trying and bereaving dispensations in a proper frame of mind. 2. That, in the exercise of faith, the gracious soul looks away from dead worldly comforts to a living Saviour, and rests there. 3. That the day is coming when mourning believers will again meet their departed godly friends. 4. That the living believer has nothing to fear from the stroke of natural death. My dear friend, encourage yourself in the Lord your God. Though your earthly husband's voice is now silent in the grave, your everlasting Husband is saying, "I will not leave you comfortless, but will come to you"—and is not that enough? Nay, more; he is leaving with you a kind nephew, to perform the office of a loving son in your widowhood, and, I hope, also to lead you to our heavenly Father's throne in family devotions, as well as to ease you of many domestic cares.

I am well pleased to observe that Mr. F—, in his letter, writes in the spirit of one who values the comforts of religion in the hour of trial. Tell him, from me, that after sixty years', and upwards, experience of the Lord's goodness, I can recommend Bible religion as the only source of solid peace in life, and of safety and joy in prospect of death and eternity. The sooner we begin the service of Christ the better. The seed of grace, early implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit, is the commencement of eternal life in the soul, and a noble preservative against the temptations of an evil world. May the Lord make you mutual comforts to one another as you pass along the vale of tears, and preserve you to his heavenly kingdom!

I have a design of being at the next meeting of synod if, the Lord will; and if so, I will see you. In the meantime you have my warmest Christian sympathy with you. Our God is the God of all comfort, and he comforts mourners.—I am your affectionate friend in Christ,

A. P.

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TO THE REV. R— F—, C—D.

PERTH, March, 1837.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER—You and I have been long labouring in the vineyard of our Lord, and seen many fellow-labourers called off who far excelled us in gifts and grace too. The thought has, I daresay, often crossed our minds, Why am I spared? There may be something of impatience, of pride, or presumption in the inquiry. We may be sure of two things—first, our work on earth is not yet done; and secondly, we are not yet ready. Some Achan may be in the camp, who must be executed; or some corner of the field must be dug over again and watered. Our great Master has appointed us to wait at our post, and pursue our work until he come. Happy is that servant he shall find so doing! I have learned that your summons of removal seemed to your family, on Sabbath evening, to have been at hand; but the messenger has been countermanded, and I hope you are convalescent. I rejoice in it, and will cordially join you in a song of thanksgiving. I, too, have had a very gentle monitor of his coming to me with the last summons. My indisposition has been light, seemingly something of the general scourge which has

R



passed over the land. But blessed be God, and glory to his name, I am at my work again ! You and I have little time to count upon ; but I hope our inheritance is secured in the happy land above. I hope we are well pleased to leave the determination of the time, and all circumstances, in the hand of our great and good Master. I most sincerely thank him for your begun recovery, and very much on good Mrs. F—'s account. It seems, to outward view, that she could have scarcely sustained the stroke of your removal. Yet we know that he can support beyond all human calculation. Let us leave all in our Father's hand, and rejoice with trembling in one sense, and, in another, rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

I would have seen you this week had it not been this slight touch of the rod on myself. I shall be glad to hear that your recovery is advancing.

I need not say, let us remember one another at our Father's throne. We have often met, and our prayers mingled in our great High Priest's censer before the throne.

My dear son's removal\* is a loud warning we should never forget ; yet even in this cup of sorrow was mixed up much mercy both to him and us left behind. His family are wonderfully supported. God is good, good, good!—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

MY BELOVED FRIEND in the House of Mourning—  
How are you taking with this sudden and trying visi-

\* The late Mr. Jamieson of Methven.

tation? I hope not as did Jacob, saying, "All these things are against me;" but rather as holy Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." Your departed son was the Lord's gift, or rather loan to you. He fulfilled his day and duty to you with all the engaging kindness of a loving and devoted heart to the very last, and gave you satisfactory evidence that he acted from gracious principle deeply engrained in his heart; and his work on earth being ended, our Father in heaven has taken him home to himself, to sing the praises of redeeming love among the nations of them that are saved. And have you not cause to rejoice? The call was sudden, but he was, I hope, made ready; it was unexpected by you and us all, but, considering the state of his health for some time past, I suppose, not unexpected by himself. Reflecting on the way of our kind heavenly Father with yourselves of late, and I may say with me also, we may expect soon to follow; but he has got the start of us. I hope we will, in the Lord's good time, meet him and our other departed friends before the royal throne of God and the Lamb. Let us praise the Lord, while we pursue after and press forward to obtain the mark of our high calling.

But I, after all, must complain of your unkindness in not advising me of E—'s distress, that I might have put my feeble shoulder under your burden, and carried our dear friend's case to our Father's throne. I never knew of his distress till I heard of his decease. In the meantime, I sincerely sympathize with you all, and particularly with your aged and bowed-down friend, hoping and praying that you may be abun-



dantly succoured from above by the God of all consolation in Christ Jesus our Lord. Farewell for a little space! Our gracious Lord will perfect that which concerneth us all in his own time.—Your old steady friend,

A. P.

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TO MRS. G— B— OF D—.

PERTH, Aug. 1837.

MY DEAR AFFLICTED FRIEND—You are in the valley of weeping, because he is gone to the house of silence whose voice had so often soothed your heart and thrilled on your ear. I have just come from reading, in my morning course, our kind Redeemer's interview with the weeping sisters at Bethany. Their loss of a beloved brother wrung their feeling hearts with sorrow; but Christ turned their attention to himself, and told them who he was, and what he would do both for Lazarus and for them. He did not blame them for weeping. Jesus himself wept; although not merely for the death of Lazarus, for he had said to his disciples, ere he came to the place, that he was glad he was not at Bethany when his friend died, that they might get a new display of his glory at Lazarus' grave, and believe. A similar display of glory you and I must not expect when we visit the tombs of our departed friends; but if we believe that Jesus himself died and rose again, then, assuredly, all who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. I hope your dear departed husband and beloved son will then occupy a place among the glorious company. Now, comfort yourself, dear friend, with these thoughts. Nay, more,

often look into the blessed book of God, and listen to what your heavenly Father is there saying to you in this hour of bereavement: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth; thy Maker is thy husband." "The mountains may depart, the hills may be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." I need not multiply quotations from that blessed book: I hope you are daily, by faith and prayer, drawing your spiritual supplies from it as your richest treasure. Along with your many comforts in your past lot, you have had a share of trials--and why not? But you may well say that you have somewhat seen the end of the Lord in them. He turned again and had compassion for his own name's sake, and took away your sackcloth and girded you with gladness. Even now, when your conjugal and maternal relations are dissolved, you can yet say, you have a kind father on earth, and a far kinder Father in heaven, to care for you. Well, my dear friend, encourage yourself in the Lord your God, and cast all your cares upon him. You have many friends praying for you, and our God is the hearer of prayer.

I feel much for the congregation. They have lost an able pastor, whose labours have been blessed for gathering and feeding them. But as the great and good Shepherd stands and feeds, he can send a man after his own heart to fill the vacant pulpit. Let them pray, and hope, and wait.

With the kindest expression of sympathy and condolence, believe me to be yours,

A. P.



TO MR. W— B— OF G—.

PERTH, 1837.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND—Your acceptable letter came to me some days ago bearing the mark of mourning. I had received a funeral notice of your late friend's departure, which struck us much and excited strong sympathetic feelings for you all, especially the bereaved widow and fatherless children. Had not our kind heavenly Father both foreseen and provided for the support and comfort of his mourners, he would not have caused them to mourn. Eternal wisdom sends our trials; and infinite love will always provide both for the support of God's mourners, and for the ultimate glory of his own name. But the great difficulty in Christian experience lies in getting the proud rebellious heart to bow to our Father's sovereign will, and meekly take up the cross. Alas! we often—too often—adopt the language of Naomi, "Call me not Naomi, but call me Marah, for the Lord hath dealt bitterly with my soul." In her haste she went so far as to say, even to a prophet of the Lord, "I do well to be angry." Now this is saying that we are wiser than God. I hope your friend will be kept from such murmurings even in heart, and will be brought to adopt the language of the church,—“It is of the Lord's mercies I am not consumed;” “His compassions fail not.” I have been sorely smitten, but God, my God, lives to be my stay—my trust—my partner in the land of the living—my everlasting all. Though she water her pillow with tears of submissive sorrow she sins not, for our compassionate Father permits the moderate

workings of human affections. It is given as a line of a profane character, "That he cries not when the Lord binds him." Yet let not your friend be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow. It is true, she has lost an earthly husband; but let her take comfort from the thought that the everlasting Husband lives, and is addressing her in these gracious words,—Hos. ii. 19, 20, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord." O, what consolation to the heart of a sorrowful widow is embosomed in these gracious words! My earnest prayer for her is, that she may find them to be the joy and rejoicing of her heart. Let her carry her young children to the Lord, use all means for bringing them up for the Lord, and he will make them a comfort and a blessing to her. "The mercy of the Lord is from generation to generation to them that fear him, and his righteousness to children's children." You know the pangs of bitter grief on the removal of dear parents, and children too; and I have met with the sore trial of parting with two beloved children, and a still more beloved spouse; but the hope of finding them again in our heavenly Father's home, cheered us in the parting pang. We shall go to them; they shall not return to us. Let us try to sing with the church, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."



My dear friend, the care of God displayed in your family circumstances bespeaks much kindness. So many of your children spared with you, made so useful and comfortable to you and Mrs. B—, and so many of them giving hopeful evidence that they are seeking the better country, gives me very great pleasure. Even W—, though deprived of external vision, gives decided evidence of a mind enlightened in the things of God, as well as of powers and acquirements, far above the average attainment of students in ordinary circumstances. This seems to say that the Lord has some useful department in the church and world in reserve for him. We and you must wait in hope. Your little delicate A— may occasion some anxious thoughts, and send you often to our Father's throne on his account. Leave him there; many a weak child has waxed strong, lived long, and turned out a great blessing to the church and to civil society; but our chief comfort, in reference to the little children, is, "That of such is the kingdom of heaven." I have no doubt that Mrs. B— and you are using all the appointed means for training up your seed for Christ. I sincerely thank you for the deep interest you take in my intended publication; I expect it will go to the press next week. I have often devoted it to the Lord in my closet. May the best blessing of a God of love rest on you all in time and eternity.—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO THE REV. MR. J——N OF M——N.

PERTH, 1803.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER—Having just finished my poor preparations for Sabbath, and closed them

with *Deus jurabit*, I sit down just to tell you that I have done so. Is it presumption? I have often done so before, and have always found that when I could study and preach in the spirit of these two words, all went well. We have foundation enough, I am certain of it, in the blessed promise for the conclusion which they express. Were we helped always to go to our good Master's work in firm persuasion that he will help, how easy and pleasant would we find it!

I understood you to be engaged also in thanksgiving and humiliation yesterday, and hope you had freedom of access to our Father's throne. You say that you met me in the house of God; that is just what I had expressed in the language of hope before your letter arrived. It is pleasant for friends to meet anywhere, but especially in the sanctuary in the presence of the best Friend. His presence sweetens and cements all other friendships. I thought we had a good day in public; but my closet was my Bethel. I thought that I was enabled to search and find out the old leaven—to bemoan myself—to plunge myself anew in the fountain—to wonder at the immensity, the riches, the freedom, the eternity of electing, redeeming, forgiving, and sanctifying love. I got leave also to take you in. May our kind Lord keep us both near himself, and enable us to be watchful against our enemies! May the text I have been writing upon be written out in our experience! Phil. iv. 7, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

I thank you for all your kind inquiries after our health. We are all well again, through divine mercy.



I think that I read love in these visitations to my young folks, and hope they are blessed to them also. They that are busied in the world need something to keep them at bay.

You are to be at A—n. I hope the great Master will go with you. Our autumn occasions have been good times to many, as well as to myself.

Let us continue to remember each other at our Father's throne; and never forget his bride, the Church.  
—Ever yours, A. P.

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### TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1804.

MY DEAR BROTHER—The first news that met me at landing last night were, that our dear and worthy friend and brother, Mr. Brown, Abernethy, was, yesterday morning, called home to his Master's joy. A new stroke of palsy put an end to his valuable life in a few minutes. His clothes were just on. He felt himself a little indisposed in the chair; and while the servant adjusted his bed, and turned round to assist him to it, she found him expiring in the chair. What a pleasant summons! what an instructive Providence to all, and especially to me, the next on the roll! Were I not obliged to go off to Abernethy, I would certainly have come out to-night to condole with you in your affliction; but owing to what has taken place there, I cannot be home until Tuesday. If spared, I will see you then; but our best Friend will abide with you. His presence is sweet at all times, and especially in a day of trial. He will tell you why he is correcting. His left hand

will be under your head. Remember your text at Logiealmond, and your last subject at home. I shall try to carry you with me to the footstool of the throne. O, let us bless the God of all our mercies with grateful hearts, and blush before him, that we have done so little for God, and for one another's best interests. Had we not the blood of sprinkling to depend upon for acceptance at the throne, we would be undone for ever. In great haste.—Ever yours, A. P.

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## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1806.

MY DEAR SON—Though I never before addressed you by this name, I have for some time past viewed you in this character, and even in my most serious moments. I may call you my *Seth*; for the Lord, who took away my dear infant son, has been graciously pleased to put you in his stead. May that kind Lord who has joined you and my dear M— together, sweeten and cement the relation with all the endearments of his paternal love, and fill your outward lot with every good thing most conducive to your best interests! You are both, I believe, better acquainted with your Bibles than to expect or wish for a dead calm of prosperity in your passage through life. Our great comfort is, that our times and all coming events are in God's hand; and, come what will, it comes from a friend and a father as a pledge of love, and is designed as a mean to draw us nearer to himself as our only rest and portion. The closer we walk with God in every relation, the more



real, unsullied comfort we enjoy in it. It needs daily supplies from the throne to keep the heart in a spiritual frame at any time, but especially when the cup of comfort is full. You will find in experience, that when the heart becomes a little intoxicated, the Lord will, by some little unexpected occurrence, bring you to your senses, and your knees. Such admonitions are kindly and seasonable.

I have little time to say more, only to request you not to forget us, and the good work before us. There is great need for a refreshing shower to our withering branches. I hope you have interest at court. We are sure He has, who speaks in Isa. lxii. 1. Let us try to put him in remembrance; and I hope some drops will fall on your own heads. He will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. I am glad to hear that M— is to be with us; I wish circumstances had allowed you also; but I hope to see you on Monday. It was said of old, that the last day was the great day of the feast; it may be so again. The presence of the blessed Master will make all go well.—Ever your loving father,  
A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, May, 1807.

MY DEAR CHILDREN—Your kind letter was received by Mr. M—. I thank you both for your affectionate inquiries and invitations, but I am afraid I cannot stir so early as next week. Through divine mercy, my complaint is going off. The pain is almost gone; but a bit of my skin is also gone with the blister, which will

disable me for walking much for a few days. No matter for that, if the Lord be pleased to promote my spiritual health by this kind visitation. I am sure that I needed this rod, and it comes most seasonably. Had it come two weeks sooner it would have prevented me from doing what I regarded as an important duty. If matters go well in Zion, let us not be much moved at little personal or family trials.

I know, my dear children, that a more treacherous, proud, misgiving, and hard heart than mine, is not to be found among the seed of Adam. My only dependence is, that my God has taken it in hand, will break and humble, will keep and heal it, by all-powerful grace. Let him take his own way, and employ his own means; through grace I will wait the issue, in assured expectation that he will keep that which I have committed to him against that day. This touch in my toe may, by and bye, reach my head or my heart, and then my course and my service will end on earth; but the Lord will be with you both, to bless you and to do you good.

I have the prospect of being at several places soon where the Lord's Supper is intended, and we will have a feast, if the great Master be present. Why should I say, if? All *will* be well. It is good to be about his hand, and engaged in his work. I hope you'll get a feast at L—nd next week. We much need a time of refreshing to our dry and withered bones: wrestle for a shower from above.—Ever your loving father,

A. P.



## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1826.

MY DEAR SON—In your letter to-day, I see the issue with —— is still doubtful. We are sure all is right which comes from the hand of a righteous Ruler, and all is good for us which comes from the hand of our kind and gracious Father. If we can lay finger and thumb on these gracious words,—Isa. xli. 11, and xlii. 16,—we shall walk and not stumble even in the dark valley. It has frequently crossed my mind that —— has been cast into this furnace most seasonably. His situation in business demands so much attention, that he was in danger of losing sight of what is infinitely more important. He has had a long track of health, and might think that nothing would ding him; but the Lord is now telling him, experimentally, that he is an earthen vessel. I hope the Lord will refine, quicken, and, in due time, recover and spare him to us for a while. I daresay the women got much good by looking into their Lord's empty grave, though they were not called to lie down in it. Our kind Lord often allures us, and brings us into the wilderness, that he may there speak comfortably—speak to the heart. I hope we can both set our seal to his promise. Let us hear the apostolic direction—"Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, instant in prayer."

A new year is now begun: many, many have been the mercies of the past year to both our families! Let us bless the Lord with grateful hearts! I am now running my seventy-third year. I must have little time before me; but I hope my title-deeds for eternity

are signed and sealed. Let my Father in heaven take his own way in preparing me for the inheritance ; I am sure he will do all for the best. I have good reason to say, he hath been mindful of me, and he will bless me still. I desire, too, to join with you in thanksgiving for his great kindness to you and your family during the past year. The touches of his rod on our young friends have been very gentle and of short continuance. This is mercy. Let us pray these may be sanctified. Farewell !—Ever your loving father, A. P.

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TO GRANDCHILDREN AT M——N.

PERTH, Sept. 1835.

MY DEAR GRANDCHILDREN—Your aunt brought me a good report last night that you were both again convalescent. I feel lightened with the news. The Lord hath smitten, and he is healing. But why did he smite? This is the question. Well does he know why. He afflicts not willingly : surely there is a cause. It is our part to search for it. Job once spoke as one puzzled to find it out, and prayed, saying, “ Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.” He no doubt knew that God had just cause for it ; but he wished to know the particular cause of his particular affliction, that he might mourn over it before the Lord. He was the holiest man on the earth too ; yet there was a cause in himself for his sorrow and suffering. Well, he prays that the Lord would show it to him. He got an answer to his prayer, and then he cries out, “ I am vile ! What shall I answer thee, O thou preserver of men ? I abhor my-



self: I repent in dust and ashes." Surely it is meet to say to God, I have borne chastisement, I will sin no more. They who come out of the furnace with a broken heart, kissing a father's rod, shall know the loving kindness of the Lord.

What is the frame of your hearts, now that you are recovering? Can you say, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee! God has been saying, in this dispensation, that he loves you: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.—Be zealous, therefore, and repent.—Whom the Lord loveth, he chastens." O, it melts the heart of a loving child when he sees the name, *Father*, written on the smiting rod: "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.—It is a mercy that I am out of hell.—I will praise the Lord: he is taking away my sackcloth, and girding me with gladness.—Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with you." I hope, my dear children, you feel some stirrings of soul to tune your harps to Psal. ciii. Well, you will find it is pleasant to render thanks unto the Lord: it is the only return we can make for his great kindness. He asks no more. But let the first part of your song of praise be thanks to God for his unspeakable gift.

Nothing can melt and mellow our hard hearts but a believing sight of the cross on Calvary. I hope you have both been on that bloody mount, weeping and saying, Jesus was wounded, bruised, slain for my transgressions, and I will glory only in the cross of my dear Redeemer. Lift up your heads, and say in faith, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid. Your good father on earth is at the throne for you: W—,

I know is there also. I hope your other brother and I are joining them. Our great Father in heaven is hearing us and healing you. O, what shall we render for all this kindness? I leave you in his gracious hand, believing that he will perfect his work on you and in you. Farewell, my dears; let us praise God for his past and present mercies: "The goodness of Almighty God endureth ever still." Tender love to your father; I am yours for ever, bearing you in my heart. Amen.—From your grandfather, A. P.

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## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1835.

MY VERY DEAR CHILDREN—It pleased me much to learn that you retained so much command of your tender feelings, as to give the parting embrace to our dear friends yesterday with so much Christian composure and self-possession. The few tears you shed, mingled with fervent wishes and prayers for your devoted brother's happiness and success in his Master's great and good work in a foreign land, were, I trust, an odour of a sweet smell, acceptable and well pleasing to God. Your tears are in our heavenly Father's bottle, and your prayers had in remembrance before his throne. The compassionate Redeemer did not chide the sisters of Lazarus for weeping the supposed loss of a dear brother. His kind and loving heart was so affected with the moving scene around him, that he groaned within himself and wept also. But, O, how vastly different was the scene passing before the two



sisters at Bethany? Their brother was dead and buried. They knew not the Saviour's intention for coming on that occasion. They thought chiefly of the rotting body of their beloved Lazarus. Now reflect, my dear daughters, on the marvellous contrast in your case. Your brother liveth; his kind Master has come and called him to go to Jamaica to blow the gospel trumpet, to gather a company of his chosen sheep and lambs into the Redeemer's fold. They are bleating for their spiritual food; they are wistfully looking and longing for his arrival, crying to God to speed his course over the bosom of the ocean, that they may embrace him as the messenger of the church and the glory of Christ. I have no doubt that the work going on in the church below, and the spreading of the Saviour's fame, is made known to the holy company around the throne above, and will fill the blessed inhabitants (your glorified mother among the rest) with transports of joy and praise. That you have a brother so highly honoured of God, as to be called of God, and selected by Rose Street Congregation to that great work, should change your mourning into joy and melody. Imitate your father's quiet composure and cheerful contentment under this new testimony of the Lord's kindness, in giving a son so pleasingly devoted to the Lord's service in this work. The deep interest taken in William's mission by the church in Edinburgh, Perth, and Methven, all testify that he has left behind him a large body of Christians who will be remembrancers at the throne for him, and will daily help him by their prayers. All things considered, let me hear and see that you have, by faith and prayer, re-

signed him cheerfully to the Master's disposal, saying, with the good woman of old, *It is well*.

Do come into town; a change of air may do you good with a blessing from above; and a seat under the banner of the King's love will cheer your heart. We are to consecrate Thursday to the exercise of fasting; the call is loud from the state of the weather. My kindest regards and prayer for your spiritual and temporal health. Farewell, and carry me to our Father's throne.—Ever your loving grandfather, A. P.

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#### TO THE SAME.

PERTH, Jan. 1836.

MY DEAR CHILDREN—I now really feel you a link nearer me than before this great breach took place. The chain of sublunary relation being now broken as to your father, you and I are brought somewhat closer together in this world. But let us not forget that the chain is very brittle. O let us cleave closer and closer to the great uppermost link in the chain of mercy. He is fixed on his eternal throne, in the centre of all his beloved members both in heaven and earth. We on the footstool are as closely united to him as those around his royal throne. His eye is upon us all; his hand holds us all, and none shall pluck us out of it. We who are yet in this variable climate, are so much affected with the changes of our cold and damp atmosphere that we contract rust; our kind Lord above will have the rust cleared off, and, for this purpose, he puts us now and then into his furnace; but he will not suffer the flame to burn too strong nor too long.



You are now, I hope, my dear children, feeling that it is good for you to be touched with the rod of a Father. That is a most kindly word, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." It appears to me that consolation abounds in proportion as your affliction abounds. Ah! say then, "Most gladly will I therefore glory in mine infirmities;" for when I feel weak "then am I strong." The Lord has so remarkably supported you both in this common trial which has come upon us all, that your heads are lifted up above the waves, and you are heard crying, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul!" Well, go on in the strength of the Lord God; grip closer and closer to him who says, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." The orphan's stay will be your only refuge; your old grandfather on earth is yet alive through the mercy of God; he feels a growing interest in you both, and in your brothers; but he is a withering, fading, leafless trunk, though he hopes the root is fixed in a good soil. He is desirous even in old age to bring forth some clusters: O for the descent of the dew from heaven! I would come out, but I feel it not comfortable to leave my own closet now; you will, I hope, come to us. I am much delighted with a letter from A—. The Lord seems mercifully to have sanctified the late trial to his soul; I hope the Lord will spare him long for a blessing to you. O what mercies he can bring out of trials to his own! Draw largely on the throne of grace; remember me when there; my day is far spent, the night is at hand, but a bright morning, I hope, will succeed, never, never to be beclouded.—The tenderest regards of your old father,

A. P.

TO MR. A—R J—N.

PERTH, 1828.

MY DEAR A—R

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You are arrived at an important stage of life, in reference both to the things of time and the things of eternity. With respect to the former, your habits of order, diligence, despatch, and minute attention to the details of business, are to be acquired. If present opportunities are not improved for these ends, there is little probability of any great success in future life. You are, by your own choice, entered on mercantile pursuits; and you may—you ought—to indulge an honest ambition, always under the direction of God, to rise in your profession to a station of public usefulness in society, and even to independence, if it be the will of God to send a blessing on lawful industry. But, while I say so, I should perhaps rather caution you against an error very common in young minds—viz. excessive ardour and precipitancy. From the natural buoyancy of their spirits, the young are in danger of building castles in the air, grasping at objects beyond their reach, and plunging themselves into inextricable difficulties at their very outset in life. The great point should be, to attend faithfully to the business on hand, and if the Lord plainly open a way of bettering our situation, then let us thankfully embrace it. But we should be sure that it be such an opening as will demand no sacrifice of principle or spiritual privilege. For instance, I learn that you had some thoughts of accepting a situation in a house in Petersburg. It was a mercy to you that your youth prevented this;



though the appointment had brought a hundred or even a thousand a-year, would this have been any compensation for the loss of your Christian privileges? A similar offer may again come in your way; but be on your guard against the temptation. The great point of consideration with you should be, that now is your time for securing your eternal interest. You are in youth, and God expressly demands the homage of the youthful heart,—Prov. viii. 17; Eccles. xii. 1. The fact that (generally speaking) conversion to God takes place in this stage of life, is a great encouragement to early religion; and it is a melancholy fact, that if this period of life pass over without any serious and saving work having begun in the soul, it seldom takes place afterwards. This observation applies with special force to such young persons as have been trained up in religious families, and under the means of grace, as you have been. While I suggest this serious admonition and warning to you, I must add, that I know nothing which can be considered as a decided evidence against your claim to rank among the genuine converts to Christ. But O, my dear A—, remember that it is a very serious and important thing to be a disciple of Christ in deed and in truth. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: that is, be anxious at all pains to have this great point fully ascertained to your own soul, upon sound scriptural evidence. Consider what the word of God says concerning the absolute necessity of a radical change of heart and nature—the necessity of the Spirit's internal work in convincing us of our guilty, undone, and helpless condition—of union to Christ—of the mortification of the

lust of the heart—and a practically holy life. Consider these things closely, and examine your heart and life, and compare them with the word of God. This is the unerring standard by which we must be tried at last; and if we conscientiously judge ourselves by this rule we shall not be condemned.

I have thrown together these few hints to you for your consideration: may the Lord bless them! I shall be very glad to hear from you on this subject. Beware of giving all your time to the world, except the mere dry formality of bowing your knees morning and evening. Ah, my young friend, this won't do. God must have our heart and affections, else he will not regard our prayers.—I commit you to the care of the Father of mercies, and am yours,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1836.

MY DEAR ALEXANDER—We are all wearying very much to see you again. You will surely try to spend a month or two at the end of the year with your friends. I intend going to Edinburgh, to witness the ordination of your brother W— on the 7th of next month, and his marriage on the day following. Could you be present it would be an additional pleasure; but it is meet there should be some blanks in all our present comforts.

I have heard that you are averse to William going to the West Indies. But he feels his call to go, as clear as Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii.) to go out to the Gentiles; and he as cheerfully responded, “Here am



I, send me." His heart has been set on missionary enterprise for several years past ; and when a call came, he viewed it as from the Lord, determining the scene of his future labours. His way is remarkably cleared by the cordial acquiescence of friends. We rejoice in the prospect of his future success. A wide door is now opened in Jamaica for the spread of the gospel. The field there is white unto harvest, and he is going to aid in reaping it.

My dear Alexander, try to ascertain the great point, that you are a genuine plant in the Lord's garden. You will find it difficult, amid the bustle of worldly business, to keep the heart for Christ. The most sequestered situation has its temptations to turn away from the fountain of living waters, and to hew out broken cisterns ; but a station like your's must be peculiarly difficult. If, however, you are enabled to watch, and pray, and study your Bible daily, you will find water spring up, even in the wilderness, to refresh your soul. O, pray earnestly for the descent of the Spirit, as the dew of heaven, to keep your branches green amidst the withering winds which blow in this dangerous region. I pray you may enjoy the comfort of Isa. xxvi. 3, and xxvii. 3. Believe, pray, hope.—  
Ever your loving grandfather, A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

Feb. 1837.

MY DEAR ALEXANDER—The occasion of your last visit to this country was most distressing to us all ; it

was peculiarly so to you. We deeply felt the blow of a Father's hand, in removing from us a beloved friend, from your family a tender and endeared father, and from me a son whom I highly esteemed as a boon to me and my family—a man who, like another Enoch, walked with God, and was much favoured with the knowledge of the mind of God. But when we saw that the Lord took him home to himself, with so many testimonies of his paternal love, our duty was plain: “Not our will but thine be done.” I hope you have been brought to say so on your knees to God. Your last letter to your sister indicates the strong emotions of filial and fraternal affections, wounded and bleeding under your loss. These, I hope, will not be permitted to mar your inward peace. Now, my dear Alexander, I would caution you against indulging these feelings to excess, lest you offend your kind heavenly Father. Though he has taken one dear to us all, let us remember he has said, “My loving kindness will I not take away from you.” I can easily imagine your feelings, from not seeing your father for such a long period, business claiming all your time and attention. You lived in the hope of an opportunity to gratify your strong inclination; and you never once suspected that your father's death would deprive you of the pleasure of a personal interview.

All these things kept you away; and you now see that God's thoughts are not our thoughts. Humbly acquiesce in the divine orderings, and say, with the holy man of old, “Good is the will of the Lord.” But the question is, How may a poor, bereaved sinner attain this holy, contented frame of mind? Why, there



is just one way : Take precious Christ into the bosom of your love ; and then you may say, with the apostle, “ I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

Perhaps, by a close examination of yourself, you may find that you needed this arousing dispensation. Perhaps the daily bustle of the warehouse had insensibly carnalized the state of your mind, disordered your religious frame, and induced a cold and carnal frame in the closet and in the sanctuary. O, what a mercy it is that our Father does not cease to be a reprover ! The refining may be sharp and very trying, but not more so than our Father judges necessary. He takes no pleasure in grieving the hearts of his children : he corrects for our profit. Justify the Lord, and say, “ Return into thy rest, O my soul !”

Allow me to tender an advice to you, in reference to your local situation. M— is the very focus of the Socinian heresy. From what I know of that denomination, they are, of all others, the most insidious enemies to the cross of Christ and the gospel of salvation, and also most anxious to inject their poison into young minds. The writings of Priestly (who at last confessed himself a downright materialist), and of others following him on the road to the same delusion, they recommend wherever they go. Their whole system is to exalt nature into the throne of nature’s God, and to banish the doctrines of revealed religion concerning the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, his atonement, and the influence of the Spirit, out of the church of God. Be on your guard against them. I would recommend to your notice Miss Jane Graham’s Memoir—edited by

the late Mr. Bridges—a woman and a Christian of the first rank for intelligence and religion.

I have only time to add, that we were all delighted with your two last letters, they breathe such warm Christian feeling, and resignation to the divine will, under this heavy bereavement. The Bible, the throne of grace, and the sayings and doings of your late father, must be now your only consolation. I commend you to the care of the God of all grace;—and I ever am your sympathizing father,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

March, 1837.

MY DEAR ALEXANDER—I thank you for your kind and acceptable letter last sent me. Although I gave you a hint concerning the infatuated followers of Priestly, it proceeded from no suspicion of any leanings toward them. But we are not the worse of a warning voice from the lips of a friend when in a situation of danger. Your reply pleased me much: it breathes the spirit of one who has taken his stand for time and eternity under the canopy of redeeming love. Study, my dear son, to live near God, and he will guide you with his counsel. See that you go out of your closet every morning with your heart seasoned and steeped in the love of Christ, and your hands will not stick to, nor your heart be defiled by, the bustle of the warehouse. Improve your Sabbaths as times of holy rest, consecrated to fellowship with the God of your life. It is daily fellowship with God which alone will keep the



soul in a spiritual frame. Your young brother is leaving us to seek employment where God may open a door. It gives us all much peace of mind that he is going to be under your eye, especially at night. He is a very gentle and amiable youth, but a great stranger to the world, and not aware of the many snares which surround the young man at his outset in life. You can from experience warn him of his danger. He has shown no turn hitherto to take up or form intimacies with strangers, which is so far good. He possesses a talent which may prove very ensnaring if known in M—. I mean high musical powers. This gift has proved a snare to many a promising youth, as the means of drawing him into company, frequently of the very worst description. I intend to speak very particularly to him on this subject before he leave us; but you will act a kind part to him if you watch over him, and prevail with him utterly to conceal his talent when in company, and reserve it only for the service of God in religion, or perhaps for the gratification of his friends in private. I hope the Lord, who is the orphan's stay, will be with him. He is a promising youth. And we all join in the prayer, that our God and your late father's God may guide, and guard, and comfort you both in every step of your way through this ensnaring, sorrowing world.—And believe me your loving father, while life remains,

A. P.

TO MR. AND MRS. W—M J—N, JAMAICA.

CHERRYBANK, 1837.

MY DEAR CHILDREN—So I address you now. Our all-wise and gracious Father in heaven has broken the intermediate link which connected you to a father on earth, more near, more dear, and more worthy of the name father. But now that the Saviour, whom he loved, has been pleased to take him to himself, and place him in his mansion above, I feel more closely joined to you both. The staff on which we were in danger of leaning too much weight is broken. But God lives; he is the rock of salvation; and the blessed Kinsman is saying to us, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Your warm breathings in your last letter to us evidence that the sore blow which has fallen on us all is causing much smarting in the flesh; but the spirit is receiving that holy unction from above which is making you sing even in your sorrow. He is writing so much love in the various events passing over you, that you may well sing, “In the multitude of thoughts within, thy comforts delight my soul.—His mercy endureth for ever.” Be this your song, and we desire cordially to join you in it. Your dear brothers and sisters have been wonderfully supported in passing through this Red Sea. And above all, we rejoice that we have such sure hope that our dear departed is singing, with the happy company around the throne, “Salvation to God and the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.” The great void now made by the removal of him so dear to us all can only be filled up—much more than filled up—by giving our great and glorious



Friend the throne of love in all our hearts. I see he is at the very core of yours. We are all overjoyed at the good tidings you send us. Your kind Lord has set your feet in a large room after trying your faith in your stormy passage. I have often thought and said, since your letter arrived, that the Lord has dealt with you as with the great apostle in his passage to Rome. He was tossed when on the boisterous waves, and at last shipwrecked. The prince of the power of the air intended to drown him, and all with him in the ship; but God set him his boundary, over which he could not pass. The ship was lost, but all the passengers were saved, in answer to Paul's prayers. God saved your vessel and all in it, except the poor boy, of whom you speak with hope that the Lork took him. Your landing on the shore of Jamaica gave you full evidence that our kind Master had opened to you a wide door of entrance. The hearty welcome with which you were received was to you the voice of God, saying, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, and lead us to the Saviour. We are all here waiting to hear what the Lord will say to us by thy mouth." The very name of the place where you have pitched your tent bespeaks mercy in store for you. God, who gave his Joseph favour in the eyes of Pharoah the king, is touching the hearts of the planters and overseers of the land to favour you. We rejoice at this: but your chief work is among the Negro population. Your earnest cry for the assistance of teachers is very urgent and powerful. I intend to proclaim it wherever I go. I admire your wisdom and prudence in telling the overseers the propriety of gaining the concurrence of

the people among whom you labour to the erection of a house for worship ere you write home for assistance in money. This is the true spirit of Voluntaryism. They must and ought to feel their personal interest in all the external accommodations for the worship of God. I am glad to learn that you are within reach of two or three of your fellow-labourers in the work of God. I was also rejoiced to read the harmonious resolutions of a considerable number of the Missionaries, of different denominations, to co-operate in all things as brethren in the great work of God in the mission, and thus guarding themselves against every thing that would mar their common usefulness, without compromising their distinctive principles. I hope the resolutions will be universally approved and acted upon by all in the island. Your next letter will, I hope, bring farther intelligence of your success and prospects.—Farewell! Let us meet at a throne of grace, till He who sits on it be pleased to take us to his throne of glory.—Ever yours,

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A. P.

TO MR. J— J—, M—.

PERTH, 13th Feb. 1839.

MY VERY DEAR JAMES—I am happy to receive nothing from M— concerning you but what is commendatory and what I anticipated. I at first thought of addressing you in the language of congratulation, but, on second thought, I concluded that it was more suitable to my old age and your youth to tender a few warnings and encouragements to my young friend entering on life in a strange place, and among many who



will attempt to draw you aside from the path of holiness. I hope, dear James, you have been enabled to give a positive answer to that grave and solemn demand from the mouth of a gracious Saviour, "My son, give me thine heart." Remember and respect the dedication every day. You are gone to a place where many new objects will present themselves to your view with many alluring attractions; take care lest any of them get an undue place in your affections. Forget not that this last temptation was the chief one presented to our Lord himself in the wilderness, by which the devil attempted to ensnare him in his net. The great enemy of souls found nothing in him on which he could fasten his bait; but, alas! in us he finds so many evil principles ready to catch at the bait, that even the most guarded are apt to be caught.

The inexperience of youth is apt to throw them off their guard. The apostle warns young Timothy to flee youthful lusts. You will meet with young men of various characters in M—. Some of them may appear so loose and unguarded in their conversation, that you will easily see you should avoid all intimacy with them; but there may be others equally bad, but of a polished and insinuating address, who may have a secret design to draw you into the intimacy of friendship; and having gained this point, they will gradually broach some loose principles against religion, as if it were gross ignorance, blind superstition, or, at best, childish folly. They will hint that the Bible must be brought down to the bar of reason, and tried by this standard. Flee such, as the worst enemies of your temporal and eternal interests. Try to find some one or two who mani-

fest acquaintance with serious religious and moral principles, and occasionally associate with them as fellow-travellers in wisdom's pleasant paths. If you can find such in your office, good and well; but do not hesitate to keep on habits of common intercourse with those with whom you mix in business. "If it be possible," says the Bible, "as much as in you lieth live peaceably with all men." Be thankful that you have a parent with you in your elder brother, who, from experience, can give you suitable advice and direction. You have also had the great enjoyment of your sister's motherly kindness in your introduction into public life. Nay, more; you see, I hope, the kindness of your heavenly Father manifested by placing you in a situation which you much relish. These are all marks of kindness never to be forgotten.

All friends here are rejoicing in the goodness of God to you in your outset in the world, and hope he will continue to watch over you to the end. I can only add, in a few words, study to make your closet your Bethel, your Bible your counsellor, and the throne of grace your daily resort for direction and supplies of grace, strength, and comfort. Let the Sabbath and the sanctuary be the chief time and place of your resort to God for the good of your soul. Take care, my dear James, of falling into a cold and lifeless frame in the service of God. Daily stir up your soul in the duties of personal religion. Cry that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, may keep your heart and mind by Christ Jesus.

I shall be happy to hear from you soon, to tell me how you come on in the Christian life. You are often



on our minds, and in our mouths and prayers. Good Mrs. D— of the G— left this vain world on Monday night last. Her precious dust is to be laid in the grave on Monday next. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” The removal of this warm friend makes a great blank to us. But Jesus says, I live. In the course of nature I cannot be long behind her. O to be ready when my Lord comes! Farewell!—Ever your loving father,

A. P.

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TO MRS. M— OF G—.

PERTH, 1835.

MY DEAR MADAM—I had the pleasure of seeing for a few moments your kind-hearted husband when last in this place, on a mournful occasion—mournful to earthly relations, but joyful to your departed friend, who is, I hope, entered into the joy of her dear Lord; and joyful also to our gracious Redeemer, who hath pleasure in the death of his saints. She has got the start of you, who have been in deaths often, because her work was done, and she was made ready and willing to depart to be with Christ, which is far better. You, and more especially I, who have been so long spared in the wilderness, are yet in the field of battle. Though we are placed in externally comfortable circumstances, I hope we both experimentally feel that daily conflict with the enemy which the apostle so strikingly describes in Rom. vii. 14-24. This is a struggle which the ungodly world know nothing of. But let us keep up our courage, we have a kind compassionate leader, a good cause, a joyful prospect, and

final victory secured, through the cross of our triumphant Captain of salvation. Paul's concluding sentence, in the passage just referred to, is a shout of victory anticipated,—“ I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” He identifies himself with all believers to the end of time. We also shall reap, if we faint not.

I am delighted to hear, by Mr. M—, that you are going on with your female associates in the way of the Lord, when so many private friendships are broken off, even among them who seem to be seeking the way to the Zion above. This is a time when the Lord seems to be coming to search Jerusalem as with lighted candles. There is much dust to be swept away, both in churches and nations, and we need not wonder that the eyes of even good folks should be somewhat blind ; but light will arise by and bye, and all the fearers of God will see eye to eye, and sing together with one voice, and also serve him with one consent. This glorious consummation I shall not see on earth ; but let us rejoice that the happy news will be proclaimed to those around the King's royal throne.

Your worthy husband informs me that you are still labouring under your frequent infirmities ; yet, although troubled, not distressed—though sometimes perplexed, yet not in despair—though cast down, not forsaken—though sometimes sorrowing, yet always rejoicing. Go on, my dear friend, in the strength of the Lord your God, singing the 130th Psalm, and your God will perfect what concerns his glory in you and by you.

In G—k you began the plan of Maternal Associations. A few of our mothers in Perth have caught the spirit, and commenced the good work. I hope the



example will be followed elsewhere. I need say nothing about myself—only that I am helped of my indulgent Master to continue in his work with increasing pleasure—my health is steady, through the Lord's remarkable kindness—and I find that the Lord's way is my strength. I hope he will be with me to the end of my course. Pray, earnestly pray for this—it must be near—and I am in some measure on the outlook for it, yet willing to stay while the Lord is pleased to make any use of my poor services.

I send this by my good colleague. My earnest wish and prayer to God for you both is, that your souls may more and more prosper. The Lord be with you in life and death!—Ever your affectionate friend and father,  
A. P.

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#### TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1838.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I heard, the other day, that you had been at Aithry Wells, and that the great and good Physician had communicated to you some benefit from these waters. The first thought suggested to my mind was—Is my kind friend so near me, seeking a cordial to her frail body, and I knew it not, that I might have held up the case to our kind Father's throne.

But it is often wisely ordered that the particular circumstances of our dearest friends on earth should sometimes be concealed from fellow-travellers Zionward, that we may be taught to cease from man, and place our whole confidence in the Lord alone. You have been a child of the family, inured to many fatherly

chastisements, and I am persuaded that, on the review, you would not wish to have wanted one of them. They have been the means, in your great Physician's hand, of quickening your pace heavenward,—of clearing your evidences for eternity,—of keeping you humble in your spiritual frame,—of elevating your views above this vain and ensnaring world,—and of giving you many errands to your Father's footstool. The longer we sojourn in this sinning world, and bear about us such deceitful and carnal hearts, we feel that nothing will keep us right except daily intercourse with our heavenly Father by faith and prayer. Occasional intercourse with a few lively and experimental fellow-travellers may cheer and encourage us onward in our course—"iron sharpeneth iron"—but it is only the heavenly unction which will cause our faces to shine and our hearts to sing as we press forward toward the mark for the prize of eternal life. Even the sweet singer of Israel confessed, that unless he had believed he should have fainted. Lean, my friend, lean daily on the beloved, and you shall mount upward as on eagles' wings. Be thankful, too, that a kind husband has been given you of the Lord to sympathize with you, and help you forward by his fervent and frequent prayers and Christian example. May the tender mercies of our gracious Father rest on you both, and perfect his good work in your souls at last! I earnestly claim a deep interest in your prayers at the footstool of mercy. I hope our mutual cries often mingle in the censer of our great and glorious High Priest before his Father's throne.

I again thank you for the kind memorial put into



my hand when leaving G——. It has a treble value to me, as coming from a friend who is, I trust, sitting and daily walking under the broad-spreading shadow of the great Rock in this weary and sinning land. Not one drop of wrath can reach those who are under the covert of Immanuel's righteousness. The kind Keeper and Shepherd of Israel watch over you both while on earth, and at last minister to you an open and honourable entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!—I remain your loving and obliged old friend,

A. P.

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TO MR. THOMAS PRINGLE,\* LONDON.

PERTH, Oct. 1834.

MY DEAR NEPHEW—Your last letter arrived the other day; it came with a knell to my heart. When I turned my mind to my distant friend, I saw him, in thought, gently floating on a troubled sea; but observed the best of all Friends standing by him, holding him by the hand, and saying, “It is I, be not afraid.” My morning song to-day was Psalm cxlvi. and cxlvii.; you were in my mind while I sang it with delight. You have been taught experimentally the truth of that

\* Late Secretary to the Anti-Slavery Society in London. For a series of years Mr. Pringle devoted himself to the business of this Society. His talents and literature, and extensive acquaintance with Colonial affairs, aided by untiring zeal and pure philanthropy, were of essential service in the cause of emancipation. But his labours were beyond his strength; just about the time that the victory was achieved his health gave way. As a means of his recovery, a voyage to his friends in Africa was recommended; but before he was prepared for the voyage he was too ill to embark; and in a short time he died, lamented by the best in the nation, who well knew his worth and still revere his memory.

word, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help;" but "happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help." You have felt that it is folly to lean on the staff of a broken reed; but he that trusteth in the Lord, happy is he! When the Lord seeth that human hope is gone, and there seems to be none shut up or left, then he repents himself for his servants. Your desire to return to the Cape seems now to be granted; your work in London is finished, honourably finished, to the glory of God, to the honour of your country, in the liberation of the oppressed and abused African slaves, and, I hope, for gathering in a multitude of them to the Redeemer. As some compensation for your past labours, God is putting it into the hearts of friends to minister to your necessities. This is so like God's way that you cannot mistake the kind hand of a father in this dispensation. The kindness of the donors, too, will give them a deeper hold on your heart.

But while I say all this concerning your external circumstances, I do not forget that I am writing to a dear friend labouring under a dangerous malady. You tell me "that you placed the result, in reference to travelling funds, in His hand who had so wisely and kindly conducted you hitherto." Well, my dear friend, make a similar deposit of your eternal all into the same gracious and faithful hand, who will keep that which is committed unto him against that day. All who are now before the throne took this course, and have not been disappointed. They, too, had to pass through great tribulation; but, having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, they got a triumphant passage



over Jordan, and entered Immanuel's land singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" Keep your eye steadily fixed on the cross of Christ by faith, and he will support you under all your weakness, and convey you through all difficulties. What think you of his dying bequest?—John xiv. 1, 2, 3-27. Put him in remembrance of his precious promises,—Isaiah xl. 28-31; xlii. 1-4; liv. 10. The book of God is full of such precious cordials;—drink and praise the Lord. I feel much for Mrs. P— and Miss B— in present circumstances. The prospect of another voyage to the Cape would occasion comparatively small anxiety were you in wonted health; but tell them to encourage themselves in the Lord; he rules in the raging of the sea, both in the literal and figurative sense. You and they are as safe, under divine protection, in the cabin of a ship, as on dry land. I entertain hope, if it be the will of our heavenly Father, that the African temperature may prove as beneficial to you as it was to your brother W—. At any rate, the Lord is pointing it out as present duty to make the trial; and how pleasing is the prospect of again embracing your nearest relations on earth! You and I shall never again meet on earth; but the best wishes and prayers of all friends in Scotland will follow you in your voyage. The Lord, I hope, will give you a safe landing, and a comfortable meeting with all friends in Glen Linden. Now, my dear friends, I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.—We all join in this earnest prayer, and remain yours,

A. P.

## TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1834.

MY DEAR NEPHEW—I was much surprised yesterday at the arrival of your letter, and deeply affected with the details it brought me of your detention in London, and especially with the cause of it. We had often been speaking and praying for you as on the bosom of the mighty waters, hoping, however, that the Lord had detained the vessel until the terrible winds in the beginning of October had passed away. But God's ways and thoughts are not ours; only, let us believe that he doth all things well. I must not dwell on these things, but tell you a fact about myself, which took place about forty years ago. I was laid down in a bilious fever, which bade defiance to all medical prescriptions for twenty-five days. I was so reduced that I could not walk from the bed to the chair. I said to my medical friends, quite from my own suggestion, or rather, I believe, by suggestion from above, Did you doctors never think of trying a blister in a case like this? They owned that the thought had never struck them. The blister was immediately applied; a blessing came along with it, and my recovery began from that moment. I merely mention this, to let you know that I too was brought to the gates of death and yet raised up again, and to suggest that the very same Physician can do the same for you, if it so please him. This would please me much; but, dear friend, it pleases me far more to see your spirit so much mellowed down, and brought to say to your heavenly Father, "Not my will but thine be done." This holy and happy frame of mind is a



satisfying evidence that the Lord's hand is supporting you, and his spirit sanctifying the rod. I hope you can say, on good ground, with the apostle, "Whether I live, I live to the Lord, and whether I die, I die to the Lord." When we look, by faith, to the death of our kind Redeemer, what have we to fear? His meritorious blood is a canopy to shield us from the sting of the last messenger; and, what is better, it is a complete covering to hide all our guilt and defilement from the eye of a righteous Judge. Under this covert God sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel. I am glad to see you leaving all that concerns you personally, and also your nearest and dearest relations, in the hand of a gracious Father. He does all things well: he will fulfil all that concerneth you, and them also. Let us admire the kindness of God, in detaining you in London by this messenger of affliction, because he knew a sea voyage would have been fatal. Let us sing both of mercy and judgment. You have had an useful life, which has been devoted to God, and the promotion of one of the greatest events of our eventful time. But when we appear before God, we must throw all our poor defective works and doings behind our back, and cry, "Unprofitable servants!"

I am afraid you have exerted yourself above your strength in your last kind letter. You must be very careful of this. Having taken your station at the footstool of the throne of a God of mercy, there remain and cry, and wait, in faith, hope, and prayer, looking on while the Angel of the Lord does wondrously. Should it be our Father's will to advance your begun recovery, I will be refreshed with a few lines from

your hand. If otherwise, the door of the bridechamber is open; and I hope an abundant entrance will be ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, where the sun will no more go down, nor the moon withdraw her shining.

You are on our hearts at our Father's throne. He hears the prayers of the destitute. Farewell! The Lord bless you and keep you—the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace, both in life and at death, is the prayer of your affectionate uncle,

A. P.

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TO MRS. T— P—, LONDON.

PERTH, 1834.

MY DEAR MRS. P.—By this day's newspaper, I learned that your worthy husband was taken from you on Friday last,—a happy change to him, though a grievous loss to you! But, dear friend, look at the bright side of the cloud, and read the many tokens of God's love to you. He gave you the good husband now gone; he spared him many years with you; has honoured him to fill a most useful sphere in society, both at home and abroad; has raised him many friends in London, to sympathize with you in your trials, and to be ready to administer comfort; and now, when his work is done, has, I hope, taken him home to himself for ever. I would say to you, fear not; I have no doubt he will take care of you and your sister. What a blessing you had her with you on this trying occasion. By looking at the date of his death, I perceive that he would not see my last letter. But no matter; the



Lord, I hope, filled him with joy and peace in believing. I will thank you, when you find time and ability, to send me a particular account of his last moments; and tell me, if, like good Stephen, he died calling on the Lord Jesus. Look to the widow's gracious Husband for direction in your course. Remember his promise, and plead it in prayer,—“I will bring the blind by a way which they knew not; I will lead them in paths which they have not trod.” “I will make darkness light before them, crooked things straight, and rough places plain.” He can turn the shadow of death into the morning. His wise and kind hand should be seen and acknowledged in all his providential administrations. How are you supported under this very trying event? Remember that when Christ foretold trials to his disciples, he said to them, When you see these things coming on you, then lift up your heads. There is no other quarter from whence we can obtain effectual relief and comfort. Study the Bible—ply the throne of grace—put in your claim to the everlasting Husband as your only friend and counsellor—believe his promise, and you shall be established. I have said before, I expect to have the particulars of the trying event as soon as possible. All here join me in the most tender expressions of sympathy and affection. May a gracious God sweeten your bitter cup of present sorrow! I leave you on the care of Him who only comforts his mourners; and remain your affectionate uncle,

A. P.

## TO FRIENDS IN BUSINESS.

PERTH.

MY DEAR FRIENDS—You are very busy trading in this world's business. Let me put the *one* question of the greatest importance to you,—Are you trading with heaven? This is a trade of the most profitable and lucrative kind. There are losses and gains in this trade too; but it is remarkable that the very things which appear present losses turn out gains in the end. On the side of loss you may mark down carnal pleasure, carnal company, the gratification of every heart-lust; and to these you may sometimes add the loss of many worldly good things, such as health, wealth, the esteem of the world, &c. Now, can you say that you count all these things loss for Christ? On the side of gain you may mark down union to Christ, the favour of God and communion with him, the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, pardon of sin, adoption into God's family, holiness of heart and life, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance in it until you reach heaven at last. It is easy to see that the side of gain far exceeds that of loss. But it is of great moment to understand the proper way of trading with heaven here.

1. You must be made citizens in regeneration.
2. You must learn the rules of the spiritual trade from the Bible.
3. You must send new orders, by faith and prayer, to heaven every day.
4. Your orders must all be made out in Christ's name.



5. You must offer no payment except the incense of gratitude and praise.

6. When your returns come, note them down in your day-book.

7. Show what is sent you to the best advantage in your practice, but don't sell it or give it away for goods of this world.

8. Make large demands,—they cannot be too large or too frequent.

9. Drive no contraband trade on earth.

It is lawful to traffic in the commodities of this world; but beware of giving them that time or attention which belongs to the things of a better.

You think you are, on the whole, gaining in the trade of this world. O, can you say so as to your traffic with heaven? Have you taken any time to balance accounts for eternity? How do matters stand between God and you? You must allow that it will be strange infatuation to study exactness as to your worldly business, and leave all in uncertainty as to your eternal concerns.

I have hinted, that from the nature of your employment you are apt to fall into carelessness, formality, and spiritual deadness. Your frequent hurries, your constant intercourse with the world, your increasing acquaintance with persons who may be agreeable enough, but sad hindrances as to religion—above all, the workings of the pride, the vanity, and carnality of the evil heart—will be a daily snare, and ought to be your great burden. Your exercise will go to wreck if you take not some time every morning for reading the word of God, meditation, and prayer. I doubt not

that you keep up the form of religion; but this is a small matter if the heart is not in the work. You are sometimes called to large parties of friends: O, take care of any sinful compliances there, which may provoke the Lord to desert you both in the house and shop. It is not easy to go into company and come away with an approving God and a good conscience. I desire to exercise a constant jealousy over you and myself too, and to hold you up constantly to Him that is able to keep you from falling. May he always stand at your right hand!—Ever yours,

A. P.

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TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

PERTH.

MY DEAR FRIEND—By a letter from your father we learnt that you have been rescued from a watery grave by a hair-breadth escape, and were much affected by the intelligence. D—n Loch, in the beginning of frost, has been for years past the spot where many incautious youths have been launched into eternity. Fondness for amusement on the ice has plunged many a family in and around — into mourning and woe. Many admonitions have you got from God in his providence, and many else from friends, to repress your youthful propensity to ramble into scenes which expose you to danger, but you have hitherto disregarded them. The buoyancy of your spirits betrays you into many rash adventures fraught with imminent danger to your health. You seem to have despised past warnings as quite unnecessary; but now, my dear friend, you have



received a warning from the hand of God himself. I seriously admonish you not to slight it, no, nor even forget it. Had the water where you sank been only a few inches deeper, or had none been at hand to draw you out when you stood in it up to your chin, where had you been? I shudder at the very idea. Were you ready to meet the Judge of all on his high throne? or could you have said that you died in his service? Did you bow your knees that morning at his throne, and seek his presence and care in your fond desire after youthful and dangerous amusement? Did you take time to open and consult the book of God for direction? Did you consider the general character of most of your companions? Had you no forebodings that the ice might give way? Did the thought never cross your mind, that if it should, and your life be lost, your untimely death would bring down the grey hairs of your loving parents with sorrow to the grave, and wring the hearts of all your friends with bitter grief? Your father says that your own mind has got a grievous shock when reflecting on the danger to which you were exposed. This gives me some hope that the great deliverance may be sanctified for your merciful recovery from youthful inconsideration and rambling habits. O, my dear friend, your years of foolish rambling should have been over long ago. You have seen some years; you were early devoted to God in baptism by your excellent father; your parents and other friends have often been at the throne of grace for you; it is now time, it is high time, for you to consider the value of your soul, and the importance of real religion to every sinner. To live and

die without a personal interest in the Saviour of sinners is the direct road to everlasting ruin. I hope better things of you; but I earnestly entreat you to consider your ways. The word of God repeatedly calls you to this important duty. Jesus himself says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." Read and study the blessed book of God. Mock not the Father of mercy by a few hurried, rambling petitions, morning and evening. O begin to pray like one deeply sensible that your heart and nature are depraved, and cry earnestly for mercy at the footstool of mercy: "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find." Youth is a precious time. God commands the young to remember him, and seek him early, with the promise that they shall find him. Break off your connection with fashionable youths, who make a mock at religion, and would lead you astray,—avoid them particularly on the Lord's day.

If you have not entered yourself a public member of the church, lose no time in taking this matter into serious consideration. But let your connection with the visible church be the consequence of accepting the kind offer of that Saviour who seeks the chief place in your heart. I need not say more. May the spirit of all grace bless these few friendly hints to your soul!

I put you into his gracious hand, and hope you will excuse my free dealings with you, as a friend whom I earnestly desire to see fleeing to the sinner's stronghold. All here join in tender expressions of regard and thankfulness to God for your deliverance.—I ever am yours,

A. P.



## TO THE SAME.

PERTH.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Your letter arrived in course. I felt much pleased with the general strain of your reply. You write like one beginning to awake out of a deep and dangerous sleep of thoughtless insensibility, lying on the brink of a tremendous precipice, and not knowing whither to run for safety.

As you seem to be somewhat in the spirit of a convinced and returning prodigal, I would remind you that the Father of mercies, whom you have grievously offended, is seated on the throne of mercy, ready to receive you as a poor, forlorn child of woe, returning with a throbbing heart, and weeping eyes, and down-cast countenance, saying, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.”

The compassionate Redeemer is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. But, my dear friend, you must *come*—come to him just as you are, a poor, guilty, helpless sinner, ready to perish, yet crying for mercy through the atoning blood of the Lamb. You must claim a personal interest in the Saviour of sinners. By faith cry that the Spirit of all grace may enable you to hide your guilty head under the glorious robe of Christ’s righteousness, which can only shield you from the storm of divine wrath, ready to burst on you. You are a prisoner of hope. Flee to the stronghold open to receive you. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Open your Bible, and pray for divine illumination to understand and

apply the few following passages from the mouth of God himself,—Isa. i. 18; liii—lv. Consider closely Jer. xxxi. 18-20; Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27; Matt. xi. 28, 29; Eph. ii.; and 1 John i. 8. O, pray in earnest for the heart-melting and heart-purifying influence of the Spirit of grace and supplication! A sight of that Saviour who died for the chief of sinners will heal all your diseases, and nothing else will.

I have often cried at the throne of mercy for you, and hope not to forget you; but you must be importunate with God for yourself. God hears the prayers of the poor, broken-hearted, suppliant sinner. I shall be glad to hear again from you. Break off all intimacy with those that would lead you astray. The companion of fools shall be destroyed. Seriously study our Lord's discourse to Nicodemus, John iii.—I remain your sincere friend,

A. P.

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TO MRS. L—— OF F——.

CHERRYBANK, 1833.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I have been told that you have got a twitch of the common rod which has been travelling through the land. The stroke has been pretty smart on several individuals; it gently touched us in this family also; and why not? Our heavenly Father best knows what rod to use, and when to lay it on. Such as have committed their all, for time and eternity, to Israel's faithful Shepherd, may well leave such matters in his kind and faithful hand. He has graciously supported you these many years, and even kept you from sinking when waves and billows were passing



over you. O, let us trust him still! Faith keeping hold of the promise, and of God in the promise, will keep our hearts calm and quiet even in the dark and stormy night. "I had fainted," says David, "unless I had believed." I hope, through the Lord's goodness, your health is established, and that you are going on your way rejoicing in the Lord.

You perhaps have heard that my only sister, Mrs. Riddel, has been called home about a month ago. She was favoured with a very quick and easy passage over Jordan,—only about twenty-four hours a little worse than ordinary. She was unable to speak much, but complained of little pain, and fell on sleep, I hope, in the bosom of the Beloved, in the close of her 88th year. This is a very loud call to me, now in my 82d year. I am trying daily to be on the outlook for the coming of my Lord; and am sometimes helped to say, "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus!" My stay cannot be long; but I find my work more and more light and pleasant. I hope you do not forget me in your closet. If the Lord spare us to meet again when you return to town, I hope we will again cheer one another on the way to the Zion above. May the presence of God abide on you and your worthy husband and niece; he blesses the habitation of the just; his mercy is round about them that fear him. I had no thought of saying so much at this time, but when Christian regard warms the heart we do not soon weary in talking to a dear friend.—I ever am, my dear madam, yours in the bond of the gospel,

A. P.

## TO THE SAME.

CHERRYBANK, 1836.

MY DEAR MADAM—I only received a parcel of Jewish papers last Saturday, and embrace the first opportunity of sending some of each kind to you. In sending this welcome messenger with good news from afar, concerning the doings of the Lord among his ancient Israel, I cannot suffer the messenger to go without asking you if your own soul be still prospering? O, my dear friend, it is good news to hear that the great Captain of salvation is on the field, leading forward the little bands of his servants with displayed banners, and gathering in the lost sheep in the various quarters of his world. Let us rejoice, that all whom his Father has given him shall come to him; none of them shall be lost. I sometimes think what a goodly company there must be, and how supremely happy, when those of all nations are gathered before the throne of the Lamb, and sing together the song of triumph to that sovereign grace which brought them there. The work is going on in our land, and in our own church, too, among the rest. I was visiting, yesterday, some families in the neighbourhood, and met with some plants among the young and the aged that seem to be growing and flourishing. This cheers my spirits.

How have you stood the cold and wet of the season? It has been rather an unfavourable summer; but what shall we say? an infinitely wise and good God orders all in the best way. There is a good crop on the ground, and a good deal safe in the stack. Much is yet exposed; but we should live by faith even as to



temporal things. On the top of the Ochils you are somewhat nearer the clouds than we in the valley; but few possess, as I hope we do, that eye which can look beyond the visible heavens, and sometimes get a peep within the veil through the telescope of the promises; we may see the King of grace and glory on his majestic throne, and hear him saying, "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." It is very pleasant to know that we have a Father in heaven who knows all our wants and woes; and yet he condescends to hear his poor children tell him of them at his footstool. He is too high, too holy, too independent, to be governed by any thing we can say at his footstool; yet he is so kind, so condescending, so compassionate, as to regard the prayers of his poor children. He may, in paternal kindness, deny us the very thing which we ask, but he will always give what is good; and, O! what debtors we are to his boundless generosity!

I hope, my dear Christian friend, we often meet at the King's throne. This is a mode of fellowship which friends in Christ can only enjoy. My heart's desire for you all is, that you may flourish in the Lord's vineyard. The Lord is again visiting our guilty land with a merciful change of weather: O that the inhabitants would praise him! Let us remember one another at the footstool of mercy. May your soul be fed under the ministry of good Mr. L—e!—Ever yours,

A. P.

## TO THE SAME.

CHERRYBANK, 1837.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND—Mr. L—— called yesterday and informed me of your very dangerous fall, the detail of which affected me very considerably. He told me also that you had been most mercifully preserved, having sustained comparatively but slight injury. David's words in the xciv. Psalm came in view, "I said, my foot slippeth; but thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." O, the wonderful care and kindness of our heavenly Father! He directs all our goings with infinite wisdom and love. The very disasters and dangers we meet with in our way clearly show us the truth of that gracious saying, "The mercy of God is round about them that fear him." When we meet with trying steps in our way which we looked not for, he then shows us that his everlasting arms are underneath us; and O how sweet it is for a child of God to see and feel that promise made out, "Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." When the hand of creatures is not seen in our trials and deliverances, we are sweetly shut up to say, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." We are sure that we need these monitors. Good Hezekiah said, after he had time to reflect on his former ways, on the sharp trial which the Lord had sent, and on his wonderful deliverance, "What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it." See Isa. xxxviii. 15, 16, 17. I most cordially join you in your song of thanksgiving to Him who preserved you in that hour of peril, and who, I trust, will complete the re-



covery. You have often had occasion to sing, "I was brought low, and the Lord helped me." You know that I feel deeply interested in you, and sometimes carry you with me to the throne of the King. We are to eat the Lord's Supper on Sabbath week: remember us, my dear friend, and I hope the kind Lord of the feast will feed you with the fatness of his house, even in your closet and family duties. You must be a prisoner for some time—I hope not very long—and kept from ordinances; but the Lord filleth every longing soul. I am, through the mercy of my bountiful Master, able to do a little on Sabbath, and am beginning visitation in the country. Let us never forget that cheering promise, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be."

Please to accept these few thoughts from a distant friend who has you on his heart. Leaving you in the kind hand of Jehovah-Rophi,—I ever am yours,

A. P.

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#### TO THE SAME.

CHERRYBANK, 1838.

MY DEAR FRIEND—For some weeks past you have been often in my mind; and my first inquiry is, How are your eyes keeping? This is only an infirmity in the flesh; and it is good to have to say, that the gracious Lord who gave you your eyesight, has not only preserved it long, but enabled you to make good use of it, in consulting the book of God and other valuable helps. May he be pleased to allow you the use of this precious faculty a little longer, if it be his holy will.

But, dear madam, take courage; the eye of faith, seated in the renewed heart, shall never be totally darkened. It may be occasionally much bedimmed by dark dispensations—by the veil of unbelief, or by the temptations of our great enemy; but a new glimpse of the King's face will dispel all clouds, and turn the shadow of death into the morning. You have often had experience of this; and you may confidently trust the faithful promise, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." When men say there is a casting down, the Lord often says there shall be a lifting up; and he will save the humble soul. I suspect that, owing to the cold and wet summer, you would have several silent Sabbaths, in your feeble state of bodily health; but even this great privation is often amply made up by closet visits from our Father in heaven. He can make streams in the desert, to give drink to his weary pilgrim. We need only the lively exercise of faith to enable us to hold on our way rejoicing. Fear not, only believe, was our Lord's direction to a very distressed petitioner. He said, to a weeping disciple, "If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God." Our blessed Master put all these, and similar sayings of his, on sacred record, because he knew that his children, in after ages, would need these important directions in time of trouble.

You, I suppose, have seen the account of the terrible wreck of the Hull steamer. It has caused a very general sensation here, as well as elsewhere. When you look back upon your sore trial, and compare it with the bereaved widows and fatherless, who are mourning over their relations, buried in a watery grave, amidst



all the horrors of a tempest, what reason have you to say, that no strange thing happened unto you, but such as is common to man. It seems a gospel minister was among the victims. What shall we say? "The Lord is just in all his ways, and holy in all his works." O may the eighteen survivors lay it to heart!

That the Lord himself may give you all more and more grace, with joy and peace in believing, is the prayer of your ever-loving friend and fellow-traveller  
Zionward, A. P.

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TO THE REV. R— C— OF D—.

CHERRYBANK, 1836.

MY DEAR BROTHER—Through different mediums, I frequently hear of Mrs. C— and your family. The report, I hope, excites not only the emotions of friendly sympathy, but sends us sometimes to our Father's throne on your account; and especially for supporting, sanctifying, and comforting communications to your afflicted bosom friend. Tell her, as you no doubt often do, that the Christian's heaviest trials are only light in comparison with the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory in reserve within the vail. I trust she has long ago fixed her anchor there, and thus she will have that hope which maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in her heart by the Holy Ghost given to her. The kind Redeemer knows all those who love and trust him. He may try them—he will do it; but he writes Isa. xli. 10, on the door of the furnace as they enter, and he whispers as they proceed, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made

perfect in weakness." Should death be in the cup, I have no doubt that our gracious Lord will make good his farewell promise to her,—John xiv. 1-3. And, O, how much better is it for the child of God to depart and be with Christ, than stay in this sinful and polluted world. "Ah," may you say, "it is an easy thing for you to speak thus, when the trial is not your own." I own, dear brother, this makes a great difference in our present circumstances; but you know that, fifteen years ago, the Lord called me to give up my hold of one of the most endearing bosom friends; and the delightful hope that she went home to our Father's house above, to the bosom of her everlasting Husband, when she was made ready for the happy change, in a great measure quieted my agitated spirit, and brought me to bow to his holy disposal. The Lord has been for some time warning you of what seems to be approaching; and I hope you are brought to stand and look on, saying, "Good is the will of the Lord." The kind Master whom we serve—poorly serve—condescends to assure us, "that he will not leave us nor forsake us." Let us try to take up the cross and sing, "God lives: blessed be my rock; the God of my salvation be exalted." It seems your brother is also with you in a drooping state. Deep called unto deep in David's case, yet he was enabled to say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope in God. I shall yet praise him.—As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." You know who says, "Be still and know that I am God." I desire to meet you at our Father's throne, supplicating mercy for the sufferers in your family, and for ourselves, that the shadow of death may be turned into a morning of joy to us all.



Accept of my tender Christian sympathy, and believe me to be your loving brother in Christ,

A. P.

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TO THE REV. J— H— OF A—.

CHERRYBANK, August, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I got the history of your journey to Kirriemuir, and your return from it: your heart was there, and you wished to serve and meet with our kind and gracious Master. The Lord, I hope, accepted the will for the deed. By late accounts, you seem to be a little convalescent; your outward man weak, but your mind cool and somewhat collected, and, I hope, renewed day by day. Were I younger, the distance shorter, myself less engaged, and the meeting of Synod not so near, I might make an effort to see you in your confinement. We have been long fellow-travellers to the rest above—fellow-labourers in our Lord's vineyard—and have, occasionally, spent some pleasant hours in speaking together concerning the kingdom of God. We are both, I trust on the confines of Immanuel's land; should you arrive there first, you will be the first gainer of the prize; but your success, instead of abating my joy, should, and I hope will, excite my thanksgiving to God for you, and also stimulate my hopes and exertions in finishing the small remainder of my pilgrimage course. You have served Christ near fifty years in your public ministry; and have been often telling saints and sinners that the only foundation on which they can safely rest for eternity is Christ Jesus, the rock of ages. On this stable rock,

I have no doubt, you have long ago taken your own standing, for life and death. Well, the billows of affliction—the winds of temptation—cannot move, nor even shake this foundation. But faith must daily keep its anchor-hold; and if so, the inhabitant of the rock may sing, “He hath made to me the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and this is all my salvation and all my desire.” This song can only be learned in the school of Christ—the Spirit himself is the teacher—and the first stanza is first uttered by the young convert in the morning of conversion. You and I have been long trying to school others in this heavenly melody; but, alas! with little success as to many. This we cannot help, though we should much deplore. But when we come to the closing scene of life, we will find it pleasant to reflect that these very truths, which were the marrow of our ministry, and the solace of our souls, in our great Master’s service, must be the stay of our spirits in the bed of sickness and death. Paul was in a very happy frame of soul when he penned 2 Cor. v. To carry about the earthly house of this tabernacle near eighty years, groaning under the burden of sin, temptation, and sorrow, may well make the feeble groan for deliverance. But waiting and watching are as much our duty, as believing and hoping to the end. You have often, I dare say, reminded others “to gird up the loins of their minds, to be sober and hope to the end, for the grace that shall be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” I hope your mind is calm, your faith resting on the finished work of Christ, and your anchor of hope fixed on that within the veil. Well, I shall only add



the remarkable words of the Apostle, 1 Pet. v. 10,—  
“But the God of all grace, who called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, strengthen, stablish, settle you.” Amen, amen! Please tell Mr. J— to write me particularly how you are in body and mind. The great and gracious Physician abide with you as your great Comforter!—I ever am your sympathizing brother in Christ,

A. P.

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TO A FRIEND.

PERTH, 1828.

MY DEAR FRIEND—The last time I visited you, I felt a wish to have some friendly and confidential conversation with you concerning matters of eternal moment, but, by one occurrence or other, the time passed by, and the opportunity was lost. I came away with the settled determination of writing you; and you may now say, Why so tardy in fulfilling your resolution? I will honestly confess that the thought has often since crossed my mind, but this morning it took such hold of me that I could no longer procrastinate. Now, my dear friend, I propose to enter into no argument with you, but merely to expostulate with you, as an old friend, who soon must dip his foot in the Jordan. I hope you will not think me obtrusive in earnestly soliciting your serious attention to the things which concern your eternal peace.

The Bible tells us, and our own conscience often whispers the same solemn truth, that we must soon appear at the tribunal of Christ, to give in our account

of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad. The thought is awfully solemn and interesting. One of the most holy men that ever lived said, in viewing this subject, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who shall stand?" The great Judge is omniscient, and knows our inmost thoughts,—he is essentially righteous, and will by no means clear the guilty. The great question then is, How may a poor sinner, covered with guilt and defilement, appear before the glorious Judge with safety and acceptance? Blessed be God that we are not left like poor heathens to grope in the dark as to this great and vital point. The blessed Bible at once directs the inquiring sinner to the compassionate Saviour—to his meritorious blood—his efficacious grace—as infinitely able and sufficient to save to the uttermost. But then this blood must be applied to the soul by the Spirit. Christ and his perfect righteousness must be received by faith, in order that we may have a personal interest in him. It is the established order of grace that every sinner to be saved must be born again,—he must believe the gospel report concerning Christ and salvation as God's testimony to him in particular. He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned. I am persuaded you know all these things—you are a reader, and have a considerable portion of knowledge; but something more, my dear friend, a great deal more is needed than mere speculative knowledge. Consider the meaning of the Apostle's doctrine,—2 Cor. iv. 1-6. The understanding must not only perceive the truth, but the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face, or



person, and work of Christ Jesus, must shine into the heart, and so gain the free consent of the will and affections, that the man accepts of Christ and his salvation, and gives up the love and practice of all known sin. This is the true evidence that we are believers indeed. Now, put the questions—O put them seriously to your own heart—Have I been really awakened out of my natural security? have I seen and felt my own wretchedness and misery as a guilty and defiled sinner before the heart-searching God? have I been enabled to cast myself at the Saviour's feet, and cry, "Lord, save me, I perish"? have I said amen to the offers of mercy proclaimed in the gospel to the chief of sinners? have I made this choice for eternity? and do I show that I have made it, by departing from all iniquity, and walking in the paths of Christian holiness? These are inquiries of infinite moment, and you cannot have solid peace in your mind until they are affirmatively settled.

You must remember how near eternity you were brought by a fall from your horse some time ago. The thought has surely crossed your mind, Where would my eternal destiny have been had I then died? Would I have been admitted among the happy company of the redeemed around the throne of the Lamb? or would I have been consigned to everlasting burning? Men may amuse themselves as they will in speculating about religious truths; but unless these truths come home to the heart, obtain the consent and acceptance of the soul, and be an active principle of holiness in the life, they produce no saving fruits.

I suggest these few hints to you from a pure con-

cern for your best interests. You will naturally suppose that they intimate a deep suspicion that all may not stand aright between God and you. I do not deny that it is so. You have many amiable qualities; but if the one thing needful be wanting, all is wanting which can comfort you when you come to grapple with the king of terrors.

If you will condescend to open your mind freely to me in answer to this letter, or if you would come and spend some time with me, it would make me very happy.

I commit you and your best interests into the hand of God, and pray that you may take all this in good part.—I ever am yours, sincerely desirous of your salvation,  
A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

PERTH, 1828.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Your favour came in course. I respect your honesty in avowing yourself a *doubter*, when an inward monitor tells you that such is the state of your mind. But O, my friend, why is it thus with you? Is it from a defect of evidence in the glorious doctrines of revelation? or is it from a defect in your own moral vision? You remember that certain characters came to our Lord, when on earth, saying, “How long dost thou make us to doubt?” What a strange, and groundless, and wicked complaint! Had they not the most abundant and striking evidence every day before their eyes, that Jesus was the Christ—the promised Messiah? What kept them from see-



ing this great fact? Ah! it was something within—the enmity, the carnality, the prejudices, the prepossessions of their own hearts. If you examine well, you will find that the cause of hesitation lodges within you. That there are profound mysteries in the word of God, which finite intellect cannot fully fathom, I admit; but if there were nothing such in a revelation from the infinite God, could we believe it to be divine? Infidels affirm that there are contradictions in the word of God, but this objection of theirs we totally deny; nay, it has been a hundred times refuted. There are a multitude of facts in nature which no philosopher can explain; and can we suppose that there should be none in revelation? But the shortest way of coming to a point here is, by looking at yourself as a poor guilty sinner, in the presence of that God whom you admit to be holy and just. Take a close view of your many transgressions against his holy law; consider how you can answer to him even for one of the many thousands of your offences. Delude not yourself with the idea, that, because he is a God of mercy, he will not be strict in marking your iniquities. He is indeed a God of mercy; but he is also a God of justice, who cannot pardon sin without a satisfaction to his justice. Where is this satisfaction to be found except in the atoning sacrifice of Christ? Look at your case, and you will see that the provision made in Jesus Christ is exactly suited to it. If you are brought to take up your rest on this foundation for eternity—to rest in him—you shall assuredly find peace in your soul; while such a delight in holiness and hatred of sin will spring up within you as will enable you to perceive at once

the truth and the excellence of the Christian revelation. May the spirit of all grace savingly illuminate your mind, and lead you into all truth!—I ever am your loving friend,

A. P.

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TO THE AUTHOR'S NEPHEW, MR. R—— P——.

PERTH, 1838.

MY DEAR R.—If H— were only half the distance from Perth I might make an effort, but, considering my advanced age, I can never again expect to visit the place of my nativity. I was sorry to learn that both your sisters, M— and C—, were so poorly. I learned from Mr. R— that they are pretty severely tried.

Tell them, from me, that when I was, some time ago, brought to the brink of the grave, I called in to my help a Physician who can heal all manner of sickness and disease. He came, and gave me a sweet medicine which powerfully effected my cure. He is still alive, and is saying to them, “Call on me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.” I cannot assure them that he will deliver from bodily trouble; but he can deliver from the mental disease of sin, which is preying on the soul of every unconverted sinner; and if this disease be brought under healing the soul will be safe, come what may.

I hope and pray they may take this happy course, for their present comfort and their future and eternal felicity. If the Divine Spirit enable them to do so, they will never perish: for them to live will be Christ, and to die will be gain. Good Mary, in the Gospels, made choice of the one thing needful, the better part,



which should not be taken from her. It will rejoice my heart to hear that my dear friends have made the same choice.

Many are disposed to wonder at the measure of health and vigour which God is continuing to me. I am daily trying to bless him for it. But the recollection of the lost days and neglected opportunities which passed over me in my youth often presses sore on my mind. I often try to put up David's prayer,—Psal. xxv. 6, 7. I am also often trying the exercise of the two disciples at Emmaus: they constrained the Lord to abide with them, saying, "The day is far spent, and the night is at hand."

You have no doubt been informed of the death of your cousin, Thomas Pringle. I had two letters from him in the time of his distress. He spake, or wrote, like one savingly acquainted with the great Saviour of sinners, lying at the foot of the cross, and depending on his great atonement as the only ground of his hope for eternity. He was a very kind, warm-hearted friend, had a well-stored understanding, and a cultivated taste. His writings, both in verse and prose, do him great credit, and will embalm his memory even to those who had no personal acquaintance with him. But his extraordinary exertions for the emancipation of the slaves in our Colonies will associate his name with some of the greatest friends of the human race. He, I believe, fell a victim to his exertions in the cause of the Africans. He has finished his useful life in this world, and is gone, I hope, to reap the fruits of his labours, in that world where sin, and sorrow, and death, cannot enter. Farewell, my dear nephew! O, neglect me not at the throne!—Yours,

A. P.

To MRS. M—.

PERTH, 30th October, 1824.

MY DEAR MADAM—Mr. H—'s letter of the 27th instant brought us the distressing intelligence of Alexander's departure to the other, and, I hope, better world. It struck us all with deep concern. Our warmest feelings flowed out toward all the family, and especially towards you. I know well how a parent's heart beats on such trying occasions. But there is no solid relief to be got except by lying down under the shadow of the throne, and crying, "Father, thy will be done!" We obtain all our comforts from the Lord, and should cheerfully surrender them when he recalls them. I know how our proud, selfish, and carnal hearts wince and kick at such dispensations; but if faith be in proper exercise, it will take the bitter cup, and say, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good." Good Hannah was a very grieved person, and wept bitterly; but she took the proper course to obtain comfort. She went to the sanctuary to God himself—she met with the High Priest—she obtained his blessing, and got a comfortable answer to her prayers. Take the same course, dear madam, and you shall have similar success. She asked a son from the Lord, and she got him, and lent him to the Lord. You got this your son from the Lord long ago—many years ago—you have often, I have no doubt, given him to the Lord, and now the sovereign Lord has taken him, I hope, to himself, and is saying to you, Go in peace, and be no more of a sad countenance. The way in which he has taken him—the time and



other circumstances—were all wisely ordered in his eternal counsels. A watery grave is just as good as an earthly one to them that sleep in Jesus. The sea must surrender its dead at the coming of our Lord as well as the church-yards. None of Christ's members will be amissing on that day. Such premature deaths (as we commonly but incorrectly speak) should put all on the outlook, especially us parents, who see those we have nursed and fondled plucked away before our eyes. What think you of the kindness of God, in sparing so many of your young family, and placing them around you, to be your comfort and your stay in advancing years. We often count more on one trial than on a thousand mercies. This is our sin, and should be guarded against. When the heart is filled with the love of Christ, worldly losses will be more easily sustained. The Lord allowed the sisters at Bethany to weep for Lazarus, but he was grieved at their unbelief and excessive sorrow. You and family have a deep interest in our sympathy and prayers. We salute you all in the gracious words of Him who comforts them that are cast down, saying, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Pray accept of our kindest salutations and sympathy. Remember us affectionately to all friends.—I ever am, my dear Madam, your affectionate and sympathizing friend,

A. P.

[THE Letters which follow were not found by Dr. Pringle's family till after the foregoing were nearly through the press, else their place in the series would have been much earlier. They were written to a Cousin in the south of Scotland, some of them before, and the rest soon after, he commenced his fixed ministry ; and the reader will find in them pleasing evidence that even then, when his years were comparatively few, his heart was rich in Christian experience.]

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Jan. 9, 1776.

MY DEAR COUSIN—I have, indeed, transgressed the law of friendship ; but my fault rather flowed from necessity than choice. Since I came here, you have often, often been in my mind, and as often I have resolved to write you ; but some intervening accident has, till now, hindered me.

I was very much surprised by meeting W— B—, the other day, in coming from the class. The rogue promised to come to dinner, but beguiled me.

Yesterday a most alarming accident occurred at Leith. A sea captain, walking on the shore, slipped his foot, fell into the water, and was drowned. The fact is certain, and its language loud : “ Be ye also ready ; for ye know not at what hour the Son of Man cometh.” Death's grim summons we must obey, for there is no discharge in that war. O, my dear cousin, what is of so great importance as to die in Christ ? This is the one great end of life itself, the chief design of God in trying providences, and the direct tendency of the gospel. If we improve not time for eternity, we are the worst of murderers. It is an important



inquiry, How may time be so improved as not to sting the conscience when death arrests? This, I think, is answered in few words, by Solomon's pressing exhortation: "Do, whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, with all thy might." When a person is conscientious in the performance of every commanded duty, and dedicates all his actions, and the all of his actions, to God's glory, then he may be said to live to purpose; but especially when he is assiduous about the great work of his own salvation, and proceeds in it, as it were, with fear and trembling. "This," says Christ, when reasoning with the Jews, "is the work of God, that ye believe on his Son whom he hath sent." Just as if God required no other work at our hands but to believe. Indeed, whatever we do besides, if a life of faith is not our main employment—if we do not every thing in the exercise of faith—our strength is spent in vain, and our labour for that which doth not satisfy. We spend time in our lawful callings—we trifle it away in religious duties—nay, we abuse it egregiously eating and drinking—while we overlook this great end, and suffer eternity to slip out of our mind.

But who can say he is clean, and plead innocent of the great transgression? We are verily guilty concerning this thing. However, my dear friend, our glass is not yet empty: let us redeem our time, and, as it were, buy back our lost opportunities, by doubling our diligence for the time to come. Eternity is posting upon us; time is flying apace; and woe, woe to us, if our time ends before our tasks! This causes many to lie down in sorrow, who might have gone singing to Immanuel's land. Oh, the ghost of murdered time! It

pierces through with many bitter reflections on the improvement we have made of it. These are suitable subjects of reflection on the return of another season. What may animate us to think of them is, the frequent surprises that many are meeting with from the king of terrors. Oh, time ! how earnestly it is desired by a dying sinner ! That we may not be found laying up this precious talent in a napkin is, and shall be, the daily prayer of, dear cousin, your true soul-friend,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

16th Oct. 1776.

MY VERY DEAR COUSIN—A sense of my many obligations to you obliges me to break through every obstacle to send you a few lines. When in health, my situation was such as made it inconvenient to be regular in my returns to a dear friend whom I value so highly ; but, for some weeks past, it has been out of my power, through bodily indisposition, which, in the Lord's kindness, is now removed. Although I expect to see you soon, yet I must pay you a previous visit on paper, in return for your anxious care about me in my affliction, for which I shall always feel grateful. To spend time in giving you an account of my bodily trouble would be of little avail ; but let me rehearse the mighty acts of the Lord, and tell of his wondrous loving kindness. But here I may well use the words of the Psalmist,—“ Many, O Lord, my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us ward : they cannot



be reckoned up in order unto thee : if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." Yet I may venture to say, that if I can be sure of any thing I am certain of this, that what proved affliction to my body was the means of comfort to my soul. I think I never enjoyed greater peace of mind, nor more scripture comfort and reconciliation to any dispensation, than on the occasion of which I speak. O, it is easy going through the hottest furnace when the violence of the flames are quenched by the waters of spiritual consolation ! Far, far better to be in the sorest affliction with the smiles of divine love, than to wallow in the greatest worldly prosperity without them. What is all without God ? Utter emptiness ! O, to enjoy God in all, and all in God ! This is the true Christian's prayer ; this his portion. But the best are apt to lose sight of their portion, and fall a nestling upon the creature. There is nothing so well fitted to blast sensual, carnal affections, as the nipping wind of adversity ; and this is often the Lord's method of procedure with his people in restoring his own work in their hearts. He brings them into the wilderness, and there speaks comfort to them. O, no matter what be the tenor of God's dealings with us, if they issue in the purging away of all our dross, and the taking away of all our tin. God always corrects us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.

Now, my dear friend, I am in necessity shut up to say, Amen ; and I have been very free, but I know it is to one who understands the meaning of Christian experience, and will make no bad use of what I have, perhaps, too plainly expressed. Yet, after all, there

is no room for boasting, or resting on any thing received—O, no! It will soon become a withered gourd if put in the place of precious Christ. I only mean to give you an opportunity of praising the Father of mercies, and the God of consolation, on my behalf.—Pray for me, your loving cousin and heart's friend,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

January 20, 1777.

MY DEAR FRIEND—And so the Lord has been giving you an opportunity of adopting the submissive language of a first-rate saint, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.” A lively picture this of worldly happiness! always fleeting, never fixed, a delusive shadow, that may please in the idea, and then dwindle into nothing. A gracious God has been experimentally teaching you the truth of this observation in the death of your little child—a promising, lovely boy, whom you now see that you could not enjoy! Why, my dear cousin, the dispensation is heavy, but not singular; our heavenly Father transplants many very tender flowers into the heavenly paradise before even their blossom is seen in the world. They scarcely appear above ground when they are suddenly cropt and brought home to glory, to enjoy the residue of their days in Immanuel's land. And is not this a good change? No doubt, the loss of promising children is a heavy trial to an affectionate parent; but, cousin, there is hope in this death; not but that children are guilty in their federal head, and,



by nature, deserve wrath as well as adults ; yet God has been graciously pleased to take the children of believing parents into the same covenant with themselves ; and when they die in infancy they die in that covenant, having never uncovenanted themselves by actual sinning. This I think a strong ground of consolation to all parents in my friend's situation. Though it does not amount to certainty, yet I think it goes the length of probability about their salvation. You certainly put a very proper construction upon the dispensation, when you view it as a check for your security, and, perhaps, for your idolatry. When we begin to dote upon any earthly comfort, it is just with God to blast it to us, or take it from us. This was certainly one lesson that good old Jacob might have learnt from God's way with him. He was dotingly fond of his beloved Joseph ; but God, in his providence, wrote a blank upon that enjoyment, and Joseph became as dead to his over-fond father till the very close of his days. Again, my dear friend, the security which prevailed when your trial was sent was no singular case ; it has often, often been the way of God with his dearest children, to bring them to a sense of duty by some sharp rod upon their person or family. This was the course he took with a secure, backsliding church,—Hos. v. 15. There are three things that should reconcile the believer to crosses and trials :—they tend mightily, through God's blessing, to promote a life of holiness ; they sweeten heaven to the child of God ; and they supply the Christian with a store of scripture experience, which will be as the beginning of glory to his soul. Were it not for

these dispensations, much of the Bible would be a mere blank; for the Spirit of God, who has indited it, has framed the whole, as it were, to speak consolation to the afflicted saint. Scarcely can we turn over a leaf but some comforting cordial meets our view for faith to draw out of these wells of salvation. This should keep us humble in prosperity, and comfort us in adversity. That this may be your attainment under your present trial, is the prayer of your friend in heart,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

6th Oct. 1777.

MY DEAREST COUSIN—Suspect not my lasting friendship, though, perhaps, my epistolary returns should not be so very punctual. I know in my own heart what place you hold there: a friend—a cousin—nay more, a fellow-traveller Zion-ward, who, I hope, shall, by and bye, string her harp along with mine in concert with the nations of them that are saved. This is the chief relation in which I view you; and this constitutes a nearer connection than earthly affection, friendship, or blood. What so nearly related as the members of the same body? and this all believers are, —1 Cor. xii. 13-27. The same spirit dwells in all Christians, and will, in some measure, stir up to love the members as well as the head. This is a cement stronger than any earthly relation,—even life itself. Death shall not separate, but consummate it. What my dear friend laments over in her case is not peculiar to her, but, alas! too, too general in these days of



darkness and treading down. Perhaps the power of godliness was never at a lower ebb, nor zeal for Christ and his cause less discovered. The parable of the ten virgins may, with the greatest propriety, be applied to this generation. Are not the best in a midnight slumber? God is visibly departing from us, and yet the ancient complaint holds true, "none stirreth up himself to take hold of me;" as if God had said, "Though I am gone just to the threshold, yet my professed people are so insensible of my departure, that there is scarcely any desiring me to return; for none stirreth himself from his spiritual slumber to prevent me from going altogether." I have no doubt but the Lord has a numerous seed, even in our day of grievous defection; but they are so much mingled with the heathen, that they have learned of them their way. Matters are come to so sad a pass with us, that there seems to be a necessity for sifting times, and, by all appearance, the stroke of judgment will fall heavy upon lukewarm professors. So much dross is mixed with the good metal, that nothing but fire will separate them. No doubt the metal will stand the proof, but the trial may be very severe. The Lord fit us for the day of his hot anger! I cannot say, my dear friend, but I have met with very much undeserved pity since I moved in a public sphere of life. My charges have been liberally borne by my gracious Master. I think I never enjoyed more pleasure in any stage of life than I do in the work of Christ. No doubt the work is very arduous, but the promise is extensive—"As thy day is, so shall thy strength be"—and if our weakness for duty gives occasion for the display of divine strength, we should rejoice and be exceeding glad.

This was the great Paul's exercise : yes, says he—" I will glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me." I repeat my former petition for your interest and entreaties at a throne of grace.—I am, with the greatest complacency, yours affectionately,  
A. P.

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## TO THE SAME.

1779, July 13.

MY DEAR COUSIN—I had your kind letter some time ago, expected it long before it came, and was much delighted with it when it arrived. But I must tell you honestly, if you go on in this way of panegyricizing (permit the odd-like word), I will give over writing altogether ; for you, my dear friend, speak in such terms of my trifling letters, that I really am ashamed to write unless I have something of importance to communicate, that may some way answer your expectations. But lower your ideas of my correspondence, and I will write more freely, and now and then tell you what is going on.

I heartily wish my dear cousin's exercise, with all its imperfections, were more general among professors than it is. You complain of disordered affections, faint desires, strong corruptions, languishing graces, and what not. Well, you will see a striking picture of your heart in Paul's experience,—Rom. vii.—and a blessed resemblance between you. I call it a blessed resemblance ; because, in my opinion, there cannot be a better evidence of a gracious state than a lively and affecting sense of the workings of remaining



corruptions. To groan under the crushing weight of a body of sin and death is a certain sign of spiritual life and motion. Be not discouraged; the first fruits are a sure pledge of the full harvest—the begun victory will issue in a complete and eternal triumph.

I think your sister, N—, intends matrimony, and I know she has good sense to direct her in this matter in making a proper choice; and I can assure her, from experience, that, to those who are equally yoked, marriage is the crown of worldly happiness. Pray, tell her this from me. May I ever expect the pleasure of seeing you under my roof? I can promise you a kind landlady when you come. Write me as to this. Love to all friends. In haste.—Ever yours, A. P.

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#### TO THE SAME.

1779.

MY DEAR COUSIN—The Lord's ways are often in the deeps, and his paths in the mighty waters; but in every case, we may say, he is a rock, and his work is perfect. Though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. You have been trysted with personal and family trials, but you can say, "He does all things well!" Is not he kind even when he smites, and compassionate in all his corrections? Whom he loves, he rebukes and chastens. What although the potion is somewhat bitter? a Father's hand compounded it, and a Father's blessing is in it; and, therefore, we should always say, "The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I

not drink it?" Dear cousin, the Father of mercies knows well how to sweeten a bitter cup, and how to make a heavy rod produce the precious fruits of righteousness, peace, and comfort; as says the poet, "Even crosses from his sovereign hand are blessings in disguise." Observe, dear friend, the sovereignty of God, and the profound deeps of his providence: yourself was brought to the grave's mouth, as if to see the burial of your sweet little infant. The Lord was showing you that he might have directed the blow at the root, though, for this time, it has only alighted upon the branch. The tender-hearted mother was brought to the brink of Jordan, to see her lovely child go through before her; and can we say this was hard usage? No: the dispensation was full of love! You are thus taught, from experience, that you yourself must soon bid farewell to all sublunary comforts. Death came so near, that you had almost taken your last adieu, and left a disconsolate husband, and your helpless children, to be tossed in the storm of worldly vicissitudes. But the Father of mercies thought not so: the afflicted parent is spared and recovered, and the healthy, promising child is taken. Adore a sovereign God! The child was God's lend, and you enjoyed him three years; and why should we complain when he only recalls his own? Have we any right to quarrel with a person for plucking a flower in his own garden? How much less the Proprietor of all! What though the broken cisterns of earthly comforts run dry, while the Fountain is, and will be, eternally undiminished. What we have in the creature, we have in infinitely greater perfection in the Creator, and this should silence



us. We were much disappointed in not seeing you in Perth; but you had too good reason for returning home.

I am truly sorry to understand that my dear mother has been poorly. Tell me candidly if you think her case any way dangerous, and I will leave every thing to pay her a visit; but I will hope the best. Let me know immediately.—I remain your sympathizing cousin,  
A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

January 31st, 1780.

MY DEAR COUSIN—I have been too long in your debt; but I know you will make allowance for my many engagements, and pardon my seeming neglect. In your last, as usual, you dwell on the plaintive strain. This is the more common, but, I apprehend, the least becoming part of Christian exercise. In this imperfect, sinful, suffering state, I own the child of God will have frequent occasion for dropping the tear of sorrow; but to dwell always on this is to hinder the work of grace, to embolden unbelief, and to dishearten the believer. A cheerful spirit, says Solomon, does good like a medicine; and praise is comely for the righteous, says the holy Psalmist: yes, and he resolved to persist in this exercise as long as he had any being. It is very remarkable that the scripture is full of encomiums upon, and exhortations to, the exercise of praise, just because the Spirit of God foresaw how backward the sons of men, and even the ungrateful children of God, would be to this heavenly exercise.

The common reply of the disconsolate Christian is, Alas, my wicked and deceitful heart—my disordered, dead, and lifeless exercise—my weak and languishing graces (if I have any)—and my strong and turbulent corruptions—all set before me such a gloomy prospect, that I cannot but complain! The pretext is, indeed, plausible; but it is not solid. Is the above case yours or mine? Then, let us rejoice, it is not quite hopeless; the remedy is provided, the cure is at hand; there is balm in Gilead, and a physician there. Why then, in sullen discontent, dwell on the dark and dismal case? Is it not more pleasant and profitable to sing with Habakkuk, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” O, my dear friend, if we had more faith we would have more joy and comfort, for there is a joy and peace in believing which neither outward fightings nor inward fears can prevent or take away. Grace and peace be with you and your family!—I ever am yours in the Lord,

A. P.

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TO THE SAME.

October 12th, 1790.

MY DEAR COUSIN—I cannot let the bearer go without acknowledging your two last favours, as this would not be consistent with friendship, gratitude, or duty. I rejoice to see you are trying to join in the church's



song: "I will sing of mercy and of judgment." The Lord is giving you occasion for both. You are no worse treated, I should rather say you are as well treated, as the other members of our Father's family. They that have gone before us had to go through fires and waters—those that are on the way are treading in the same paths—and can we expect, or should we desire, to be conducted to our Father's house by a separate road; nay, by a road quite different from that which our dear Lord and elder Brother trod? No, no; it would neither be for our interest nor our comfort. I see you are not disposed to complain of your personal or family trials, at least you are striving against all hard thoughts of a correcting Father; but you are still complaining much of a dead frame—of a carnal heart—of little progress in sanctification. Continue to complain. Had you no fault to find on this score, I should think a great deal worse both of your frame and exercise. Only there is an unavailing, an unprofitable kind of complaining that even saints often fall into,—a complaining when the heart is not deeply affected,—a complaining more to men than to God at the throne,—a complaining more than is meet. Bad habits are very easily contracted, and, when contracted, it is very difficult to lay them aside. It is so in the spiritual as well as in common life. I have often found saints grieved for that which was their mercy, and *sighing* when they should have been *singing*. I do not say this is your case altogether—I hope not. But one thing I am sure of—to *feel* the workings of corruption so as to mourn over them, to be enabled to pray, and watch, and fight

against them, is good exercise, and bespeaks a lively frame. But I presume your greatest trial is, that you feel sin strong and often prevailing, and yet you cannot war, nor watch, nor pray against it, nor mourn over it as you would and should. Alas, my dear cousin, you have many, many fellows. I am sure I may join you in this complaint. But to whom can we go? Our Lord will give final victory in a little. The triumph of our spiritual enemies shall be short. Though the child of God fall, he shall rise; though he sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto him; though he for a long time walk in the midst of trouble, the Lord will revive him—he will stretch forth his hand against the wrath of his enemies, and his right hand will save him. Let us try to take Eliphaz's counsel to Job: "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause; which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number: who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: to set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety."—I am sincerely yours,

A. P.