



Dear Bro<sup>r</sup>  
y<sup>r</sup> most affectionately  
Jos Williams.

James M'Dowall

AN ENLARGED SERIES OF

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

DIARY, MEDITATIONS, AND LETTERS,

OF

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS,

OF KIDDERMINSTER:

WITH NOTES BIOGRAPHICAL AND EXPLANATORY: TO WHICH ARE  
ANNEXED SOME ORIGINAL LETTERS FROM MINISTERS, &c.

OCCASIONED BY HIS DEATH.—AND AN INDEX.

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Embellished with a Portrait.

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BY BENJAMIN HANBURY,

A DESCENDANT OF THE AUTHOR.

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“ Mr. Williams was one of the most extraordinary persons I was ever acquainted with. I compare him to a valuable ring, where grace, or the divine nature, is placed like a large, refulgent brilliant in the centre; while good temper, lively spirits, a constant cheerfulness, a tenacious memory, a ready utterance, and a pleasant wit, as so many gems, surround it; and all together made as complete a jewel as ever I knew.”

*Rev. R. Pearsall; see p. 436.*

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SECOND EDITION.

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TO  
THE MEMORY  
OF  
A BELOVED WIFE,  
WHOSE PRESENCE CHEERED THE EDITOR  
WHILE  
PREPARING THE FIRST EDITION  
OF THIS  
ENLARGED SERIES ;  
BUT WHOSE DECEASE,  
MARCH 23, 1824,  
PLUNGED HIM INTO PROFOUND GRIEF,  
HE  
DEDICATES  
THE PRESENT AND  
ALL SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS.

---

Though lost awhile, still Memory holds thee dear ;  
And Love would fain record thy virtues here :  
But adamant inscrib'd with verse divine,  
Would frail and fleeting prove for worth like Thine ;  
Not so Heaven's record, that retains its trust,  
When weeping friends and monuments are dust.

B. H.

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## PREFACE

TO

## THE ENLARGED SERIES.

DR. JOHNSON has remarked, that “there has been scarcely any man eminent for extent of capacity, or greatness of exploits, that has not left behind him some memorials of lonely wisdom and silent dignity;” \* and the remark is not inapplicable to the author of the manuscripts from which the present volume is compiled. He did not, it is true, rank with men distinguished for science, but his abilities were of no ordinary description; and, without pretending to deeds that procure the renown by which mankind is too commonly dazzled, he exhibited what are incomparably superior—a mind ardently devoted to the glory of God, and a life spent in unwearied exertions for the *best* interests of his fellow-creatures. Eminent for the exercise of personal religion, he was signally successful in diffusing piety among all whom Providence had placed within the sphere of his influence. The name of JOSEPH WILLIAMS

\* The Rambler, No. 135.

ranks indeed unusually high in the list of *laymen* who have distinguished themselves in the cause of vital religion; nor can every *minister* rejoice in more numerous instances of turning sinners 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'

The authors of the "History of Dissenters" have given a sketch of the life of Mr. Williams, which they commence with these words:—"As the example of eminent ministers, which ecclesiastical history presents, is so frequently rendered inefficient to private Christians, by the notion that their superior religion was a professional excellence, which is not to be expected from those who are employed in secular affairs, the same propensity to excuse ourselves from resembling the eminent, may have induced some to remark, that the memoirs which we have given of persons not in the ministry, were taken from the higher ranks of life, when independent circumstances, and freedom from the distractions of business, render devotedness to the service of God and his church comparatively easy. It is therefore *with peculiar pleasure* that we now introduce to our readers a devout tradesman, whose religion, excellent for its own superiority to the ordinary standard, becomes still more valuable for the stimulus it furnishes to the great mass of mankind, who must ever, like him, be occupied with the labours of a secular calling."\*

\* Vol. iv. page 14.

Few books have been more acceptable to the religious public than the Diary of this excellent man, edited by the Rev. B. Fawcett, M.A.; concerning which, the authors just alluded to, after stating, that “the solicitude which Mr. Williams manifested for the salvation of his children, by writing such *Letters* as would *do honour to any pen*, was recompensed by the exquisite delight of seeing their early and decided piety,” add, that “his *Diary* forms his highest eulogium, and may be pronounced one of the most useful books which a Christian tradesman can read;” they might also have added, *or which can be read by a Christian in any situation of life*. To examine the productions of genius, even in narratives of fiction, is gratifying to persons of taste; but to minds piously disposed, it is far more delightful, and infinitely more profitable, to pursue, in a register of *religious experience*, the gradations by which degenerate nature rises towards

“The highest style of man.”

The reader who may wish to learn by what means the *new matter* comprised in this Enlarged Series of Extracts from the Diary, &c. of Mr. Williams has been procured, is informed, that time has released from any farther obligation to privacy, many articles which, in the opinion of the Rev. B. Fawcett, “it was necessary to omit” when he prepared *his* edition. But a principal part has been derived from the short-hand

manuscripts of Mr. Williams, which the possessors from time to time carefully preserved, in the hope, that, although to themselves the contents were as a *sealed* book, they might possibly be deciphered at a future period; and the editor, having made short-hand, as exhibited by all the systems he has been able to obtain, his particular study for many years, has accomplished the deciphering of his revered great-grandfather's papers with complete success. From this circumstance he has been able to avail himself of the important advantage of collating the *abridged transcript* made by Mr. Williams in long-hand, with the several articles as they were *originally composed*, in the actual order of time and events; which has induced him to make slight alterations in some parts of the work previously published by Mr. Fawcett, by using the *present* instead of the *past* tense. Some transpositions of whole articles have also been made, in consequence of the alteration of the calendar not having been regarded in those instances. To give additional interest to the work, the *names* of the several parties alluded to (which prudence might require the compiler of the edition of 1779, to omit) are now nearly all introduced; and in most instances too, the *superscriptions* to the epistolary matter are given; several *notes* are also added, some of which are biographical. The method of distinguishing the *old* and *new* matter is pointed out in the Table of Contents; by turning to which, a great number of articles will be found to be *entirely* new; and to some

of the articles formerly published, *additions* of greater or less extent have been made, which, however, could not be conveniently particularized. The *Letters* and *Extracts* at the close of the volume will undoubtedly be read with interest by all who venerate the memory of Mr. Williams, as they serve to shew how much he had been esteemed in life, and was lamented in death.

For the valuable matter derived from the kindness of individuals who are in possession of letters, &c. the editor's acknowledgments are particularly due to the Rev. Frederick Hamilton of Brighton; the Rév. Richard Pearsall Allen of Exeter; James Kirkpatrick of the Isle of Wight, Esq.; and his sister, Mrs. Silver, relict of Thomas Silver, M.D. of Portsmouth; Joseph Bunnell of London, Esq.; Joseph Watson of Highbury-place, Esq.; and his sisters, Mrs. Addington and Mrs. Walker of Kidderminster; and to the two daughters of the late Mr. Joseph Green of Bristol. To the Rev. John Humphrys of London, and the Rev. Joseph Berry of Warminster, the editor returns his sincere thanks for prompt attentions to his inquiries; nor can he forget other friends and relations who have rendered him important services; viz. Mr. Samuel Hanbury of Westminster, the eldest surviving descendant of Mr. Williams; Mr. John Hanbury of London, the editor's father; Messrs. Henry, William, and Benjamin Penn, and Mrs. Osborne, all now or late of Kidderminster. Finally, the editor with pleasure records his obligations to the Rev. Samuel Fawcett, son of the former editor, for the very handsome manner in which

he has expressed his approbation of the design of publishing this Enlarged Series, and from whose letter he takes the liberty to make the following extract:—

Yeovil, May 27, 1814.

“THOUGH I have not the pleasure of knowing you, I am happy to find you are a descendant of Mr. Williams, and still more, that you value the memory, and inherit any degree of the taste and spirit of that venerable man. I am glad you have undertaken to publish an enlarged edition of his Diary, which I doubt not will be highly acceptable to the serious part of the Christian world. Truly happy should I have been to have furnished you with any additional materials for that work; but after a careful examination of my father’s papers, I have not discovered any by Mr. Williams, or particularly relating to him. Sincerely wishing you success in all your good undertakings, and all that happiness which is to be derived from walking in the steps of your pious ancestors, I am, dear sir, yours very respectfully,

“S. F.”

The work as it now appears in its complete state, is respectfully submitted to the patronage of the religious public, by which the labours of the former editor have been so highly approved.

B. HANBURY.

8, Temple-Place, Blackfriar’s-Road,  
April 6, 1815.

## PREFACE

TO

THE EDITION OF 1779.

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THE private papers of Mr. JOSEPH WILLIAMS would have been published long ago, if the desires of many of his friends could have been gratified. Though the Publisher was for many years favoured with Mr. Williams's intimate friendship, and well knew that his Diary and Meditations were voluminous, yet he had no opportunity of perusing them till twenty-two years after the decease of the excellent writer. His widow would never suffer them to go out of her hands, during the four years in which she survived him. And after her death, his three daughters, whom Providence had placed at a great distance from each other, having agreed to enjoy the manuscript by turns, were so eager to extend their separate privilege from year to year, as absolutely to prevent others from sharing with them in their satisfaction.

Such of Mr. Williams's writings as were published in his life-time were anonymous. There are *three* *poe-*

*tical compositions* of his in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1736,\* under fictitious names, which the reader will find in the following pages, placed in the order of time to which all these Extracts are reduced.

In 1740, Mr. Williams published a pamphlet, entitled—*The Principal Causes of some late Divisions in Dissenting Churches traced to their Origin, in a Letter from a Dissenter in the Country.* He submitted his manuscript to the critical inspection of Dr. Watts, and made some considerable additions to it at the Doctor's request.

In 1748, came out his *Abridgment of the Rev. David Brainerd's Journal among the Indians*: with Dr. Doddridge's Dedication of it, To the honourable Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge; in which the Doctor represents the compiler as “determined to conceal his name.”

It was certainly the farthest from Mr. Williams's intention, that his *Diary* and *Meditations* should be published after his death, and with his name. His first copy of them was in short-hand; which none of his relations were able to read; but he himself wrote an abridgment of it in long-hand,† for the use, as he expressly mentioned, of his children and their descendants; and

\* It has been ascertained that the whole number is *four*: viz. two in 1736, one in 1738, and one in 1739. See pages 79, 83, 85 and 117.

† See page viii.

which is now made public at the request of his only surviving daughter, his numerous grand-children, and many other of his near relations.

The title of *Extracts* is given to the following pages, because it was necessary to omit many things, even in Mr. Williams's abridged copy, that either related to the private concerns of particular persons, families, and religious societies, or that were merely of a controversial nature. Indeed, for the greater part of the following pages, we are indebted to the kindness of some, who had been Mr. Williams's correspondents, or who happened to have any of his letters or other writings in their possession.

What is here presented to the reader, contains a comprehensive review of a life devoted to God from early to advanced age, from about *seven* years old, to his entrance on his *sixty-fourth* year. Almost every year, in so long a period, affords a distinct date to some instructive or entertaining particulars, each of which is placed in the order of time; as that appeared, on the whole, to be the most eligible arrangement. By this means a more just idea of Mr. Williams's real character may be formed, than could have been by a *funeral sermon*, where flattery is so often introduced, that the simplicity of the most obvious truth is ready to be suspected. To such truth, the Publisher apprehended himself strictly to adhere, when, immediately returning from his friend's grave, he endeavoured, in a discourse from these words of the Apostle—*Be ye followers of*

*me, even as I also am of Christ,*' to hold him up to the imitation of surrounding multitudes, as an example of eminent piety, whether we viewed him in his own house, or in the house of God, or in his transacting the affairs of trade, or in his zeal for promoting the honour of God and the interest of Christ in the world. Important as such particulars were, in their peculiar reference to Mr. Williams, yet the Publisher is well persuaded, that these Extracts are much better calculated to satisfy and improve every mind, not excepting those who were personally acquainted with the deceased, and who recollect his genius, learning, and retentive memory, his various reading, and distinguishing faculty for entertaining and profiting all that conversed with him.

Here, it is humbly hoped, Christians of very different attainments in the divine life, whether weak or strong in faith; whether engaged in painful conflicts with their spiritual enemies, or triumphing over them; may see reason to conclude, that 'as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.'—Here the men of trade and worldly business may learn the perfect consistence between the duties of life and of godliness, between their minding earth and making sure of heaven, and how absurd and iniquitous it is, to make light of religion, and 'go their ways,' in the neglect of it, 'one to his farm; another to his merchandise.' They may here perceive, how rational and scriptural it is, to 'acknowledge God in all their ways,' and thereby turn

success or disappointment, prosperity or adversity, into occasions of greater nearness and devotedness to God, more cordial delight in him, and fuller enjoyment of him.—Here the lovers of learning and science may trace the labours necessary for attaining self-knowledge.—Here the proud and passionate may discern, that the difficulties of ‘being clothed with humility,’ and of ‘putting on the incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,’ are not insurmountable.—Here the indolent and slothful have a convincing proof, that ‘the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.’—Here they ‘who did run well,’ but were easily ‘hindered, that they should not obey the truth,’ are taught, both the duty and happiness, of being ‘stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.’—Here doubting and trembling souls, with all their load of perplexity and uneasiness concerning their eternal state, have before them an example of one, who, in some seasons of his life, exactly resembled themselves; though, at other times, he ‘rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.’—Here parents and heads of families are prompted to try themselves, whether they are manifesting their own piety by earnest endeavours to ‘form Christ in’ their children and servants, and what disinterested, zealous, and prudent measures they are pursuing for the present and everlasting happiness of the next generation, that when they themselves die, their successors may ‘arise up, and call them blessed.’—Even the most devout and

heavenly minds will here have the pleasure to see, what they themselves feel, that Mr. Williams never thought himself 'already perfect,' but was ever restless in his desires and endeavours to love God more ardently, to have greater zeal and success in doing good to others, and that he himself 'might win Christ, and be found in him.'

These histories of pious reflection, these devout exercises of the heart, while they were in manuscript, were blessed as the means of beginning piety in some, and of reviving it in others of Mr. Williams's descendants. May divine grace assist readers of every age and character, of every condition and relation, so to improve them, as to 'be followers of him, who through faith and patience inherits the promises.'

B. FAWCETT.\*

Kidderminster, March 16, 1779.

\* This eminent minister was born August 16, 1715, and died Oct. 18, 1780. Ample testimony is borne to his *diligence* and *zeal* in the ensuing pages; but, for farther particulars, reference may be made to a funeral sermon by the Rev. Thomas Tayler, late of Little Carter Lane, London; which is prefixed to the last edition of a very valuable work by Mr. F. entitled---"The Grand Inquiry." In Mr. T.'s discourse will be found a succinct, but interesting account of Mr. Fawcett; with a correct list of his labours for the press, to the number of twenty-four. Other particulars of Mr. F. are contained in---"Letters to Dissenting Ministers, &c. from the Rev. Job Orton; with Notes, &c. by the Rev. S. Palmer;" 2 vols. 12mo. 1806.

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AN ENLARGED SERIES OF  
EXTRACTS  
FROM THE  
DIARY, MEDITATIONS, &c.

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HIS EARLY PIETY.

1699.—THE first serious impressions I remember to have been made upon my mind, were when I was about *seven* years\* old, occasioned by the death of a son of James Payton, a boy in another family. My father coming into my room, told me who was dead; and very seriously discoursed to me on the immortality of the soul; the certainty of a state of rewards and punishments; my own mortality, and liableness every day to have such a change pass on me by death. I was greatly surprised, and filled with a warm concern for the salvation of my soul. It put me on praying with greater earnestness than common; and I was resolved to do the will of God so far as I knew it.

When I was about *ten* years old, my father corrected me with a just severity for telling and persisting in a deliberate lie. He at length conquered my stubbornness, and brought me to confess the truth. His rebukes, reasonings, and expostulations, wrought on me such a sense of shame, that his words wounded me deeper than his stripes, and melted me into very tender relentings. “Now,” said he, “I forgive you; but I cannot promise that God will forgive you; and if he should not forgive you, this one sin is enough to condemn you to eternal misery: but, this I will do for you, I will pray that God will forgive you; and I *charge you* to go into your chamber, and pray earnestly to God for pardon.” Accordingly I went, and on my bended knees, with a flood of tears, begged for Christ’s sake the pardon of all my sins, and particularly this great

\* Mr. W. was born November 16, 1692.

sin I had just been guilty of. When I had thus spent almost a quarter of an hour, I rose up somewhat comforted, and the impression abode on my mind many days, so that my prayers were with more fervency than usual, and I was so ashamed, that I could scarce look at my father or any of the family.

1705.—It pleased God to take away by death my little sister Abigail, when I was in my *thirteenth* year. This was the first breach made in our family, since I was old enough for reflection. My father, after morning family-prayer, said something to us suitable to the sorrowful and awful occasion; and gave us some directions how to improve the providence. I felt myself strongly inclined to get into some place of retirement, to meditate upon death. It was a remote corner of the stable, where, in the most solemn and best manner I could, I sometimes mused on death, and on my own mortality; and sometimes prayed to be made ready to die; in all, using a low voice. My affections were engaged; and very lively convictions I had of the vanity of the world, and its insufficiency to my real happiness. An interest in Christ then appeared to me better than all the world, and some earnest desires and breathings after Christ I then experienced. In less than two years, my little sister Esther died also; by which my former convictions were renewed.

1707.—After I had been *some time* at my father's trade, my mind was too much corrupted by the filthy conversation of the shop-men. Our minister\* coming to see my father, directed his discourse to me, taking notice what a comfort it was to parents to see their children take good ways; and

\* The Rev. Francis Spilsbury: who died January 31, 1727, aged 60; after 34 years' labours in the Independent Church, in Kidderminster. He was father of the Rev. F. S. who left Bromsgrove in 1737, for Worcester; and afterward, for Salter's hall, London; where he died in 1782. The former was son, and the latter, grandson of the Rev. John Spilsbury, A. M. Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford; who had been Vicar of Bromsgrove, till the fatal Bartholomew Act in 1662, when he became the minister of a meeting-house erected in that town, in 1693: he died in 1699, aged 71. Mr. Spilsbury of Kidderminster was a nephew of Dr. John Hall, Bishop of Bristol, who appointed him his executor.

what a grief of heart it must be to them to see them disobedient, and addicted wholly to play. He then gave me to understand, that formerly my parents had entertained good hopes of me; but now, as I grew elder and bigger, they justly expected that I should grow better; and what a sad thing it was that I grew worse and worse. Some other gentle reproofs he applied to me, which left stings behind them, and wrought kindly on me, and for a while brought forth some good fruits in my heart and life.

1708.—In my *sixteenth* year, I began to weave in the clothier's broad loom with a man who was an early riser and close worker, so that I commonly wrought with him 14, and sometimes 15 or 16 hours a-day. This, prevented my opportunity for, and suppressed my immoderate love of play. Often on Lord's-days, I had serious impressions on my mind which remained with me all the Monday morning; but, my continual labour in the loom, and the vain discourse which filled my ears, together with the vanity of my depraved heart, too much wore out all impressions of serious piety before night; and all the rest of the week I was vain enough. I laboured at the loom two years; before I left it my convictions were deeper, and my resolutions stronger for serving God; so that it grieved me to have no time in the morning for secret prayer, which was partly owing to my fellow-labourer rising so early, and partly to half of my breakfast hour being taken up in attending on family-prayer. However, my Lord's-days' convictions had such an influence on my mind, that, for two or three days after, I commonly redeemed time for prayer, either from sleep or from meals. Towards the latter end of the week, my zeal usually began to cool, and my prayers to be formal and lifeless, till on the next Lord's-day my convictions, both of sin and duty, were renewed. Thus I went on for many months, keeping my ground, but alas! making slow advances in the work of religion.

1710.—After entering into my *eighteenth* year, and changing my daily employment for that which allowed me more time for religious duties, my convictions of sin, and humili-

liation for it, increased. I was more enlarged in secret prayer, and so filled with a sense of the greatness and majesty of God, that frequently I was scarce conscious to a wandering thought in that duty. As I then worked in a shop with three journeymen, I found their conversation very irksome to me, because I made conscience of my thoughts and words. Yet, though I came from prayer to the shop, resolved not to hearken to their discourse, but to keep my heart fixed on God and heavenly things all the day; after a while, the gaiety of my natural temper would betray me, first into free, and by degrees into vain conversation. This much retarded my progress in piety, and filled me with remorse and grief every evening. At length I prevailed with my father to let me work in a chamber by myself; but, though it was a commendable one, I was ashamed to tell the reason. Being thus alone, I endeavoured to keep my heart all the day bent on religion. To this end I contrived to set Mason's Hymns,\* or some other devotional book, so near me, that, with little or no hindrance, to my work, I could, by glancing my eye upon it, take in a line or two at a time. In this manner I committed to memory all Mason's Hymns, and with such a devout frame, that I could adopt almost every line in them; even his songs of praise,—for grace,—for deliverance from spiritual troubles,—for answer of prayer,—and for joy in the Holy Ghost; as the genuine language of my own soul. I found my will so changed, from what it had been, that I entertained a very comfortable hope I was 'renewed in the spirit of my mind;' and frequently, I had not only 'peace,' but 'joy in believing.'

About this time I was walking in a summer evening in the meadows, and fell into a solemn meditation. 'While I was musing, the fire burned,' so that I could not but 'speak with my tongue.' I discoursed to myself on the shortness and uncertainty of life, my own mortality, and the wide difference between an eternity of happiness and misery. I had such a sense of the joys of heaven and the

\* See Note to July 4, 1741.

pains of hell, as made all the beauties of this lower creation to disappear, and all worldly riches and honours not worthy to be compared with securing my great concern, the salvation of my soul. I wondered how men could spend all their time in labouring and caring for things which they must quickly leave, while they neglected the salvation of their souls. I wondered how people could so generally allow themselves to think and talk of nothing but the trifling affairs of this life. I wondered at myself, that I should spend so much of my time hitherto to so little purpose. I wondered at my father, though a good man, and my faithful monitor, that he had not warned me oftener, and more earnestly, of the danger I was in of perishing for ever. I was glad to find in myself such a lively sense of invisible things. In this temper of mind I could almost say with Elihu, in wishing for an opportunity to pray—‘I am full of matter—my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak that I may be refreshed.’ The dusk of the evening, and the solitary place I was then in, afforded me a sufficient retreat. Sometimes kneeling, sometimes prostrate, I there poured out my soul before the Lord; and there received an inward witness, that I was a child of God. I was even ravished with the love of Christ. I was in the apostle’s ‘strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which’ I then esteemed ‘far better.’ I was ready to say with Peter—‘It is good to be here;’ and with Jacob, ‘This is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven.’ It left a devout serenity on my mind, which continued many days.

On Lord’s-day morning, September 10, I awoke in a serious frame, lamenting my many defects and shortcomings in duty; and that, after such lively convictions, I had made so little progress in the religious life. I rose with a resolution, by the grace of God, to do somewhat to put the grand concern out of doubt; to prevent my returning to sin; and to bind myself for ever to the Lord. Accordingly, I went immediately up into my closet, and,

having solemnly devoted myself to God in secret prayer, I wrote down my self-consecration:—

“ I solemnly devoted and dedicated myself to him, who is the King of kings; resolving, by his grace, to give a bill of divorce to all manner of sins; and, to the utmost of my power, to strive and wrestle with all temptations to sin, whether from without or from within; to avoid, as far as possible, the society of vain, graceless persons; to commend myself to God by prayer, at least twice a-day; to be careful and constant in self-examination, and meditation; particularly to meditate on the love, the transcendent love of God in Christ; and of Christ, in willingly offering up himself a sacrifice for poor sinners; and in sending the blessed Spirit, whose strivings, and quickening motions, I resolved, by the grace of God, never to quench. I resolved to watch narrowly against the wanderings and strayings of my heart in any duty; to make the glory of God, and the salvation of my soul, my chief business and design; and to account the affairs of this world but as diversions to me in my way heaven-ward.”

This is the substance of what I then recorded as my solemn vow, determining from thenceforward to call myself daily to account for the actions of the day; and frequently to write some remarks thereon. This course was of excellent use, to keep me close to God and duty; to prevent sin; and particularly it helped me to redeem precious time, for I made conscience of rising early.

About this time, going with my father a few miles from home, his talk with me was very profitable. He exhorted me to serious religion now in my youth, as the season when the mind is most fit to receive good impressions. He cautioned me not to put off the grand concern to an uncertain hereafter. He pleaded with me, not only the uncertainty of life, but the improbability of my turning to God in old age, after vicious habits were grown strong by a long continuance in sin. To affect me the more, he gave me the following particulars of his conversation with a gentleman of his acquaintance. “ I was coming home,”

said he, “ one evening, not long after I was married, from Bewdley, in company with Mr. Radford and his son John. They had been sitting some hours with persons remarkable for their persecuting principles, and who had been throwing out severe reflections against the Dissenters. Though the old gentleman himself never went to meeting, except when he was at London ; yet he had a high esteem for Dissenters, and had courage enough on all occasions strenuously to vindicate their conscientious character and practice. So, on this occasion, after having heard their aspersions, he addressed the company with some warmth of resentment, and said, ‘ Gentlemen, you may be ashamed thus to abuse better men than yourselves, men far more conscientious, and who live much better lives than either you or I do ; men who make religion their daily business, and dare not allow themselves in those liberties of an immoral kind which you and I do.’ After he had related to me these particulars, he then directed his discourse to his son. ‘ Son,’ said he, ‘ though I have not *myself* been so religious, and careful of my soul as I should have been, yet I cannot but have a tender concern for *your* everlasting happiness ; and here, before Mr. Williams, I admonish you, not to live after my example, but to keep close to such persons as the Dissenters, and make them your companions. I have often advised you to make this man your associate ; he will lead you in the way to heaven. You are got in with a knot of young fellows, who will do you no good : but I charge you,’ which he uttered with a louder voice, ‘ to leave off the company of such and such, and spend all the time you can in the company of this neighbour.’ To which I replied, Sir, I am now full of business, and am much elder than your son ; therefore, young men of his own age are more fit for him to associate with. On my saying this he stopped his horse ; I being before him, and his son behind ; then, with great earnestness he declared to him, ‘ I will not stir from this place until you have promised me to abandon that set of companions, and make this man your daily associate. Mind religion, religion in your youth, and do

not do as I have done. I have slighted many convictions, and now *my heart is hard and brawny.*' ” I was in a manner thunderstruck with the old gentleman's last words; and though my father went on to relate more than he there uttered, and the promise his son made him before he would stir a step farther, yet my thoughts were wholly swallowed up in deep musing on these words, “my heart is hard and brawny.” I had such an affecting sense of the old gentleman's dreadful state, that it engaged my mind all the rest of the way; and even while I was transacting business, it was still uppermost, for his words were ever sounding in my ears. Thus, I was kept long in a very serious frame; and was possessed with a most alarming fear lest I should fall into such a state, which I considered as the greatest plague that could be inflicted upon me. In this temper of mind I returned home, keeping my thoughts all the way intent upon the sad and solemn subject. ‘While I was’ thus ‘musing, the fire burned, my heart was hot within me,’ and using a low voice, I kept up a serious soliloquy on the most important concerns of my soul; and the impression did not wear off a considerable time.

Not many weeks after this, as I was walking in the church-yard, I began to muse on the antiquity of the church, and put this question—What is now become of all the builders of this stately fabric? This led me seriously to consider the different states of the dead. I considered the many generations of mankind, that had entered upon the stage of this world, had acted their part, and gone off from it. I considered also, that an utter end is put to their sensual pleasures and delights. Some of them were rich and great, high and honourable; others, were poor and despised, oppressed with labour and poverty; but now, death hath thrown down all such differences and distinctions: as is the poor, so also is the rich: the meanness of the one, and the grandeur of the other, are equally forgotten. Yea, the remembrance of them, except of a few, is perished from the earth. But, what is become of their souls, their immortal part? They are gone into the world of spirits,

‘and their works have followed them.’ What they sowed here, that they are now reaping, and will be reaping to eternity. I then considered—how little it would avail me, whether I were high or low, rich or poor, in this life, which is so short and transitory; and how much it concerned me to secure my soul’s everlasting happiness. I had then such a clear, affecting sight of the vanity of this world, that I could not but wonder, how people could busy themselves so much about it, as to neglect their souls. I wondered at the parish-clerks in particular, who were present at so many burials, how they could neglect to prepare for their own death. I sought a place to pray in, and got behind one of the buttresses of the church, and there poured out my soul to God in earnest cries, for his grace, to enable me to live above the world, and to prepare me for a happy eternity. I came home with my thoughts so full of eternity, that I did not care to think or speak of any thing else all that evening.

In the beginning of the winter, at the edge of a night on which our workmen have an annual feast, and for which purpose they were gathering about the door, I was led to think—What poor joys those of the world are, how low and mean, how transient and of short continuance. I immediately withdrew into the meadows. It being a clear sky, the majestic canopy of the heavens, bespangled with numberless stars, elevated my grovelling mind to contemplate the superior glories of the great Author of this stupendous fabric. I considered that what I beheld was but the porch, or rather some more remote appendage to the heaven of heavens. If then, the porch made such a glittering show, how radiant must the palace itself be! I contemplated a while, as well as I could, the glories of heaven; and my mind was wrapt up in ambitious desires after a mansion there. I then returned, and stealing up in the dark into a chamber, I earnestly prayed, and afterward went down to company; but the serious impressions abode on my mind all the evening, and especially prevented that gaiety, which on such occasions I was used to discover.

Soon after this, I contracted an intimacy with

Azariah —, which began by my accidentally addressing him on an occasion while I was taking a walk for meditation ; but, seeing a stranger, I presently thought—Perhaps this young man has been bred up in ignorance: how desirable is it, that he should be brought to a saving acquaintance with Christ! On which I addressed him with a courteous air, and recommended the ways of religion to him. He attended to me in a candid and good-natured manner ; and we walked together, and talked on the advantages of early piety and serious godliness. We agreed to meet often for such like conference ; and for many years after, there was scarce a week passed in which he did not visit me, or I him. He seemed to make a vigorous progress, both in knowledge and piety, and was often of great service to me : as Mr. Baxter writes of *his bosom friend*—

“ He warm'd me with his zeal, when I was cold ;  
 And my remissness lovingly controul'd.  
 For such a friend I had: though, after all,  
 Himself became my warning by his fall ;  
 As more than one or two have done since then ;  
 Shewing, if grace withdraw, we are but men.”

This very passage we several times read together, and were equally at a loss to know, whether Mr. Baxter meant it of his friend's totally falling away, or only for a time. We thought it could not be, that a person coming up to the character there given, could utterly fall. I little thought then, that *my friend*, who seemed fully to come up to that character, should, in the course of some years, so apostatize as to become a common drunkard. Let this be a caution to me, and likewise a motive to thankfulness. ‘Thou standest by faith ; be not high-minded, but fear. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.’

COMFORT AFTER GREAT DEJECTION.

*November 14, 1710.*—Being charged with a thing I had done, which would have brought some shame on me, I denied it. The next morning, being in some measure awakened for my sin, I confessed and bewailed it before God ; and begged earnestly for pardon and for strength of

grace: yet, Oh! most horrid! I had scarcely been on my knees an hour, when being charged with the same thing I denied it again, with these words—"no indeed did not I." Afterward being awakened and convinced of my great wilful sin, I was filled with horror lest I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; and these two scriptures—"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," and, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c. if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance,"—these, together with the subtle insinuations of Satan, brought me almost to despair of any mercy: but going in a few days to a friend's, I there met with a sermon concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost, which I borrowed, and on perusal, found that sin represented to be committed with malice in the heart toward God, when I had reason to hope mine was only infirmity, and want of watchfulness. This hope, through mercy, administered comfort to my soul, and I sought by prayer the following dispositions—"Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee;" "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me;" "For when I am weak, then am I strong."

## HIS ADMISSION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

*Lord's-day, March 2, 1712.*—This was the first day that I was admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Some bright rays of the love and mercy of God were manifested to my soul; the vanity of the world was deeply imprinted on my mind; I saw more clearly than ever I had done, the odious nature of sin, and the excellency of a holy life; and afterward, in the reviewing of my behaviour at the Lord's supper, and in secret prayer, such impressive views were imparted to me, particularly of the odious nature of sin, as I think I never before experienced. Hallelujah!

## A BENEFICIAL DISAPPOINTMENT.

*Saturday, January 1, 1715.*—I purposed this day to have

gone a journey with my sister Hannah :\* my mind was bent upon it, but the Lord mercifully prevented my going by a great fall of snow ; however, blessed be his name, he gave me sweet communion with him in reading and in praying, made preparatory work for the sabbath sweet to me, and put it into my heart to buy this book I am now writing in, for his use. ‘Trust in the Lord with all thine heart ; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.’

Let me now record my reflections on entering upon another year.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

*Same day.*—I have begun a new year, God grant it may be with a new heart. How sad ! to look back upon a year far worse spent than either of the three last. Oh ! dismal review ! What ? to grow worse, more cold, more froward, more formal, more backward to duty and to spiritual converse with the Son of God ! How like a hypocrite, especially of late, have I acted : how many mornings have I engaged in the business of the world, and how many nights gone to bed without praying, reading, meditating, self-examination, or even lifting up a thought to God in mental ejaculations. Sad degeneracy ! horrid ingratitude to the God of all my mercies ! I despair of ever walking orderly, as becomes a Christian, while I continue in the neglect of every duty. I shall never excel while I neglect meditation, self-examination, and the recording of remarks on myself. How easily may it be done, and of what singular advantage may it be to write down remarks on myself, my experiences of my falls and hopes of sincerity. Surely, singular advantages must follow such a practice, for hereby I may observe something of God to my soul, and of my soul to God :—I may pour out my soul to God accordingly, and be either humble or thankful :—I may judge how it is with me in respect of time past : and, whether I have profited, by grace, to find out the means whereby I have profited, that I may

make more constant use of such means ; or, where I have been negligent, to observe by what temptation I was overcome, that my former errors may make me more wary for the future ; besides many other benefits which I may, by the Lord's help, derive from a diary. The Lord God humble me greatly for my transgressions and provocations, and enable me, by his grace, to live this year at another rate than I have done during that which is gone.

## SPIRITUAL LETHARGY DEPLORED.

*Saturday, January 29, 1715.*—This night I was much affected in conversing with Azariah,\* on the best method of carrying on spiritual converse to spiritual advantage. In retirement I became scrupulous concerning my thorough conversion. I wish it be not without cause. The Lord God engage me to, and assist me in, examining myself seriously, wholly, and impartially, on that solemn and momentous affair, and enable me to carry it on, and to 'work out my own salvation with fear and trembling.' Alas ! how am I bent on the world and the things of it, and how little on heaven and heavenly things. Ah ! Lord God, shall it be always thus, shall my mind be still taken up with trivial things ; neglecting the great concerns of another world ? Is it nothing to me whether I be happy or miserable to all eternity ; nothing, how I shall improve and redeem the time, and employ the talents which God hath afforded me ? Did I not think it worth my while, some years ago ; wherefore now so lethargic ? A good God stir up the grace that is in me, if any such there be, and engage me to live more circumspectly and becomingly to my latter end.

## ON THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

*Lord's Day, March 13, 1715.*—It is written, *Exod. xxxi. 17*, that 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.' Here is the origin of a sabbath, a weekly day of rest. No doubt, Adam acted under the influence of his Maker's example ; and so, before the flood, did all good people. A sabbath

\* See page 10.

was observed by Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; and in the time of Moses the Lord gave the law, of which the fourth commandment is—‘Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.’ All the first six days of the week it is permitted to us, and it is our duty, to employ ourselves suitably in our worldly callings; but alas! this world is too apt to overcome our seriousness, our religion, our thoughts of another, and therefore did God appoint a sabbath, that wholly laying aside all labour in our ordinary callings, we should duly employ ourselves in the promoting of his glory and the good of our immortal souls. As in the first ages of the world the sabbath was observed on the seventh day, in commemoration of the work of creation; so, since the resurrection of our blessed Saviour, the first day of the week is observed as the Christian sabbath, in commemoration of the mysterious, and, if possible, more stupendous work of redemption, which he accomplished on that day, and is therefore called, Rev. i. 10. ‘The Lord’s day.’

Praying, reading and hearing the scriptures, and devout meditation on redeeming love, are the principal duties of the sabbath. Every Lord’s day should be with the true Christian a Christmas day. He should rejoice in and commemorate the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of the Saviour: He should meditate on the covenant of grace: He should be gathering on this day spiritual food for the remainder of the week. Happy while in the enjoyment of the liberty of serving God in his temple, the Christian should be laying up against a time when he may be deprived of that liberty, that during the time of famine he may live on the ‘old corn.’ He knows that his breath is in God’s hand, he, therefore, gladly embraces each returning earthly sabbath, considering that ‘there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave;’ and unless he keep his sabbaths becomingly on earth, he will never be admitted to an eternal sabbath of enjoyment in another world. The renewed soul considers that in hell there is no sabbatical rest, but exquisite torment; no delightful work of praise, but blasphemy and horrid

execration; no such thing as increase of holiness in hell, but in heaven he shall arrive at perfection in every grace.

O my soul, where art thou? What? dreaming about the notional part of these things! Art thou not affected with the consideration of them? Oh! worldly, vain heart! too prone upon the world, and sin, and vanity, else such thoughts would surely elevate me above all trivial enjoyments, and engage me more earnestly in contriving how to keep the sabbath becomingly. Oh! that I more feared to speak my own words, and think my own thoughts; that I more feared to trifle away any part of such precious time.\* Oh! that I could fix my affections on spiritual work, that I might have my eye on 'my end,' then should I be more careful in my way, and more industrious to improve these precious seasons of grace. But, alas! how unable am I of myself to effect what I complain for want of, and what I wish for. Spiritual things, by nature, are unsavoury to me; but thanks be to God, who hath given me somewhat of a spiritual appetite; though, alas! it is far too cold, too dead.

O Thou that dwellest in the highest heaven; who hast said, 'Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you,' to thy blessed Majesty I would address myself in covenant. Shall I be always the same, and still go on spending my precious seasons of grace unprofitably? O come, holy Lord, inflame me with ardent love to thee: give me a filial fear of thee; a concern for thy glory, and for the growth of grace in my soul: and in order thereto, give me a fear of offending thee on thy day; a holy ambition to strive to outdo others in holiness and humility, and close walking with thee; and a thirst after growth in grace. O Lord God, I know thou wilt without fail grant my request, provided I use the means requisite on my part in careful preparation on the approach of thy day, and an application of myself to the duties peculiar to it, for thou never saidst 'to the seed of Jacob—Seek ye me in vain.'

\* Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

Adored be divine Goodness, not only for weekly returns of his precious seasons of grace, but for Sabbath ordinances; for ministers who preach in the name of Christ; and for liberty to exercise the right of waiting on him according to conscience. 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' How many times hath my heart been warmed and quickened in duty on the Sabbath, after a dull, sinful, and lethargic week! How often have I experienced the consolations of the Spirit on Sabbath opportunities, and how much more abundantly might I have experienced them had I not been wanting to myself; had not pride, laziness, and carnality prevented me. O blessed God, thou art not wanting on thy part. Give up thyself, therefore, my soul, into the hands of this just, good, and gracious God. On him repose thyself, thy all; lay all thou hast at his feet, and wait for his assistance to help thee on in heaven's ways. Let not the world swallow up thy time; let not sin and vanity have the choicest part of thy days. O Lord God, I am thine, but I may be ashamed that I have walked no more as becomes a child of thine. O save me from Satan, the world, sin, self, and every evil that may draw me away from thy blessed self. Amen.

RETURNING AFTER DESERTION.

*Monday, April 3, 1715.*—Having been in a very lukewarm condition for a considerable time; only now and then sensible of my sad estate; forsaken of God, in some respect; and, in a great measure, given up to the ways of my own heart; I applied myself on Saturday evening to the work of preparation for the Lord's supper, and with great earnestness on the next morning. Yet, my thoughts were too wandering in all the public duties of the Sabbath. I had, however, some light, some comfort, some divine influences on my soul; and afterward, in evening prayer, I was greatly assisted in imploring for the return of God's mercy by affording me the aid of his Holy Spirit. I humbly hope I was answered in the thing I prayed for; even while the words were yet in my mouth. Oh! let this encourage me greatly to be very constant in the duty of prayer;

not to neglect it on any account: and to take pains in prayer.

' FAINT, YET PURSUING.'

*Lord's-day, July 3, 1715.*—This day I have been attending among the people of God at his house, and in his ordinances. In what frame is best known to the great God, for my own mind is so darkened it can scarcely perceive the condition I am now, and was then in. What could be expected after a long series of vanity, and a course of hypocrisy, for the most part regarding the presence and observation of men more than the inspection of the great God. It is true I drew near to him this morning, with desires that he would not impute to me my rashness; and with desires, though faint, that I might behave myself becomingly before him, and renew my covenant at his table sincerely: but, alas! I was dull and unconcerned. Oh! woeful state. Wondrous patience! that bears with such a worm.

Let me now address myself to do somewhat, if possible, toward repairing the injury I have sustained; and to rouse my soul to greater warmth and concern for its state, and to more zeal toward God.

Jesus hath been exhibited before me as a 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' He submitted to become a sacrifice for the guilt which the first man entailed on his degenerate offspring. The word was gone forth, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' Alas! man hath lost his first estate. He hath become obnoxious to the justice of an offended Deity. The law required perfect obedience; but man's nature is become corrupt, he is utterly unable to fulfil the terms of the first covenant. The noble faculties of man's soul are defamed, his will is become refractory, his understanding darkened, and his affections all run in a wrong channel. What then can he do? He cannot restore himself to his original purity; he cannot expiate for his own crime; he is not able to do what is required for the future, for the law is still in full force. Devils cannot restore him; they are themselves

under the inexorable vengeance and irrevocable sentence of Almighty justice. They cannot be admitted to prefer a petition for themselves, much less for others; and, if they could, would not, for they hate the Almighty with a perfect hatred; they hate the work of his hands; yea, by their instrumentality man hath fallen. Angels! can they recover man's innocence? Ah! no. Man, originally 'made a little lower than the angels,' has fallen abundantly lower than them. Could those glorious beings manifest themselves, and should man implore their intercession, which, perhaps, they would gladly undertake, yet no intercession on their part would avail, 'for the wages of sin is death,' and angels cannot die! But were it possible, and did all the host of heaven voluntarily submit themselves to extinction on man's behalf, they would be totally incompetent to satisfy the justice of an offended God. Mark then, O my soul, his wondrous clemency! 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Behold the triumph of mercy over justice; of free grace he did it, 'because he delighteth in mercy!'

SELF-EXAMINATION.

*Friday, January 6, 1716.*—In retirement this evening, reading in Mr. Stee's Discourse on Uprightness, I met with six texts to be applied in self-examination and trial, to which he premises, that "If you can lay sound claim to any one of them (though you should labour to find them all) you may rest with comfort in the safety of your condition, though at present you may not discern the rest. The upright man approves himself to God; he chiefly loves God; willingly obeys God; can judiciously appeal to God, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee;' he lives not in presumptuous sins; and keeps himself from his 'own iniquity.'" Before I entered on the signs, I bent my knees to the Most High, and I may almost assuredly say, that I prayed sincerely that he would

please to afford his spiritual assistance, without which nothing can be done well, that I may be able to discern my case. On the whole, I find great reason, humbly and tremblingly, to hope that I do love God; do give him the most hearty of my thoughts; and somewhat of appealing to him, I apprehend in my case, because I submitted myself very willingly to trial; I am desirous, as I have not allowed, so still not to allow of often repeated sins, which come nearest to presumptuous sins of any I am aware that I have lately committed: and I trust I have a radical hatred of presumptuous and all other sins, especially of that of my 'own iniquity,' my darling sin at my conversion; and these considerations lead me to the comfortable hope that my conversion is genuine.

## PEACE SPOKEN TO HIS SOUL.

*Tuesday, January 24, 1716.*—Not only in this, but for several days, I have been ready to take the comfort of my covenant interest being secured with the great and good Father of heaven and earth, 'my Lord and my God.' The beginning of which, arose from evidences after self-examination on January 6th, which have been confirmed to me since, by my holy joy. The Lord, of his mercy, grant that my comfort do not prove ungrounded, and that devils do not overthrow me by presumption. This night in prayer, I humbly hope, peace was spoken to my soul. I was abundantly enlarged in praising God, and my affections mightily drawn out in love to him. My spiritual comfort was the more increased by reading in Dr. Preston concerning Effectual Faith, p. 78, 79, &c. which exactly applied to my case, especially after being greatly cast down for sin. 'I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.'—'Be not high-minded, but fear.'—'It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory.'—'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'—'I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his

people, and to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly.'

COMMENCEMENT OF HIS COURTSHIP.

*Tuesday, January 31, 1716.*—I have to remark, that yesterday week I came to a resolution to pay my addresses to Phebe Pearsall; after having discoursed with my mother on it, and found that she had long been thinking of her as suitable for me. Accordingly, with the approbation of friends on both sides, our first meeting took place this evening, having previously addressed myself to God by prayer. Our first discourse turned on spiritual affairs; beginning where God would have us begin. She told me that she did not remember the time when she had reason to hope she was first impressed with a sense of religion, but as long as she could remember she had pleasure in, and love to the ways of God. The greatest helps she had in those ways were from her sister Hannah.\* A few days back, I advised with Mr. Clymer on this subject, an expression of whose I wish to record; he said, that "Were he to advise any thing with respect to my altering of my condition, it would be that I should first of all make sure my covenant interest in Christ; he hoped I had done so, for if it be not done before marriage, my situation would be the more dangerous."

CONFESSION OF SINS.

*Saturday, November 3, 1716.*—Having lived a long time in a course of sin, neglect of prayer, and all other spiritual duties, I think it proper and reasonable, in words, to humble

\* Afterward Mrs. Housman, who died Oct. 31, 1735, and whose Diary was published in 1743, by her brother, the Rev. R. Pearsall, but who had previously recommended that undertaking to Mr. Williams, in a letter from Warminster, dated Sept. 22, 1736.—"Dear brother,—So many have been recommending to me the publication of the papers relating to the dying temper and expressions of my sister Housman, that I cannot avoid mentioning the affair to you again. Mrs. Rowe seems peculiarly desirous of it. I am still of opinion, that it is pity but such a shining light should be set in a candlestick, that many may see it, and be themselves enlightened and quickened, and encouraged in their way heavenward. Pray, if you think proper, talk to brother Housman about it, and propose it to good Mr. Bradshaw. If he cannot be persuaded, then I can think of no one undertaking it but yourself, if your business will give leave."

my soul before I approach to the holy table of the Lord ; if I dare approach to it ; and to enumerate my transgressions, particularly sins I have been guilty of since I came to years of some understanding. Good Lord ! brighten my memory, and soften my conscience, the better to enable me for this work.

When I went to the *free-school*, I often told and stood by many impudent lies, though I knew the doom attending them ; being highly provoking to the great God. Even while I was at *that* school, I first began with the sin of my ' own iniquity.' Since I was awakened, I told a known lie, and on the very next day, after having humbled myself for the offence, I renewed the lie : see Nov. 14, 1710. To these, I might add innumerable sins, such as frequent breaches of faith ; frequent returning to sin after contrition made for it, and pardon asked ; frequent neglect of prayer ; neglect of reading ; and almost constant neglect of examination, and particularly of meditation : frequently contemplating revenge, covetousness, and lying : withholding of that which belongs to others, though without a design to deprive them of their own, ultimately : corrupt and unchaste discourse : waste of precious time to a prodigious degree : neglect of family-prayer, when it has lain at my door : giving way to anger, indolence, and the lavishing of my money : worldly-mindedness, pride, voluptuousness, and the taking of too much liberty in sports : hypocritical dealing with the Most High ; drawing near to him with my eyes directed towards heaven, but with a heart fit for hell ; a humble knee, but a haughty spirit ; a serious posture, but a frivolous soul. O Lord God, ' Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me with thy free Spirit : then will I teach transgressors thy ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.'

## COVENANT TRANSACTIONS.

*Lord's-day, December 16, 1716.*—I have lately renewed my covenant with the Lord. I hope that in sincerity I re-

solved against all manner of sin ; but, alas ! I find my heart not thoroughly as it ought to be. I was guilty on Friday last, of rash and sinful anger, even to a rage next to madness, for a small offence. The good Lord, of his free mercy and grace, assist and enable me wherein I did foolishly, to do so no more, and to withstand all assaults that may tempt me to a violation of the law of God. Let me often read in T. Sharp, On Divine Comforts, concerning Sin and its dreadful nature. May I be stirred up to be constant in self-examination every night, that I may not continue to live without regard, or, as it were, at all adventures : but may I have an ardent desire to grow in grace, to ‘ lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset me ;’ giving all ‘ diligence to make my calling and election sure.’

## SPECIAL SELF-EXAMINATION.

Κρίσις ἐμὴ τῆς καταστάσεως τοῦ πνεύματος ἐμῆ.\*

*Saturday, February 2, 1717.*—It is now more than six years since a work of grace, I humbly hope, was begun in my soul. At a general view, however, it is easy to discover that I have made very little, if any, progress in a divine life ; but have rather suffered a declination for some years past : I may, then, justly think it high time to inquire into the cause of this thing. ‘ Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts—Consider your ways.’

Have not I great cause for consideration, and that before it be too late ; before I have plunged myself into those disconsolate circumstances from which I may never extricate myself. Very dangerous snares are often in my way, and my sinful, corrupt, nature is sometimes prompting me to fall into them. I strongly feel the influence of one particular temptation ; which, some years ago, I should have thought would have been as nothing to me ; but now, from this single observation, I easily infer that watchfulness is relaxed ; my conscience less tender ; my hatred of sin less strong ; and, consequently, my love to God not so ardent as formerly. Rouse then, O my soul, inquire seriously and

\* My judgment of the state of my own mind.

impartially into thy state and case! Assist me, O thou Maker of my soul, and preserver of its being! Help me in the amending and correcting of it, that it may be made more useful here, and more fitted for thy glory hereafter! I am conscious to myself that I am a great bungler at the work of self-examination; but something must be done, and if God assist, it will not be the poorness of the method that shall hinder the success of my endeavours.

I find myself strangely unaffected and unengaged when I join with my father in family-prayer. My mind is almost perpetually roving during that solemn service. I find my conversation exceedingly vain; and I scarcely entertain a thought of God, of Christ, heaven or hell, death or judgment, in a whole day. I observe in myself a readiness of thought to frame a lie, on any occasion that may serve to defend my reputation: I do not remember that I have wittingly been overtaken in this way; but I find I have been very near to it several times. Alas! I must observe, that I am easily prevented praying to God in secret; too often, by not rising early; and too often, by going to visit in an evening, when, one would think, there was the more need to pray for grace to withstand the allurements of society. And, lastly, I am in doubt whether I truly love God or not.

I will now consider the reasons of my fear and the grounds of my hope: first, then, I have not that concern on my spirit which I should have when I hear the sacred name of God profaned; but so far from it, that I have taken his holy name in vain myself! I have not that sympathy in the sufferings of the people of God which becomes one who truly loves the Lord: I have not that earnest desire after ordinances, or delight in them, which becomes a child of God; but, on the contrary, often prefer my worldly employment, to an opportunity of waiting on my heavenly Father: I am not so fearful of offending him, nor so touched with a sense of my ingratitude when I have sinned, as to engage to do so no more; but pretend to repent, and afterward, on a slight temptation, return to the very same sins of which I so repented: I am not so zealous for the honour and glory

of God as I ought to be, otherwise I should be contriving how to promote his honour and recommend his service to those that are without, more ardently. But, on the other hand, I have grounds of hope, which are such as these: I love good people better than any others; in this I am as clear, methinks, as in anything; and the more too, of piety I apprehend in any one, I am sure that the more I love that person: neither do I know any other cause of my loving my father more than my mother,\* than the apprehension I

\* Mr. Williams has not recorded any memorial of his mother similar to that of his father, May 2, 1721, though sufficient remarks have passed under the Editor's eye, to enable him to testify of Mr. W.'s dutiful regard to her, instances of which occur, January 31, 1716, and July 4, 1717; but the Editor is happy in being able to make up such deficiency, in a degree, by presenting the reader with two letters to Mr. W.'s sister, Mrs. Richards of London, on the event of their mother's death: the first, from the reverend gentleman, whose death was the occasion of Mr. W.'s consolatory letter, dated December 14, 1751; and the last, from the sister mentioned in page 12.

*To Mrs. Richards.*

Bromsgrove, October 10, 1746.

Madam,

Considering my dilatoriness in writing, I question not, this will come to you somewhat unexpectedly; but it is not unusual, in this world, to meet with events little looked for. And sometimes, those things which in a sense we may be said to look for, do not fall out in the manner we expected them: to convince us, that the Supreme Moderator, as he formed all his designs without us, so he executes them without consulting us; which, when adverted to in a proper manner, may teach these useful, and at all times necessary, lessons,—to wait the pleasure of that God who disposes all things in a sovereign manner; and not to be surprised either into indecencies, or undutifulness, when he meets us with his dispensations, in an unexpected way.

I doubt not, but you have from time to time, for years past, been expecting to hear of the removal of your dear, though aged parent; as have all her friends about her. Yet, I cannot say that the message was looked for when your nephew Watson arrived yesterday to acquaint us, that she had taken her farewell of a vain world. Happy change! that veils, for ever veils the eyes from sense and sin, and fills the soul with rapturous views of uncreated light, and endless day! Happy surprise to her, in a moment, to exchange worlds so vastly different! Her Master called her home full of years, and when nature was spent, and worn as it were to a hair. She slipped away without any visible signs of pain; the earthly tabernacle being quite prepared to give up its immortal tenant.

On such news, I know that nature will be ready to show its tender and affectionate emotions; and nature calls for indulgence, but I need not prescribe to you the lengths or limits; grace, distinguishing grace, has taught you this beforehand. There are many considerations to alleviate the weight of your concern; your dear mother *enjoyed* as many years in the world, as were useful;

have of his greater excellency in grace: and methinks I have some love to the service of God when seriously engaged therein: and do sometimes taste a higher relish of the ways of religion, than of my secular enjoyments at any time; and do also hope, that I can from experience say—‘A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.’ I have some-

and many more than the most of her fellow-creatures. Old age is seldom comfortable; yea, is rather a burthen to those that attain to it; and few there are that can say they have ‘pleasure in’ such years: this is a *weaning* circumstance even to the most tender and affectionate children; and, I observe, oftentimes disposes the most dutiful and loving relations to part with them more easily. This consideration *you* are called to own with thankfulness to a kind God, who has spared a good and valuable mother, so long as she was capable of being of real service to you, or to herself. How many have been deprived of both their parents, and been thereby exposed to many upward inconveniences, before they could be helpful to themselves, which has not been your hard fate, for when God took from you your worthy father, yet he continued your kind, indulgent and careful mother, to be a head over you, and a comfort unto you. Also, you have this to consider, that your dear mother was *ripe* for the change; ripe, not only in years, but ripe, I question not, in grace. She stayed till she was fit for glory; and, indeed, it is not fit that any of us should stay here any longer. What business have any of us in a sinful, vexing, ensnaring world, when God has trained us up and fully fitted us for a better? It were improper, nay, unkind to wish it otherways. I hope God has taught you and your sister \* with you, to part not only with your aged mother, but every other thing for Christ. I hope you now can say, ‘When father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.’ Yea, I believe he has done that already. You have him as your head, your protector, your provider, and your comforter; and, what can you want? For, he is the Fulness that filleth all in all; and having him, you have all. ‘All things are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.’

It now remains for you to think of following your parents. You must go to them, they cannot come to you. Agreeably, therefore, to the apostle’s exhortation, ‘Be ye followers of them who by faith and patience are now inheriting the promises.’ I pray that God may so sanctify this dispensation, as that it may quicken you unto ‘all diligence;’ that your ‘lamps’ may be trimmed; that you may have ‘oil’ in your vessels, waiting in readiness for the coming of the Bridegroom, that you may enter into the marriage. Accept, Madam, the sympathizing regards of your friend and servant,

JOHN FREELAND.

*To the Same.*

Bromsgrove, November 3, 1746.

MY DEAR SISTER,

You have by this time, had more accounts than one concerning the death of our dear mother, who slipped silently from earthly

\* Pheobe; the same who was afterwards married to a Mr. Jukes, of Birmingham; but of whom the Editor has gained no farther information.

times, though I must say very seldom, been greatly delighted in praising God, and that with my whole heart; sometimes on sacramental occasions, but especially in private evening exercises at home. Methinks, when in a serene, dispassionate frame, I do sincerely prefer a mean estate in the world, with a virtuous, pious wife, who would excite and encourage me, in the ways of God, and with whom I may live the better in his fear; than a plentiful estate with one who is destitute of God's grace, though otherwise very agreeable as to temper, and other such qualities; and, do hope and believe, that the principal motive with me for fixing my resolution in the choice I have made for my intended wife, should God see fit to approve, was the hope that she is a child of his. I would lastly state, as a ground of holy confidence, that I have sometimes enjoyed communications of the love of God and Christ to my soul; and have had some sensible feelings

rejoicings \* into that world, where, to share in more sublime joys, is the constant employment of the blessed inhabitants. Here, she has been very little capable, either of joy or sorrow, for a considerable time: she had, in a great measure lost the capability of being excited by those passions. I cannot but esteem it a merciful dispensation, both to her and her children, that her removal from earth to heaven was not preceded by those painful circumstances, which might reasonably have been expected from one of her years; for old age is a time of many peculiar afflictions, altogether unknown to the young. When I was at Kidderminster lately, she was full of complaint; "What a burthen life was now to her who had lost almost all her faculties;" or to that effect. She said, "The young little think what old age is." I was much affected with what she said; but hoped she would have been more communicative than she was. I was well pleased with an account of my dear child's †, of what he had been witness to: namely her constancy in performing her secret duty; he had heard her more than a hundred times, pouring out her soul at 'the throne of grace;' and, both by her example and exhortations, had often sent him on his knees. Some little time before she died, he asked her, What frame she was now in? she answered "Through free grace, I hope a saving change was wrought in me in early life; if it were not, it must remain undone, for I can do nothing now; but do *you* take my advice and improve a time of *youth!*" Oh! that we could all take that advice, and employ the little remains of life in seeking, and securing our interest in the favour of God, in and through Christ; which will be the best cordial to support us under the peculiar evils we are liable to, if we should live to old age.

Your affectionate Sister,

H. WATSON.

\* October 9, was a Thanksgiving-day.

† Mr. John Watson.

of the outgoing of my soul to him; yea, abundant flowing love; so that, with deep humility and holy joy, I could almost say—‘I am my beloved’s, and his desire is towards me.’

## PIOUS RESOLUTIONS.

*Lord’s-day, March 3, 1717.*—I observe this in myself, that I am very prone, if I can find any room for it, to alleviate my sins in my own mind, with respect to some circumstances that may attend them; which I judge to be a symptom of hypocrisy. Being very sensible that my lukewarmness in religion, and frequent compliance with divers temptations are owing to my neglect of duty; and being also sensible, that I thereby offend God and wrong my own soul, I do resolve, by the grace of God, that I will, as often as may be, read at least two chapters in my Bible, in some retired place; and that, by the same grace assisting, I will not enter on my daily employment before I have bent my knees in secret prayer; and farther, that whatever the hurries of the day may be, I will endeavour, at the close of it, to consecrate half an hour for stated meditation and examination. Oh! what a monster of rebellion and ingratitude am I, so often atheistically to act, as if I believed not that the presence of God is over me, observing and writing down all my wretched actions in the ‘book of’ his ‘remembrance.’ Yea, so estranged from duty am I, that I did not set myself at all, becomingly, to prepare for the Lord’s supper till this morning. ’Tis true, I had thoughts of setting myself about humiliation work on the over night, but did not spend any time in that necessary employment. Oh! degenerate, hardened creature! could I at one time have thought that I should now have dared to have approached the Lord’s table in so unprepared a manner! This morning, indeed, directly after I rose, retiring into a back room, I walked about for a time, musing, and at last fell down on my knees to pray; and do humbly hope the Spirit of God did assist me, and humble my heart for sin. I could not begin to pray without an effusion of tears; I wish they were not forced; and do hope, I was made to loathe my sins and myself for

them; but yet I have great reason to fear my hypocrisy. However, I have reason also to hope I have, in some measure, been 'in the Spirit' on this day; and that, the Lord was pleased to display his grace in breaking my heart for sin, both while hearing his word, and partaking of his supper. I hope I seriously devoted myself to him, and did unfeignedly repent that I have so often sinned against him: and do also hope, that the effects of this my humiliation will appear in my after life and conversation. O Lord God, assist me, I humbly pray thee, for Christ's sake. 'When thou saidst—Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee—Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.'

SPIRITUAL WATCHFULNESS.

*Lord's-day, March 10, 1717.*—I have experienced nothing to day but a deceitful heart, desirous of liberty, ready to be drawn aside and enslaved by sin! Alas! my words have not been well guarded of late, and so with my thoughts, though they have both been under greater restraint for a time. I have experienced, however, that it is good to begin the day with God; and to season the heart with spiritual things, as by reading, meditation, and prayer; which last, arms me for the duties of my secular calling, and leaves a pleasant tang on my spirit through the day. I observe too great an inclination in myself to receive the creature comforts without an eye to the Giver of them; and too often, when I take my meals alone, am apt to do it, without prayer or praise; a melancholy symptom of a depraved soul. Alas! my carelessness to perform my vows. I do resolve now, by the grace of God, to double my diligence, in the duties prescribed March 3.

This day, for the first time, I repeated \* a sermon from my notes of one by Mr. Witton †. I enlarged upon it

\* Mr. Spilsbury being ill, and no regular supply at hand.

† The Rev. Richard Witton, A. M. 40 years pastor of the Congregation at West-Bromwich; and who died December 28, 1765, aged 82. He was formerly assistant to Mr. Spilsbury, at Kidderminster.

occasionally, and did it very readily. The good Lord help me to engage in his service in a better manner than I have yet done.

## COMPUNCTIONS OF CONSCIENCE.

*Lord's-day, April 7, 1717.*—Let me inquire—Whether or not, I know Jesus Christ as Lord, and as *my* Lord? Do I indeed know the evil of sin, its dreadful nature, and its consequences? Is not my heart hardened to a strange degree; particularly since I so recently as March 3, lamented that I had made but slender preparations for the Lord's table; and had then, under the secret impulse of the Spirit of God, warm checks of conscience; yet, to let the iron cool again without following up the blow so lately struck by those resolves, and on the next recurring opportunity, to omit the same duty! Is there so much need even when a Christian is in some good measure unblemished in his conversation, to set aside time to work up his soul into a meetingness for approaching to the table of his Lord, and could I content myself to defer the duty to but a few hours previously! Have I not reason to conclude, that I have sinned the more because 'grace' hath 'abounded,' and because the Lord was pleased to shed abroad some influences of his grace upon me? Surely, I do not suitably or feelingly know the evil that is in sin! Do I indeed obey the Lord? Hath not quite the contrary appeared in my vain conversation and endeavours to stifle the motions and checks of conscience? Have I my eye fixed on Jesus Christ much? Is it fixed on him at all? Is he in all, or even any of my thoughts? Oh! wretched estrangedness of my soul from its most desirable object, its only help and hope.

## HIS FATHER'S TEMPORAL AFFAIRS DISCLOSED.

*Thursday, July 4, 1717.*—This day my father sent for me to come to him in his chamber. There, with a deal of difficulty, he informed me of the state of his worldly affairs; and that, when every thing he had, or was concerned in, was estimated, he should possess but a trifling remainder. This was a very melancholy account to me, who had, for a

long time, entertained different expectations ; had had some fair offers made to me ; and, particularly, had the entire affections of one who had mine equally ; all which seemed now quite blasted, and my glowing hopes instantly dissipated. I wish nothing may ever cause me to be in a worse frame ! It immediately produced soul-humbling, self-condemning thoughts, and increased my tenderness for my dear parents ; to whom I expressed myself in these, or such like words, accompanied with tears :—“ I did not expect that matters were so ; I confess I am surprised ; but, seeing how things are, our best way, I think, is to be submissive to the will of God, humbly to acquiesce in his disposal, and endeavour to bring our minds to our condition. For my part, I am, through mercy, able to do somewhat more than maintain myself, and do assure you, that I will endeavour to my utmost to support you, if need be, even to bread and water ; this is my present resolution.” To which my father answered, with a flow of tears, “ I thank you, son, very kindly.” I then, addressing both my parents, added thus, “ You have been good to me all my days ; and now, I will endeavour gratefully to demonstrate the apprehensions I have thereof.” On retiring, I went immediately to prostrate myself before the Lord. I wept much, and humbled myself, as it were, to the dust, acknowledging the righteousness of God in all his proceedings, and lamenting my own particular sins. Now, how to manage myself, as to worldly affairs, I know not ; but pray that God will be pleased to direct and guide me.

## HIS GROWTH IN PIETY.

*Lord's-day, August 4, 1717.*—To this day I have had my ups and downs in religion. Sometimes, lively workings of grace, holy fear and watchfulness, fervent love, warm desires ; and, sometimes, a comfortable hope. At other times, I have given way to levity and vanity of mind, which brought on remissness in duty, and even a neglect of it, till recovered by deep repentance. My father having communicated to me the frowns of Providence on his temporal

affairs, this discovery has continued to produce a very humble resigned frame to the divine dispensations, and in some measure prepared me for divine comforts, under the sermons\* I have heard to-day, being our sacrament day. Christ's love to souls, was the subject of discourse. Never did I experience such a flame of divine love as was kindled in me. The word came to me with life and power. The Lord hath shone in upon my soul with the enlightening and enlivening rays of his Holy Spirit, drawing out faith and love into lively exercise, exciting admiration and adoration of his wonderful and stupendous love; and hath given me some well-grounded assurance of his special love to me, and that I am a child of God. Far be it from me now to grow carnally secure, or to arrogate any thing to myself; to his holy name be all the glory!

HOLY JOY, AND THE GROUNDS OF IT.

*Monday, August 5, 1717.*—Through free grace, I have this day been made again to experience, what it is to enjoy communion with, and communications of love from, a kind and gracious God. Oh! the sweet rays of love, wherewith he was pleased to shine in and upon my soul, drawing out my heart to him in praise for the more than hope that I am one of the election of his grace. The good Lord carry on that good work he hath begun in my soul, that I may become more holy; more and more assimilated to my blessed Saviour. I have a little compared myself with myself; and, particularly, have inquired into the present state of my soul, and into the manner of the working of the Holy Spirit upon it, from time to time; and do now humbly conclude, that I am in Christ Jesus a living branch of the true vine. Though I have many infirmities and weaknesses, and am guilty every day of many omissions and commissions, yet, I do humbly hope, that I am thriving in my spiritual state. My will is more and more bowed in resignation to the divine Will; and I do not remember any repining, murmuring, or discontent arising, since my father related his circumstances, but an humble acquiescence in what God

By the Rev. — Thompson, of Bromsgrove; Mr. Spilsbury being very ill.

has appointed ; all which, I sincerely ascribe to the great goodness of God to me ; and not in the least to myself. My desires to please and glorify God are more enlarged ; and though I do not serve him as I ought, it is my desire to do it in a perfect manner. The good Lord engage me to a universal obedience of his holy will.

GRACE AND NATURE CONTENDING.

*Lord's-day, August 18, 1717.*—On a review of my state, I find reason to hope that the spiritual life in my soul, which was drooping, begins again to revive ; blessed be the God of all grace and mercy ! I have heard many a time, with ‘ the hearing of the ear,’ that the ways of wisdom ‘ are ways of pleasantness,’ and that ‘ the ways of transgressors are hard :’ the latter, I have often thoroughly experienced, but the former seldom so sensibly as of late. It is clear to me that I am spiritually alive, from my spiritual growth. Meditations, which were wont to be burthensome, have now lost their difficulty. The ways and service of God yield me such sweet content and delight, that I need not go abroad for joy, unless it be to my dear bosom friends, with whom my joys are enlarged ; and that too, I hope, without turning them into carnal joys. Still, I find I have a wretched, deceitful, corrupt heart ; grace in me is stirring, yet corruption is stirring too. O my soul, ‘ watch therefore,’ and again I say ‘ watch,’ against outgoings and strayings after vanity and folly : keep close to God in a dependence on him, for while thou dost this, thou wilt ‘ not be moved.’ I live as in an enemy’s country, where I must dispute every inch of ground in my way to heaven. Blessed be God, I have not positively or sinfully failed in my late resolutions ; though many times I have left much of the prescribed duties to be done late in the day, and therefore it was done lazily. And now, I would not extenuate my short coming, before a just and righteous God, who is also very merciful and gracious : on Tuesday morning I did neglect stated secret prayer ; it is true, I had retired for that purpose, but was called away : also meditation, though not omitted, hath not been performed with that due concern

as should be; it hath been deferred to the close of the day, and then performed sleepily: but my vow hath obtained its chief end,—that of keeping my mind intent on God and duty. I can truly say I experience great advantages from the course therein laid down; and do, therefore, unfeignedly again resolve, by the grace of God, to continue to perform the before-mentioned duties. Oh! that I may walk humbly, and look on myself, when fullest of divine communications, but as a drinking-glass without a foot, and which consequently cannot stand of itself, nor retain what may be put in it. Let me ever keep in mind the exhortation—‘Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.’

I was very free with my cousin Henry Crane\* to-day, telling him—How to attain peace and comfort of mind by close walking with God, and taking the course which I have taken lately.

*November 19, 1717.*—This was a day of humiliation. I purposed aforetime, to spend such days in a solemn manner, both in public and private: but on this, for the first time, I spent all the morning in secret prayer, self-examination, meditation, and self-dedication. Afterward, I attended the whole public service, which lasted six hours, and found myself more lively than common in every part of it. I dare not resolve, but, oh! that I may always have opportunity and a heart, for the like, or better preparations on the like occasions.

## HIS SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

*Wednesday, January 1, 1718.*—I have enjoyed solemn and sweet intercourse with the King of kings, and Lord of lords, several times lately. I do humbly hope, that on the whole, I have made considerable progress in grace this last year: but I think it hath been chiefly since July 4. The Lord hath enabled me since that time to walk in a more

\* Of this exemplary character the Editor regrets that he can communicate no farther information than that he was a confidential friend of Mr. W., and that he died December 6, 1779, aged 85.

becoming manner than generally I have done through my whole life; and the breathings of my soul have been and are more frequent and lively after God and Christ.

## REMISSNESS DEPLORED.

*Lord's-day, June 5, 1720.*—Oh! sad, shameful review. I have now lived in the wilful, allowed neglect of self-examination, and no less of meditation, for about seventeen months; in which mis-spent time two remarkable providences have taken place; the one, my father's death, May 2, 1719, and the other, my own marriage, August 24, in the same year. At what a wretched rate have I lived! Secret prayer hath been omitted the greatest part of this long period, and in the remainder but very seldom performed. Many strivings and workings of conscience I have had, with many desires to do and be better. Sometimes I have feared lest all that I have at any time taken to be the operation of the spirit of God in me, hath been totally ineffectual; and really, I have too great reason still to fear. However, though my sins are so great, it may not yet be too late to hope. Surely, they are not beyond the reach of the pardoning blood and merit of the Lord Jesus Christ! A long-suffering and merciful God can grant me the aid of his Blessed Spirit, to root out the strong habits of sin that are within me, and turn my soul to the obedience of the just. O my soul, flee to the rock of refuge, 'to the rock which is higher than thyself.' Thou art greatly impoverished, which I apprehend to be very much owing to having lived in the constant neglect of secret duties. Now, therefore, as I would do and be better, I would oblige myself thereto by an additional obligation to those by which I am already bound; and I do consequently oblige myself, by all the sacred ties and bonds of duty, to be constant every morning in reviewing the last day's walk and conversation, unless I shall have found time on the preceding evening; and also, to pray secretly to my God both morning and evening; and at convenient seasons to take time to employ myself in stated meditation. 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according

unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.'

## HIS DREAD OF HYPOCRISY.

*Monday, August 8, 1720.*—What a sad discovery have I made of the hypocrisy of my heart! What purposes did I form in June last; but alas! I have no mind to go on with the duties to which I resolved. How soon did I shake off the affecting sense of my resolutions! How soon did they lose their force upon me! I could well enough satisfy myself in the neglect of secret duty, while I kept up family-prayer and reading the scriptures. Oh! dreadful hypocrisy. Oh! deplorable state that I am in. Oh! that I knew and sufficiently considered my danger of perishing for ever. I fear I never had the graces of God's Spirit in sincerity. I fear mine was only a superficial repentance and conversion; all my religion but a profession, and all my joys in God and Christ but delusive elevations. Woe is me! Satan leads me about, and makes me his easy prey, and yet I am not affected therewith. My wretched lusts, which used to lord it over me, are yet unsubdued. Above all this, I find the world hath fast rooting in my soul, and what will become of me I know not. I fear, after all my profession, the doom of the unprofitable servant will be mine—'Bind him hand and foot,—and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Yesterday I joined with those who renewed their covenant, at the Lord's table. Methought I could have done it sincerely; but, oh! how unaffected was my soul in every part of the duty: neither humbled for sin, nor praising God for his mercy and love in Christ Jesus, nor exercising faith—or any other grace! I could do nothing. Oh! wretched! deplorable state. 'Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?'

## HIS HOPE OF SINCERITY.

*Lord's-day, April 23, 1721.*—Blessed be God, who hath of late wrought in me a greater concern for my eternal welfare, than for a considerable time before. I hope the Lord hath been at work on my soul this day. I have long enter,

tained jealousies of myself, lest hypocrisy should reign in my heart. Reading to-day, in 'Fenner's Treatise of the Affections,' the Lord was graciously pleased to rouse me, in examining the state of my soul by the pulse of my affections, and to fill me with jealousy lest I be yet a hypocrite, lest all my religious professions be mere shew, or shadow, without the substance. The fearful apprehension thereof greatly impressed my mind, and made me very pensive. I went up into my chamber to ruminate on the state of my soul, where, meeting with my wife, she would stay with me. I then told her my fears. She endeavoured to comfort me, when, alas! I needed more to be excited and awakened. I went on charging myself, and expressing my fears, till the Lord was graciously pleased to warm my heart, and I hope, in some measure to humble it. I thought I should be glad, if I might possibly conceive, on good grounds, but some small hopes of mercy at the hand of God.

This evening the Lord graciously prepared a comforting word for me, as he had before graciously prepared me for it. Our minister, Mr. Spilsbury, expounded Isaiah lvii. 18, 19. 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him.' The Lord was graciously pleased to raise my affections at the first hearing of the words, and to make the discourse suitable to my case, thereby to strengthen my hopes that he will not quite cast me off, nor be angry for ever.

A MEMORIAL OF HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

*May 2, 1721.*—My dear and honoured father has been dead now two years. His memory is blessed, and will be for ever dear and precious to me. In him I have lost, not merely a loving father and friend, but a wise and able counsellor, a faithful guardian and monitor, and an excellent pattern of sobriety, watchfulness, self-denial and diligence, particularly in his heavenly-calling. He redeemed a great deal of time from his bed, rising commonly by four, and

spending two or three hours, till the family rose, in reading, meditation, and prayer. He was a man of a hot, passionate temper, but through his great watchfulness, and close walking with God, it very seldom broke out; on the contrary, he was remarkable for his meekness, calmness, and affability. As he lived generally beloved by persons of all denominations, so he died much lamented. I have great reason to bless God I had such a father. Oh! that I might more and more copy his excellent virtues. His death greatly impressed my mind, and roused me out of that spirit of sloth and slumber into which my intended marriage had betrayed me. Upon serious reflections, I became more sensible of the great loss I had sustained; was deeply humbled for my sad neglects of secret religion; and, June 5, 1720, renewed my resolutions for a more constant, conscientious discharge of the several duties of secret prayer, meditation, and self-examination. For a while I acted agreeably to such resolves; but, alas! the world had got possession of my heart, so that I too soon returned to my former carelessness.

## OF HIS FIRST, AND OF HIS SECOND CHILD.

*Monday, September 11, 1721.*—God hath been pleased to load me with his bounties, and to deal out to me very comfortable circumstances, for which praised be his name. June 13, last year, a good providence bestowed on me a very desirable child, which we named John, but it was removed in the March following: now latterly, August 17, he hath given me another, which I design to call Phebe, and merciful circumstances hath he dealt out to my wife and daughter, so that the language of my heart should be, ‘Let the Lord be magnified.’ I now esteem it my duty to give up my little one into the Lord’s hand, trusting that he will enter its name into the book of his decrees. O my soul, see to it that thou be sincere. May the Lord enable me solemnly to devote my child to him; and may he graciously take it into the number of his adopted ones, that it may be sanctified from the cradle, or from the womb, as was Jeremiah. May he spare it in mercy, use it for his

glory, and bestow resignation to his will should he be pleased to call it hence.

A SPIRITUAL SIGHT OF CHRIST.

*Saturday, September 30, 1721.*—The frame of my mind at present is serious, and I am ready to hope that, notwithstanding all my unprofitableness, covenant-breaches, and multiplied transgressions, I may yet come and find welcome through the mercy of God. I have received some encouragement this evening: going to look at my horse, it occurred to me, that I was near Mr. Baxter's Walk; I proceeded there, and God was pleased to stir up within me a desire after Mr. Baxter's spirit. Some earnestness I experienced, yea, panting after God; and I was impressed with a spiritual sight of the excellency and beauty of Christ. I do hope, it is the prevailing desire of my soul, that Christ may be formed in me, and that I may be more and more conformed to him. 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'

HIS GRACES STRENGTHENED.

*Lord's-day, October 22, 1721.*—The desires of my soul have of late, blessed be God, been more habitually after him, than for the greater part of my life. Though I have served him in much weakness, and with manifold imperfections; and many times omitted worshipping him in secret; yea, and the love of this world stirring much in me, as my endeavours in my worldly calling appear to have a divine blessing; yet, I humbly hope, he stirs up in me desires to resist and overcome those workings of worldliness and covetousness, and to make me in earnest after 'the true riches.' This day, it pleased God to stir up in me humble and earnest desires to meet him; and, I hope, I experienced his assistance this morning, both in secret and family-prayer. God was also pleased to send me what was suitable and affecting in public, when the minister \* 'Besought us, by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.'

\* The Rev. James Spilsbury.

I immediately after retired with a heart full, I humbly hope, of love and praise, blessing God for the impressions that were thereby made on my mind. What sorrow for sin, and for my habitual corruptions, while, with much weeping, I was led to reflect on the many sins of my youth and riper years! My passion of weeping was wound up, I think, to as high a pitch as ever I remember on any occasion; but, oh! the pleasure I felt, when God was pleased, through that storm of grief, to whisper peace and pardon to my soul. How was I made to humble myself before God; how did he shew me my own unworthiness and nothingness, and make me wonder there was any hope for such a worm!

## HIS AFFECTIONS ABSORBED BY THE WORLD.

*Lord's-day, June 23, 1723.*—My son Nathaniel was born Thursday, April 4, when, I humbly hope, I did, with sincerity and much affection, devote him to the Lord.\*

I have continued to have a growing trade ever since the remarks I made October 22, 1721, but especially for nine months past. Alas! through the hurries of the world, my mind is too much indisposed for converse with God in secret; and my desires are carried out after the treasures of the world, so that I find it made true in me—*crescit amor nummi*, &c.† O Lord, put me on reflection, examination, and prayer, that I may find out my state, and get matters mended with me, for I am sure my heart is not so with God as it should be.

*Lord's-day, July 7, 1723.*—Matters are still much the same with me. I find a backwardness to every duty, but especially to secret duties. This day I have had some stirring of affection towards the Lord. His good Spirit hath been at work on me, which makes me to hope he hath not entirely cast me off, or sworn in his wrath that I 'shall not enter into' his 'rest.' It is an unspeakable mercy that is not the case, notwithstanding my sad continuance in sin,

\* He died October 24, 1726.

† The love of money increases as much as the money itself increases.

and backwardness to duty. I have this day solemnly vowed to the mighty God of Jacob, that I will be his more than I have been, and that this world shall not so engage my thoughts and time as it hath done. The Lord help me to fulfil my engagements.

HIS LOSSES IN TRADE.

*Lord's-day, June 6, 1725.*—After many years of prosperity, it has pleased God to exercise me with great losses this year, to almost the whole of my capital in trade; but they are blessed to my great advantage in spiritual things, and made an occasion of clearing up my interest in the love of God, and my title to eternal life, for which I had long before been labouring in vain, by close examination and earnest prayer. While my mind was very apprehensive of the fatal consequences that might attend these overwhelming losses, I went into my closet, and read 'Flavel's Saint Indeed,' particularly his directions—How to keep the heart in times of adversity. It pleased God to bless that good man's advice in such a case, and so to set it home to my soul, that I was brought into a most submissive, resigned frame. It stilled the storm, and produced a perfect calm. I was thoroughly convinced that honey was in the rod, and that God was doing me good, and not evil, by my chastisement; and I was particularly convinced, that this was sent in answer to my prayers. I had often bewailed a proud, earthly heart, and had begged for humility and heavenly-mindedness. I was convinced that no means could be more likely to obtain such a blessed temper, than impoverishing providences. I had often prayed, that God would 'hedge up my way,' rather than suffer me to be proud and carnal. I conclude that God has been doing it, and that the issue of all will be gracious.

*Lord's-day, July 11, 1725.*—I greatly hope my kind and gracious God hath been pleased to bless this affliction to my spiritual benefit. He hath thereby brought my soul into a more resigned frame, and made me more solicitous about my interest in himself, 'that good part which can never be taken from me.' He hath discovered so much love

in this providence, as makes me even rejoice in it, and bless him for it. The three sermons I have been hearing, from the Rev. Matthew Bradshaw,\* on these words,—‘*Thou art my portion, O Lord!*’ administered great comfort and joy to my soul. I have more cheerful hope, that I have chosen God for ‘my portion,’ and that this affliction is so far blessed to me, as to make the frame of my spirit more serious, and to enable me to engage in every religious duty with greater fervency, and to labour after a more close walking with God. Oh! gainful loss. Oh! wondrous grace. How ‘are all his ways mercy and truth! In very faithfulness doth he afflict.’ He reserves his cordials for his children in their greatest straits or difficulties. Let me still hope and trust in thee, O my God, and not return to vanity, earthliness, or pride any more; but keep me humble and serious, and let my soul ever bless thee.

*Friday, July 16, 1725.*—Oh! how wise and gracious is my heavenly Father. How sweetly doth he over-rule afflictive and dissappointing providences to my great advantage and comfort! Surely, I find my heart improving and growing hereby in submission to the will of God, delight in God, and in duty. Surely, I am enabled to love God more, not only by means of this trial, but even for it. In prayer, this morning, my soul was drawn out in love and praise, and my affections sweetly stirred. Blessed be God!

*Saturday, July 17, 1725.*—Having for a considerable time been reading ‘Baxter’s Saints’ Rest,’ though never so constantly every morning as since my losses in trade, I am now come to his arguments for, and directions in, the heavenly work of Meditation, and am greatly excited to engage in it daily. I began this evening, for the first time, to walk abroad to meditate; and though I have cause to bewail a backward, careless, earthly heart, yet, blessed be God, my labour, I humbly hope, was not lost. I did experience some raisedness of affection, some drawing forth of desire, some comfort of hope.

\* He married a daughter of Mr. Spilsbury, and succeeded him as pastor of the church.

## HIS TRIALS SANCTIFIED.

*Lord's-day, August 1, 1725.*—I have of late been frequently searching my heart; though it is not without much backwardness that I am brought to this work, and still more difficult I find it, to engage closely therein. On the whole, I greatly hope, that God is 'my portion,' and hath the highest place in my affections: for I have been enabled to bear my great loss with patience beyond my expectation. I have even been enabled to be thankful, and to bless God for this exercise, as believing that he sent it in much mercy, and means me good and not harm by it. I have also been thereby quickened to strengthen my hold of God, and my interest in him. It hath added to my convictions of the world's vanity; made me more solicitous to satisfy myself that God is 'my portion,' and not the world; and made me willing to be brought into straits, or into extreme want, if my heavenly Father see it best for me; for if I have an interest in his love, all afflictions shall be in mercy. I have been quickened to the more diligent, constant exercise of duty; especially in a morning, as I have not so easily been put off devoting the first hour after rising, to reading and prayer; which are now performed with more than usual delight, desire, and concern: so that I infer, from this review of my state, that the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit have been working on my soul in a remarkable manner. Oh! how have I been ravished of late, with a hopeful prospect of that glory which is to be revealed. What pleasure have I found in casting myself at Jesus' feet, and submitting to his frowns! What outgoings of soul after him, in earnest desires for more grace, and after a more heavenly, fruitful conversation! 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name.'

*November, 1725.*—About the beginning of this month, some aggravating circumstances were added to my late losses in trade, on which I again had recourse to Flavel's directions—How to keep the heart in times of adversity. God was pleased, by reading and prayer, to support my

soul, and to assure me it was from love, from covenant love, he thus exercised me. My distress was relieved. I was enabled, with faith and patience, to ‘cast my burden upon the Lord,’—upon his wisdom, and directing providence. I was particularly led to renew my resolutions to use and improve opportunities for meditation. Accordingly, evening after evening, God is pleased to ravish my soul with the joyful prospect of future glory, and to draw out my longing desires after it, in such a manner and measure as I never felt before. Many times since July 11, my desires to have God for ‘my portion’ were greatly excited. Fain would I have adopted the Psalmist’s aspiration, but durst not. I tried it day after day. It ran exceedingly in my mind for weeks. Whatever I was doing about my trade-affairs, this would be uppermost—Oh! that I could say, ‘Thou art my portion, O Lord!’ At last, finding that nothing less would satisfy the desires of my soul, and believing the Lord himself had stirred up these desires, and therefore, if I were willing, he could not be unwilling; I ventured, though with a trembling heart, to say—‘Thou art *my portion*, O Lord!’ Thereupon joy, like a tide, came rolling in, and got possession of my soul; and I was quickly able, in the confidence of faith, to repeat the aspiration. My mind is full of it, and it puts life and vigour into every grace.

November 10, 1725.—In answer to a letter in which he sympathized with me under my late losses I have written as follows :---

*To the Rev. Richard Pearsall.\**

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

I *resent*, with sincere gratitude, your kind concern for me, and tender sympathy with me, under those afflictions

\* This true friend and brother of whom a memoir, to record his general excellence, is a *desideratum*, of considerable interest to the religious world, was born at Kidderminster, August 29, 1698. He was educated for the ministry at Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire; was fixed for ten years at Bromyard, Herefordshire, from thence he removed to Warminster, Wiltshire, where he continued sixteen years; and finally, he settled in 1747, at Taunton, Somersetshire, at

which an all-wise, infinitely gracious, loving, and I humbly hope, my beloved God and Father, is, in great mercy, and according to the directions of unerring wisdom, exercising me with, 'who am less than the least of all his mercies,' unworthy of every mercy, and therefore unworthy of his correcting love. Shall I tell you? Are you not desirous to know, how so heavy a stroke is borne? I cannot, without fear and jealousy lest my apprehensions and fancy should exceed the reality of my faith and divine enjoyments, relate to you the temper of my mind, since I heard the tidings of my late disappointments. Oh! that I could do it with a single eye to the glory of so good a God, and to the magnifying of his ineffable grace and love. Dear brother, 'I have all things, and abound.' I have not suffered loss, but reaped the greatest gain. 'He hath shed abroad that love in my heart, which is better than wine.' The tidings were at first somewhat surprising, the swelling billows began to toss my mind and disturb my rest: but oh! what serenity follows, when God speaks peace. How cheering are the smiles of his love! How sweetly did he persuade, and even assure my soul, that by this cross providence, he was faithfully pursuing the great end of electing love, and did order this affliction as a means sanctified to that happy end! That 'by this, my iniquities should be purged; and these should be the fruits thereof—to take away sin,'—to mortify my carnal affections,—to wean me from earth and sense,—to strengthen my faith in God, and every holy disposition,—to lead me into

which place he died November 10, 1752. He edited the Diary alluded to in the note to page 20, of this volume. He also published "Contemplations on the Ocean, &c." which are thus mentioned by Mr. Hervey in the third volume of *Theron and Aspasio*, Let. 9. "Should the reader desire to see this subject more largely opened, and more fully improved, I would refer him to the publication of my ingenious and pious friend, Mr. Pearsall; in which a refined fancy, and delicate philosophy, compose a chaplet for evangelical divinity; uniting some of their beautiful and fragrant flowers to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; to quicken and refresh the spirits of his people; to invite and win the hearts of the disobedient." Two volumes of *Reliquiæ Sacræ* of Mr. P. were edited in 1765, by Thomas Gibbons, D.D. And a brief account, and a portrait of Mr. P. are in the *Evangelical Magazine*, for October, 1810.

the secret of communion with him here,—and to ripen me for everlasting glory hereafter! Oh! how did my heart, as well as my eyes, overflow with joy, when he gave me the comforting evidence of my interest in his favour, and in the merits of Christ; shewed me ‘my name written in the Lamb’s book of life,’ and gave me some foretastes of that ‘fulness of joy,’ and those ‘rivers of pleasure,’ at the fountain-head of which, the saints are solacing themselves to eternal ages! Oh! how ravishing is his beauty and glory. If a transient glance, in this state of distance and imperfection, be so transporting, I had almost said transforming, what will it be to see him ‘face to face,’ to dwell for ever in his glorious presence, and look ourselves into his very likeness? I could cheerfully say with Dr. Watts—

“ My willing soul would stay  
 In such a frame as this,  
 And sit and sing herself away  
 To everlasting bliss.”

Could I repine, think you, at Providence? Nay, could I so much as grieve? Was there any place left for sorrow in my heart? No. Sorrow was at once banished from my mind, and joy and gladness put into full possession. Thus, more than once, hath my heavenly Father visited me; for ‘he is afflicted in all our afflictions,’ and reserves his choicest cordials for the seasons of our greatest dejection and fainting. What wisdom too, shines forth in this providence! On reflection, I find, according to your penetrating hints, that though I did, I trust, own the hand of God in the former loss, and could bless a taking as well as a giving God, yet I ‘despised the chastening of the Lord;’ or, if I were in any measure, ‘humbled under the mighty hand of God,’ I am sure I too soon forgot it; of which I was not wholly insensible, and often chid my stupid soul on that account: and though I do believe I have been the better for it ever since, yet the desired end was but partially and very imperfectly answered. My fervour began to cool. I began to remit my diligent attendance to secret duties, and particularly solemn, stated *meditation*; for the conscientious discharge of which,

that disappointment had strengthened my resolution:—A duty *this*, which I would earnestly recommend to all that desire to live a life of communion with God, as they value spiritual peace, comfort and joy. Also, what goodness, mildness, and gentleness doth my heavenly Father discover in this providence! Perhaps, he is only shaking the rod over me, that thereby he might more deeply root former impressions: for I am not without hopes that in the issue I shall sustain little or no loss in my outward estate. And what kindness doth my heavenly Father shew, by inclining good brother Henry\* to lend me a supporting hand in this exigence! Surely, I must not overlook the goodness of God therein, at the same time that I owe very great obligations to brother Henry, who of his own accord, unasked, became my surety. I am encompassed round with mercies, which way soever I look, or bend my thoughts. Oh! how admirably is justice chequered with mercy. How endearing the methods of the sovereign grace of God, to bring us to himself! But, I fear pride hath too much a hand in dictating. Oh! this cursed pride; to which I am sensible my temper is very much addicted. Oh! that God would heal me of this sin of pride; would ‘hide it from me,’ that I might take root in humility, and thereby grow more steadfast in the ways of God! Oh! may this providence be blessed to the curing of a vain, earthly mind, and a hard, unbelieving heart, and every other spiritual disease: then shall I sing—

“ O happy rod!

That brought me nearer to my God.”

But I fear, I justly fear, I shall again be ensnared by this tempting, deceitful world. Dear brother, help me by your prayers, help me by your farther instructions. Yours, &c.

J. W.

*Lord's-day, December 26, 1725.*—Still an all-wise God, whom, unworthy as I am, I hope I may call my God, my gracious and merciful God and Father, is exercising me with

\* Pearsall, who died October 22, 1746.

farther and greater trials, in consequence of my former losses, and by which they are rendered more aggravated than I could have imagined. Amidst all these distresses I can, through abounding grace, say with Dr. Watts—

“ Should earth against my soul engage,  
 And hellish darts be hurl'd;  
 Then I can smile at Satan's rage,  
 And face a frowning world.  
 “ Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
 And storms of sorrow fall;  
 May I but safely reach my home,  
 My God, my heav'n, my all!”

However, I would be found diligently preparing for the worst that can come. Therefore, whatever God hath already permitted, and even though he should permit the worst I can fear, these are my purposes, by the grace of God enabling me:—

First, I do, and will endeavour to justify God in all. ‘He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.’ Perhaps, he is ‘calling my sins to remembrance,’ and chastening me for former follies, to humble me yet more; which is what my proud spirit greatly needs. I am very sensible, though I have not been duly humbled for it, that I have been too much in love with the world, and too much delighted with worldly prosperity, even lifted up by it. Oh! that pride did not still find place in my heart, and mingle even with the patience I discover in bearing these trials of adversity. Lord, help me to lay myself low, as in the dust, before thee. Let me be able to say—Lord, thou hast overcome! Oh! that this proud heart of mine were more effectually overcome, and bowed to thy will; that it were purged of pride, and every sinful disposition, and made altogether such as thou wouldst have it to be!

Secondly, I will endeavour to receive this, and every other affliction which my heavenly Father is pleased to exercise me with, as coming from his hand, and by his direction; and therein to comfort myself, and rejoice, that it is my ‘Father’s good pleasure.’ Though I desire to mourn for my sins, which are the procuring cause of all my afflictions; yet will

I rejoice, that they are of my heavenly Father's appointing, 'who will stay his rough wind in the day of the east-wind,' and will moderate my afflictions, I trust, if he see it best for me. How harsh and severe soever he may suffer them to be, I know he can sanctify them to my spiritual and eternal good. Therefore,

Thirdly, I will endeavour quietly to submit to this, and every other affliction. I will bow to the sceptre of divine grace, and patiently accept the punishment of my sin.

Fourthly, I will still hope in God, and repose my trust in him alone. 'Yea, though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' 'I can do all this through Christ strengthening me.' But, O my God, one thing I humbly beg—'take not thy Holy Spirit from me;' renew thy cordials, and furnish me with every grace, that I may hold out even 'unto death,' and at last receive 'the crown of life!'

#### THOUGHTS ON HIS ETERNAL STATE.

*August, 1726.*—Being on a journey to London, in a cross-road between Aylesbury and Amersham, my way lay close by a church-yard, where I saw a monument of a woman, whose age, when she died, was the same with my own; she and I being born in the same month and year. This led me to consider—What if it had been the divine appointment, that I had quitted this earthly tabernacle two years ago, as she did; where would death have landed me, and what state had I now been in? Would my departed spirit have fallen a prey to the devouring jaws of infernal fiends? Oh! what terror would have seized me at their first appearance. What horror would have racked this trembling soul of mine, to find itself naked and defenceless under the power of merciless furies! In what a cruel and violent manner would they have dragged me to the prison of hell! With what contempt would they have ridiculed my folly, in squandering away my precious time, to pursue trifles, 'and make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,' which should have been improved to 'work out my own salvation with fear and trembling!' How bitterly would my own heart have reproached me for my folly, in refusing the

offers of grace, which have been so often tendered to me; and resisting the motions of the Holy Spirit, which have so often sweetly drawn me; and in dividing my heart between God and this world, when it ought to have been the Lord's wholly! How would 'the terrors of the Lord' have 'set themselves in array against me,' and 'the dregs of the cup' of his indignation have been given me! 'Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?' How dreadful, to be cut off for ever from the divine favour, and for ever to be a companion of devils and damned spirits, to hear their horrid execrations and blasphemies! My affections by this time were so moved that I could not contain, but with an audible voice cried out—'Lord, gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men!' I was comforted with the testimony of my conscience, that I had not made such my beloved associates upon earth; that they were not the men of my delight; and therefore, I hoped that *my portion* would not be with such at last, whose company my soul abhorred. I had an inward witness, that I could never patiently endure to hear the sacred name of God profaned by impious lips, much less to hear it blasphemed; but, that 'God was my exceeding joy, his favour my life, and his loving kindness better than life.' Encouraged by this lively hope, I shifted the melancholy scene to one more bright and glorious. Oh! what a joyful surprise would it be to my soul, as soon as she gets loose from this prison of the flesh, to behold a convoy of 'angels, which excel in strength,' waiting her separation, and ready to receive her into their embraces, and welcome her into the world of glorified spirits. How transporting, to find herself safe under their guardian care, and hear them say—Fear not, happy soul, 'thou art greatly beloved.' Oft have we stooped from the heights of glory, to attend thy motions, and preserve thee from unforeseen dangers. Oft have we been detached from the armies of heaven to guide thy doubtful feet through perplexing labyrinths, and to assist and animate thy devotions. We are now sent to be thy convoy to realms of light, and to present

thee before his presence, 'who hath loved thee with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness hath drawn thee.'—Whether borne on the wings of those flaming ministers, or on pinions of her own, with what speed and pleasure would my spirit sail betwixt worlds and worlds, towards the haven of immortal bliss! When approaching 'the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God,' how divine the joy, to 'consider her palaces,' and 'mark well her bulwarks!' What 'an entrance' would she have 'through the gates into the city!' How astonished at the grandeur and magnificence; and that a creature, so mean and unworthy, so vile and sinful, should be exalted to such dignity and glory! But, oh! the joy, to hear from the refulgent throne, in mild and gracious accents, such words as these—'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!' How ravishing, to receive the caresses of the heavenly inhabitants, who rejoiced at her conversion, and will much more rejoice at her entrance into glory! How peculiarly tender the greetings of former associates in the path to glory! How charming their songs, and their readiness to teach a stranger! Is all this but the beginning of a felicity that is to be ever growing?—With these thoughts I felt a joyful persuasion, that this, and much more than this, should ere long be my happy state. I was filled with sweet consolations. I could not forbear crying out—Grace! grace! Tears gushed from my eyes abundantly. Whilst I pursued the meditation, I was still, with ravishment, crying out—Grace! grace! After these strong emotions subsided, a serious, heavenly frame, abode long on my mind, attended with earnest breathings of soul after God and Christ, after grace and glory, such as I never experienced in any former journey.

A TIME OF SICKNESS AND DEATH.

November 16, 1726.—Whilst I was sitting up with a dying friend, Mr. Edmund Read, I wrote the following lines.

*To the Rev. R Pearsall.*

DEAR BROTHER,

Surely, I cannot want a subject now I am hearing the

pantings of a poor, helpless, sick man, labouring for breath; and perhaps, insensible of his own case. Oh! what a privilege to be a Christian. How safe is their state, of whom the apostle testifies—‘All things are yours, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come.’ And again—‘I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, &c. shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ In such a dying time, when our relations and intimate friends are sick and dying around us, we cannot but expect our own turn may be next. What an unspeakable pleasure is it, to have some comfortable hopes, some well-grounded confidence, that death, our last enemy, cannot hurt us;—that his sting is taken away;—that, through the conquest of our victorious Redeemer, we may triumph over him, as a disarmed, vanquished foe;—that, however horrible his approaches are to nature; dissolving her frame, destroying the curious machine by which the soul acts in this state of imperfection, and putting an end to all sensual joys; yet, through the riches of divine grace, we can look, by an overcoming faith, beyond these melancholy scenes, to the glorious issue;—to that ‘rest, which remains for the people of God;’—to that prize for which we are wrestling, striving, running, fighting;—that end of all our duties, for which we have so long been waiting and praying;—that joyful harvest, after a weeping seed-time;—yea, that quiet haven, after a dangerous, tempestuous voyage! With what transporting joy might a lively faith and hope enable the gracious soul to look on, and embrace, when called to it, that which is the greatest aversion of our nature; because it puts a period to all our sins and sorrows, to all the miseries we either feel or fear, and introduces us to the beatific vision and fruition of our God and Saviour, ‘whom having not seen we love,’ whose beaming glories shall conform our souls to the image of our glorious Creator, and shall finally change these vile bodies, and fashion them like to his own glorious body!’ Though ‘it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when he shall appear,

we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Can we forbear crying out with the poet—

“ O happy place! When shall I be,  
“ My God, with thee to see thy face?”

Though ‘to be present with the Lord,’ is the primary happiness of saints ‘absent from the body; yet, to be joined ‘to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,’ affords a delicious prospect. We shall then find, to our increasing joy, that our friends, ‘who sleep in Jesus,’ and are dead as to our world, yet live. If we overtake them, to how great an advantage shall our acquaintance be renewed! In how much more refined a manner, than we were here wont, shall we join them in adoring our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier! With what ecstatic admiration shall we unite in celebrating the wisdom, power, and goodness of the great JEHOVAH, which shine so brightly to the inhabitants of that blessed world! With what triumphant exultation recount the wonders of redeeming love, as well in the particular instances thereof to our own souls, as in its general display to the human race!—But I may well check myself with— ‘Who is this that darkeneth counsel with words without knowledge?’ How low, how inadequate are my conceptions of that glory which ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive!’ This we are sure of, that our joy shall be full and everlasting: and should not such a prospect reconcile us to death? Blessed then, for ever ‘blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us!’ How should we rejoice in the ‘grace in which we stand,’ and triumph ‘in hope of the glory of God!’ How should we love the Author and Purchaser of all this happiness, and admire and adore rich and free grace, which ‘chose us in Christ before the founda-

tion of the world,' and 'saved us, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy!' Dear brother, how infinite are our obligations to love the Lord.

Yours, &c. J. W.

*Lord's Day, November 20, 1726.*—God, my good and gracious Father, hath been pleased to appoint a merciful issue to my worldly losses, and to give me a year of considerable prosperity in trade; and yet, I humbly hope, my mind hath not been puffed up therewith, as formerly.

I am now called to observe the hand of God in an uncommon, malignant, epidemical fever, by which in this little town many have been cut off, twenty in one week, and eight were buried in one day. How shall I improve such awful providences? Shall I suffer the love of the world to fill my heart? May I not reasonably expect, that as I also am formed of the same brittle materials, my own turn may be near? What remains then, but that, as I have often, so now again, I solemnly give up myself to him, 'whose I am,' and humbly resign myself to his disposal. Therefore, 'into thine hand I commit my spirit, thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.' O fit me for thyself, and when thou pleasest, receive me to thy glory! Blessed be God, death doth not now appear terrible to me; but how it would appear, in its nearest approaches, I cannot say: oh! that its sting were taken away, as I hope it is, that it may be safe, though it should not be comfortable. Oh! that these awful dispensations may be sanctified to all concerned, to stir us up to 'prepare to meet our God,' and better to improve our religious privileges, which are so distinguishing. Thrice happy they who are safe arrived above, far from this world of care and strife, this abode of sin and sorrow, 'and are ever present with the Lord!' Happy they too, who are sincerely the Lord's; and, though sojourning in this vale of tears, have a clear title to a mansion in the New Jerusalem, and are daily preparing for those joys and glories that are to be revealed!

DEATH OF THE REV. F. SPILSBURY.

*Lord's-day, February 5, 1727.*—Our much-lamented

pastor took his flight from this world, on Tuesday, January 31, being our preparation-day, and after having been confined eight days. This day, Mr. Thompson\* preached the funeral sermon, from the words---‘Moses, my servant is dead.’ Having been previously informed of the text, I prepared the following verses, which were given out before sermon.

We sing our pastor's mournful death,  
Our notes in solemn numbers flow :  
Lord, cheer us mourners from above,  
Pressed down beneath the awful blow.

Long had our shepherd watch'd our souls,  
And fed them with the Word of grace ;  
Oft hath he rous'd our sluggish pow'rs  
With speed to run the Christian race :

But, he is gone ! Ah, gloomy day,  
Wherein the messenger of death  
Was sent our union to dissolve,  
And to demand our prophet's breath.

Well may ‘the ways of Zion mourn,’  
And Israel weep their Moses dead !  
Well may the members groan and grieve,  
Spoil'd of their venerable head !

\* Yet in the midst of death and grief,  
This thought our sorrow shall assuage--  
Our Father and our Saviour lives ;  
Christ is, ‘the same’ through every age !†

SICKNESS AND DEATH IMPROVED.

*June 28, 1727.*---On my return home yesterday from an evening walk, in which my heart had been warmed with meditation, I visited a neighbour, whom I found wrestling with death, and very delirious. I prayed with his friends. This morning I went again, and was much affected, to see so vain a man standing on the very edge of life, soon to leap into an unknown eternity, for which I fear he was too little prepared. He died about noon. In retirement, I set myself to meditate on death, which again prevails amongst us; and I ruminated on an excellent sermon, preached by my brother Pearsall, yesterday, on the importance of

\* See page 31.

† Watts' *Psa.* 102, 3rd part. *L. M. v. 3.*

having an interest in Christ, from the words—'My beloved is mine.' My affections were stirred, and gracious discoveries my heavenly Father was pleased to make of his love to my soul.

*October 1, 1727.*—In my late Lancashire journey, I had sweet experience of the Spirit's gracious influences, helping me to maintain a devout frame of soul, and enjoy delightful communion with God in meditation, when, in many evening walks, I retired from public company. The sickness and mortality, which every where prevailed, were of great service to me; they kept the general temper and frame of my mind serious, by holding the eternal state and world much in view. Blessed be God!

HIS SECOND LANCASHIRE JOURNEY.

*Wednesday, March 27, 1728.*—This evening I returned from my second Lancashire journey, with Mr. Azariah ——,\* of whose company I am tired, and have resolved never to travel with him again. I had sweet seasons on both the Lord's-days that I was from home; the first, at Lancaster, where I joined with Mr. Bent and a handful of poor people in celebrating the Lord's supper; and though, having no previous notice, I had made no particular preparation, I had truly a sweet season; my affections being devoutly raised and employed. The next Lord's day I spent at Manchester, where the ingenious and pious Mr. Mottershead † exercised both parts of the day. Joining with him in his morning prayer, my spirit was much broken by contrition and humiliation for sin; as it was also, in many instances on the journey; but especially for being forced to ride nine miles on that day, through Mr. Azariah ——'s dilatoriness the day before. I think I had sweet experience of the Spirit's gracious influence, in a more eminent manner than in my first journey that way, in Sep-

\* The person mentioned January 29, 1715.

† The Rev. Joseph Mottershead, who moved to Manchester, about 1718, from Nantwich, and in whose house, at the latter place, died the justly celebrated Rev. Matthew Henry. Mr. M's *third* wife was the daughter of the Rev. C. Blackmore, alluded to, Nov. 25, 1745: he died in 1771, aged 83.

tember.—Blessed be God! My son Henry was born January 7, of this year.\*

CHRISTIANS EXCITED TO PROMOTE SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION.

*Friday, June 21, 1728.*—As the human race, generally, is indued with rational powers and formed for society, that each individual might administer assistance and comfort to another; and, as the utmost extent of natural or acquired abilities and accomplishments is unattainable in a solitary state: so the Christian community is made up of individuals indued with a diversity of gifts, that each may impart to another some spiritual benefit, some addition of knowledge, strength, vigour, resolution, succour, delight, or joy, which would be otherwise unattainable. By imparting to others, the Christian does not lessen his own stores, for in feeding others he feasts himself, and in delighting others he rejoices his own soul; insomuch as such communications tend to renew his divine sensations, which are themselves the offspring of intercourse between God and the soul. Often hath it been matter for real sorrow to me that I have been unable to procure spiritual conference. How backward are too many Christians to engage in this duty! Often have I made the attempt on some whom I believe to be spiritually minded, and have been able to draw from them scarcely any thing more than “aye” or “no,” or some short expression of approbation of what may have been said. Good God! how is it that they whose eyes thou hast enlightened to approve those things which are most excellent, and to choose thee for their chief good and ultimate end, should be so backward to speak of thee and of thy ways! Surely, each may impart some spiritual benefit; for the head hath need of the feet, and the feet of the head. If Christians did but act the part of worldlings in this particular, by considering what a heavenly kingdom, what an ample estate, or reversion they are entitled to, how would their love to each other dispose them, as Jonathan to David, to be sometimes congratu-

\* He died August 23, following.

lating each other on the subject, expatiating on, and enumerating many particulars of their future felicity; and what grateful mention would they make of the wonderful Donor! Let such consider that they have a sure, indefeasible title to a kingdom which hath everlasting foundations; wherein alone the blessed inhabitants are without ambition, envy, or the cares that attend the present state, and then can they be silent in the praise of their munificent Lord, who so freely adopted them; and prepared them for such ineffable glory as 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' Christians should be more forward to strengthen each other's hands in God, and to excite and confirm each other's resolutions to fulfil the terms by which they hold their title to the heavenly inheritance. Alas! my sluggish self needs to be more excited to so good a work. The Lord fill my heart with his grace, that it may 'abound more and more.'

FLATTERY REJECTED, AND SINCERITY SOLICITED.

*To the Rev. R. Pearsall.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Kidderminster, August 2, 1728.

I rejoice in your ready compliance with my proposal, from which I promise myself if God shall see fit to prolong our lives, much spiritual profit and pleasure. It will afford occasion sometimes to withdraw my vain, carnal mind, from worldly pursuits and amusements, to musings and studies more worthy a rational soul; and so it will be as a spur to my slothfulness, for I confess I find in myself an unaccountable backwardness to engage in spiritual things. From your communications, at how cheap a rate shall I possess divine truths digested into new and easy forms, the result of my dear brother's studious labours; and read in piecemeal the transcript of a heaven-born soul, enlarged and cultivated not more by external advantages than by being long exercised in heavenly pursuits. You express, indeed, a very humble sense of your own abilities and performances; oh! that I could always preserve a like

sense of mine, which would cause more glory to redound to the great Author of all my mercies, and bring more peace and prosperity to my soul: but here give me leave to expostulate with my dear brother.—I have formerly mentioned how addicted my spirit is to pride; in which I am persuaded you believe that I do not charge myself unjustly: now, can it at all tend to my cure, that you should ascribe to me as in your last, qualities so exalted; and such as also, in a former letter you were pleased to express admiration of almost *ad stuporem*.\* Such expressions might very innocently pass from a Spilsbury to a Howe, but oh! let no such sparks ever be struck into my inflammable breast. At this very moment pride is rising while I would do justice to the wisdom of the late Mr. Spilsbury, who scarcely ever indulged me with any expression of approbation, even when occasions had offered themselves; being well acquainted with my proud temper. That I may get some help of God for this my soul-malady, I beg that in your next you would deal faithfully by opening to me, with the greatest freedom and impartiality, all that you apprehend or know to be amiss in my spiritual state; yea, rip open and spare not; such violence shall not break my head, for I promise to receive in good part the worst that you shall hint of me. Rest not in generals, but descend to the smallest particulars. Such monitions from a brother, will, I doubt not, connect our love and fraternal regards the more strongly; for the remembrance of such conduct, I have found, in nothing else so much awakens my filial affection and esteem for the memory of my dear father Williams, in whom I lost a faithful, prudent, tender monitor, not only for sinful actions, but also for common indecorums. Think of this, and believe me to be in the best bonds,

Your's, &c. J. W.

MEDITATION BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

*Lord's-day, September 1, 1728.*—O my soul, I am this day to celebrate the supper of the Lord. It is not a feast

\* To astonishment.

for my body, but my soul. Hast thou a spiritual appetite? If, through grace, an habitual disposition towards things of a spiritual nature be given, yet it concerns thee to get lively actings of that divine temper. I hope a saving change hath been wrought in me. The truth of my conversion hath stood many a trial. My conscience hath witnessed to this 'good work of the Holy Spirit. ' Bless the Lord' for this, ' O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.' Yet, how indisposed and unprepared do I find myself at this time! God hath been pleased to prove me by many family afflictions and deaths. I did endeavour, I hope, patiently to submit to the will of God, and to humble myself under his mighty hand: but, alas! how soon hath the sense thereof worn off my mind! How quickly have I lost the impressions of the rod! I have not, indeed, 'fainted under' the divine 'rebukes;' but I have 'despised the chastening of the Lord,' which should have bound me, as with cords, to the careful, serious discharge of every duty, and to a constant preparation for my own dissolution. How much need have I to be importunate for divine influences from above, without which I 'can do nothing!' Let me now awake out of my sloth and stupidity, and stir up my soul to lay hold on God.—I am to accept of Christ to be my King and Saviour, with all the blessings of his purchase, as exhibited at his table to all that are willing and prepared.—I am to remember him, and what he hath done and suffered; and to shew forth his death, in order to the mortification of my lusts, and the increase of my faith and love, my repentance, and new obedience. I find myself sadly unfit for work so heavenly and divine. I have been earnestly seeking the divine presence on my knees. For this cause I will beseech the Lord again and again. 'I will go unto God, unto God my exceeding joy;' unto God who hath 'the residue of the Spirit.' Who knows but he may return and be gracious? I will confess my sins unto him. Who knows but he may give me 'a broken and a contrite heart?' I will plead with him, the death of his 'own Son;' and his own de-

clared willingness to make us holy and happy. God will not shut out the cries of his children. I will cast myself upon his mercy and truth, who 'never said to the seed of Jacob—Seek ye me in vain.' My God will hear my complaint, and give a gracious answer, if I can but send up humble, fervent desires.

THOUGHTS ON THE LAST JUDGMENT.

*Lord's-day, July 27, 1729.*—In an excellent sermon to-day, by my brother Pearsall, it hath been proved, from reason and scripture, that 'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' And now, O my soul, what preparation have I made for the future judgment? On what terms do I stand with God? The day is coming, yea, it hastens on apace, when I shall be 'cut off from the land of the living,' when I shall no longer have opportunity of repenting or believing, of confessing sin or forsaking it, and so making my peace with God through faith in the blood of the Redeemer. I have been long since 'planted in the house of the Lord.' I have made great profession of religion. I have been blessed with many serious calls to repentance and new obedience. I have been awakened by many a rod, many a smarting stroke of Providence. I have many a time sat down with the followers of Christ at his table, and there professed to renew my baptismal vow, my covenant engagements to be the Lord's. It may justly be feared, 'if I am filthy, I shall be filthy still.' Sure I am, 'as the tree falls, there it shall lie.' O my soul, art thou savingly interested in Christ, or art thou not? After all the serious, diligent researches into my heart and life I have already made, it is worth my while again to inquire into this important concern, that if, on an impartial trial, my 'heart condemn me not,' I may 'have confidence towards God,' and may 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' or if my 'heart condemn me,' yet, as mercy is still freely offered, and there is a possibility of my repentance and return to God, I may labour to get an affecting, soul-humbling sense of my miserable state, and may 'flee from the wrath to come.' Surely, there is hope in Christ con-

cerning this thing. If I were presumptive heir to some considerable estate, even though my title to it were very disputable, I should spare no means in my power to make it clear; I should 'accomplish a diligent search;' I should be contriving ways and means to get as certain a knowledge of it as possible; and as far as I apprehend consistent with justice, I should stick at nothing to make it sure: and doth not the kingdom of heaven deserve as much labour and diligence as an earthly possession? Inquire then, O my soul, into thy qualifications for the heavenly felicity and glory, and consequently thy title to it.—*Do I hate sin?* Heaven is a state of holiness as well as happiness, and 'there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie.' The God with whom I have to do, is a holy, sin-hating God, and requires that his people 'be holy as he is holy.' An interest in Christ is utterly inconsistent with a love to sin, for 'Christ is not the minister of sin.'—*Do I then, hate sin?* Thus far I am sure—I hate sin in others! I hate profane swearing, sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, uncleanness, theft, and murder: I hate their lying and dissimulation, perfidy, and ingratitude. But, do I hate my own sins? I hope I can truly say, as to myself, I hate uncleanness of every kind, and in every degree: I hate lying, cheating, over-reaching of others, even where I could do it unknown to all men: I hate profaneness of every kind, even profane wit: I hate hypocrisy, and I hope I hate worldly-mindedness. Yea, I hope, too, I hate pride, even in myself; it is what I watch, and strive, and pray against. I see the beauty of humility; the excellency of a spiritual frame of soul, and a holy, heavenly conversation. I hope, I love God so much, that I hate every thing that is derogatory to his honour. I hope, I hate every thing that unfits me for the service of God, or for the duties of my calling. I can generally deny myself things, however pleasant or agreeable to my palate, or carnal desires, or views of any kind, so far as I find the gratification and pursuit thereof would interfere with my temporal and spi-

ritual interests, or obstruct my usefulness. I cannot but hope, on the closest examination of my heart, that I do indeed hate sin.—*Do I love God above all, and the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?* Can I answer, if the question were put to me by the Searcher of hearts—*Joseph Williams, 'lovest thou me,' more than all?* Can I appeal to Omniscience itself—'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?' I have often found by unquestionable experience, that I do in my judgment approve of the enjoyment of God, of his favour, and the light of his countenance, and prefer them before any pleasure whatsoever, though in the absence of every creature-comfort, even in poverty and want, and under a load of scorn or contempt: that in my judgment I do approve of a life of communion with God in the most abject outward circumstances, better than a series of the highest prosperity, better than the abundance of riches and honour, without his special love and favour. Sure I am, if I can be sure of any thing, that I have often tasted more exquisite delight in meditation and prayer, have drawn more solid satisfaction from a sense of divine love, and a good hope of an interest in Christ, than ever I felt in any other joy whatsoever. Yea, in the most prosperous circumstances I have ever been favoured with, my best comforts have been derived from the hopes of the full enjoyment of the divine presence. Why then, O my soul, am I so seldom, and so cold, in meditation and prayer? Can this consist with a superlative love to God and Christ? 'Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.' If the favour of God be above all things dear to me, why am I so cold a suitor at the throne of grace? Why, no more on my knees in my closet? Why do I employ so little time in devout meditation? If, indeed, I love him above all, why doth it not appear by loving to converse with him? Why do I not love his people more, and delight more in their society and converse? Why do I not shew greater zeal in promoting his cause and interest? O my soul, lovest thou the Lord Christ?—*Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?*

Do I believe in him to the saving of my soul? Is mine an evangelical faith? I hope I can truly say—I approve the method of salvation by faith in Christ. I heartily approve the terms of the new covenant, so far as I understand them. I am heartily willing that God should have all the glory of my redemption by Christ; of my conversion; of all my best services; of my highest hopes and comforts. I am willing to lay myself in the dust, in a sense of my utter unworthiness. I see and own the unprofitableness and inefficacy of all my best duties,—my watchfulness, self-denial, humiliation, and sorrow for sin; of all my obedience and charity; of all my prayers and praises,—to merit divine acceptance, and to release me from that obligation to punishment sin hath laid me under, much more to justify me before God, and entitle me to the great and glorious rewards proposed and promised in his gospel. ‘Counting’ all my own righteousness ‘but dung and dross,’ I am willing to reach forth an empty hand, that I may receive a sealed pardon, and be ‘counted righteous through faith,’ and be ‘accepted in the beloved.’ I would give up my wife, my children, liberty, trade, and worldly profits, pleasures, honours, yea, even life itself, whenever any or all of them may stand in competition with Christ, or with my duty to him. I would devote myself, my all, entirely to his service and honour; and commit my soul, with all my most valuable and important interests, to his care and keeping. To him alone I desire and design to yield up my departing spirit, whenever he shall please to call me hence: but, alas! where are the lively actings of my faith on Christ, and his all-sufficient sacrifice? A spirit of sloth and slumber is fallen upon me. The cares of this world retard the lively motions of my soul. O thou God of the spirits of all flesh, send down quickening influences from above, that I may ‘stir up’ my soul to ‘lay hold on thee!’

## HOLY RESOLUTIONS CONFIRMED.

*Lord's day, February 1, 1730.*---Last night I meditated on the words in John xv. 15---‘I have called you friends.’ I considered Christ as owning and greeting his people as

‘ friends,’ in what he *has* done for them, and what he *is now* doing for them; and also, in shewing what he *will* do for them, by attending them at death, receiving their souls, taking care of their bodies in order to raise them in due time, and mould them into a more glorious form, acquitting and applauding them before men and angels at the day of judgment, and setting them at his own right hand in glory to eternal ages: all which, I applied in the way of self-examination. I had been for several days prevented from reading any thing practical, which is a loss to me; but, blessed be God, who warmed my heart with the foregoing meditation, and though that and the examination of myself were not long, I enjoyed a good hope that I am of the number of Christ’s ‘ friends,’ which was confirmed to me afterward, when with great earnestness and seriousness I applied myself to secret prayer, in which my Almighty, faithful, compassionate, patient, necessary, and everlasting Friend, enabled me to pour out my soul to him with great enlargedness, and filled me with divine peace and joy, from a full incontestible assurance that I have the Spirit, and that I then very sensibly felt its lively application. I was filled with ‘ joy unspeakable, and full of glory,’ so that ‘ my soul did magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour.’ My soul was drawn out in strong desires after the living God; after more of his grace here, and fuller enjoyment of him in glory. I was deeply humbled by a sense of my unworthiness of such a peculiar favour, and by a sense of my manifold and late vanities; but, I trust, holy resolutions were entered into and confirmed, for new and better obedience. Amen. Hallelujah!

## ADMONITIONS TO A MINISTER.

*To the Rev. \*\*\*\* \*.\*.\*.\*.\*.\*.†*

May 31, 1730.

REV. SIR,

I beseech you more to study plainness and perspicuity

† This and the subsequent letter are produced as examples of faithful dealing on the part of a hearer to a minister; which, when reasonable, and accompanied

of style. You preach not to the most judicious, but to the most learned. Your long sentences run us out of breath, and perplex or cloud our understandings, and clog our memories. Your want of just and due pauses, &c. confounds our ideas; and does, to our conceptions, very much spoil the admirable contexture of your elaborate discourses.—I shall be truly sorry if these hints shall afford a ground of discouragement to you, which I assure you flow from a spirit of Christian love, and real friendship; and, I humbly hope, some earnest desire and zeal, that God may be glorified, and precious souls eternally saved through your ministrations. I am sure you will excuse this freedom, and take in good part, what I am confident is well intended. May the Lord of the harvest assist and prosper you mightily in the great and difficult work of gathering precious souls to himself; and make you the spiritual father of many sons and daughters in this place: so prayeth, and shall pray, yours most truly, most affectionately,

J. W.

*To the Same.*

September 6, 1730.

DEAR SIR,

I am so full I cannot refrain. I have been pouring out my soul to God in the bitterness of my spirit, but even that sufficeth not. Believe me, it goes to my very heart, to hear you, instead of a soul-melting sacramental discourse, which I reasonably expected, to hear you, I say, deliver a dry unseasonable discourse, in such a dull, lifeless manner. I am afraid little good was done thereby to precious souls. Believe me, such preaching will never obtain the great end of your ministry. Oh! that you had a little

with the spirit of love, ought not to be regarded as offensive. In allusion to this very minister, another, whose name would carry with it considerable influence, has this remark in one of his letters:—"He had, I suppose, about twenty people to hear him at the last; having ruined a fine congregation by his very learned, critical, and dry discourses, an extreme heaviness in the pulpit, and an almost total neglect of pastoral visits and private inspection." That Mr. W. was a candid hearer, may be inferred from his commending a discourse delivered by the minister previously admonished with such laudable fidelity. See Oct. 22, 1732.

more fervent love to Christ, and to precious souls: that you would *meditate* more, though you redeem the time even from your studies, for more of the student than the Christian appears to me in this morning's discourse. Oh! that you would read and seriously weigh and apply Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, part 3, chap. v. sec. 5: and that you would excuse my great freedom, and receive with Christian patience, candour and humility, what is, I am sure, well meant, however performed!—I could not satisfy my conscience on the neglect hereof. The Lord grant to us all more Christian zeal, and fervency of spirit in serving him, for surely, this is the most sleepy age of the Church. I love God, therefore I thus address you; and am, in the sincerest bonds of Christian love and friendship, dear sir, your cordial friend, and most humble servant,

J. W.

JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING.

*Saturday, June 19, 1731.*—I desire to bless God, that I have been enabled by his grace, for a long time, and particularly of late, 'to walk humbly' and closely with him, and have had large experience of the assistance of his Spirit in duty, humbling me deeply under a sense of my weakness and instability, strengthening my faith in Christ, and drawing out my soul in earnest desires after him, and after more abundant supplies of his Spirit and grace. Having now for many years enjoyed, with little interruption, a settled, prevailing, and comfortable hope of an interest in Christ, and in all the blessings and benefits of his purchase, I received, this morning, a refreshing token of my heavenly Father's everlasting and unchangeable love, a renewed evidence of his special favour, and of my title to the 'glory that is to be revealed.' I was enabled to exercise an *appropriating faith* in the promises, and to be persuaded, that, as sure as the word of God is true, the blessed '*rest*' of the saints '*remains*' for me. I was enabled to answer in the affirmative,—humbly appealing, even to Omniscience itself,—to all the queries, or marks of trial, proposed by Mr. Baxter, in his '*Saints' Rest*:' but,

how can my ungrateful soul be so little affected with this, and so much straitened in the high praises of my gracious God, who hath done so great things for me! ' Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.'

## THE HEAVENLY REST.

## A MEDITATION

*On the words—'There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.'*

Is there a HEAVENLY REST? The sound  
 Spreads o'er my frame a joy profound.  
 Blest day! when on my Saviour's breast,  
 My raptur'd soul shall ever rest  
 From sinning,—not from heaven's employ;  
 From sorrow,—not from sacred joy.  
 Then, shall my soul, illum'd, explore  
 The springs and causes veil'd before;  
 And mark in all, how brightly shine  
 Traces of Providence divine;  
 What wisdom, justice, power, controul—  
 What truth and love conduct the whole:  
 And, rapt with admiration, raise  
 A tribute to my Maker's praise.  
 How shall I then, rejoice to trace  
 The goodness of recov'ring grace!  
 Which, through conversion's *straiten'd gate*  
 Safe led me; and, though intricate,  
 Taught me to tread that *narrow way*  
 Which tends to realms of endless day;  
 Gave a new bias to my will—  
 To love of good, from love of ill;  
 Made me to know that Christ alone  
 Incensed Justice could atone;  
 And, when with sore afflictions prest,  
 To seek the sure, unfailing REST.

Methinks, Christ's harbingers I hear!  
 The shouting saints proclaim him near:  
 I hear the archangel's trumpet sound;  
 It rends the rocks, it cleaves the ground;  
 The heavens reverberate the noise  
 With clangour shrill—"Ye dead arise!"

Now, where's the soul that dare deny  
 Or doubt, the Filial Deity?

What will the trembling sinners do?  
 How will they pass the dread review?  
 See! the Judge frowns with wrathful ire,  
 And dooms them to resistless fire.

Behold, in what a different way  
 The saints abide the important day!

How sweet the accents of His voice,  
 Who bids their ravish'd hearts rejoice;  
 And whose endearing love invites  
 To 'mansions' of supreme delights.

There, link'd in bands of purest love,  
 Young saints harmonious numbers move.  
 They sing—"The eternal *Father's* grace  
 Which drew us from a guilty race;  
 Which, from earth's dangers, sins, and snares,  
 Hath chose and made us joyful heirs  
 Of heavenly crowns; a kingdom sure;  
 And bliss that ever shall endure!  
 Thee, *Saviour!* also, we adore,  
 Who, shame and sorrow for us bore;  
 And, by the merit of thy blood,  
 Prepar'd us for this blest abode.  
 We laud thee, too, *Celestial Dove!*  
 Who, on our hearts didst early move;  
 Infusing love, and ev'ry grace,  
 To fit us for this holy place.

—With gratitude our souls distend:  
 Our hallelujah's ne'er shall end!"

Hard by, a more illustrious band  
 Long since arriv'd from Hebrew land;  
 With joyful notes, and harps of gold,  
 This strain in tuneful concert hold:—  
 "God is our strength, our heavenly song,  
 To Him our choicest strains belong:  
 He is our God; him we adore  
 Who was our fathers' God before;  
 Brought them from rig'rous servitude,  
 And all their enemies subdu'd;  
 Prolong'd their peace, and gave repose,  
 While heavy judgments plagu'd their foes:  
 And by a bright successive train  
 Of awful signs, did Mercy deign,  
 Though with their num'rous follies prest,  
 To lead them to the promis'd rest!

—Thy works how marvellous, and great!  
 Lord God Almighty, how complete!  
 How just and true, are all thy ways!  
 Who shall not fear, adore, and praise?"

Not distant far, another throng  
 In graceful order moves along,  
 With solemn step, and mien erect;  
 In rays of brightest lustre deckt;  
 Whose high commission once had been  
 Proud princes to rebuke for sin,—

To warn of judgments nigh at hand  
 Impending o'er a guilty land,--  
 Heaven's high behests, with ardent zeal,  
 Of grace, or terror, to reveal,--  
 Confirm the good, their fears repel,  
 Or promis'd blessings to foretel.  
 Each of the venerable band,  
 Tunes his sweet harp with skilful hand :  
 While, joining with melodious tongue,  
 Now one, now 'other, leads this song :--  
 " The mighty God from Teman came,  
 While thousands of his saints acclaim ;  
 From Paran mount, the Holy One  
 In bright, distinguish'd glory shone ;  
 His glory o'er the heavens was spread,  
 And the whole earth his praise receiv'd.  
 The dreadful wrath that arm'd his hand,  
 No mortal force could e'er withstand.--  
 Firm to the word, not largest bribes  
 Could change his oath to Jacob's tribes.  
 Through desert tracts their journey lay ;  
 But streams refresh'd the dreary way.  
 Mountains beheld, and trembling stood ;  
 His pow'r impress'd the accustom'd flood ;  
 The murm'ring billows backward lie,  
 And leave the yawning channel dry.  
 Conscious of his resistless force,  
 The sun suspends his rapid course ;  
 The moon at his command stands still ;  
 While fiery arrows, vengeful, kill :  
 His flaming sword, and glitt'ring spear,  
 Slaughter'd his foes with wrath severe.  
 What troops his terrors could withstand,  
 When marching through a guilty land  
 To thresh his foes, wherever found,  
 And tread the heathen to the ground ?"--  
 Straight, the whole choir their voices raise,  
 And thus, in concert join the praise :--  
     " Thy works how marvellous and great !  
     Lord God Almighty, how complete !  
     How just and true are all thy ways !  
     Who shall not fear, adore, and praise ?"  
 They ceas'd, Then with his harp and tongue,  
 Another guides the grateful song :--  
 " I love my God, I love his name ;  
 His bright perfections I'll proclaim ;  
 I'll speak his power ; I'll sing his grace ;  
 My song shall reach his holy place :  
 He is my Fort, my blest Abode,

My Rock, my Saviour, and my God;  
 My Strength, on whom I sole rely;  
 My Buckler, and my Tow'r on high;  
 Sacred to him be all my lays:  
 He merits my transcendent praise  
 Who quell'd the men that 'gainst me rose;  
 And hurl'd destruction on my foes.—  
 He listen'd to my fervent prayers;  
 Reliev'd my sorrows; sooth'd my cares:  
 From heaven he mark'd a glorious path;  
 Earth shook and trembl'd at his wrath;  
 Hills, of their deep foundations proud,  
 Aw'd by his presence, shook, and bow'd  
 Above, high blazing meteors play;  
 Thick swelling clouds prepare his way;  
 When—bursting from the astonish'd skies,  
 A God! strikes on my frighted eyes:—  
 Down from above, he came, he stood,  
 And drew me from the gaping flood.”—

Again, the choir in concert join;

And thus, in praise again combine:—

“ Thy works how marvellous, and great!  
 Lord God Almighty, how complete!  
 How just and true are all thy ways!  
 Who shall not fear, adore, and praise?”

Scarce had these accents pass'd away,  
 When others still this strain convey:  
 But now, methought, the heavenly choir,  
 In praise more sweet, more loud, conspire;—  
 “ Worthy the Lamb which once was slain,  
 That we might to these seats attain!  
 Let every nation, every tribe,  
 Wisdom and power, with praise ascribe  
 Salvation, honour, and renown,  
 To him that on the throne sits down;  
 --The spotless, interceding Lamb;  
 The First and Last, the great I AM.  
 To him that's holy, just, and true;  
 To him that did our foes subdue;  
 Who once was slain, yet ever lives,  
 And endless life by dying gives;  
 Blessing and glory, kingdom, power,  
 Riches and strength for evermore!”

Is heaven so sweet? Is heaven so sure?

A bliss which ever shall endure?

Then truly, madness hath possess'd

The souls that slight this HEAVENLY REST

To his dear Name, be deathless praise,

Who rescu'd *me* from devious ways ;  
 Ador'd for ever be that love,  
 Which turn'd *my* feet tow'rds realms above !  
 Come then, adored Saviour ! come,  
 And fit me for my heavenly home.  
 Oh ! while I have both breath and knee,  
 Let me still breathe and bend to thee.  
 Let my meet soul desire the day,  
 Reluctant flesh puts far away :  
 When parting from my fleeting breath,  
 Lord ! with the righteous be my death !  
 Oh ! be as his my latter end ;  
 Then thy glorious guardians send  
 My joyful spirit to convey  
 To realms of everlasting day :  
 And while surviving Christians dear,  
 Over my grave shall drop a tear,  
 Let me, in robes celestial drest,  
 Repose with thee in HEAVENLY REST !

## ON KEEPING HIMSELF FROM HIS INIQUITY.

*Lord's-day, October 22, 1732.*—Now, O my soul, after hearing an *excellent* discourse\* on the Psalmist's declaration—' I have kept myself from mine iniquity,' consider and inquire—What is thy beloved, thy favourite, thy own iniquity ? Is it the lust of uncleanness ? Surely, No ! I cannot but hope, that, many years ago, when at first I was under awakening convictions, lust then received its deadly wound. Is it covetousness, or love of the world ? I cannot but hope too, through the grace and good providence of God, these iniquities are in a good measure subdued. Is it malice or envy ? As to the former, I am not conscious of having ever indulged to it against any person in the world : neither am I conscious that the latter is allowed or prevalent ; though I fear, some risings of it sometimes shew themselves, which, I humbly hope, I utterly disallow, and sincerely strive against. But, is it not *pride* ? Verily, I have reason to think this is ' the sin which does so easily beset me ! ' Well then, O my soul, is it not necessary for me to set a diligent watch over this favourite sin ? and may it not be useful to consider the several ways by which this sin exerts itself, that I may the better guard against it ?—

\* See note p. 64.

I think pride discovers itself very much in *angry resentments*; chiefly against my servants, for injuries, slights, or neglects, whether real or apprehended. Anger seldom rises in me against my children, but too often towards my servants. How easily is my spirit ruffled by the awkwardness of servants, and by their doing business unfaithfully or negligently! though, I hope, not so often, nor so easily, nor to such intemperate degrees, as formerly: but, O my soul, let me not be partial to myself, nor in the least connive at rash anger. I was helped, last year, by reading 'Sibbs' Soul's Conflict.' My spirit was so tamed, my haughtiness so reprov'd and brought down, and I gained such a command over my humours and passions, for many weeks, that I was then convinced, it is possible for me to keep this choleric spirit of mine always under a due regulation and a religious restraint. I may preserve and maintain a calm, quiet, meek spirit amidst whatever provocations; but not without the constant exercise of great watchfulness, solemn meditation, and fervent prayer; and here I record this testimony against myself, if ever unbridled passions should transport me into any indecencies hereafter,—that it is for want of a due exercise of one or more of these important duties. Pride often discovers itself by vain *ostentation*. Alas! how much of this is found in me. Ostentation of learning amongst men of learning; ostentation of piety amongst pious men; ostentation of gifts in prayer; ostentation of being considerable in trade amongst tradesmen; ostentation of acquaintance with gentlemen; are the kinds and ways in which my pride is still too much unconquered. Oh! how weak and foolish is this. In how ridiculous a light doth this set me in the eyes of the judicious! How much more displeasing to a holy God; who requires me to 'be clothed with humility!' O my soul, guard against this vanity! 'Set a watch,' O Lord, 'before my mouth, keep the door of my lips.' Doth not pride often discover itself in my thoughts by *an over-valuing opinion and conceit of myself, my attainments and excellencies, my worth and importance*? Had I not some such

workings of mind lately, when one elder than myself was called to serve in an office which I expected? \* Did I not think myself a better, a fitter man than he? Did I not then entertain fears lest I should not be called next? I endeavoured, indeed, to suppress such workings, and to satisfy myself that such and such were elder, and might justly be accounted worthy of precedency. Lord, help me to mortify all sinful ambition; and 'in honour to prefer others before myself;' and never to be impatient of seeing others rising above me in any respect.

## HIS INCLINATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY.

Wednesday, November 28, 1733.---My heart hath now been set nearly a twelvemonth, on my entering into the ministry. May it not be very seasonable, after just having reviewed the preceding article, to inquire---Whether *pride* hath not had a considerable influence in stirring up my desires after that holy office? Many of my neighbours and friends, I find, are forward enough to suspect that to be at the bottom: and have not I reason to suspect it myself?

I do indeed hope and believe, after many examinations of myself, and solemn appeals to him that searcheth my heart, that my main, my principal end therein, is the glory of God. That compassion for precious, perishing souls, and a concern and grief for the want, the apparent want thereof in many ministers, were the first springs and motives of those desires. But yet, had *pride* no influence in this matter? Do I not esteem more highly of my gifts, and knowledge, and utterance, and zeal, than is meet? And have I not just reason to be more suspicious than I have been of them? O my soul, it highly behoves thee to be well assured that *pride* is not at the bottom; for if it be, I cannot expect the approbation, or blessing of God, on which success wholly depends. I am certain, at least *very* likely, to suffer considerable worldly loss on this account. I expose myself to a load of censure and reproach, and if

\* Probably that of a Deacon, as he had become a Trustee, June 6, 1722.--The Editor endeavoured to ascertain this, but *that* Church-book could not be found; a circumstance which he regrets. H.

withal, I miss of the divine approbation, what work shall I make for bitter repentance! Do I not herein depend too much on my own skill, and too little on the divine strength, aid, and efficacy, without which I can do nothing? And may I not justly fear, that if I should be placed in some corner, among a handful of people, and have little success; have little agreeable conversation; and at the same time, meet with but little respect, and be straitened in my worldly circumstances; I should grow weary of the work, and repent the change when it will be too late. I should now, therefore, well consider the grounds of my inclination to the work of the ministry: the reasons I have to hope that I may be more useful in that, than in my present sphere of action: the methods by which I expect and hope, by the blessing of God, to win souls for Christ: how I should bear the disappointment, if at first setting out, my labours should prove unprofitable, and I be slighted, both by ministers and people: whether my person as well as ministrations may not fall into contempt, after I may be set over a people as their minister, for having been a tradesman: and whether, after all, my labour and diligence in the work of the Church may not prove entirely fruitless!

THOUGHTS ON APPARITIONS.

*Thursday Evening, November 7, 1734.*---In the twilight this evening, I took a solitary walk in the church-yard, there to converse a little with the dead. After seriously reflecting awhile on my own mortality: the important change which hath passed on all those tabernacles of clay that lie mouldering there, and which ere long must pass upon mine; as the darkness increased, I felt some approaches of foolish fear, and therefore, began to muse on the unreasonableness of fearing the sight of apparitions.---What can I possibly imagine should appear to me? It must either be a good or a bad angel, or else a separate human spirit; or, any one of those, invested with some visible form. Indeed, the visible presence of either of them, but especially the former, might well possess my soul with dread and terror. But, suppose a good angel should appear to me; it must be at

the command of our common Lord, whom, I humbly hope I adore and love, though alas! too faintly, too coolly. Such appearance must be under the direction of him, who, I humbly hope, is my reconciled God and Father in Christ Jesus. What have I then, to fear from such a messenger? It must come on some wise, some kind and gracious design. I doubt not, I have been favoured with the protection of such a glorious agent, and have had many kind offices done for me by one or more ministering spirit, who must, therefore, be near me oftentimes, though invisible. I doubt not, I have received many a friendly hint from such a gentle monitor, respecting both my heavenly and secular calling. Do I need then, to fear; or, why should I tremble at the appearance of so benevolent a being, in whose society I hope to spend eternal ages? Do I not firmly believe,---do I not know myself to be a dying creature; that in a little time this frame of nature shall be dissolved, and my spirit take her flight into the world of spirits? Have I not the glorious hope of dwelling for ever in the immediate presence of God, and of being for ever happy in the light of his countenance? And doth not the joyful expectation of having 'an innumerable company of angels' for my everlasting associates, afford me a delightful prospect? Why then, should the apprehension of such a vision, even in the present state, produce in me any disquieting dread or consternation? But, suppose a fallen angel, yea, Satan himself, should appear to me in as frightful a form as my imagination can possibly paint; do I not believe, and am I not infallibly certain, that he can neither assume such a form, nor make it visible to me, without the divine permission? Hath not the infinitely wise and good God every one of those cursed fiends in his chain? What then, have I to fear, even from those avowed enemies of God, of angels and men, since they can do no mischief of any kind, nor hurt any one of God's creatures, farther than he useth them as the ministers of his vengeance? Holy 'angels, who excel in strength,' exult and triumph over all the rage of devils, being superior to their malice, and invulnerable by all their

hellish darts. May I not, therefore, rejoice and confide in this---that if God be my Father and Friend in Christ, 'greater is he that is in me,' and with me, 'than he that is in the world---the prince of the power of the air,' that 'roaring lion which walketh about, seeking whom he may devour?' Wherever I am, is not God more surely there? 'O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee,' that sincerely repenteth of every known sin, and by faith and prayer seeks to be justified by Christ's righteousness, and to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 'God, who cannot lie, hath promised eternal life,' to such. Do not these considerations pacify my conscience? What have I then, to fear from Satan? The appearance of a departed soul, assuming and actuating some visible form, cannot be more dangerous, nor carry in it any thing more terrible, than that of a fallen angel. I have certainly a secret prevailing aversion to the sight of one of these; and I doubt not but such a sight, were I alone, and apprized what it is, would fill me with unusual consternation. Whence does this proceed? Is it not, chiefly, from the weakness of my faith? And particularly, from a want of conversing more, in my meditations and serious reflections, with the inhabitants of the invisible world? How necessary is it, in order to a complete preparation for death, and an entire victory over it, to get those fears conquered, by an overcoming faith in the promises, the power, and the presence of God and Christ! For, when I close my eyes in death, shall I not immediately open my immortal eyes in the world of spirits? Shall I not then behold new forms; converse with strange, unknown beings; and find myself surrounded with innumerable inhabitants of the ethereal regions? How can I hope to keep possession of myself, then, if I be overwhelmed with the dread of such an appearance now? What helps can I expect or hope then, which are not at hand now? Do I hope for the presence of Christ in and after death; and is he not as ready to help or relieve his servants in their distresses now? Do I hope for a convoy of angels to attend my fleeting spirit in its passage up to

the realms of glory; and are they not sent forth now, 'to minister to the heirs of salvation?' It is true, those heavenly guards are now invisible, who then will be visible to my spiritual sight, and I may then see myself surrounded with powerful friends. But, where is now my faith? Is not 'faith the evidence of things not seen?' Have I not now a 'sure word' of promise, on which my soul may securely rest? Fortify thyself, therefore, O my soul, against all these groundless fears. 'Thy place of defence,' wherever thou art, 'shall be' stronger than 'the munition of rocks.' Exercise a lively faith on the infallible promises and immutable oath of God. Rest upon the divine all-sufficiency. Confide in the presence and protection of God, and Christ and good angels. Keep 'a conscience void of offence.' Be much in converse and 'communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.' Suffer no estrangement of thy heart from thy best friend; but 'commit the keeping of thy soul to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator;' and of thy body too, nor doubt his protecting care.

HOW PIOUS INCLINATIONS BECAME PREVALENT.

*Saturday, February 1, 1735.*—I am considering how far my will governs my affections, passions and practice; and how far it is passive, and how far free. When I call to mind, what was the habitual, prevailing disposition of my mind in my youth; what an impetuous propensity I had to youthful lusts; what a prevailing sway the love of carnal pleasures had over my will and all my powers;—when I farther recollect, by what means the current of my soul was altered, and the bias of my will changed; sometimes by a rousing sermon; sometimes by a seasonable word of advice or reproof from my father, or other Christian friend; sometimes by an awakening providence; at another time by a strong impulse on my mind, disposing me in the most serious manner to inquire into the state of my soul, and what preparation I had made for death, and how I could stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, in case I should be called away that day or that night; which considerations sometimes excited me to redeem time for reading

and to pray earnestly to God for the pardon of my sins, and for a renewed heart: I say, when I call to mind these things, and how a love to God and Christ, and holiness, gradually obtained an ascendancy in my soul, I cannot but ascribe that wonderful change wrought upon my will, and the various steps towards it, to the free grace of God, and the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit. But, must I therefore conclude, that in every individual act of mine, I am merely actuated by some superior, invisible power? Or, that in every religious act, so far as it is done agreeably to the will of God, I am influenced by the same good Spirit, whose assistance or agency is at other times withheld, or afforded in a lower measure or degree? Doth the difference, [the great and wide difference, I find in the frame of my heart in religious exercises, at one time and another, proceed merely from the difference of supernatural aid? Doth it not in some measure, arise from the difference of my own actual preparation for the duty before-hand, or from a difference in my active exertion of my rational powers in the work? Doth that better preparation itself proceed from some superior agent? Who shall solve these difficulties? Be thou diligent, O my soul, to 'work out thy own salvation with fear and trembling;' and so much the rather, because 'it is God that worketh in thee both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'

THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

*Wednesday, June 4, 1735.*—This morning my dear, my fondly-beloved Hannah took her flight.\* I would now be found inquiring seriously, how I shall improve this severe dispensation of Providence, and what considerations may be of use to reconcile my mind to it.—As the creature and property of God, may he not do with my child what he will? I have no prevailing doubt that she is 'fallen asleep in Jesus.' My gracious and good God enabled me to devote her to him in baptism, as well as many times since, and particularly very often in her last illness. I hope, I have been upright and sincere in dedicating her to God.

\* She was born July 26, 1731.

I hope I have been truly earnest and fervent in my prayers and supplications to God for her life, if it were agreeable to his blessed will; and that, if Infinite Wisdom had otherwise determined, she might be ready for her great change. If I have reason to hope, that, in my measure, I have been faithful in the discharge of my duty, surely I have no reason to distrust the goodness and faithfulness of God, and his readiness to shew mercy. When our Lord says—‘Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heavèn,’ I understand him to mean, both, that little children are capable of receiving benefit by Christ; and, that the submission, humility, and meekness usually found in little children—in opposition to the pride, self-conceit, and self-confidence too generally prevalent in adult persons—is the temper of the gospel, the temper of all its disciples, the temper susceptible of religious impressions, and the temper which the Holy Spirit forms in the heart, to constitute persons proper subjects of the Redeemer’s kingdom. May I not from hence derive some hope concerning my dear child’s eternal state! How submissive and obliging were her general temper and behaviour! How dutiful to her parents! How ready to comply with the will and inclinations of her sisters! How studious to please! How tender of sinning! What indignation hath she often discovered, when her school-fellows have uttered profane words! What a measure of the fear of God, and even of trust in him, did she discover, when, at three years old, in a storm of thunder and lightning, she once and again, of her own accord, had recourse to prayer! Can I doubt of the grace of God in her, or that she reaps no advantage from a Redeemer? ‘Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not also receive evil?’ He hath not ‘written us childless.’ ‘Thou, Lord, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.’

Hath death, with awful terrors arm’d,  
 Been waiting at the door;  
 And, ravish’d hence a pleasant babe,  
 Whose charms delight no more?

How shall we bear the smarting stroke  
 With a submissive frame?  
 How, well improve the providence,  
 And profit by the same?  
 Lord, 'tis thy hand, thy sov'reign power  
 Form'd the dear living bust;  
 The holy, just, almighty Word  
 Commands her flesh to dust.  
 Far heavier strokes our sins deserve,  
 If thou shouldst be severe;  
 Patient, submissive, all-resign'd,  
 Thy just rebuke we'll bear.  
 What tho' the lovely mortal die,  
 And perish from our sight!  
 By faith we trace the nobler mind  
 Up to the worlds of light:  
 See the great Judge, with aspect mild,  
 With pleasure in his face,  
 Welcome and hail the new-come guest,  
 While Heaven applauds the grace:  
 See kindred minds, who went before,  
 Triumphant flock around,  
 While to their golden harps they sing  
 Tunes of immortal sound.  
 Oh! may we keep the ethereal road,  
 Led on by grace divine;  
 Then shall we quickly go to them,  
 And in their praises join.\*

## MEDITATION AMONG THE TOMBS.

*Saturday, September 27, 1735.*—After an evening walk in the church-yard, what a sight have I had! A field set thick with monuments of the dead. Yet there are but few monuments compared with the number of the dead that lie there: most of those stones were erected since my remembrance; and perhaps, not one stone for 20, 30, or 40 that have been buried. What a crowded spot will this be at the resurrection? What a plentiful harvest will it yield! Numerous, though not numberless. Every individual is known to the Lord the judge. Every name is registered in his book of remembrance. Not one shall stay behind in the grave. Not one will be missing, whose bones have

\* These lines were printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July 1739, signed "Mechanus."

been deposited here. How numerous will the colony be, which will be gathered from Kidderminster church-yard! Suppose this island of Great Britain not to have been peopled till 500 years after the Flood, and that 100 have been buried here, every year, one year with another; from that period, it will amount, in the space of 3,500 years, to an army of 350,000. If such a parish as this may be supposed to yield so many, what will Great Britain and Ireland produce? If I reckon this parish, either as to its extent, or number of inhabitants, to be about the thousandth part of these three kingdoms, I may compute the three kingdoms to yield, in 3,500 years, at least three hundred and fifty millions. What then, will the product of these islands be, during such a period compared with that of the whole earth? May I not suppose all the dead of the whole earth, within the said 3,500 years to be more than twenty thousand millions? Now, O my soul, stretch thine imagination to the utmost, and consider—how boundless is that mind, how infinite that understanding, which perfectly knows and recollects every individual of mankind, with the thoughts, words, and actions of each; the time of their births, the length of their days, all the transactions of their lives, and the time, manner, and circumstances of their deaths. How easily can he separate and collect their scattered atoms! What work will this be for almighty creating Power, to rebuild their ruined tabernacles, and form them spiritual and immortal! What busy work, for glorious angels, to collect this vast assembly, and present them before the universal Judge! but, when I consider holy angels as ‘ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,’—perhaps, as many as one hundredth part of the whole human race; this thought tends to facilitate my conception of the ease and regularity of such collection. The word of God assures us, that ‘the dead in Christ shall rise first.’ The sleeping dust, of saints alone, shall hear the first blast of the archangel’s trumpet, and awake to joyful life. With what rapture will such awaken’d saints behold their exalted Re-

deemer, 'who loved them unto the death,' and 'whom having not seen they loved!' How happy the re-union between the myriads of perfect spirits, which God will bring with him, and the bodies which they laid down so pale, squalid and ghastly,—or were torn from them by torturing racks, or consuming flames; but, which are now refined, adorned and beautified! How will each glorified spirit admire its own comely form, and say of its divine clothing—Oh! the change from what I once was. Whatever remembrance they will have of their former meanness and misery, their former pollution and guilt, yet, all tormenting sense of them will be for ever banished. Will their smiling Judge upbraid them with their past fickleness and inconstancy, their lukewarmness in his service, their manifold backslidings,—their pusillanimity and want of zeal in his cause? Rather, will not infinite 'charity cover the multitude of their sins?' How will they then know more sensibly than ever, that all the glory with which they are invested, is the effect of boundless grace! O! how triumphant their joy! to find that all his glory, with its never-ending progress and increase, was 'prepared for them from the foundation of the world.'

## PIOUS FRIENDSHIP.

" *Damon to Pythias.*"\*

" WHILE far from toils your Damon sits secur'd,  
 From ruffling storms and rattling hail immur'd;  
 While easy slumbers bless my downy bed,  
 And friends and health their softest influence shed;  
 While glowing fires correct the inclement sky,  
 And wife and children with their charms sit by;  
 Pathetic thoughts my Pythias still pursue,  
 Whom storms attack, and northern winds pierce through.

" The muse e'en shudders, while she would rehearse  
 The toils you bear; and rigours fill the verse.  
 Fain would she follow, with her wings outspread,  
 Fond of encircling that important head,  
 And thinks she still could follow where you lead.

\* His brother Pearsall, under the character of *Damon*, addressed Mr. W. under that of *Pythias*, while he was on his north journey in February, 1736, to whom Mr. Williams replied soon after his return. The former, was inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine for March, and the latter, for May, 1736.

But, ah! such flights her fancied power exceeds;  
 Affection prompts, but stronger wings she needs.  
 Forward she springs to join her absent friend,  
 Eager through all his trav'ling toils to attend:  
 But see, she struggling droops; with languor bends;  
 Her sanguine hope in disappointment ends.

“ Yet, while I mourn the dreary wastes you tread,  
 Pause on your storms without a friendly shade;  
 While full of fears the spreading floods I view,  
 And sympathizing tears my cheeks bedew;  
 While exhalations clog the ambient air,  
 And on their wings unwholesome vapours bear;  
 While o'er the lonesome rocks and vales you pass,  
 O'erspread with frosts, and slippery as glass;  
 With bended knees my ardent vows ascend, †  
 That guardian angels may your steps attend;  
 In all your dangers lend their friendly arms,  
 To guide your doubtful way secure from harms.  
 When nature sickens, and the god of day  
 Is found too weak to drive the fogs away,  
 May these kind guards their friendly wings o'erspread,  
 Defend, support, and cheer your drooping head;  
 Bid storms subside; let zephyrs only rise,  
 With balmy wings to fan the foggy skies.

“ In vain the infant Spring its beauties sheds,  
 In vain sits brooding on the flow'ry beds;  
 Flora in vain enamels all my ground;  
 In vain the primrose spreads its fragrance round;  
 In vain the violet, with its beauteous hue,  
 Peeps out of nature's womb in mantle blue:—  
 All this is nothing, till I hear of you.

“ What though the airy songsters tune their throats,  
 And court mine ear with their once charming notes?  
 What though the lambkins, innocent and gay,  
 Frisk round me, and untaught, their gambols play?  
 Methinks 'tis winter still, while sad, I mourn  
 My Pythias still protracts his wish'd return.”

*Pythias to Damon.*

From toilsome travels safe return'd at last,  
 The boist'rous storms and threat'ning dangers past,  
 Warm in the embraces of my dear lov'd spouse,  
 (Heaven's gift, propitious to my youthful vows),  
 And fondly welcom'd, on my safe return,  
 By my sweet babes, whose transports mutual burn;  
 To gentle Damon, Pythias greeting sends,  
 Charm'd with that love which to my toil attends.  
 The muse e'en triumphs, with such friendship blest,  
 Which lays the storms, and calms my ruffled breast.

Such pious friendship! whence devotion springs,  
 And, from above, the needful succour brings.  
 Heaven heard your vows, and gave me strength to bear  
 The piercing regions of the inclement air.

How could my Damon whom Roefido \* loves,  
 Whose lays the matchless *Philomel* † approves,  
 To rustic Pythias humbly condescend,  
 And generous love, where merit fails, extend?  
 Blest day! when pleasing hands our hearts ally'd,  
 Made you a brother, Phebe made my bride.

But, what are nature's bands, or ties of blood,  
 What the precarious ties of brotherhood,  
 To friendship's sacred cement, sweet and strong,  
 Whose close attraction draws the soul along?  
 When with my Damon's graceful presence blest,  
 My soul exults, and hails the welcome guest.  
 Your cordial speech my drooping spirit cheers,  
 Renews my courage, and dispels my fears,  
 My thinking powers on nobler themes employs,  
 Inflames my love, and animates my joys.  
 So the parch'd earth, refresh'd by gentle showers,  
 Smiles, and more glad, displays the op'ning flowers.  
 Your absence chills my heart, but while I weep,  
 Your letters come, and all my sorrows sleep.  
 What wit; what beauty, truth, and goodness shine!  
 What love pathetic, in each tuneful line!  
 My muse, with feeble voice, attempts in vain  
 To sing your friendship with an equal strain.  
 My doors, to men of virtue, open stand,  
 My choicest stores, myself, they may command:  
 But to my friend, I'll open e'en my heart;  
 To you, the secrets of my soul impart;  
 I'll tell you all my state, you'll soothe my woes;  
 Your balmy lips my bleeding wounds shall close,  
 Solve all my doubts, my thrilling griefs allay,  
 Improve my joys, and chase sad cares away.  
 Oh! how I long to embrace my absent friend:  
 Fly swift, ye hours! my Damon to me send.  
 Full twenty moons the tiresome distance tell,  
 Since parting hence, you bade a dear farewell.  
 But now, the wintry storms are over-blown,  
 The chilling snows, and rigid frosts are gone;  
 Boon nature now exerts her genial pow'r's,  
 The verdant fields are deck'd with fragrant flow'rs;

\* Mrs. Pearsall; she was a Miss Philipps, of Bromyard, and the Rev. — Philipps, of Newbury, was her brother.

† Mrs. Rowe.

New prospects in succession court your eyes,  
 Trees in full blossom, and of various dyes;  
 Unnumber'd beauties shall rejoice and smile,  
 And charming Sylvan scenes your steps beguile;  
 The warbling birds shall cheer the lonesome glade,  
 And every ev'ning chant a serenade.  
 Your friends impatient chide your ling'ring stay,  
 Then haste, my Damon, haste, and come away.

## SELF-EXHORTATION.

*Lord's-day, June 6, 1736.*—I am going to God's-house, and when there, to his table. Ah! how unfit, how unsuitable is the frame of my soul for the solemnities thereof. I have great reason to lament the coldness of my love, and of my desires after God and Christ. Something I have done toward examining myself, my state God-ward; but oh! how much do I find amiss in my heart and my will. While endeavouring to pray to God, how dry, how barren, was I! Yet I do believe that Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me. Oh! how much hath he done for me. Look back my soul, to the days of thy youth, the years of thy vanity. What powerful restraints did Christ lay, by his good Spirit, on my carnal appetite! How sweet, frequent experience have I had of his distinguishing grace working powerfully and effectually on me! How did he constrain me to love him, and to devote myself, entirely, sincerely, to him, when others were left to walk in the ways of their own hearts! and shall I not love him? What rich and large experience have I had, through my whole life, of his all-wise conduct and rich bounty toward me! and have I nothing to return for all this?—Come, O my soul, stir up the grace that is within thee; 'prepare to meet thy God:' and oh! be sure to be very diligent and sincere in thy intercourse with him this day.

## VERSES TO A FRIEND RECOVERED FROM ILLNESS.

*To Mr. John Cooper.\**

Believe me, Sir, 'twas sad, 'twas shocking news,  
 The sudden anguish wrung my inmost soul—

\* These verses were inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine for August, 1736. The Rev. R. Pearsall, in a letter dated Sept. 22, addressed to Mr. W. has these remarks:—"I am glad you could send me word of Mr. Cooper's recovery, at the

"Your friend Alexis dies!"  
 Through every vein the thrilling accents roll;  
 I'm struck with infinite surprise;  
 Whilst sympathizing tears my gushing eyes suffuse.  
 The dear Alexis die! my joy, my friend!  
 Kind Heaven avert the fatal stroke,  
 That precious life restore;  
 The rigid sentence, mighty grace! revoke,  
 On bended knees the mercy we implore,  
 Let mercy from on high the needful succour send.  
 Indulgent Heaven regards our humble vows:  
 Joy to my heart! thy threat'ning pains surcease;  
 The dear Alexis lives!  
 That languid pale which sat upon his brows  
 Retires, whilst rosy tinctures now increase,  
 And in his sparkling eyes the lamp of life revives.  
 Ah! wisely yet revolve this solemn thought—  
 "Had racking pangs prevail'd, and death ensu'd,  
 Where had my soul been found?"  
 Life is the time when pardon must be sought:  
 Death and the grave repentance quite exclude;  
 There's no device, nor work, nor wisdom under ground.  
 Think, when you felt your strength and spirits fail,  
 And lay convuls'd in agonizing pain,  
 With death in dreaded view;  
 How little then could pomp or wealth avail!  
 Earth's fond delights and sensual joys how vain,  
 When the ever-parting soul must bid them all adieu!  
 Reflect, what cheer'd you most in that distress;  
 What sins the trembling conscience most appall'd;  
 What were your hopes and fears?  
 How gladly time mis-spent you wish'd recall'd;  
 What did you seek; what count your happiness;  
 And what resolve, if spar'd to future months or years?  
 Come then; what work remains for life to do;  
 Whate'er is wanting in your faith or love  
 To crown your hope, your joy;  
 With utmost might and doubled strength pursue:  
 Let no delay the stedfast purpose move,  
 Nor worldly charms or cares your heavenly zeal alloy.

same time you gave the account of his extreme sickness. I thank you for transmitting a copy of the lines you so well composed on that occasion. The strong sense, the manly and handsome language, the attractive sweetness and friendship, with the lively piety, which run through all, must recommend them to those who are proper judges." Mr. C. was of the medical profession, and formerly of Bromsgrove, but afterwards of Kidderminster.

## HIS LIFE THREATENED, AND HIS CONDUCT THEREON.

*Lord's-day, December 5, 1736.*—Having had a letter thrust in at my window last night, wherein my life is threatened, on account of the share I have had in endeavouring to regulate and reduce the price of spinning in this town and neighbourhood; and not knowing what may be in the womb of providence; how far the all-wise God may leave such wicked person or persons to his or their wicked devices, or what ends infinite Wisdom may have to accomplish by permitting me to fall a sacrifice to popular rage, I think it highly proper, seriously to inquire—What preparation I have made for eternity.

I will, first, set down my thoughts, my deliberate judgment on the design of regulating and reducing the price of spinning. I have, indeed, said enough in the printed papers entitled—“The true state of the Stuff-trade,” to make it appear not only a just but laudable undertaking, in the judgment of disinterested persons, and I see no reason yet to alter my opinion of any thing therein; especially, when I consider that there are as many goods of our description now made in other places, as seem to me sufficient to answer all the demands for such goods. Indeed, unless we can sell as cheaply as our competitors we must lose our share of the trade, which will take place if the price of spinning be not proportionable. But then, although the trade continue to decline, seeing that my life is threatened—Whether should I not, to save it, set myself to reverse the measures already taken? It is true, necessity may in time enforce a compliance with the measures of reduction; but more particularly to find out my own duty in this matter, it may be proper to consider the threat either as an empty menace to intimidate me, or as the certain resolution of some *desperado*, who will not fail to endeavour to execute his purpose: in the former case it merits no regard; in the latter, I may conclude either that he will or will not be permitted to effect his purpose. Could I conclude that if I do not act according to his direction I should certainly

be murdered, then I am clear in my judgment that I ought to comply with him; for I ought to use all lawful means to preserve my own life and the life of others. I owe the preservation of my life as a duty to my wife and children. The affair is no more mine than that of the whole town, therefore I am not called on to set my life in the front of danger, and I have reason to hope I can benefit my family by other means, though I am afraid there are numbers who cannot. As, however, I know not how this threat may terminate, I will proceed to the grand inquiry; an inquiry of everlasting importance.

I have in the course of the last twenty-six years frequently examined my heart and life by the rule of God's word, and by the characters there laid down, both of the righteous and of the wicked. I have frequently and carefully examined the general, prevailing temper of my mind; and, on the whole, through free grace, I find that although there is still a corrupt principle within, much vanity, and oftentimes a backwardness to private and public duties, yet that in the prevailing disposition of my mind, in my deliberate choice and estimation, I do love God, and value his favour above all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world. I esteem those my choicest seasons wherein I have most of the divine presence, most of his aid, influence, and agency; and my highest, everlasting hopes are laid up in God. The getting of riches on earth is nothing to me in comparison with the laying up for myself 'treasures in heaven.' To live in the blissful vision and fruition of God in glory;—in the constant exercise of holy dispositions; a perfect, exalted delight in God as my God and Father, and in Christ as my Lord and Saviour:—the most exalted thankfulness and high praises for distinguishing grace, redeeming love, and all the innumerable favours heaped on me ever since I had a being;—the exercise of sacred joy, in humbly admiring and celebrating his glorious perfections, searching into his infinite works of wonder, wisdom, power, and love; in tracing the footsteps of redeeming grace to believers in general, and in particular to my own soul;—and all this in the

blissful society of glorious, refined, exalted spirits, both angels and saints; together with sensible communications of life, light, love, and joy from Him that sitteth on the throne; is all the heaven I hope for, and in which my highest expectation and hope of future happiness centre. I well remember when the prevailing temper of my mind was the very reverse to this: when, notwithstanding a serious education and frequent convictions, sin had possession of my soul, and lorded over my whole man; then, religious duties were matter of my greatest aversion: but now I can trace the leadings of almighty Love in renewing my soul and changing the bias of my will. I can trace the gradations by which, in the course of many years, the work was carried on from a state of deep distress and almost overwhelming fear, to a well-grounded hope and joyful assurance. I have frequently and conscientiously examined the general course, as well as the particular actions of my life, and although the gaiety of my temper hath betrayed me into a thousand vain expressions, and the quickness of it hath often hurried me on in passion 'to speak unadvisedly with my lips,' and to do many things which I cannot justify, yet I humbly hope there is no sin through the whole course of my life unrepented of. It is my daily, habitual care and endeavour in all things to approve myself to him that searcheth my heart; 'to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God.' Though my obedience hath been very imperfect it hath been sincere, and will be accepted of God, through the meritorious righteousness and atoning sacrifice of my Redeemer, to whom I fly, and in whom alone I trust for justification, and for eternal life:—'for I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' I can at present conceive but little of the employment and joy of celestial spirits, yet this I know, and it is enough,—that when he who is my Lord and my life, whom I have loved unseen and served sincerely, though very imperfectly, 'shall

appear, then shall I also appear with him in glory.' Blessed, therefore, for ever 'blessed be the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ,' which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten me again unto a lively hope,' 'to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me,' 'and not for me only, but for all them that love his appearing.' Amen, and amen.

WHETHER GOD OR THE WORLD WERE HIS PORTION?

*Lord's-day, July 24, 1737.*—After hearing a discourse by Mr. Bradshaw, on the Psalmist's inquiry and determination—'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee;' inquire thou, O my soul, and inquire with the greatest strictness and impartiality. This is a matter on which depends my present comfort and everlasting happiness. To deceive myself in this important concern, is putting the worst cheat that is possible on myself. What a dreadful surprize must it be to the soul that hath deluded itself with vain hopes, even unto the hour of its departure hence, to meet a frowning God, and hear that stunning accent—'I know you not whence you are, depart from me?' Therefore, O my soul, search diligently: examine well thy evidences. Let conscience speak freely; I hope, it is rightly informed; bribe it not into silence; nor pervert it to give a false evidence, either by palliating thy sins and corruptions, or magnifying thy good works and dispositions.

What is my heart set most upon: this world, or God? I must not dissemble or deny, that a care for and delight in my wife and children, a care to make the best advantage of my trade, and to render my present life easy and pleasant, have most of my thoughts. Yet, I humbly hope, yea, surely in this I may be confident, by the experience now of twenty-seven years, but more remarkably of the last twelve years,—that the love and favour of God are what I prize above all things; that to 'walk in the light of his countenance,' is the highest felicity I either enjoy, or hope for, in the present state; and to dwell for ever in his glo-

rious presence, is the highest of my future hopes and expectations. Though my conscience blames me for many defects in my obedience, and care to please God; though it reproaches me for many omissions of secret duty, and many sad neglects in the performance of duties of every kind; all which may justly lead me to call in question the sincerity and predominance of my love to God; yet, it also witnesseth, that in general I am more solicitous to please God than any besides him; and that I never have such enjoyment of myself, as when I do the things that please him; nor any joy like that which flows from a sense of his approbation and love. In all my wants, I fly to him for supply; in all my perplexities, I seek to him for counsel; in every distress, he is my refuge and strength. Under all my pains and indispositions of body, my hope, my help is in the great Physician: I look unto him as the first cause; observe his hand in appointing, directing, and limiting them; and endeavour humbly to inquire into the meaning and design of them, and 'wherefore God contendeth with me.' In like manner, would I be found eyeing the hand of God in every loss, whether in trade, or by the death of a child, or other dear relation. When viewed in that light, I may truly say, it hath never been very difficult to submit, how severe soever afflictions have been, and whatsoever their kind. I have found my faith in him—a sense of his love—and a prevailing hope that he is my God—a full support under my greatest burdens. I have enjoyed a satisfying assurance, that if I were stripped of every worldly good, I might possess all in him alone. Conscience is my witness, that now, in the fulness of worldly good things, and in the prospect of making some considerable provision for my family, I would be found referring my prosperity to his blessing on my endeavours. Frequently my heart is lifted up in thankfulness to my bountiful Benefactor. It is matter of grief to me, when I want the cheering tokens of his gracious presence, and the quickening influences of his good Spirit: but, when 'his love is shed abroad in my heart,' (and blessed be his name,

many such delicious repasts he hath indulged me with) the sense of it eclipses all the beauties and glories of the world in my esteem. I can say with Dr. Watts—

“ One gracious smile, my God from thee,  
One kind, forgiving word,  
Is more than all the world to me,  
’Twill greater joy afford.”

From all which, I cannot but hope, my heart is set most upon God.

What is the main design and business of my life? Any common spectator, who only sees and hears my general conversation, could not see reason to conclude, that I minded any thing so much as the profits and pleasures of this life. I must confess, they have too much of my heart, they occupy too much of my time and thoughts: yet, methinks I would be found living for, and chiefly intending a nobler end than sensual gratifications. I cannot say, that my active obedience and service, my exercise of self-denial and mortification on all proper occasions, do so clearly evince, as I could wish, that the glory of God is the main end of my life; but, though the evidence be too obscure, I cannot but hope nevertheless, that I have no other end, which sways so much with me. It is the grief of my soul, when I reflect on any thing I have done to displease God, or dishonour his holy religion. ‘My sorrow is stirred,’ when I sometimes observe the ignorance and wickedness of others, and more especially if I see the Lord’s-day, or hear the Lord’s name profaned. It is a pleasure to me, when I have an opportunity of doing good to others, and especially to those ‘of the household of faith.’ I think I have often found, that I should be content to be poor, to be despised, to suffer the loss of all things, yea, to be as severely tried as Job was, if it were the will of God, and that I might have grace equal to my day, and a revenue of glory might arise to the great Author of my being. I find I can freely part with my money to feed the poor, or to support the interest of the gospel, and bless God for enabling me ‘to give willingly.’ I have not for many years been solicitous for long life, but have kept my end much in view, and looked

upon preparation for death as the great business of life, and, though very defective, I hope I have been sincere therein. Desirous of some competent provision for my family, in case I should be taken away from them, yet I am not conscious of any great solicitude about it, having experienced in myself, my brothers, and sisters, that God can and will provide for us, if we be found in the way of duty. But I would be chiefly solicitous to train up my children in the fear of God; 'to see Christ formed in them,' and leave a divine blessing entailed upon them. From all which, I would humbly hope, that it is the main end and business of my life to please and glorify God.

And now, which would I rather part with, God or the world? In this, I think I can be more clear and certain. Indeed, how I should stand 'the fiery trial,' were I called to it, is hard to say. The thought of it is terrible: but God is all-sufficient; and from the experience I have had of divine consolations, I am well assured he is able to bear up the fainting spirit under the severest torments, to which this flesh of mine can be exposed. As for giving up a good trade, rather than a good conscience, or parting with riches, honours, pleasures, wife, children, and all my dearest earthly enjoyments, I humbly hope, the case is more plain; yea, that 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' I desire to ascribe the glory and praise of all attainments to the free grace of God in Christ, acknowledging that 'by the grace of God I am what I am.'

## DEVOUT RETIREMENT FROM THE WORLD.

*Saturday Evening, July 30, 1737.*—Retire now, O my soul, from a noisy, busy world, a world of various employments and manifold temptations, to converse a little with thyself. How dear, O my soul, should thy interests be to me; how much more so, than the interests of my body! I have done something these two or three last weeks; which I have reason to believe will conduce much to my worldly advantage, and how much am I pleased with the thought! I have heard this week something, which will probably be very prejudicial to my worldly interests, and how many

contrivances have I had to prevent the evils apprehended! Now, is not my soul's prosperity or adversity of greater moment to me? I shall be judged one day by him 'who trieth the reins and hearts, who will render to every man according to his works,' and can I be unconcerned how I shall pass the solemn test? Am I not conscious of many defects in the government of my passions, in the temper of my heart, and in my behaviour both towards God and man? How then, shall I stand to have my whole life impartially sifted, examined, and laid open? I flee to the blood of atonement; and humbly seek shelter and refuge from devouring wrath, in the bosom of my all-sufficient Saviour. I know 'he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him:' I know that his compassion is equal to his power, 'for he will not break the bruised reed?' Yet, I cannot but fear, lest in the day of trial my faith should fail. Sometimes I have had such a lively sense and convincing evidence of his power, goodness, and faithfulness, as also of my interest in him, that I have thought I could have sung with as much cheerfulness as good old Simeon—'Now let thy servant depart in peace.' Soon have I been convinced, that my strength and courage rise or fall in proportion to divine aids; that 'it is God who strengthens me with might by his Spirit in the inner man;' and that 'without Christ I can do nothing.' Rest thyself, therefore, O my soul, at all times, upon his grace, 'who is able to keep thee from falling, and to preserve thee blameless unto his heavenly kingdom.'

GOD TERRIBLE TO GUILTY SOULS.

*Lord's-day, July, 31, 1737.*---I have been hearing the terrors of the divine Majesty to guilty souls represented, by Mr. Bradshaw, from these words of Job---'Therefore am I troubled at his presence, when I consider, I am afraid of him.' Now, my soul, What is thy temper? I fear this great and terrible Majesty: I fear him for his *greatness*, who is able to cast me, both body and soul, into hell, and might have justly done so long since. I can say, the fear of him doth, in some measure, swallow up all other fear.

Though I must acknowledge, the fear of man, the fear of shame, and the fear of temporal loss, have often proved a great snare to me ; yet, so far as I remember, I can say, and to the glory of God be it spoken, when the sin was obvious, the guilt evident, into which such meaner fear would have betrayed me, then, on the contrary, the fear of God, the fear of displeasing and dishonouring him, hath been found the superior, the predominant principle in my soul. My courage and zeal have been enabled to trample upon all opposition and scorn, in the face of apparent danger, for the cause of God, of virtue, and religion. I hope, I can also say, I fear him for his *goodness*. A sense of gratitude to him is an obligation upon me. I have had such tastes, such experience of his goodness and grace, that I fear doing any thing to forfeit his gracious presence, and cause him to withdraw from me : I fear doing any thing to grieve his Holy Spirit, and prevent his cheering and quickening influences : I fear doing any thing to wound or waste my conscience, interrupt my peace with God, or make me shy of his presence. I hope this is the prevailing bent of my soul : yet, alas ! I frequently, I daily do things of a contrary tendency. How often do I omit, or slightly and hastily perform the duties of the closet ; by which, chiefly, the life and vigour of religion are cherished and maintained ! May I be more diligent for the future to redeem time for secret devotion ! The Spirit of God delights in a quiet, a meek and humble soul ; but how often do I suffer little provocations to ruffle me, and how easily do my keen and angry passions catch fire ! may I better rule my own spirit for the future ! May I be enabled to maintain a constant, habitual sense of the divine presence and observation, to keep me always in a composed frame ! Time is a choice jewel, a valuable talent, every minute of which should be well improved ; but how much of it do I suffer to run to waste ; and spend in unprofitable amusements, what should be spent in converse with God, in communing with my own heart, and even in looking diligently into the concerns of trade ! Others may suspect me of too

much eagerness in worldly pursuits, while I am conscious of too much slackness. May I henceforward be quickened to greater care and diligence to divide my time aright, and improve it to all valuable purposes! When tempted any way to neglect present duty, may the same principle that swayed with good Nehemiah, sway with me---‘ So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord.’ It is for want of consideration that men are not afraid of God. Did they duly consider God and themselves; did they consider the awful perfections of God, his irresistible power, his spotless holiness, and his inflexible justice; did they consider, that sin is highly provoking to him; did they consider, that he is every where, and takes notice of all their actions; did they at the same time consider their own guilt, which exposes them to the displeasure of God, and the terrors of his wrath, which extend to all our enjoyments, and even reach to our souls, and can wound them with insupportable distress, and that all the world cannot support or relieve us under his anger, but that it will pursue us to all eternity;---did they duly consider these things, how would they fear before him? How would ‘his excellency make them afraid, and his dread fall upon them!’

## GROWTH IN GRACE.

*Lord's-day, September, 18, 1737.*---‘ But grow in grace,’ was the subject of this day’s discourse, by Mr. Bradshaw. And now, O my soul, what are thy reflections? Certainly I have felt the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit in numberless instances. I think also, I have been made sensible of my corruptions, my sinfulness and misery, and been often humbled as in the dust. I have been convinced of my need of Christ, and somewhat I have seen of his excellency: and cannot but hope, that I have been made willing to embrace him, and that I have embraced him on his own terms. Oh! that I were made to see more of the worth of Christ, more to admire him, to love him more, and to be more zealous for his interest and glory. I certainly do esteem God as my chief good; my highest expectation of happiness is from him, and from his benignity

who is the fountain of goodness, the spring of everlasting consolation. 'I have none in heaven but God, nor any thing on earth that I desire' or love, 'in comparison of him.' Some tastes I have had of his love, and of those comforts, those 'rivers of pleasure which are at his right hand,' the sweetness of which infinitely transcend the choicest delights I ever tasted in mortal things. Surely, therefore, I have chosen him, yea, I cannot but choose him, for 'my portion,' my everlasting All. I have been intrusted with so much of this world's goods, as to prove what riches, honours, and pleasures of sense can do for me, and have found them all empty, delusive, and unsatisfying. On the other hand, that little I have experienced of his love assures me that he is an unfathomable ocean of excellency: yet, though I have not done all that I might to cherish and cultivate his love, surely I prize it above my very life, and dread his displeasure worse than death. Surely I may say, with the pious and ingenious Mrs. Rowe—

"If this be not a truth,  
I do not breathe, I have no hopes, nor fears,  
I know not where, I know not what I am;  
But wander in uncertainty and doubt."

Consequently sin, as sin, is the object of my abhorrence. I loathe and strive against what was my darling lust, though, 'alas! too faintly. Is not this 'body of sin' my heavy burden? I can appeal to my inmost conscience, as Mr. Baxter doth; yea, to God himself;---

"Would I long bear my heavy load,  
And keep my sorrows long?  
Would I long sin against my God,  
And all his mercies wrong?"

Is not my judgment, my practical judgment, more firmly determined for God? Speak, conscience! Is it not 'all my salvation, and all my desire,' to stand high in his favour, be conformed to his likeness, be made partaker of his holiness, and happy in his everlasting embraces? Are not my affections more disengaged than formerly, from riches, pleasures, and the honour that cometh from men; though,

alas! I feel too much the stirrings of pride, and need more mortification and self-denial? My affections cling to my wife and children, I think, more sensibly and closely than to any thing else below the skies; but yet I am convinced, should the great Sovereign strike all my comforts dead, one smile of his were a sufficient cordial, even under such an overwhelming trial. As to the duties of religion becoming more easy and pleasant, what shall I say? Here my assurance staggers. I have cause enough to lament with holy Job---‘O that it were with me as in months’ or years ‘past!’ How short, alas! how seldom, how broken are my secret devotions! What reason have I to weep over, and be ashamed of my secret prayers! ‘Lord, quicken thou me, and I will call upon thy name!’ On the whole, what thanks, what adoration, what love do I owe to ‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy hath begotten me again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!’

FAMILY AFFLICTIONS.

*Saturday, September 24, 1737.*—The case of my maid-servant (in the small pox) was thought to be desperate; but God hath dealt graciously in her recovery. She is snatched from the very jaws of death. Blessed be her kind Deliverer! May her future life be spent to good purpose! May I be more faithful in admonishing and instructing her in ‘the things that belong to her peace!’ One daughter was very ill of the same distemper, but another is like to be much worse. No sooner is one trial past, but another, a sorer trial comes on: ‘The clouds return after the rain.’ Such a burden, we cannot but fear, will overwhelm her tender frame, quench the lamp of life, and bring her down to the dust.

What if this should be the mournful issue! How wilt thou comport, my soul, with such a dispensation? Wilt thou quarrel with the great Disposer, find fault with his dealings, or submit with reluctance? No, that be far from me: ‘Let the pot-sherds strive with the pot-sherds of the earth; but woe be unto him that striveth with his

Maker.' Are we not in his hands 'as clay in the hands of the potter,' which he may crush or break at his pleasure? 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more.' This very dear child is a treasure committed to my care, a loan sent unto me by the great Lord of all, for which I am accountable to him, and may he not call in his own when he pleaseth? Is it not a matter of much duty, much care and labour, much watchfulness and diligence, to bring up a child for God? And should I grudge, should I complain, if God see good to release me so soon from such an important trust? O my soul, hast thou been faithful in devoting it by baptism, faithful in praying for it, and in forming it to obedience and virtue, so far as its capacity will admit? Then take the comfort of it. 'Thy work is with the Lord, and thy reward with thy God.' Or, hast thou been remiss and negligent? Then, be humbled for past neglects, and diligently improve the hours and days that remain, not only in praying for her life, but in devoting her afresh to God in Christ, begging that she may be interested in all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, and cheerfully resigning her to the divine disposal, whether in life or death.

*Saturday, October 1, 1737.*---This has been a week of much trial and exercise of my faith and patience. To see a beloved child blinded, and covered over with a loathsome disease, wrestling with death, ourselves helpless and impotent, our bowels yearning over her, but not capable of helping her to an easy respiration; in this distress, to eye steadfastly the hand of God, to justify him, to maintain high and honourable thoughts of him, to have all our expectations of relief from him---from his goodness and faithfulness---his power and all-sufficiency, when 'flesh and heart faileth;' this is a great trial and exercise of faith. Many a time, this day, hath it been whispered, (as it were) in mine ears---*Have faith in God!* Omnipotence can easily sustain her, and spread new life and vigour through every part, but if he choose not, sure I am, he doth all things well and wisely. Though he 'take from me the

desire of mine eyes with a stroke,' still I will trust him, yea, love and praise him. I find afflictions good for me. I have ever found them so. They are happy means in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to mortify my corruptions, to subdue my pride, my passion, my inordinate love to the creature; they soften my hard heart, bring me on my knees, exercise and increase faith, love, humility, self-denial: they make me 'poor in spirit,' and nothing in my own eyes. Welcome the cross! welcome deep adversity! welcome stripping providences! with Mr. Mason, they make me sing---

"O happy rod!  
That brought me nearer to my God."

Yesterday morning, and once or twice before, I had sweet enlargement of soul in humble, earnest, importunate supplication, and entire resignation. I can now say, (Lord, help me to say it with greater resolution) Come life, come death, welcome the will of God!

*Lord's-day, October 9, 1737.*—It is done. 'It is finished.' Her days are numbered, and they are finished.\* Do I 'sorrow as one that hath no hope?' Have I not reason to hope my child has fallen 'asleep in Jesus?' Have I not a prevailing hope of my own interest in the everlasting covenant? Have I not the testimony of my own conscience, that I have been faithful and sincere in devoting her to God in baptism, and many a time since? Have I not with lively actings of faith laid hold on the covenant for her, and recommended her to the mercy of a compassionate, all-sufficient Saviour? Have I not reason to believe, that she is received into the bosom of her dear Redeemer? The state of separate spirits is indeed far removed from our observation. It is but little that we know of the invisible world: but, surely, there is reason to hope, from what the word of God reveals, that my dear child is now a glorious, happy 'spirit made perfect,' and joined 'to the general

\* This was Mary, his youngest child. When she was born, is not recorded; but it must have been in, or after 1732.

assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.' Why then should I repine, or be dissatisfied, at her removal hence? If all lived to adult age, religious parents might be without trials peculiarly adapted to their patience, their faith, hope, love, and resignation. Many other reasons, no doubt, there are for this conduct of Providence: but it may well satisfy me, that 'what I know not now, I shall know hereafter.' For the present, 'I am sure the judgment of God is according to truth,' and that he doth all things well and wisely. Then welcome the will of God! 'If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.' I shall go to them, but they shall not return to me.

THE FOLLY OF IMMODERATE ANGER.

*Lord's-day, October 23, 1737.*---I am sorry to find the humbling sense of my late smarting affliction so much and so quickly worn off. It grieves me to find my spirit so untamed, my pride so unmortified. I have been transported last week into several indecent sallies of passion, disagreeable to my profession and character, and contrary to many solemn resolves. Certainly, pride is at the bottom, unmortified pride. It is true, I was 'not angry without a cause.' This servant had been negligent, another had spoiled his work, a third had been dishonest; but what then? Might I not have reprov'd these faults without passion? Is not a mild rebuke more likely to prevent such faults for the future? Or, if not, ought I not to have suffered a little loss patiently, rather than ruffle my temper, and disturb the peace of my soul? Doth it not argue great weakness to make another man master of my temper, and subject my tranquillity to every little disappointment? Be ashamed of this, O my soul, and let me learn henceforward better to govern my own spirit. Oh! could I learn to think more meanly of myself, surely I should not treat with a haughty insolence, even my inferiors, though they do things contrary to my interest! What dishonour do I bring on the gospel of Christ, when I, who have taken upon me the Christian name, discover to the world unmor-

tified passions; a spirit so unlike to the meek and lowly Jesus! Are not meekness and love, of the very spirit of the gospel? Is it not part of its distinguishing excellency, to break savage nature, and make it gentle; to civilize brutes and barbarians; to subdue unruly passions, and teach its votaries to 'bless them that curse, to bless and curse not?' Hath not my Saviour taught me—'to resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also?' Is not this to 'be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect?' How then, shall it appear that I am a disciple of Christ, if I suffer my resentment, my angry passions to arise, when no affront, no mischief, no disobedience were designed me; but merely, perhaps, an act of inadvertency or carelessness? Or, how can I expect to be 'forgiven the thousand talents I owe' to my great Lord, if I 'cannot forgive' my 'servant a hundred pence,' or bridle my passion, when the damage done me, perhaps, doth not amount to a single penny? Again consider, O my soul, when I discover angry resentments for a small neglect or mismanagement of a servant, is this 'doing to others, as I would that others should do to me?' Suppose I were in that servant's place, and had the same dependence on him for a livelihood, as he now hath upon me, which might have been the case, how would such a behaviour in him towards me sit upon my heart? What pain and uneasiness would it give me! How unreasonable should I think such a keen resentment, such an imperious tone, such an overbearing insolence, in my master or superior, when the fault was wholly negative; it may be, a mere omission! How tenderly should I expect or wish to be treated, were I in the place of those whom I treat so rudely! Why then, should I give to others a pain, a disturbance, a vexation, which I myself should think altogether unreasonable? Be deeply humbled, O my soul, for past transgressions of this kind; and for the future, let me guard against the first rising of passion, or check it as soon as it begins to swell; and let me reach after the amiable 'ornament of humility, a meek

and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.' So shall I learn to bear the cross incidents of life without the ruffle and disturbance of my own inward powers, the pain and terror of those about me, and without making others witnesses of my folly and weakness.

## INCONVENIENCES ON A JOURNEY.

*Lancaster, November, 1737.*—From this place I sent, in a letter to my wife, the following verses, which I composed for her, while I was riding alone, and in the dark:—

While distant from my dear abode,  
 And dearer partner's face,  
 Through lonesome paths and dreary ways,  
 I roam from place to place :

Frequent these pleasing thoughts return,  
 And sacred joys inspire—  
 When fears assail, and danger's nigh,  
 My Father, God, is nigher!

'Thou art my portion, Lord,' I cry;  
 Oh! let my cry be heard.  
 Thy favour is the light of life,  
 Thy providence my guard.

In various musings of the mind,  
 And thoughts that inward roll,  
 Thy comforts, which are all divine,  
 Cheer and delight my soul.

I find no certain dwelling-place,  
 But wander here and there;  
 I'm but a pilgrim here below,  
 As all my fathers were.

But, there remains for me 'a rest,'  
 'A house not made with hands,'  
 A 'mansion' on the heavenly plains,  
 Where my salvation stands.

Here, I'm expos'd to boist'rous winds,  
 And raging storms invade;  
 No fence, no shelter o'er my head,—  
 I find no friendly shade.

There, is a region all serene,  
 No cloud infests the sky;  
 Storms never roar, or gather round  
 The saints that dwell on high.

Through shades of night I grope along,  
 Bereft of gladsome day;  
 Many my dangers, and unseen,  
 While darkness veils my way:

But there the nations of the just,  
 Remote from gloomy night,  
 Are blest with rays of love divine,  
 And dwell in endless light.

Here we are mourning blasted joys,  
 Our dearest comforts die;  
 Vain are our fondest cries and tears  
 To hold them when they fly.

There they, restor'd to our embrace,  
 With heav'nly splendour shine;  
 And all, around our Father's board  
 Regale on joys divine.

ENDEAVOURS TO RECLAIM A BROTHER.

*Lord's-day, December 4, 1737.*—The providence of the Most High, which hath kept me all my days, brought me home last night in safety and health, from my northern circuit, in which I have been out a month. A little before I went from home, I heard a sermon,\* on the 'Joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' I was glad to see my brother John in his place, and attentive to the preacher, while he was very affectionately expostulating with sinners. I immediately determined to write to him, which I did as soon as I came home. I begged of him, once a-day for a week at least, to retire, and seriously ask himself some questions I gave him, and then pour out the sentiments of his heart in fervent prayer to God. He took my letter so kindly, that he attempted to put the advice in practice; but when he kneeled down to pray, he was seized with horror, and could do little else but weep. He after fell to drinking again, and was out till two or three in the morning. The second or third morning he came home in great agony of mind, accusing and condemning himself freely to his wife, not without some expressions of despair. In this temper he came to me, and in an hour or two of private conversa-

\* By the Rev. James Hancox, after this of Dudley.

tion declared his desire to leave off his sinful course, and suggested his great fear that he should not be able to overcome the strong habits of vice he had contracted. I endeavoured to comfort, as well as counsel him. On the morrow I set out for the north, and after a week's absence wrote to him many things with the same view. As his case lay much on my mind, I composed, in solitary seasons, but chiefly on horseback, and sent him the following soliloquy:—

THE CONVINCED SINNER.

When I survey my num'rous faults,  
How black and horrid is the train!  
The number far exceeds my thoughts,  
They're tinctur'd with the deepest stain.

Can such a sinner hope to find  
A gracious God, a Saviour kind?

My sins have so offended Heaven,  
They've been so long my daily food,  
I fear they cannot be forgiven,  
I fear they cannot be subdu'd.

I can't repent, I cannot pray;  
My head-strong lusts I must obey.

What! can there no relief be found?  
Am I abandon'd to despair?  
No balm in Gilead's happy ground?  
No Saviour, no Physician, there?

But must my trembling soul sustain  
The terrors of eternal pain?

Distracting thought! How shall I bear  
The unknown vengeance of a God,  
Whose wrath transcends my utmost fear?  
Oh! screen me from his vengeful rod.

With endless burnings who can dwell  
Or, 'bide the raging flames of hell?

How fast my minutes glide away!  
Silent, but certain, is their pace.  
Quickly will death conclude my day:  
Then, farewell calls and means of grace!  
Nor judgment lingers though forgot;  
My own damnation slumbers not.

See! the great Judge in pomp descends,  
With all his saints, in bright array,  
To doom his foes, to bless his friends.  
Oh! the dread horrors of that day:

Where shall I hide me? how retire  
From him, whose eyes are flames of fire?

He bids the archangel's trumpet sound!  
The sleeping clods awake, and hear:—  
See! countless throngs fill all the ground;  
And all, before his throne appear.

With nice survey his piercing eye  
The saint and sinner doth descry.

Joyful his saints exult, and hail  
The glorious triumphs of the day;  
While sinners tremble weep and wail,  
O'erwhelm'd with guilt and sore dismay;  
Angelic hosts at his command,  
Divide them quick to either hand.

Those, he applauds, with glory crowns,  
While pleasure sparkles in his eyes:  
These, he condemns with awful frowns,  
Inexorable to their cries.

Oh! might I then his plaudit gain,  
Refin'd and purg'd from every stain.

And shall I still persist in sin?  
I tremble at the guilty thought!  
Shall foul corruption reign within,  
Since my redemption Christ hath bought?  
The chief of sinners have obtain'd  
His grace, and pard'ning mercy gain'd.

Oft have I heard the gospel sound  
With tenders of forgiving love.  
Of those that seek him he'll be found;  
For, contrite hearts his bowels move.  
Who knows, since patience yet takes place,  
But this may prove my day of grace?

Their wants will surely be supply'd,  
Whose earnest cries his grace implore:  
Nor ever was his suit deny'd,  
Who humbly knock'd at mercy's door:  
Here, then, I'll wait, and knock and cry;  
If I must perish here I'll die!

NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

*Lord's-day, January 1, 1738.*—With what shame, with what thankfulness, have I reason to reflect on the year that is past? It hath been a year of mercy, many and multiplied mercies. It hath been a year of bodily health, little pain or sickness have I been exercised with. It hath also, been a year of prosperity: bad as trade is in general, God

hath been pleased to bless my endeavours with good success: if not equal to some years, yet I am sure far beyond my deserts. But, what returns have I made to God for all his mercies? How backward have I been to devotional duties! How remiss and languid in them! How rarely have I enjoyed sensible communion with God! How little time have I set apart (unless when travelling) from the concerns of the world, for solemn meditation, for conversing with God and my own soul! How often have I been transported into indecent sallies of rash and sinful anger; though not so as to strike any person, nor so as to utter profane, scurrilous, or abusive language; yet, so as to suffer my mind to be distempered and over-heated, so as to lose the government of myself, perhaps grieve my wife, children, fellow-Christians, and expose myself to their censures. May I double my guard against this my constitution-sin. May I be more earnest and frequent in praying for strength and succour from above in the hour of trial and temptation, that 'as my day, so my strength may be.' And may I be more constant every morning in devotional exercises, which I have often found so very useful to promote my watchfulness, to compose my spirits, and to mend my frame and temper of mind.

UNHAPPY TEMPER AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

*Lord's-day, February 5, 1738.*—This day I have been commemorating the dying love of Christ. But, oh! how cold hath my love been to him, whose love to me hath been so fervent. How unsuitable, the frame of my mind to such a solemnity! I would be deeply humbled for it, and inquire into the cause. However, I have this comfort, in reflecting on what passed at the Lord's table, that in meditating before the administration, and in setting myself earnestly to seek God, I could say Lord, thou hast been found of me in this place, and on this occasion heretofore; and art not thou the same God? Is not the desire of my soul sincerely towards thee? I received some comforting assurance, that I am the Lord's, sincerely devoted to him, and that he is my God in covenant, 'my

portion' and my all. Yea, I was persuaded of my readiness, through assisting grace, to yield a cheerful obedience and subjection to his will in all things, so far as I should know it, even to the discharge of the most self-denying services, and the patient bearing of the most bitter sufferings for his sake. May this be the fixed, determinate purpose of my soul, and herein may I increase more and more!

A STATE OF TRUE CONTENTMENT.

*Lord's-day, March 26, 1738.*—My heavenly Father hath not only blessed me with a competent portion of the good things of this life, but he hath also blessed me with some comfortable measure of contentment with my lot. He hath given me enough; and enabled me to think it enough, both for myself and family, although he should not be pleased to add any farther increase. Blessed be God, I can take a cheerful enjoyment of the comforts of life, and gratify the lawful and innocent demands of nature, without that fear of want, of which Solomon says—'This is vanity,' and 'it is an evil disease.' I can pursue my trade and worldly business, in an humble dependance on the divine conduct and blessing, without an anxious solicitude for success; and, through grace, can bear disappointments and losses with humble submission to divine disposal, without excruciating care and vexation. I cast myself, my family, my most important interests, my all, upon the Lord, with humble trust in his all-sufficiency and goodness, not only as able to sustain me, but who hath promised—'that all things shall work together for my good;' and, to 'preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.' Far be it from me to attribute the praise of this to myself. No. 'This is the gift of God.' It is not my own wisdom or goodness. 'It is the blessing of God that maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.' I would thankfully ascribe 'to the praise of the glory of his grace,' and to the aids of his Holy Spirit, whatever good dispositions I find in myself, and would humbly consecrate all to his service: but, I would charge on myself the defects of my obedience, and the remains of envy and discontent, which are yet too much unmortified. I hav

not attained to that full contentment with my estate, which the commandment requires, and which I would be found reaching after. Fain would I be brought to think my present state, however inferior to others in riches and greatness, and whatever losses and disappointments I am at any time exercised with, to be best for me. In order to this, and as much as possible to perfect my contentment, I would—Consider the folly and mischief of *discontent*. It cannot mend my state, but will make it much worse. It is not a likely means of obtaining the blessing of God, but the way to bring his frowns, if not his curse, on what I have. It will unfit me for the duties of religion, and for the proper business of my station in life, so far as it prevails. It will hinder my enjoyment of the comforts I have, and add bitterness to every affliction. It is, indeed, productive of envy, malice, hatred, injustice, and almost every kind of unrighteousness. On the other hand—Consider, O my soul, the many and great advantages of *contentment*. It is pleasing to God; it honours and glorifies him. It disposes us to a cheerful discharge of our duty in all circumstances. It gives us the best enjoyment of life. It will prevent many evils, and preserve from many temptations. It is a cure of covetousness, or an undue esteem of the world, and inordinate desire after it; as also, of pride, or too high thoughts of ourselves. It will sweeten every affliction; at least it will take off much of its bitterness, and help us to bear up under losses, reproaches, poverty, and disgrace, if we suffer as well-doers, with composure and serenity of mind. O my soul, labour more after this excellent temper, and check and mortify every rising, every motion of discontent.

## RENEWED ENDEAVOUR TO RECLAIM A BROTHER.

June, 1738.—Alas! I have reason to believe the proceedings stated, December 4, in the case of my brother John, are without effect; he is become as bad as ever, and to all appearance, more hardened in his vicious course, for he now justifies what before he freely condemned. I have taken his case into consideration again, and sent him a

copy of verses of another cast; but I fear, by his answer they will be equally ineffectual with the former.

Since you will drink, till every serious thought,  
 Till reason's drown'd in the luxurious draught;  
 Night after night your revels will renew,  
 Out-brave your conscience, suffer no review;  
 But, lost to friendship, honour, fear, and shame,  
 To the whole town your folly will proclaim:  
 Though certain woe your vicious course attends,  
 Though oft besought, and warn'd by faithful friends,  
 Though punish'd oft by scoffs and ling'ring pain,  
 Yet still incorrigible will remain—  
 Go! take your head-strong course, add cup to cup,  
 Repeat your crimes, and fill your measure up!  
 Adown your throat the precious liquor troll,  
 And drench with plenteous streams your thirsty soul!  
 At midnight hours reel cautiously to bed,  
 Insult your wife, repose your swimming head!  
 Snore on, till noise of day disturb your sleep,  
 To bus'ness then, heart-sick, reluctant creep!  
 Never reflect on time, or cash mispent,  
 Suppress each serious thought, nor once relent!  
 If conscience tremble, urg'd with guilty fear,  
 Let flowing cups the grov'ling dastard cheer!  
 If yet it quail, with dire forebodings prest,  
 Persuade the foolish thing—'tis all a jest!  
 A mere chimera!—there's no heaven, or hell!  
 Or God, or devil!—Such idle whims repel.  
 Renounce your baptism, and reverse your vows,  
 And sell yourself to tipple and carouse!  
 Till health impair'd, till constitution broke;  
 Till credit sunk, yourself the common joke;  
 Till spurn'd of all, unpitied as unblest;  
 With want, with pain, and various woes oppress;  
 Till spirits' drain'd, to a sick-bed confin'd  
 And rack'd with terrors of a guilty mind,  
 Relentless, hopeless, you will shortly lie  
 Appall'd with horror, and—despairing—die!

DEATH OF A FRIEND.

*Lord's-day, July 2, 1738.*—It hath pleased the All-wise, the sovereign Disposer, and Lord of all, this morning to call away in the midst of his days and usefulness, my dear friend Mr. Joseph Tayler\* of Whitelench, a wise and a

\* Father of the venerable Rev. Thomas Tayler, late pastor of the church in Little Carter-lane, London.

good man. About a fortnight since he *chanced*, as we commonly express it, to push one of the points of a table-fork into his thumb, but not very deeply, so that he did not think it needful to take any notice of it till the next day, when he found it painful, and such was its progress, that this morning he took his flight hence to keep an eternal sabbath.

Now, O my soul, what use, what improvement shall I make of this awful, this surprising, this mournful Providence? This is our sacrament-day; at the ordinance I have often admired, and been affected with his serious, yet lively deportment: and, how much clearer than mine, are the views he now hath of the mysteries of redeeming love! We have often taken sweet counsel together, and spent many an hour in pleasant conversation. I have lost a dear associate; a delightful and profitable companion; one that had a clear, penetrating head, and could assist me in searching out truth. One to whom I could freely open my mind, and from whom I have often received light and instruction: one who loved me, and was often inviting me to his house. Oh! what sights has he had this day. I am ready to wish that my soul were in his soul's stead. O my soul! keep thine end stedfastly in thine eye: may I live every day as my last; 'following them who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises;' that so I may at last go to him, though he shall not return to me.

*July 9.*—This day Mr. Bradshaw preached Mr. Tayler's funeral-sermon, from—'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,' towards the close of which, he drew his character in the following words: "He set out in the ways of God betimes, and persevered therein to the end of his life: he had a deep sense of religion on his mind, which had an influence on his conduct:—he had an excellent natural capacity, which he greatly improved by much reading and close thinking:—he had a large compass of knowledge, a quickness of apprehension, and solidity of judgment, which made him capable of great usefulness:—and as he was well-furnished, so he was ready to do the kindest

offices, and serve the interests of those about him :—he was a lover of good men, and valued all whom he had reason to believe loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.”

This, I believe to be his true character. How blessed then is his memory ; but how extensive the loss of such a useful, valuable man ! I may add of my own observation, that he was not dogmatical, but always open to conviction. Though an able disputant, yet when a tenet which he had espoused and defended, has been refuted by a train of clear, strong arguments, he has not only felt the force thereof, but in my hearing has frankly given it up, with this ingenuous acknowledgment—“ I cannot resist the force of such reasoning,” which I thought as much redounded to his praise, as did the victory to that of his antagonist. I have not duly improved the conversation of this valuable friend ; may I now improve his loss, by mortifying my affections to all things here below ; and employing the faculties and capacity God has given me, in useful service, to the utmost of my power, now while time and opportunity last, and by following him so far as he followed Christ.

YOUTH EXCITED TO THINK OF DEATH.

*To his Nephew Watson.\**

DEAR COUSIN,

Kidderminster, July 11, 1738.

It was a very mournful providence, which at once bereaved your dear parents of their only daughter, and you of

\* Mr. John Watson was born at Bromsgrove, June 23, 1725. He was the son of the gentleman to whom the letter, dated December 3, 1753, is addressed, and of Hannah the sister of Mr. Williams, already mentioned. Mr. Watson's history and that of his uncle are interwoven. In June, 1740, he went to reside with his uncle as an apprentice, and shortly after the expiration of his term of servitude, became copartner. At a period coeval with the latter event, he was admitted a communicant of the church, under the pastoral care of the Rev. E. Fawcett ; and after eight or ten years, was chosen for a deacon, which office he retained till his death, June 16, 1804. The Supplement to the Evangelical Magazine for that year, contains a judicious and instructive memoir of Mr. Watson, by the Rev. John Humphrys of London, who will be again alluded to in other parts of this volume. In the memoir, the reader will find it stated, that—“ Mr. Watson was eminently distinguished by qualities both of the head and of the heart :” “ his integrity nothing could shake :” “ he feared the face of no man. In him, the sublime maxim of Seneca was strikingly illustrated—“ No man seems

your only sister. I doubt not you, to whom she was so near and dear, could not but share deeply in the common grief of all your uncles, aunts, cousins, and many others that were acquainted with her. But let me tell you, cousin, it is not enough to grieve and mourn under so awful a dispensation. Such a providence hath a voice. When death comes into a family, it calls loudly to every surviving member of it, and I cannot but hope you did then ‘hear the rod,’ and did consider ‘who appointed it.’ Perhaps, by this time the sound thereof ceases to toll in your ears. Shall I, therefore, put you in mind? I hope you will not think it impertinent, or unseasonable, at this distance of time, to be reminded of it; for the lessons it dictates, are not to be observed for a day, or a week, or a month, or a year, but throughout your whole life.—It is designed to

to estimate virtue more, no man is more devoted to it, than he who will hazard even his reputation as a good man, rather than wound his conscience.” In this just eulogy every person must join who was admitted to the privilege of intimacy with Mr. Watson; whose felicity it was to be united as a partner-in-life to a lady possessing a mind more than usually cultivated. In September, 1749, he married the daughter of Mr. John Wilkinson of Kendal. That gentleman having become a widower while his child was young, felt himself for that reason, the more concerned to protect her from the influence of worldly contagion.\* His anxiety on her account, by a particular leading of Providence (noticed by Mr. Williams, February 13, 1746,) was a means of Miss Wilkinson being invited to reside for a time in the family of Mr. Williams; from which circumstance proceeded all the material consequences of her future life. “This pious lady,” writes the author of the memoir above-mentioned, “was remarkably sensible and serious in her conversation; her letters are replete with sentiments of piety, and exhibit great elegance of diction; and her *diary*, if the delicacy of her friends would permit its publication, would prove an acceptable present to the religious public.” She died December 10, 1799.

\* Subsequent to the publication of the first edition, the editor received a letter dated June 15, 1815, from Mrs. Walker, of Kidderminster, containing this passage: “You will not be surprised to hear that the just tribute of respect which you pay to the characters and memory of my late beloved and truly excellent parents, was particularly gratifying to my feelings.—From them I learnt many circumstances relative to the persons whose names are introduced in this new edition, which renders it very interesting to me. Will you allow me to rectify a mistake respecting the cause of my mother residing in Mr. Williams’s family. Her father *was not at that time a widower*, which your good uncle Humphrys seems to think in the account he drew up of my dear father; my grandmother not dying till about the year 1766.”

mind you of your mortality. Not only that you should think of it, while the affecting object lay in your sight; or when you were attending it to its dusty bed: or for that evening, when the sorrowful scene was fresh in your memory. Did you not on that melancholy occasion, reflect thus?—"My sister is dead and gone, who was younger than I. She was lately as likely to live as I now am. A rosy bloom overspread her cheeks, betokening health and vigour; but now, alas! the roses are withered, and turned into a mortal paleness. Who knows but my turn may be next! She that was lately so sprightly, lies now senseless and inanimate: and, how soon may this be my case! Who knows what a day or a week may bring forth!" Did you think so then; and is not the case the same still? Will it not be the same as long as you live? Meditate, therefore, daily on your mortality.—Not only should it mind you, that you are a dying creature, but should also quicken you to prepare to die. You know that all of you will not die: man is a compound being; the material substance will die and perish; but there is an immortal, invisible, immaterial substance within, which, when the body dies, takes its flight as a bird when it escapes out of a cage, and is carried by angels to its proper place. They that loved God whilst here, and devoted themselves sincerely to his service, and are made meet for the business and blessedness of heaven, shall at death be carried thither. On the other hand, they who had a prevailing aversion to God and holiness, and a love to the ways of sin, shall be turned into hell, and be made companions of devils and damned spirits. Now, which of these two states would you choose? I know it is not possible you should choose the latter: but remember, they who choose the *ways* of sin, do in effect choose its *wages*. Let this providence, therefore, excite you to prepare to die, by devoting yourself entirely to God. Do it now. Set out betimes in the ways of God, whereby you will 'lay up a good foundation for yourself against the time to come,' and will hereafter 'lay hold on eternal life.'—There is one voice more of this awful stroke,

which you should never forget—That you are now your parents' only hope. Had your sister lived, then, though *you* should have proved perverse and disobedient, they might have had comfort in *her*: but now she is gone, if you should prove a son of sorrow, an heart-breaking to them, where shall they look for comfort? You will bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.' Cousin, 'if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine;' for I can assure you, that your welfare and well-doing will administer matter of real joy to, your affectionate friend and loving uncle,

J. W.

## DELIVERANCE FROM FIRE.

*Saturday, July 15, 1738.*—How good is it to trust in God, and to commit ourselves, our all, morning and evening, to his protection! This morning we have been favoured with a singular deliverance from danger by fire. Between three and four o'clock, our female servant dreamed that a neighbouring house was on fire, and that it was also quickly extinguished. By the agitation which the dream occasioned, she discomposed her bed-clothes, and became cold; on which, awaking, she raised herself to replace her covering, and by that means moved her shoes; their grating sound awoke my wife, for we were in the room beneath, who at first imagined the girl was rising; but after revolving in her mind why she should rise so early, drew back the bed-curtain to enable her to judge of the hour, and immediately observed smoke in the room. My wife gently roused me, and asked what occasioned the smoke. I sprang from my bed, and hastily put on part of my dress, during which short time the smoke became much increased, but from its direction, I immediately guessed from whence it proceeded. Accordingly, running down the stairs I made to the parlour, and on opening the door saw, through thick smoke, a glowing fire, and round about it a circling flame. I ran to the pump for water, and threw part of the contents of a pail on the fire, by which I was compelled to retreat from the effects of the vapour

and smoke. Hoping I had checked its power, I ran to calm my wife's fears, and to put on more clothing, which done, I as quickly returned and repeated the application of water, till the fire was quite subdued. I found it had been occasioned by the snuff of a candle being improperly thrown into a spitting-box, filled with saw-dust the snuffers not being at hand. The window-curtain nearest to the box was burnt all away from bottom to top; the floor was burnt through, the whole breadth of the box, and had been on flame around it; the groundsel of the room, a thick solid beam, was burnt to charcoal more than an inch deep, and about the length of ten inches; one of the oaken wainscot-pannels had been on flame and part of it consumed; yet the window-seat, which was deal and projected nearly two inches over the pannel, and the corner of the seat much discoloured by, and as I may say, roasted in the flame, had not caught it, which appears to every body very wonderful. It somewhat added to my confusion at the time, and now enhances the mercy of the deliverance, that for many years I had regularly insured, but had omitted it this year, partly through inadvertency, and partly through my brother Housman being taken ill when in London, last February, whom I had desired to pay a year's insurance for me.

Consider now, O my soul, the greatness of this mercy, and take notice of the interposition of divine providence in working out this deliverance. Probably, if none of us had awoke before six o'clock, our usual hour; or if we had lain unapprized of it but one hour longer the fire penetrating through the board would have caused a circulation of the air, which would have accelerated the action of the fire, and, the whole room being wainscoted round, would soon have become impossible to be subdued; or, if we had escaped with our lives, it might have destroyed much of our substance, and spread desolation around us. Why was it, that the servant should have at such a juncture, a disquieting dream, and my wife be so easily disturbed? Were these things the effects of chance? Surely, no! So seasonable

an alarm must have been under the direction of Him who is the Keeper of Israel, and who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.

“ He doth sustain our weakest powers  
With his almighty arm,  
And watch our most unguarded hours  
Against surprising harm.”

WATT.

What shall I render to the Lord for this and all his other benefits! My heart for some time overflowed with love and gratitude. Oh! may the sensations excited by this deliverance never wear off. Who would be proud on account of riches! How soon may they make themselves wings and flee away! Who would withhold from God his due, either for the relief of the poor, or the support of his gospel! How easily, how convincingly can he shew us the vanity and absurdity of covetousness! How safe and wise is it to trust in God, to wait on him, and have our expectation from him alone! How thankful should I be to a delivering God, and how careful to walk worthy of his mercies!

CONJUGAL LOVE.

*To the Publisher of the Gentleman's Magazine.\**

July, 1738.

SIR,

I meet with many fine things in your Magazine, addressed to young ladies, in order to win their affection; but seldom, if ever, have seen any thing done, in the poetical way, to preserve or cherish it after marriage. I hope the poets do not all live and die bachelors: why then, should they be less inspired with enjoyment, than with expectation or desire? Or why should it be thought a subject unworthy or unfit for the muses, to cultivate or celebrate conjugal love? As I was travelling lately in a pleasant evening far from home, the smiling gaiety of the season all around me inspiring delight, my thoughts took an agreeable turn that way, and in an hour or two, on a round trot, produced the following lines:—

\* This letter and the verses were inserted in the Magazine, for August, 1738.

*Mercator to his Amanda.*

O thou, in whom complacence dear I find,  
 The sweetest solace of my lab'ring mind,  
 (Saving what sweeter to His grace I owe,  
 At whose right hand rivers of pleasure flow,)  
 Thou dearest partner of my joys and cares,  
 Thou daily subject of my fervent prayers,  
 Whom should I love but thee, my charming spouse,  
 To whom I stand engag'd by solemn vows?  
 Are children dear—and not Amanda more,  
 Amanda, who the beauteous offspring bore?  
 Whom should I care to please, my fair, but thee,  
 Who gav'st thyself in blooming youth to me?  
 Nor parents' frowns thy steady heart could move,  
 Firm to thy choice, and constant in thy love;—  
 Love, which through years in pensive patience spent,  
 Bow'd their reluctant minds to late consent.  
 Blest be the day! when Hymen join'd our hands,  
 And bound our gentle hearts with mutual bands;  
 The day when thou by pure affection led,  
 Didst take me for thy spouse, thy guide, thy head.  
 Hail! wedded love, source of domestic joys,  
 Hence! jarring discord, which all bliss destroys.  
 Still may my breast with chastest passion burn  
 Still may my dear an equal flame return;  
 Connubial flame still in thy bosom glow  
 Fond as the loving hind, and pleasing roe.  
 So shall thy bliss my joy perpetual prove,  
 And I be ever ravish'd with thy love.

## DEATH OF A SISTER.

*Lord's-day, August 6, 1738.*—Frequent and loud are the calls of providence to my vain, earthly heart, to leave all earthly snares and come away. How many monitions have I that I must die! My dear friends and relatives are dying around me. The removal of one after another of those who were dear and desirable to me, to whom I could with freedom unbosom myself, to whom I was always welcome, who loved me and took pleasure in my prosperity, renders this world a less desirable abode. The loss of such friends should prove the means of fixing my frequent meditations on that state into which I hope they are translated, of disengaging my affections from the present state of guilt and grief, and of drawing out my earnest desires after that blessed world in which I hope to rejoin them, and where

I shall behold my God and Saviour with rapturous joy, and ever-growing delight; view over at leisure the wonders of his wisdom, power, and love, in the worlds of nature, providence, and grace; and for ever triumph in the undoubted tokens of his special, everlasting love. Last Wednesday, the remains of my dear sister Green were committed to the grave. That comely face is no longer so; 'corruption' is her 'father,' and 'the worm' her 'mother and' her 'sister.' She died on Monday night, after wrestling hard with death all the day. Her departure happened while I was earnestly, and with lively affection praying for her, in another room, with my brother, now her mournful relict, and others. I had just finished what supplications I had to offer on her behalf, that God would graciously accept of her repentance, faith, and self-dedication; that he would pardon and purify her, and consign her departing spirit to the care of guardian angels, when I remarked that her groans, which till then, had continually sounded in my ears, were ceased; and, I soon understood by the motion of their feet who were attending on her, that she was gone; this naturally transferred my thoughts from the dead to the living, to pray for survivors, that we might wisely improve and submit aright to the awful stroke.—I am now going to the table of the Lord. She was my seat-fellow at the last two sacramental seasons. I hope she is now eating that bread and drinking that wine which is for ever new. She discovered, the last time, sensible tokens of very lively affections, and I trust also, Christian graces stirring, at that ordinance, and afterward seemed more willing, and even desirous to be gone, if it were the will of God, and expressed hopes that she had in her death. May these considerations have their suitable influence on my heart, when I am sitting at that mysterious board; remind me of my own mortality; and engage me so to act and demean myself, as not knowing whether this may not be my last opportunity of this nature.

## ON FEAR OF DEATH.

Why, O my soul, so loth to die?  
 Why so afraid from hence to go?  
 What is there in this vale of tears  
 To captivate and charm thee so?

Thou canst not find a full content  
 In all the wide creation's field.  
 Here's nothing that can fill a mind,  
 Or proper satisfaction yield!

How often hast thou mourn'd and cry'd—  
 Oh! that I'd pinions like a dove,  
 I'd fly from this deceitful world,  
 I'd soar on high and dwell above!

Canst thou forget, when to thy Lord  
 Some near approaches thou hadst made,  
 And tasted at his hallow'd board  
 The sacred symbols—wine and bread:

How, burning with the purest flame,  
 This was the language of my heart—  
*Now* Jesus! take me to thyself,  
 And let me never, never, part!

The sharpest sting of death is sin,  
 The strength of sin is from the law;  
 But against these thou may'st from Christ  
 Sufficient help and comfort draw.

Thou need'st not fear, for surely he  
 Who left his heaven to seek thee here,  
 Thy passage thither will secure,  
 And kindly entertain thee there.

Angels shall bear thee to the place  
 Where he's enthron'd above the skies:  
 And what he purchas'd with his blood  
 When thus brought home he'll not despise.

## PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

*Wednesday, August 30, 1738.*—'I know,' says Job, 'that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.' Is this a serious truth, and should it not then, be seriously considered? Should it not be admitted daily into my serious contemplations; now, while life lasts, which is so uncertain, and while something may be done towards making my death both safe and comfortable?

Have I any concern, in the world, of equal importance with this; or that so justly demands some portion of my time to be set apart for this solemn purpose; even while I am hot and eager in my earthly pursuits? If my great work be not yet done, what an indispensable necessity is there, that I set myself seriously to think on death, in order to quicken me in preparation for it! What care should I take to mortify my corruptions! How earnest and importunate should I be at 'the throne of grace,' for renewing and sanctifying grace, that the divine image might be stamped on my soul; that it might be beautified and adorned with every Christian grace and virtue, that these may shine forth in my life and conversation: that I may 'adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things,' and may be found 'meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light!' Or, if I have hope, through rich grace, that such a blessed change is begun in me; yet what need have I of the most quickening means, to make me diligent in getting a supply of whatever is lacking in my faith, love, and joyful hope? Do I know yet, what it is to die? Or what farther grace and strength I shall want, and to which I have not attained? 'It is appointed unto men *once* to die.' It is but *once* that I am to take my leave of these mortal shores, and launch forth into the boundless ocean of eternity. It is but *once* that I am to resign my departing spirit, with faith, and hope, and humble confidence, to the care of my gracious Redeemer: but *once* I am to close mine eyes on these transitory scenes, and immediately open them, by a new vision, on an amazing unknown scene, in a region widely different from this, and in the midst of spiritual beings. Notwithstanding I have had for many years, and still have, an habitual prevailing hope, that my everlasting state is made safe and secure; that God is my Father, friend, and 'portion;' and that I am his by electing, adopting love, and renewing grace; yet, how do I know this hope will abide, and sustain the agonies of a dissolution? How different a view may I then have of my past sins! How much more black and

frightful may they then appear than now in a time of health and strength! What different reflections may I then make on my repentance, my sorrow for sin, my faith in Christ, and my several acts of duty and obedience! The sins of my youth, many of which are forgotten, may then revive and affright my trembling conscience; ‘and the terrors of the Lord may set themselves in array against me.’ What can comfort me then, but the testimony of a good conscience, and this, sealed and witnessed to by the comforting Spirit; What, but an overcoming faith, in an all-sufficient Saviour, and evidenced by sincere obedience of heart and life to whatsoever he hath commanded? If God speaketh peace, who is he that shall then speak terror? But, in this, as well as many other cases—‘the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.’ Many a bright day hath closed with a cloudy evening: yet, ordinarily, where ‘conscience is void of offence towards God and man,’ death will be attended with present peace and joy. Be it, however, my chief concern, that my death may be *safe*; so that when I die, I may ‘sleep in Jesus,’ leaving it to the great Disposer of all events to allot to me what measure of *comfort* and *joy* he sees to be most for his glory.

## HOPEFUL PROSPECTS CONCERNING A CHILD.

*To his Daughter Phebe.\**

DEAR CHILD,

Kidderminster, September 1, 1738.

IT hath given me many pleasant reflections since you went to Bromyard, when I have thought of the agreeable situation you are in, and what advantages you enjoy; and I flatter myself that you are making a good use of them. Next, and subordinate to my own, and that of my dear other self, I have nothing more at heart than the felicity of my children; and I can truly say—I rejoice in every thing that has a tendency for your good, either for body or soul, but chiefly that your soul may prosper. I rejoice in those good beginnings, those buddings of a work of grace, which appear in you: that tenderness of sinning; that conscientious sense of duty; that care to please and obey

\* Then visiting Mrs. Philipps.

which you have all along discovered. And I hope you will not rest in any present attainments, but be going on from strength to strength. Be suspicious of yourself; always maintain a holy jealousy lest you should grow formal and heartless in duty, and take up with the work done, instead of fervent devotion and communion with God therein.

Present my duty, service, and love, to my good aunt and cousins. It is a sickly time here, but we are all, through distinguishing mercy, in good health, at the same time that four in the neighbourhood are ill of an epidemic fever. I hope you are daily mindful of us in your prayers, and can assure you that you are constantly remembered on devout occasions by, dear child, your truly affectionate parent,

J. W.

COMMITTING THE SPIRIT TO CHRIST.

*Lord's-day, September 17, 1738.*—‘ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ With these words Stephen the proto-martyr closed his eyes in death, when a furious, bigotted mob had barbarously bruised and battered his body with a shower of stones. Thus, the apostle Peter directs them that ‘ suffer according to the will of God, to commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator :’ thus, David in great danger and distress cries—‘ Into thine hand I commit my spirit, thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth :’ and thus, our blessed Lord, just before he yielded up the ghost, cried out—‘ Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit.’ The day is coming, the hour is drawing on; even whilst I am writing and meditating on it, it is making its advances; when this body, so dear to me, which I have tended and nourished with so much care, must die: then all its motions and operations will cease, and it will become wholly untenantable to this active, immortal spirit, which will immediately dislodge hence, and being disburdened of the crazy load, will flee into the world of spirits. Before this, perhaps, pain and grief will render life a burden, embitter all its comforts, and make the prospect of rest, even in the grave, inviting and delightful. How-

ever that may be, the intimate union of soul and body, my unacquaintedness with the inhabitants of the other world, together with some uncertainty about the issues of death, make my soul ready to fear, and how distant soever the event, to tremble at the thought. Oh! what will it be to sail between world and world. What, to quit this earthly tenement, and seek a new, an everlasting abode in the immense, the boundless regions of eternity!

“Hov’ring about these mortal shores,  
 Mine eye with vast survey,  
 Views the dread darksome gulph, that leads  
 To realms of heavenly day,

This is the vast, untry’d abyss,  
 My soul, thou must explore;  
 Oh! for a kind, a skilful hand  
 To waft the stranger o’er.”

I have been present at the death of many of my dear friends. I beheld my dear father’s dying agonies! I heard his dying groan, while, sitting on the bed-side, he leaned his head on my breast. Lively emotions of joy that moment prevailed and triumphed over all my compassionate grief. I was glad his weary soul was got free from those excruciating pains which were occasioned by a stone in his bladder, and which for many days, yea, weeks and months, had lain heavy upon him. It was with a pleasure unfelt before, that my thoughts pursued his departing spirit to a better world and state. I could not but wish ‘my soul in his soul’s stead,’ had it been the will of my heavenly Father. I know, or can conceive but little, what violent struggles of dissolving nature, what anxious fears, what perplexing doubts, might distract and vex his trembling soul, in that awful hour. As little do I know, what sudden tides of joy transported his exulting spirit, as soon as the vital bands were burst, and he found himself in the hands of heavenly guards. With what joyful admiration and surprise did he behold that new, that strange, that glorious scene, which then opened to him! How soon were his fears banished, and the dolorous griefs forgot, which he endured in the body? What rapturous joy possessed him, to hear himself accosted by benigu,

glorious spirits, as a brother and fellow-servant! What ravishing pleasure! to hear his guardian, who had ministered to him upon earth, and been witness to his pious care and watchfulness, his self-denial and mortification, his godly sorrow, his warm devotion, his earnest wrestlings with God, and zeal for God's honour and interest; as well as to his frailties and follies of life;—to hear such a one assure him of divine approbation and 'acceptance in the Beloved;' and recounting many instances in which he had rescued him from impending dangers, seen, or unseen; guarded him from innumerable evils; succoured him in hours of temptation; assisted his devotions; animated his pious resolutions; silenced his fears; resolved his doubts; directed his way; prospered his undertakings; supported him under adversity; and brought good to him out of evil; perhaps, informing him of the divine care and kindness to his mourning widow and fatherless children! Who can say, what sights he saw, different from what he had seen with the eyes of flesh!—or, what sentiments he conceived; how much more just and true, how much more refined and exalted, than those he had entertained in this imperfect state! How much more knowledge did he gain in one hour, than in the sixty years of his pilgrimage here! How much more justly was he brought to conceive of God, of his essence, nature, perfections, providence, grace, and glory! What demonstrative, yet intuitive knowledge did he quickly attain of those sublime mysteries, which in all ages have puzzled men of the most acute penetration! How was he made clearly to discern the beautiful harmony of those seeming contradictions in various passages of divine revelation, which have employed the tongues and pens of subtile disputants, and occasioned miserable divisions in many Christian churches! Doctrines which now seem incompatible, such as the Divine prescience and human free agency, God's free grace and man's free will, the father begetting and the Son begotten, the Spirit proceeding from both, a Trinity in Unity, and many other seeming paradoxes, how are his perplexities concerning them for ever done away!

## A GOOD MAN SATISFIED FROM HIMSELF.

*Lord's-day, April 8, 1739.*—Solomon says—‘A good man shall be satisfied from himself.’ Surely he alone is a good man, who loves God above all;—who hath devoted himself, his all, unto God;—who studies to know the mind of God, and endeavours to have his temper and conduct conformed thereto;—who entirely resigns himself to the divine disposal in health and sickness, in prosperity and adversity, in life and death:—who is devout towards God, and benevolent towards men: and all this, from a prevailing love to God, and desire in all things to do what is pleasing in his sight; yet, when he hath done all, expects not acceptance with God on the score of his own performances, but through faith in Christ, and for the sake of what the Saviour hath done and suffered for him. This is the good man, who shall be satisfied primarily from God, and in some sense, shall be also satisfied from himself. It is, for instance, a satisfying consideration to a good man, that *he hath made his peace with God*. Some may object to this manner of expression, that not we, but Christ, makes our peace with God; for ‘he is our peace.’ It is true, Christ is the great peace-maker, who reconciles God to man, by ‘bearing our sins on his own body on the tree,’ and by making ‘continual intercession for us;’ but we make our peace with God, as we are actors therein; for, through the Spirit, we accept of Christ with a full consent of will, and exert all our powers in confessing sin, renouncing and forsaking all sin, bitterly sorrowing for sinful compliances, firmly resolving against all sin for the future, embracing Christ in all his mediatorial offices for redemption and salvation, and earnestly praying to God for pardon, acceptance; and eternal life.

It is a farther satisfaction to a good man, that having made his peace with God, *he hath secured his best, his everlasting interest*. It must be his daily and perpetual feast, to enjoy an habitual hope of everlasting felicity, when he hath run his Christian race, and finished his probationary course. He will be often looking beyond the veil, and be taking a

pleasing, though very imperfect, survey of the glory that is to be revealed. This spreads an habitual cheerfulness over his temper, and gives him vastly the advantage over those, who derive all their comforts and hopes from the objects of sense, and confine them to this present state of existence. Whatever his afflictions or dangers are, he is always safe under the divine protection and care. Pain and sickness, losses and disappointments, the death of near and dear friends, poverty and disgrace, they 'all work together for his good,' mend the frame of his mind, lead him nearer to God in more frequent and sweet communion, exercise and increase his faith and trust in God, and thankfulness to him. His grateful reflections will be such as these:—

“What though pains of body now break my rest, ‘and fill me with tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day,’ they are but temporary; ‘there remains a rest for the people of God,’ and it remains for me! Some of those with whom I have entrusted part of my worldly substance, disappoint my expectation; ‘riches make themselves wings and flee away;’ but my best ‘treasure is in heaven, in bags which wax not old,’ which can never be lost. What though friends die, my God, my Saviour lives, ‘whom having not seen, I love above all!’ Friends are that, and that only to me, which God makes them; and when their assistance and usefulness cease, still in an all-sufficient God ‘I have all things and abound.’ Neither poverty nor disgrace can make me miserable, whilst I have the promise that I ‘shall not want any good thing,’ that ‘no good thing will be withheld from me;’ and stand approved of my own conscience, and of my Sovereign Judge, who ‘will bring forth my judgment as the light, and my righteousness as the noon-day.’”

It is no small satisfaction to a good man, to see the fruits of his pious labours. Though many pious parents see cause to lament, that ‘their house is not so with God’ as they could wish: yet there are but few, if any, who do not see some good fruit of their good examples, and pious instructions to children, servants, or those about them. ‘The righteous’ not only ‘is’ but appears in the eye of the

world, 'more excellent than his neighbour.' The presence of a good man often bridles the tongue of the profane. His sudden appearance sometimes restrains a torrent of cursing and swearing. When he observes these things, it cannot but yield him a secret and sweet delight, and is an evident proof that goodness is so awful, as to bear his testimony in the breasts of the wicked. It is a pleasure to him to curb wickedness, where he cannot cure it; but it is a greater satisfaction to reform the vicious. Accordingly, when he sees his children, under his pious care and culture, not only imbibing religious principles; but, their hearts, as clay or wax turned to the seal, early receiving the best impressions; formed to holiness, and manifesting their fear of God, by their tenderness of displeasing him, and the inward power of vital religion; his heart is hereby filled with such pleasures as the men of the world are strangers to; and, overflowing with gratitude to the God of grace, he turns his prayers into devout praises.

A good man hath sweet satisfaction and delight in *secret converse with himself and with his God*. Having 'a conscience void of offence,' 'a heart' that does 'not reproach' him, he can spend hours in conversing with himself, with more solid satisfaction, than others can find in the conversation of their most intimate friends. With the greatest complacency he recounts his mercies; ascribes them all to the unmerited bounty of his heavenly Father; receives them as tokens of his paternal care, and fruits of his covenant-love; thus, his relish of them is exceedingly heightened, and he at once delightfully enjoys both himself and his God. When walking or riding alone, he views the works of nature with devout contemplation. Every herb, or plant, or tree, or animal, bears evident signatures of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and so adds wings to his faith, fires his love, and draws forth his soul in holy admiration and longing desires after a clearer knowledge and a fuller enjoyment of the great Author. He marks and admires that rich and infinite variety with which the earth is crowned; and with what exquisite skill its

productions are formed and adapted to the several ends or designs of the Creator ; but in himself, his material and immaterial part, he finds more surprising wonders. Thus ' a good man ' is ' satisfied from himself ' as the instrument, but God is the author of all his bliss.

## DESIRING TO SEE JESUS.

*Lord's-day, August 5, 1739.*—O my soul, do I ' desire to see Jesus ? ' Do I take pleasure in attending those ordinances, where ' Christ is evidently set forth, '—where the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace, are displayed ? Do I often think of him in my retirements ; and, does my heart go out with warm desires after him ? Do I attend to his word with this view—that I may know more of Jesus, bear his image more, and be formed to a greater meetness for the vision and enjoyment of him in heaven ? Am I going now, to his table, that I may see more of his loveliness, discern more clearly my interest in him, and derive richer communications of strength and comfort from him ? Is it the language of my heart—Oh ! that I may have an humbling ; transforming sight of Christ : oh ! that I may have such an interview with him, as to increase my love to him, and inspire me with zeal for his honour. If I thus ' wait ' upon the Lord, I ' shall not be ashamed. ' ' Their hearts shall rejoice ' that thus ' seek him. '

*Evening.*—Blessed be God, I have been this day favoured with a glimpse of Jesus at his table. My soul was enlarged with ardent love and longing desire. ' Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadab. '

## A PROSPECT OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

Ascend, my soul, on Pisgah stand,  
From Nebo, view the promis'd land ;  
Direct thine eye up, far above,  
Beyond where rolling planets move  
In circling orbs ; more distant far  
Than the remotest fixed star ;  
There, glist'ring with a light divine,  
Like jasper-stone, or chrySTALLINE,

And spangled o'er with many a gem,  
 Stands, glorious New Jerusalem :  
 Imperial palace of my God,  
 Twelve thousand furlongs long and broad ;  
 Four-square the plan ; surprising sight !  
 Of equal length, and breadth, and height !  
 Pellucid pearls, of various ray,  
 The city's twelve foundations lay ;  
 Row above row, in order rise ;  
 Of various dye, of various size :  
 Jasper and sapphire thou shalt view,  
 With chalcedony's beauteous hue ;  
 Sardonyx, emerald, sardius bright,  
 The beryl, and the chrysolite ;  
 Then topaz, jacinth, chrysoloprase,  
 And amethyst of purple blaze.  
 On these, a wall, built great and high,  
 Defies or force or treachery.  
 On hinges turn'd, of massive gold,  
 Twelve *gates* their pearly leaves unfold ;  
 Each *gate* one pearl ; on each side, *three* ;  
 Arrang'd in perfect symmetry ;  
 At which, by turns, at God's command,  
 Each at his post, twelve angels stand.  
 Her streets the purest gold surpass,  
 More brilliant than transparent glass.  
 No need of local temple there,  
 Where God and Christ are ever near.  
 Their temple, God, the great I AM ;  
 Their temple is the glorious Lamb.  
 No need of sun, or paler moon,  
 Where, brighter than the brightest noon,  
 JEHOVAH'S dazzling glories shine,  
 And the Lamb scatters rays divine.  
 Quitting this squalid, darksome cell,  
 There, in his palace thou shalt dwell ;  
 Purer thyself, and brighter far,  
 Than sweet Aurora's social star ;  
 Nor lucid beams of Sol compare  
 With heavenly splendours thou shalt wear.

Wake, then, my drowsy, slumb'ring soul !  
 Who but an owl, or bat, or mole,  
 Would linger here in shades of night,  
 When call'd to dwell in heavenly light !  
 Ah ! look not on the downward way,  
 Where thousands in the desert stray.  
 Mount on the wing, and upwards soar,  
 Till earthly scenes appear no more.

Wrapt up in flames of sacred love,  
 Triumphant rise to realms above.  
 Yield not thy heart to mortals here ;  
 Oh ! see what beauty triumphs there.  
 Place not thy all in splendid dust—  
 The prey of thieves, of chance, of rust !  
 Delusive treasures ! here to-day,  
 To-morrow wing'd and fled away.  
 Come, view the rich, exhaustless mines,  
 To thee, thy bounteous Lord assigns ;  
 So large, so boundless is the store,  
 My soul can ask, can wish no more.  
 Do lands and goodly buildings fire  
 Thine eager wish, thy warm desire ?  
 Look up, and ponder well thy share  
 In realms above ; art thou not heir  
 To an inheritance in light ?  
 To mansions built by the Infinite ?

On earth thy fancy often roves  
 To calm retreats, gardens, or groves ;  
 Oft hast thou felt what pleasures yield  
 The bleating flock, the waving field,  
 The lowing herd : but, what are these,  
 Compared with those life-giving trees,  
 Whose charming rows on either side,  
 Where living waters gently glide,  
 Branches of healing fruit expand ;  
 Which lure the eye, and tempt the hand ;  
 Whose taste excels the richest wine ;  
 Infusing life and joy divine !  
 There, on the soft enamell'd floors,  
 Flora surprising beauties pours ;  
 There, roofs with grapy clusters hung,  
 (Passing the bower famed Milton sung,  
 Of Paradise, once sweet and fair ;  
 The mansion of the favourite pair ;)  
 Heaven's blissful natives entertain,  
 All scatter'd o'er the verdant plain ;  
 Cherub, and seraph, thrones and pow'rs ;  
 With myriads from this world of ours,  
 Redeemed souls, by grace renew'd,  
 Their robes made white in Jesus' blood.  
 What hallow'd joys their breasts inspire,  
 While sole, or social, they retire,  
 For varied bliss, from regal seats,  
 To these delicious, pure retreats,  
 Made vocal with melodious lays,  
 Sung to the bounteous Author's praise !

## MERCIES AND THANKS.

*Lord's-day, August 26, 1739.*—Twenty years I have now worn the conjugal yoke; and, blessed be God, it hath been an easy yoke. A thousand family blessings I have received, since the weight of family cares hath rested on my hand. A thousand instances of protection in danger, direction in perplexity, relief under fears, and supply of wants, hath there been, by providential interposition, for me and mine. I have found 'the ways of the Lord to be mercy and truth.' His 'goodness and mercy have followed me all my days.' He hath not seen fit to give me abundance; but, blessed be his name, he hath given me a sufficiency. He hath not lifted me up above a dependance on his care, nor ever left me destitute of a supply. In straits, a way of enlargement hath always been opened to me, and not seldom by means unthought of, and from a quarter the most unlikely. I have always found, and still find, it is good for me to 'trust in the Lord with all my heart; and lean not unto my own understanding;' but 'in all my ways to acknowledge him.' My mistakes and difficulties are many, which my folly and rash inadvertency have plunged me into; 'but out of them all the Lord delivered me.' That God, who hath delivered, and doth deliver, will still deliver me, if I trust in him. I have been exercised with many afflictions in these last twenty years; particularly by the death of five children, all dear to me, especially the two last. The rending off such branches, gave my heart sensations the most painful. Blessed be God, who enabled me quickly, and I hope entirely to submit, without a murmuring word or repining thought;—because it was his will—because it was his hand. Many losses in trade I have also sustained, but they were quickly made up to my great advantage. Trials of bodily pain I have also had, but these have been light and few, in comparison with my deserts. I expect greater trials than any I have yet encountered. Blessed be God, the prospect of passing 'through the valley of the shadow of death' is not now terrible. 'I know whom I have believed,' and have

at present 'a good hope through grace,' that 'he will keep what I have committed to him;' yea, that 'he is my God for ever and ever, and will be my guide even unto death.' Though I am weak, impotent, fickle, and unstable in myself, though in myself I have nothing to rely on to bear up my sinking spirits in the awful hour, or to recommend me to the mercy and approbation of my Judge in the decisive day; yet 'in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' Therefore, I will 'trust in the Lord for ever;' yea, I will 'rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' Blessed be God, I have, in innumerable instances, felt his drawing power, and experienced a concurrence of my will and affections. There is nothing, I think I more ardently desire, than to have all the powers of my soul brought to an entire compliance with his will in all things, that God may be glorified, and 'Christ may be magnified in me both in life and in death.' I am, I trust, made willing to be abased, if God may thereby be exalted. I can freely acknowledge myself to be 'less than nothing,' and confess that 'in my best estate I am altogether vanity.' I am willing to bear the shame of my sinfulness, both original and actual, and give unto God the sole praise of whatsoever good his free grace hath wrought in me, or by me. My best services, as they proceed from me, I see are very imperfect and mixed with sin; but, through the intercession of Christ, they 'are a sweet odour, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing unto God.' Though 'I know nothing by myself,' I have no sin that I either allow or persist in; none, but what I have, I trust, sincerely repented of and turned from; and make it my daily endeavour to 'fulfil all righteousness, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God;' 'yet am I not hereby justified.' No; I am 'justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' I found all my hopes of salvation in the full satisfaction he made to divine justice, by his active and passive obedience. As in our nature and stead 'he fulfilled all righteousness,' and bore the wrath and vengeance of the Almighty due to us for

sin, and hath freely offered the glorious fruits of his purchase 'to as many as believe on him,' so I believe, that through my faith, which 'is the gift of God,' his righteousness shall be, and is imputed to me, as though I myself had perfectly fulfilled the law in my own person, and that I shall be saved 'from the wrath to come;' yea, that I have now a right to all the privileges of the sons of God; am, through adorable grace, 'an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ;' and that 'when Christ, who is my life, shall appear, then shall I also appear with him in glory.'

This thought transporting pleasure gives—

I know my dear Redeemer lives ;

And standing, at the latter day,

On earth, his glories shall display :

And though this goodly, mortal frame,

Sink to the dust, from whence it came ;

Though buried in the silent tomb,

Worms shall my skin and flesh consume :

Yet, on that happy, rising morn,

New life this body shall adorn ;

These active powers refined shall be,

And God my Saviour I shall see.

Though perish'd all my cold remains ;

Though all consumed my heart and reins ;

Yet, for myself, my wond'ring eyes

Shall God behold with glad surprise.

But, though I have this cheerful hope now, whilst death is viewed at a distance, and I am enjoying sound health of body, vivacity of spirits, and prosperity in temporal affairs; yet, who knows how different an effect death, with its attending horrors, may have on my mind, when it must be viewed in a nearer prospect? Suppose I should die of a lingering disease, see my flesh wasting daily, be exercised with acute pains, have wearisome days and nights appointed unto me for a long time, and feel myself die by slow degrees.—Suppose Infinite Wisdom should likewise blast the fruit of all my diligent endeavours, and reduce me to poverty and contempt, so as to have it said of me—This is he that made such a figure in the world!—Add to all this, suppose my children, or any of them, should take bad

courses, and fall into scandalous sins, or deep distress, while I were unable to afford them necessary relief: how would such circumstances increase the anguish of my mind! How could my feeble spirit sustain such accumulated burdens! Certainly, I have not in myself power equal to such a pressure: but is not God all-sufficient? and hath he not promised—‘as thy day is, so shall thy strength be?’ Faith can overcome, and triumph over the greatest difficulties. O my soul, be not faithless then, but believing. Let it be my daily care to approve my heart and ways unto God, and ‘have always, a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.’ ‘In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.’ ‘I will say of the Lord, he is my rock, and my fortress, my God in whom I will trust, my buckler, the horn of my salvation and my high tower.’ ‘They that trust in the Lord, shall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.’

## COUNSEL AND COMFORT TO THE AFFLICTED.

*To Miss Philipps.\**

Saturday, October 20, 1739.

DEAR COUSIN,

I have been looking up to him, who is able to ‘heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases.’ Tell your sister that Jesus is as able now to raise even from the dead, as he was in the days of his flesh, and as truly says to us now, as he did to the father of him who had the dumb and deaf spirit—‘if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.’ He says to every one of us—‘Ye believe in God, believe also in me.’ Call upon the name of the Lord in this hour of distress. He can do what neither friends nor physicians can do. ‘All power is his, both in heaven and in earth.’ Life and death are at his disposal. Surely, the power he had on earth is not diminished since his triumphant ascension to the Father’s right hand. With what ‘boldness’ may we now ‘enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus?’ Is not this the ‘new and living way,

\* Of Bromyard.

which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh,' that we may now bring our wants and burdens, our complaints and distresses, to Jesus our friend, yea our brother; persuaded that 'in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily?' Oh! what a privilege to have such a friend, such a brother. If the Lord help us not what can creatures do for us, how dear, how sympathizing, how skilful soever? I hope your sister, under present trials, can look up to him as her God and Saviour. I hope she can say with Thomas—'My Lord and my God!' I hope she hath fled, and is now 'flying for refuge' to him, as the 'hope set before her;' and then she may cheerfully say—Come life, come death; nothing can come amiss to me. I hope you, dear cousin, are continually casting 'all your burdens on the Lord, who will sustain you.' 'He is faithful who hath promised.' You have, I doubt not, absolutely resigned your sister, yourself, all your important interests to him, who does all things well and wisely. I hope my dear and honoured aunt is learning by this providence to trust absolutely in the infallible promise, and unchangeable covenant; and, under a sense of her manifold imperfections, to trust in him, whose righteousness is perfect, and to go to him for pardon, for faith, for submission, for consolation, for every thing she wants, or imagines she wants. Before we die, it is good to have our passions dead, our affections mortified to every thing below the sun—taken off from the creature, and fixed on the great and good Creator. It is kind—therefore in God to give us now and then a more sensible conviction how unsatisfactory and uncertain created comforts are, that we may thereby be led, or even driven, to centre in an unchangeable God—the only proper rest of souls. Oh! that every providence, as well as every ordinance, may prove a means of lifting us up to the top of the mount, to behold the glory of him, 'who hath loved us, and washed us in his blood?' There, may he meet us, and fill us with his love, 'cover us with the robe of' his perfect 'righteousness,' 'and make us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Oh! how

‘happy are the people that are in such a case.’ What can they lack, what have they to fear, in time, or through all eternity? When once their interest in him is cleared up, they may, and must, ‘rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’ May these be the happy circumstances of each of your souls. Be assured, that to commit your present sorrowful case to our compassionate Lord, shall be the daily business of

Yours, &c. J. W.

HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS.

*To the Rev. R. Pearsall.*

Kidderminster, March 14, 1740.

DEAR BROTHER,

I am thankful for yours. My life is such a constant hurry, that I could not have thought it so long since I received it: but, though my time and labours are so much engrossed by the world, sure I am, it is not the effect of my deliberate choice, or prevailing desire. I very frequently leave, with great reluctance, what is more eligible and dear to my soul, to enter on the concerns of this perishing life, and am dragged into business by the necessity of my circumstances. When I can dismiss all worldly concerns at the close of the day, and retire, then I most agreeably enjoy myself; then I, at times, enjoy some of my dearest, though absent friends. Oh! that I could say—then I enjoy my God. I hope sometimes I do. Some glimpses I had of him last winter, which shot such piercing rays, as I know could come from none but him. Indeed, it hath been, as Mr. Flavel often says—*Rara hora, brevis mora.*\* Oh! that I could walk with him in a more steady, uniform manner. Such influences of his grace, such smiles of his pleased, pleasing countenance, oh! how have they revived my heart, and what a serenity and sweetness have they diffused over all my soul. How have they eclipsed all created glories, and enabled me to look upon and use this world with indifference! Yea, such remarkable interpo-

\* Choice the season, short the stay.

sitions of his providence in my favour, and so many of them have I experienced, as may well confirm my humble trust, and even confidence in him, whatsoever difficulties he may be pleased to exercise me with. Well do I know, that he careth for me, even for me, and interests himself in my affairs. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name!' Your's, &c. J. W.

## THE GOSPEL CALL.

*To his Daughter Phebe.\**

DEAR CHILD,

Kidderminster, June 7, 1740.

Notwithstanding your long absence, you are not forgotten. I bear you daily on my thoughts, am solicitous for your welfare, and recommend you to His care, who alone is able to preserve you. Some weeks ago you sent me word that you were well; I rejoice: but, I wish to know how your bodily health is now; and more especially, how your soul prospers. You were by nature, fast asleep in sin, and under the power of spiritual death. The call of the gospel is—'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' Now let me ask you—Are you awakened out of this sleepy state? Are you risen from this state of death? Do you not only fear to sin against God, but do you also love him; and that above all: better than me, or your mother, or sisters, or gay clothing, or the esteem of the world? Are his favours more to you than riches, honours, and pleasures? Is Jesus the Saviour 'altogether lovely' in your estimation, even 'the chiefest among ten thousand?' Have you been deeply sensible of your need of him; of your lost state by reason of sin; and are you thoroughly humbled for it? Is your's 'a broken heart,' and a 'contrite spirit?' Have you seen the suitableness of the Saviour; his ability to save to the uttermost, and his resolution in no wise to cast out any that come to him? Have you thereupon embraced him in all his offices; relying on his conduct and instruction; his propitiatory sacrifice, to atone for sins; his meritorious righteousness, to justify you; and his

\* She was then on a visit at Warminster.

prevalent intercession, to recommend both your person and services to the divine acceptance? Do you look for salvation in no other way, and by no other name; love him, though unseen; and rejoice in him with a sacred joy? At least, is it your supreme desire and earnest endeavour so to do; and your sincere and pungent grief, when you fall short of it? My dear child! it is 'my heart's desire and prayer' 'that you might be saved;' and in order to it that you may be in Christ; united to him; a new creature. This is not in my power to accomplish for you, or I would do it: I can but direct, and 'put you in mind of these things,' and pray for you. But, you have a Father in heaven, with whom is the 'residue of the Spirit,' which he will not fail to give to them that ask him: none teacheth like him: seek him, and he will be found of you; forsake him, and he will forsake you: let your constant, earnest addresses, therefore, be to him, in the name of Christ, whom he 'heareth always.' Ply the throne of grace with unwearied importunity; and then, as certainly as God is able, you will find him ready and willing to do for you 'exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think:' but, the frame of your heart, and the whole conduct of your life, must correspond with this disposition. Instantly suppress every rising lust, pride, envy, malice, uncharitableness, and love of this world in any shape. By prayer, meditation, and communion with your own heart, keep up daily, frequent, intercourse with heaven. So shall you go on 'from strength to strength:' and, be assured, if you thus 'seek first the kingdom and righteousness of God, all other things shall be added to you.'—I commend you to the divine blessing, providence and grace, and am, my dear, your affectionate father, J. W.

OF 'THE WATER OF LIFE.'

*To the same.*

DEAR CHILD,

Kidderminster, July 24, 1740.

I doubt not your stay so long at Warminster hath been very agreeable to you, and that you have found many friends in a strange place: and, I doubt not, you have been

careful to manifest your gratitude where you have received favours. As you are now about to return, may you be under the care, protection, and blessing of Him who is able to secure you from all dangers; and may you return much improved in every Christian grace and virtue, and nearer to the kingdom of heaven than when you left us. Old Mrs. Walker is dying, and it is thought will see the world of spirits before the next sun-rising. Amazing sight! 'Blessed are they' that shall sit down at 'the marriage-supper of the Lamb.' May you and I be happy, welcome guests, there! Are we not invited? Do not 'the Spirit and the Bride say—Come?' And may not 'whosoever will,' come and 'take the water of life freely!' What is that 'water of life?' Whatever it be, it is that which our Lord hath to give: for he saith to the woman of Sychar—'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.' I hope you have known this 'gift of God;' that you have asked for, and have tasted of this 'living water,' which surely, must be that righteousness which the Lord is; and which he imputes to as many as believe in and embrace him as their Lord and Saviour, their Righteousness, their Peace, their Advocate, their Treasure, their Bridegroom, their All in all. I designed but a few lines, but it is with difficulty I now withdraw my hand. May a gracious Providence guard all your steps, and attend my dear child through every stage of life, and never leave you till it has placed you 'before the throne' in bliss. I have no great inheritance for you upon earth: may you be 'begotten again' 'to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled;' there may you be for ever a joyful associate with him who now is, dear child, your affectionate father,

J. W.

THE WISDOM OF NUMBERING OUR DAYS.

*Lord's-day, August 10, 1740.*—'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' Alas! how short is human life, when extended to its ut-

most length\* ; and how very uncertain whether my life will be so protracted ! The period of it is indeed certain to him that gave and supports it. The number of my days is written in the book of God's decrees ; ' he hath appointed its bounds, which I cannot pass,' but hath wisely concealed it from my knowledge. To me it is altogether uncertain, in which year, month, or day I must make my exit from the stage of this mortal life. What proportion does this life bear to succeeding eternity ? What proportion do mortal joys bear to never-ending misery ; or, these ' light afflictions,' ' the sufferings of this present time,' to ' the glory that shall be revealed in us,' the ' far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ?' The work of life is greatly important, and how little of it is already done ! Consider, O my soul, these two things—what have I been doing ; and, what doth my hand find to do ?—What have I been doing ? Let conscience now give a faithful account. Much business lies on my hands in the affairs and concerns of this life : it is my prevailing desire to have my heart, at least, less taken up therewith. Sure I am, studies of a religious nature are more delightful to me than worldly pursuits. I have never more enjoyment of myself than in reading or musing on things of a religious tendency. But, still, what have I actually been doing ? I think two-thirds of my waking time have been taken up in worldly pursuits of one kind or other. I can say, I have therein of late been reluctant ; and a sense of duty to be diligent in my calling, hath been a much stronger motive with me, for many years, than the love of gain, or desire of increase. I have spent, perhaps, one-tenth part of my time in bodily refreshments, which is not so much, I hope, as hath been laid out in religious exercises, and means for improving my mind. But, alas ! how little of my time hath been filled up with secret prayer and devout meditation ! How little have I done in combatting with my corruptions and lusts ! How little, in cherishing Christian graces and holy dispositions ! Yet, I hope, I find and feel my corrup-

\* Psalm xc. 10.

tions are grown weaker; and my temptations are more resisted, and more easily overcome, than formerly. The Lord Jesus Christ was never more precious to me: my faith in him was never more lively, or more strong: my zeal for his honour was, I hope, never more genuine. My pride was never more mortified: I never was more disposed to strip myself of all honour or merit, that God alone might be exalted. 'The world' was never more 'crucified to me,' or 'I unto the world,' and this, I hope, 'by the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ.' Never was I more careful to 'redeem the time,' or more concerned at mis-spending it: but, still, I am frequently conscious of too much remissness in the duties of religion, as well as in my secular calling. 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'—Well then, what have I to do? To be more diligent in my worldly business, that I may redeem the more time from it: to be more in reading the scriptures and practical divinity, and in meditation and secret prayer: to be more mindful of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the unsatisfying nature of all created comforts; and, to converse more with death and the world of spirits;—more to exercise an unshaken trust in God, in his providence and promises, in his care and faithfulness: more to instruct, exhort, watch over, and pray for my children: more to govern my passions, and maintain a calmness or meekness of spirit, and equanimity, amidst all the little provocations and disappointments I meet with. Lord, 'who is sufficient for these things?' 'Thy grace is sufficient for me.' 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'

## MEDITATION AMONG THE TOMBS.

*Tuesday, September 2, 1740.*—I have been this evening in the church-yard, conversing, as it were, with those who cannot now converse with me. There I found dear Mr. Spilbury,\* of venerable memory, who 'being dead, yet

\* To the note at page 2, it may here be added that Dr. Latham, of Findern, near Derby, in his sermon preached at Kidderminster, on the death of the Rev. Mr. Bradshaw, used this emphatic language:—"You can never lose the idea of your former pastor, the late Rev. F. Spilbury, whose graceful and familiar address from the pulpit, and wise and prudent conduct out of it, gave him so much weight

speaketh.' A vigilant pastor was he. Blessed saint, whose 'works follow' him.—There too, I found my dear father, with whom I have often taken sweet counsel. A father of precious memory to me. Blessed be God! for his instructions; and for his corrections too, even the severest of them. It grieves me to think that ever I grieved him; but he hath forgiven me. Does he in heaven hear how I am going on? Ah! how much does he hear amiss of me! May I so behave as to increase his joy!—There also, I found five dear delightful children. How much did I promise myself from them; and while continued with me, how much did I enjoy in them! Sweet babes! you all, I trust, are not only delivered from the burden of the flesh, and from a world of guilt and grief; but are employed in the high praises of your bountiful Creator, your compassionate Redeemer, and glorious Sanctifier. Though here you knew, and were capable of knowing, but little; yet now you 'see,' not as I, 'through a glass darkly, but face to face,' and are for ever ravished with divine love. How does the glorified spirit of your dear grandfather embrace your kindred spirits, and teach you some of the songs of heaven! but, how little do I know of your business or blessedness! When shall the day come, that I shall be admitted to partake of your joys! I will say with Mr. Baxter—

" May such a sinful worm as I  
Aspire and ascend so high?  
That kingdom's mine, in hope and right,  
Which you possess in love and sight.  
That God, that Christ hath loved me,  
Whose glory your blest eyes do see."

and influence in his place. Of his superior merit, we had the highest testimony from that great man, his uncle, Bishop Hall, Master of Pembroke College, in Oxford, and Margaret Professor; who frequently resided in his family, and had the attendance of the clergy there at the same time that his worthy nephew, as a dissenting minister, officiated among you at the meeting. Could Mr. Spilsbury have satisfied himself in the terms of conformity, every one must be sensible of the advantages his relative gave him for preferment; but, when the good bishop could not serve him in that way, he gave him the last testimony of his affection and respect, in making him his executor."

And with *Mr. Mason*\*—

“ O happy place ! When shall I be,  
My God, with thee, to see thy face ?”

CONCERN FOR A CHILD'S SPIRITUAL WELFARE.

*To his Daughter Phebe.*

November 8, 1740.

Dear child ! dear Phebe ! how shall I express  
My kind concern, my anxious care for thee !  
Admit the counsel a fond parent gives ;  
Dear and important is thy bliss to me.

Trust his experience who hath surely found  
Nor honours, wealth, nor pleasures e'en the best,  
Nor social joys, nor aught below the skies,  
Can fill the soul with solid, lasting rest.

Nothing but heavenly grace and love divine,  
A sense of pardon through the Saviour's blood,  
A soul refin'd and breathing after God,  
Friendship with Heaven, and glory in the bud ;—

Nothing but these, the conscience can allay,  
And calm the tumults of a troubled mind :  
Though thrilling pain, or pressing fears invade,  
Support from these God's children ever find.

But, oh ! beware, good-nature looks like grace,  
A fair profession like sincerity ;  
Devout and social duties merely paid,  
Pass for religion in a creature's eye.

The pois'nous force of sin must be subdu'd ;  
God's image in thy soul must be restor'd :  
If these be wanting, thy religion's vain ;—  
Nor tears, nor prayers, true comfort can afford :

But tears and prayers, believe me ! cannot fail,  
If they be persevering and sincere,  
To gain that blessing Christ alone can give,  
Who ever lends to such a gracious ear :

His blessing then, will all thy paths attend,  
Will safety here, and solid peace insure :  
His righteousness will cover all thy sins ;  
And thy salvation finally secure.

HIS EFFORTS FOR THE POOR.

*Saturday, March 21, 1741.*—How wonderfully have I  
been provided for, these last six months ! Many kind and  
remarkable interpositions have I experienced ! I have kept

\* This is a *misnomer*, see page 52.

on a large trade. The wants and cries of the poor have moved and prevailed with me to employ many more than my prospect of a demand for goods required, or the rules of common prudence would justify; so that I have lived in almost continual expectation of straits, and yet have been continually relieved, and often in a way quite unforeseen and unprojected by me. Still I have been enabled to believe and trust the all-sufficiency and faithfulness of my good God, who hath never failed, but generally outdone my expectation. It hath been a time of remarkable deadness of trade by reason of the scarcity and dearness of provisions, and yet my trade has been surprisingly large:—

“ Is not the hand of God in this?  
Is not this end divine?  
Lord of success! thee will I bless,  
Who on my paths doth shine.” \*

MASON.

\* It appears that in the interim between the date of this article, and the subjoined letter, Mr. W. wrote in a strain of pious thankfulness to his brother, the Rev. R. Pearsall, whose excellent counsel in reply, it would be injustice to departed worth to withhold from publicity.

DEAR BROTHER,

Warminster, April 27, 1742.

I am afraid you will think me long in answering your last. I must own so good, pious, entertaining a letter deserved an answer much sooner, and still deserves one much better than I can give: but I am forced with the Swedes to pay in copper remittances in gold; and, if no better can be had, it must be accepted, or none. I am glad to find, in the midst of all the decays of trade round about you, that *you* have been enabled to carry business on with vigour, and that you have been capacitated to employ such numbers of hands, which otherwise would be in great danger of being idle. It is an honour if God make us instruments of good to those near us,—of keeping off or alleviating that distress which otherwise must bear hard upon those who are creatures of the same make with ourselves; but oh! a great mercy indeed, if God by his grace will wean us, and keep us weaned from this world, by fixing our faith on a better country, even a heavenly one; and by keeping that faith *alive* and *lively* in our hearts. It is a pleasing thing to review the signal appearances of providence in our favour, and peculiarly signal they seem, when they take place in those seasons when mostly needed, and tally exactly with our urgencies. Perhaps, however, we are favoured with most of such remarkable appearances when we take most care to record them to the glory of God, and the establishing of our souls in God's ways, and particularly in the method of humble trust in God. Now, need I say to my good brother, that all this is to go along with a rational and a Christian prudence; for our graces are not to exclude but to animate and establish us in the regular use of our rational powers. If we give ourselves too great a scope, expecting *always* a remarkable interposition, such a conduct may prove a snare. I mention this the rather because it become you to

## ON SUDDEN DEATH.

*Lord's-day, March 22, 1741.*—On Friday morning, the wife of Mr. Daniel Edge \* was suddenly taken hence. Between two and three o'clock, as Mr. E. told me, they were awake and talking together, when she was according to his judgment, as well as usual, but by four she died. How loud a warning does such a providence carry in it! 'Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.' I doubt not she was ready for her great change, and as such joyfully was she surprised, as soon as she closed her eyes in death, with the presence of her glorious ministering convoy for the realms of immortal bliss! 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' Surely, it is some blessedness to have so easy a dissolution. Methinks holy souls have little reason to pray to be delivered from sudden death: but, well may such refer the manner of their separation from a cumbrous load of mortality, entirely to the will of their gracious Sovereign. May I be well prepared for death! May all my debts to my fellow-men be punctually discharged, and my accounts with my great Creator be all balanced through the blood of Christ, and then—

"Come, Lord! when grace hath made me meet  
Thy blessed face to see,  
Release thy pris'ner: oh! how sweet  
Would heavenly freedom be."

BAXTER.

## MEDITATION BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

*Saturday Night, July 4, 1741.*—O my soul, I have in view an opportunity of commemorating the death of my dear Lord Jesus; yea, I am invited to feast upon his body

consider that while you make such a *very* great quantity of goods beyond what you have at any time done, should there be a sudden damp on trade, what a damage may it be! You may not only be obliged to turn off great numbers abruptly, but also may find pecuniary demands greater than your capital, if not credit, may honestly answer: so that your concern for the poor, however laudable, ought to be regulated by a prudent prospect to future occurrences. I look on myself as interested in this affair, and therefore take the more liberty because I would have you always act consistently, who am, dear brother, yours cordially,

R. PEARSALL.

\* Father of the Rev. John Edge of Stourbridge, who married a daughter of the Rev. F. Spilsbury of Kidderminster, and who died, July 12, 1777, aged 69.

and blood. It is a feast of his own providing. He is the master of the feast, and he condescends to sup with his guests, that we may *sup with him*. He gives us himself, his righteousness and merits, the fruits of his perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice. He gives the pardon of sin, peace with God, justification, adoption, sanctification, assurance of his love, joy in the Holy Ghost, a growing conformity to himself, a growing hatred to sin, a growing love to God and holiness, mortification of our lusts, crucifixion to the world, victory over temptations and over death itself. These we receive in feeding on him by faith, and resting upon him.—*He sups with us*. We offer up to him our hearts in love and devout affections, in cheerful praise and self-dedication; grieving for our disobedience and ingratitude to him, and forgetfulness of him, and of his unspeakable love. We rejoice in his love, hope in his mercy, take a holy revenge on his murderers, and renew our resolutions to behave in a manner more worthy our relation and obligations to him. Communion presupposes union, and union agreement. Am I, then, united to Christ? Do I love what he loves, and hate what he hates? Are his friends my friends, and his enemies my enemies? He that is joined to the Lord is ‘one Spirit.’ Have I the Spirit of Christ? Am I ‘led by’ his ‘Spirit?’ Thus, have I communion with Christ! but, ah! what reason have I to ask myself, in Mr. Mason’s mournful accents—

“Where is my faith? Where is my hope?  
Where is my *fervent*\* love?”

Alas! it is with me ‘a day of small things.’ Yet, I have great encouragement, strong and powerful motives, to stir up these heavenly graces. Many and great favours have I received. What is it, to be freed in some good measure from the bondage of corruption, the power and dominion of sin; and, to have a readiness to will that which is good? Shall not ‘he who hath begun the good

\* “Wanted,” in Mason. It may here be noticed that this author’s work is entitled, *Spiritual Songs: or Songs of Praise; with Penitential cries to Almighty God, &c.*

work in me, perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ? What is it, to have 'a conscience void of offence?' And should not God alone have the praise of this? He found me running astray, and brought me back to his fold. He implanted in me a fear of displeasing, and a care to please him. Hitherto he hath 'kept' me 'by his mighty power.' What is it, to enjoy inward peace and serenity of mind; many comforts in hand, and a joyful hope of infinitely greater in reversion? Surely, I have great reason to be thankful, and to praise him for spiritual blessings: and how signal have his mercies been to me in temporal favours! How many and evident to me are the interpositions of his kind and bountiful providence? How distressing might my circumstances now have been! How large was his bounty, and how small my deserts! How many blessings hath God bestowed on me, which I never prayed for! I am grieved for my unthankfulness, but not enough. I might have had the blast of God upon my increase; and, why hath not this been the case? Oh! let me never forget to make this an offering of praise, and present it daily to my gracious God. Many have had their substance consumed by devouring flames; let me not forget his preventing goodness and preserving care. What a mercy is it, to have suitable friends, and desirable enjoyment of them! It is God, who makes them what they are to me. A loving wife and dutiful children are the blessings of God. What a mercy to have a sound mind in a sound body! Oh! that my life may be wholly filled up with obedience, love, and praise.

SANCTIFYING THE LORD'S-DAY.

*Lord's-day; November 1, 1741.*—O my soul, now is a time for serious reflection. Sabbaths return, and point out to me the will of God—that there should be intercourse between heaven and earth. He is calling me off from worldly cares and pursuits, to attend to more noble and important services. It is his will that I should now rest from toil and labour; and this, in order to my preparation for eternal rest. Heaven is my home, my rest; but how

indisposed is my mind to the joys and praises of the blessed state. Amidst a crowd of cares, how are the powers of my soul fettered! How seldom do I look within the veil! and when I do, alas! how imperfect, how transient is the glance! How feeble are the aspirations of my soul towards God, though he is the centre of my wishes, and the life of all my joys! Lord, 'I have none in heaven or earth' in comparison of thee, and yet how cold is my love to thee! How flat and languid my praises of thee! How fickle and partial is my trust in thee! Sacraments return, and show thy will—that there should be intimate, endearing transactions betwixt my soul and thy great self. Thou art ready to seal to me the covenant, on thy part—to 'be a God to me,' not merely as my Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, but 'my Portion,' 'my Shield, and my exceeding great Reward;'—to pardon all my sins, to subdue my corruptions, to strengthen me against all temptations, by the communications of thy light, and life, and love. Thus, thou art ready to make me 'thy workmanship,' by changing the bias of my will; embittering sin to me, enabling me to hate and forsake it; shewing me my absolute need of a Saviour, his suitableness and all-sufficiency, and disposing me to receive and embrace him, and trust in him alone for righteousness; and tuning my heart to love and praise. Lord, thou art ready to do all this for me; yea, thou hast in part already done it. Shall I not be ready cheerfully and cordially to seal to thee! Surely, my God, I am under the most endearing ties and obligations to thee. Though I should refuse to yield myself to thee; though I should neglect thy service, and estrange my heart from thee; yet still the obligation abides, and I shall be found ungrateful and inexcusable: but, O my Lord, both duty and interest call upon me to seal to thy covenant, and make over myself, my all to thee. I am no where so safe as under thy protection; in no circumstances so happy as in the enjoyment of thy love; and thou art ever ready, whenever I give myself to thee, to make over thyself to me. These very covenant-transactions, which convey my heart to thee

with all I am and have, give me at the same time, a sure claim to thee, as my God, and an interest in thy glorious perfections: and surely, there is enough in thee to fill my soul with peace, and to satisfy every craving desire! What can I wish for, which an interest in God, as my God, does not contain! Do I desire riches? No. I hope,—I believe,—the love of God hath mortified this sordid lust: at least, I hope my will is so swallowed up in thy will, that I desire prosperity and increase of worldly goods, chiefly to increase my public usefulness, and be capacitated to do more for God, for his poor, and the support of his interest:—and is not this the most likely way to obtain my wish? Do I desire the favour of God; to live a life of communion with him here, and to enjoy his uninterrupted smiles for ever? I hope I do: I hope there is nothing in the world I prize so highly, or desire so earnestly:—and is not this the way to obtain my desire? In devoting myself to God, I empty my heart of every thing else: I get an affecting sense of the emptiness and insufficiency of all other comforts, and labour to excite a hungering, thirsting desire after God: I apprehend him to be absolutely necessary to my soul's present repose and future felicity: I earnestly desire him as such, and long after fellowship with him:—and is not this the way to be filled? In every strait, I have always found it good to trust in God, and have often said—*God will provide*. He hath provided accordingly. He that careth and provideth for ravens, for young lions, yea, for every insect, will he not much more care for men, and most of all for them that trust him, and have devoted themselves wholly to him? Is not this a part of my work, in my covenant-transactions—to strengthen and exercise my faith in his providence, to make a fresh surrender of myself, all I am, and all I have to him, and put in my claim for a share of his providential kindness and care? Is not this the way to have his blessing on what he intrusts me with, be it little or much? Therefore, will I seal to my God, to be entirely under the direction of his preceptive will, and entirely submissive and resigned to his disposing

will. Whatever is his will shall be mine, 'through Christ strengthening me,'—through 'the supply of the Spirit of Jesus.' I will 'trust in the Lord for ever,' since I know that 'in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.'

SELF-EXAMINATION BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

*Saturday Evening, December 5, 1741.*—I have been called upon, this evening, to search and try myself, preparatory to the solemn feast I have in view—whether I be savingly converted, and brought sincerely into covenant with God; whether I conscientiously observe God 'in his goings in the sanctuary,' and in the world; and, whether I have been owned of God, so that he hath settled upon me, and secured to me, the inestimable blessings of his covenant. It is a vain thing to deceive myself in so important a concern. Speaking peace and safety to my own soul will not secure me from Almighty vengeance. It is, therefore, the greatest folly in the world to persuade myself, that my state is good and safe, if it be not so. The day is coming, yea, it may be at hand, when I shall be tried and examined in another manner by him, 'before whose eyes hell and destruction' lie naked; 'how much more, then, the hearts of the children of men!' What will it benefit me, to draw a veil over my sins! If I indulge iniquity, I may 'be sure my sin will find me out.' Let me, therefore, set myself, as in the presence of God, to sift, and try, and judge my heart and ways. A long time I have entertained hopes, that my heart is right with God, though in many respects my obedience hath been defective; but, am I not deceived?—Let me examine those defects I am conscious of, and see whether they be 'the spots of God's children:—'

Undoubtedly, my master-sin is pride. This hath formerly puffed me up with too high a conceit of myself, and made me think too meanly of others: it hath made me impatient of contradiction: it hath filled me with too keen a resentment of slights and injuries, sometimes with evil surmisings; and it hath often broke out in ungoverned passion:—but, how is it with me now with respect to these things? What can I answer to my sovereign Judge, if I

were now unclothed, and standing at his bar, and interrogated concerning the pride of my heart and life? Can I appeal to him—'Lord, thou that knowest all things,' knowest that I hate pride, and that the workings and prevalence thereof, are the matter of my grief, and the burden of my soul. Can I say—Lord, thou knowest it is what I have in the sincerity of my soul, and with tears, often and earnestly begged at thy hands—that thou wouldst 'hide pride from me,' that I may be 'poor in spirit,' and mean in my own eyes; and this, from an humble sense of my original depravity and vileness, the treachery of my heart, together with my manifold backslidings and innumerable offences against thee. Is it not the unfeigned desire of my soul to be vile or base in my own eyes; and do I not reject with abhorrence the workings of pride, as soon as I discover them. 'Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'

HEAVEN IS THE CHRISTIAN'S HOME.

*To a Correspondent.\**

December 26, 1741.

—— I thank you for your kind congratulation, and for the serious hint you give me, that Kidderminster is not my home. This puts me in mind of a verse in the pious Dr. Watts's hymns:---

"Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
And storms of sorrow fall;  
May I but safely reach my home,  
My God, my heaven, my all."

And likewise that of the truly devout Herbert, many of whose old-fashioned odes I greatly admire:---

"We talk of harvests: there are no such things,  
Until we leave our corn and hay:  
There is no fruitful year, but that which brings  
Our last, and lov'd, though dreadful day."

\* He knew more of books than trade, and therefore, wondered at Mr. W. not being at home to answer his letters with speed.

What have I here, that I should stay, and groan ?  
 The most of me to heaven is fled :  
 My thoughts and joys are all pack'd up and gone,  
 And for their old acquaintance plead."

I hope, I can indeed say---that as ' here I have no continuing city,' or abode, so I am seeking and ' looking for one to come ; that, my treasure is in heaven,' and that ' my heart is there also,' (Oh ! that it were more) and, that I value and esteem all my enjoyments here below, only as means to help me in my way thither. Adored for ever be that free, rich, distinguishing grace, which turned and inclined my heart, so perverse by nature, to bend my course heavenward.——

NEW YEAR'S REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.

*January 1, 1742.*

Reflecting with repentant sighs  
 Upon the year that's past,  
 My tongue with admiration cries—  
 Why was not that my last !  
 Millions within the circling year  
 Resign'd their fleeting breath ;  
 While sovereign Power hath spar'd me here,  
 And sav'd my soul from death.  
 Had sharp diseases seiz'd my frame  
 And brought me down to dust,  
 Almighty Maker ! I proclaim  
 Thy sentence had been just ;  
 And hadst thou doom'd my guilty soul  
 To realms of black despair,  
 I must, while endless ages roll,  
 Have own'd thy justice there.  
 Then since my life thy care hath been,  
 Myself I yield to thee :  
 Hence, all I have, without, within,  
 For ever thine shall be.

I will review, and oft lament  
 The sins of former days ;  
 So shall my future life be spent  
 To thine immortal praise !

COMMUNION WITH GOD.

*Wednesday, February 17, 1742.*—I would now record,  
 (oh ! that I might do it with a single eye to his glory,

‘whose I am,’ and to whom I am under millions of obligations;) a fresh instance of the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, coming upon me like a mighty, swelling tide, captivating my whole soul, and bearing away my affections full sail from earth and sense up to the celestial throne, and giving me a glimpse of ‘the glory that is to be revealed,’ and a taste of those joys that are unutterable, which spring from ‘the throne of God and of the Lamb.’

I was employed this evening in the twilight, in a branch of my trade and revolving in my mind these lines of Dr. Watts—

“He will present our souls  
Unblemish’d and complete,  
Before the glory of his face,  
With joys divinely great:”—

When, sudden, almost as a flash of lightning, my soul was ravished with a joyful assurance, that my Saviour, my Jesus, will one day ‘present’ *my* worthless soul, defiled as it now is, ‘before the presence of his glory,’ purified from every stain, refined from all its dross, and made meet for the heavenly society and employment, ‘with exceeding joy.’ My joys were so big, they must have vent: instantly I retired, and falling on my knees before my God and Saviour, my soul was drawn out in such humble adorations, such glowing thankfulness for all the methods of distinguishing grace, such deep humiliation from a sense of my unworthiness of such high favours, particularly on account of the inaccuracy of my conversation; and, at the same time, I felt my heart warmed with such ardent love, and earnest desires after a fuller enjoyment of him whom my soul loves, as, I think I scarce ever before experienced. I could not but desire, if it were lawful, that my dissolution and departure hence might be hastened, that I might ‘be with Christ.’ I also found and expressed a willingness to stay, as long as God had any work for me to do here that might be for his glory; yea, to stay his time, to suffer, as well as do, his will. I was led particularly to praise the blessed Jesus, with a melting heart and flowing eyes, for

what he had done for me, as living, dying, and interceding, and by the renewing, sanctifying, and comforting influences of his Spirit; while a vigorous faith led me to 'believe in hope,' and to adore and praise him for what he will do yet farther for me. I then said—

"Thou wilt present my soul  
Unblemish'd and complete,  
Before the glory of thy face,  
With joys divinely great."

It was to me a sweet foretaste of the divine joy which 'the spirits of just men made perfect' have on their first admission into the realms of glory. Surely, this high elevation is to fortify me against some approaching trial by casting down, and to bear up my soul against some sudden shock of adversity. I had lately such a hint set home upon me in reading Dr. Sibbs' 'Soul's Conflict.' Lord, 'thy will, not mine, be done;' 'here I am, do with me as thou pleasest;'—

"What sinners value, I resign;  
Lord, 'tis enough that thou art mine:  
I shall behold thy blissful face,  
And stand complete in righteousness."—WATTS.

Or if such an event be not near, I am sure it calls for great humility, great watchfulness and circumspection, that I may adorn my profession, and walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, that I may not grieve his Spirit, and forfeit his presence and quickening aids; but by a self-denying humility and obedience may be prepared to receive his farther gracious visits.

#### CHRIST IN US, THE HOPE OF GLORY.

*Saturday Night, March 20, 1742.*—I have been meditating on that expression—'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' Surely, there is such a thing as Christ being formed in the soul, without which all knowledge concerning him will avail nothing to salvation. There is such a thing as a union between Christ and every sincere believer.—There is a union of hearts. 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.' 'To them that believe he is precious.' Believers evidence their love to Christ, by forsaking all

other lovers; devoting and giving up themselves entirely to him; seeking and expecting their supreme happiness in communion with him, and enjoyment of his love.—There is, also, a union of interests. Christ delights in the joy and prosperity of his members. ‘These things have I said unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.’ They, also, delight to advance his glory and the prosperity of his kingdom. They rejoice, when his gospel is received, and souls are made willing to comply with the terms of his covenant. From union proceed reciprocal communications. He communicates to them grace and strength, life and fruitfulness; and they bring forth fruit to and for him. The pious breathings of their souls in prayers and praises, in ardent love and longing desires after him, are his delight. He imparts to them the quickening influences of his Spirit, for which they make a return in vigorous faith and holy obedience. He comforts them with the consolations of his Spirit, the savour of which ascends to him in holy joy; nor less in deep humiliation, from a sense of their unworthiness. They profess their weakness and insufficiency; and he gives them strength for duty, and succour in temptation. They confess and mourn before him their lusts, corruptions, and miscarriages, and he sends peace and pardon. They look to him as the dispenser of their afflictions and crosses; humbly submit to them, and patiently acquiesce in them; as coming from his hand, and as the demerit of their sins. Notwithstanding the interposition of these clouds, he reveals the constancy of his love, shews them his all-sufficiency for their support, and appoints to them a gracious issue, and complete deliverance; even a ‘far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’—Thus, their hope of future glory is derived from *union*. As they love and believe in him, they cannot but love and believe his gospel, which ‘hath brought life and immortality to light’ in clearer and brighter discoveries, than ever the church had before been blessed with. They contemplate, with wonder and delight, ‘the heavenly inheritance which is incorrup-

tible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' They have 'a full assurance of faith' that there really 'remaineth a rest for the people of God.' Though it be requisite that they who are 'set for the defence of the gospel,' should produce other evidences of its divine original; yet, I suppose any experienced Christian, who is 'passed from death unto life,' and is united to Christ by faith and love, hath such an internal evidence of its divine mission, as is far more convincing and satisfactory to his mind, than all other evidences deduced from prophecies and facts compared together. The believer's union with Christ is farther productive of his 'hope of glory,' as Christ gives him in the gospel the plainest, fullest, and richest promises of eternal life. 'This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' Christ died to purchase this glory for us, and by his rising again from the dead he gave us a pledge of our resurrection to everlasting happiness. By his Spirit, which dwells in his people, he gives them an 'earnest of their inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.' He is gone before 'to prepare mansions for them in his Father's house, and will come again and receive them unto himself, that where he is, there they may be also.' How great and manifold are the Christian's obligations to Christ! How miserable the state of such as 'are without Christ,' 'having no hope!' How happy the state of all that are united to Christ and interested in him? Their hope of glory may well palliate all their cares; moderate their affections to things below; calm their passions; support them under pressing griefs; sweeten religious duties; give them 'boldness and access, with confidence, to the throne of grace;' soften a bed of languishing; and, fortify them against the fears of death. It is true, all that are united to Christ have not a comfortable hope of glory, but they have solid ground for hope. It is for want of more constant exercise of faith in Christ, that their hope is not more lively and joyful. How careful, then, should we be to cherish and cultivate this blessed hope! How

careful should they be, who are diligent in the work of the Lord, and full of good fruits, to 'shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.'

'A TIME TO WEEP, AND A TIME TO LAUGH.'

*To his Daughter Phebe.\**

MY DEAR,

Kidderminster, June 14, 1742.

I doubt not these lines find you in the enjoyment of many good friends, who are making you as welcome as your heart can desire, or their's contrive: nor do I doubt that you are making yourself as agreeable as you can to them, by the cheerfulness of your temper, and courteousness of behaviour, as well as readiness to serve them on all proper occasions. I need not tell you, how much cheerfulness joined with humility, adorns and recommends;—how much preferable it is to noisy mirth, which does not seem so well to suit with our condition as rational beings, or as Christians; as sinners, or as probationers for an eternal state. Not that we either should or can maintain, at all times, a strict uniformity of temper. No! There is 'a time to weep, and a time to laugh;' which denote those extremes in our temper, that are equally distant from the medium of cheerfulness. When we visit a friend, on whom the hand of God lies heavy, no doubt it becomes us to give a patient and solemn hearing to his complaints, and 'to weep with them that weep:' but much more it is our wisdom and duty [to humble ourselves before God, and to give way to all the emotions of grief and godly sorrow, when in our religious retirements we reflect on our original depravity and actual sinfulness, or on any sensible tokens of the Divine displeasure that we lie under, whether through some external affliction, or through the hiding of his face, and the withdrawment of his quickening influences from our souls. On the other hand:—we may be innocently merry on many occasions, particularly on days of rejoicing for national deliverances, or for victory over the enemies of the nation; on the safe return of friends that

\* On a visit to Mr. Joshua Symonds, of Shrewsbury: there was some public spectacle at that place about this time.

have been long absent, or when God hath favoured them with extraordinary deliverances, or instances of prosperity. Certainly, it becomes us on such occasions to 'rejoice with them that do rejoice.' We may also, innocently laugh over a merry story, if it be pure of guilt, at a smart repartee, or at any lively turn of wit; though here, Herbert's is a very good rule:—

" Laugh not too much : the witty man laughs least ;  
For wit is news only to ignorance.  
Less at thy own things laugh, lest in the jest  
Thy person share, and the conceit advance."

But we should never laugh at indelicacy: if any person should be so rude as to introduce any thing of that kind into conversation, whether directly in impure words, or more remotely by corrupt meanings, couched under words in themselves unblameable; in such cases the speaker should be rebuked by sternly repeating this couplet:—

" Immodest words admit of no defence ;  
For want of decency is want of sense."—POPE.

I wished you here yesterday to have heard two of the most rousing sermons I have heard a great while, preached by Mr. Saunders of Denton,\* whose prayers were equally affecting. It was at his place, that Dr. Doddridge, a twelvemonth ago, first proposed to a meeting of ministers, a scheme he was then forming for the revival of religion, and which he has since published in the preface to his sermon, entitled—"The evil and danger of neglecting the souls of men." Mr. Saunders says, it had long been a time of great deadness in his church, and he had long lamented it, but had not exerted himself in any uncommon way, till he began to bestir himself according to the directions in the Doctor's scheme: particularly, by catechising all the youth of his charge, and treating with them personally and seriously about their soul-concerns; visiting families in a pastoral way, and inquiring into their improvement by religious opportunities; as also, employing and

\* In Stedman's edition of "Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge, 1790," at page 290, Dr. D. pays an affectionate tribute of respect to the memory of this minister.

encouraging some of the most capable and forward of his people to assist him, several ways, in promoting the work of religion: in consequence of this, religion hath been revived among them to a surprising degree; and he says it is not so at Denton only, but in many of the neighbouring churches. I hope other ministers will take encouragement hence, to follow such examples. But, whether they do or not, let me entreat and persuade you and cousin Hannah,\* and your young friends with you, to follow the pious conduct of the young persons I have mentioned:—first, to give your own selves to the Lord; this I hope you have all done; but see that you have done it in sincerity; nor stay here, but confirm and ratify such self-consecration in the presence of God, angels, and men.

The more you see of the world, the more may you be convinced of the vanity and unsatisfactoriness of all its enjoyments, and be quickened, to make sure of what will yield solid and durable happiness; and the more may you see and admire the various footsteps of the Great Creator, shining in his works, as well of nature as of providence. Wherever you be, may you still be minding ‘the one thing needful,’ and evidencing your choice of the ‘good part;’ which will infallibly procure happiness to yourself; and very much contribute to the joy of, my dear, your affectionate parent,

J. W.

PROMOTING PIETY IN A DAUGHTER.

*To the same.*

DEAR CHILD,

(On a North Journey) July 2, 1742.

‘My heart’s desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved.’ Our blessed Saviour hath left it on record, that ‘in his days the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent took it by force;’ that is, persons were awakened by John the Baptist’s preaching, and his own, to a serious concern about their salvation, and to see the necessity of repentance in order to salvation: and, else where, our Lord tells his disciples, that ‘many shall seek

\* The lady addressed, April 9, 1749.

to enter in at the strait gate; and shall not be able.' From whence it is plain, that salvation is not to be obtained without much labour and diligence. I have blamed myself many a time for not saying more, and speaking oftener, to you on this head, in order to quicken you now, 'in this your day,' to 'give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' And I should have been glad to have heard from you oftener: but, there is, I know, an unaccountable shyness in young persons to open their minds freely about matters relating to their souls, and their everlasting interest. I hope you 'have chosen the good part.' I see nothing blameable in your conduct, nor would I discourage you, or excite needless fears in your mind: but yet, how it is betwixt God and your soul is best known to God and yourself. It is a matter of such vast importance, whether you be really converted, and savingly interested in Christ, or not, that you will, I doubt not, bear with me when I tell you, that I cannot but be desirous of fuller satisfaction about this grand point; and the more so, because I cannot but fear thousands have deceived themselves by resting in a bare profession, and in 'a name that they live,' while they have been 'dead in trespasses and sins.' If your case be good, it will bear examination; and if it be otherwise, it is high time to use your utmost diligence, in order to make it better. I would, therefore, not only put you on a close and careful examination of yourself, as soon as you can get leisure for it; but would likewise gladly assist you therein, as well as I can. For this blessed purpose, I would propose two queries, to which, after a careful examination of yourself, I desire you would set down your answers in writing; as I suppose, you can do that with greater ease and freedom than by speaking to me; and let me have your writing in a few days. I would ask you, therefore, and put you on asking yourself—

Have you reason to hope, that you are really converted, and savingly interested in Christ?

What are the grounds of your hope, or what evidences have you, that you are interested in Christ?

The day is coming, when you will be judged by him that searcheth your heart: 'If your heart condemn you' now, you may reasonably fear God will condemn you, who is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things: 'but 'if,' on an impartial examination of yourself, 'your heart condemn you not, then have you confidence toward God.' 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged;' that is, we shall not be condemned. Therefore be at pains about this great concern, chiefly for your own advantage; and in a subordinate degree for the satisfaction of your affectionate parent.

J. W.

## DUTIES TO BE OBSERVED IN AFFLICTION.

*To the same.\**

DEAR CHILD,

Kidderminster, August 14, 1742.

I am sorry to hear of the return of your fever, and should be more so, but that I know] it is God's usual way by affliction, to bring his children home to himself; that 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;—that he proves and tries his children by affliction, that he might do them good in the end. If you be of that happy number you will, I persuade myself, in the first place, eye the hand of God in this affliction; humbly inquire into the design and meaning of it; bear up under it with Christian patience and resignation; and be more solicitous to make the best improvement, than how to get rid of it. You will not 'despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of him;' you will expect no relief from means otherwise than through his blessing them, and therefore seek to him as the great Physician. This will put you on diligent self-examination—Wherefore it is that the Almighty thus contends with you; and put you on diligent endeavours to get a supply of what is wanting in repentance, faith, love, and new-obedience. That these may be the blessed fruits, shall be my daily prayer. I now commend you to the care of 'him that is able to keep you,' assuring you that your general prosperity is one of my principal cares, and that the prosperity of your soul will afford a peculiar joy to, dear child, your affectionate parent,

J. W.

\* No address is written on this letter.

## DEATH OF THE REV. M. BRADSHAW.

*Thursday, November 11, 1742.*—Last night, our late pastor, the Rev. Matthew Bradshaw, took his flight from our world, and, I doubt not, entered into his rest. He was a most excellent preacher. I have great reason to bless God for his ministrations, which I scruple not to say have been more profitable to my soul than any other that I ever sat under, in the general: but, alas! by reason of his frequent indisposition, he did not preach forty sermons in all the last two years. Notwithstanding the excellency of his public ministrations, I cannot but fear religion languishes among us, which I impute very much to the want of encouragement to private opportunities, as well as to the want of a more rousing evangelical ministry in general. Neither the love of God, nor the fear of God, nor faith in Christ, nor the nature or necessity of conversion, nor the peculiar privileges of believers, have been so much urged and pressed upon us, as moral duties; neither have these last been recommended so much from gospel motives as from their own intrinsic beauty and excellency; which too few have eyes to discern, and fewer feel the constraining force of. Certainly ‘*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*’ The end and use of the law is to lead sinners to Christ for righteousness, who is its end; and if the fear of God and his judgments, or the love of Christ, will not constrain to duty, I know not what will. Great things are now depending on the choice of a minister to succeed Mr. Bradshaw. May the Chief Shepherd undertake for us, and send us a pastor after his own heart, that shall feed us with knowledge and understanding. May I be directed and inclined to act my part aright therein, that I may neither basely give up the cause of Christ, nor kindle a flame of division among us. O Lord! give me wisdom to discern, and zeal, guided by meekness, to practise whatsoever shall appear to be my duty in this respect.

*November 14, 1742.*

A widow'd church, a flock bereav'd,  
That mournful day deplore,

When death our pastor snatch'd away;  
Our pastor now no more!

Deep in the bowels of the earth  
Those lips in silence lie,  
Whence sacred truths divinely flow'd,  
And rais'd our passions high.

Have not our souls with rapture burn'd?  
Our hearts with ardour glow'd?  
When, ravish'd with a Saviour's love,  
A Saviour's wounds he show'd.

Our sacred passions were all fir'd!  
While he in melting strains,  
Show'd how the Victim's crimson streams  
Flow'd from his bleeding veins.

He trod the path to Zion's hill,  
And plainly taught the way  
That from this howling desert leads  
To fields of heavenly day.

Oh! may we press towards the goal,  
Nor faint beneath the rod,  
Thankful adore the hand that gave,  
And bless a taking God.

Our great Head Shepherd ever lives,  
While under-shepherds die;  
Lord, let thy grace surround us still,  
And send a fit supply.

#### MEDITATION BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

*Saturday Night, August 6, 1743.*—Consider, O my soul, wherefore did the Lord of glory leave, as his dying charge—that by 'eating bread and drinking wine' we 'should shew forth his death until he come' to judgment? Why must Christians, in their religious assemblies, frequently repeat this service? Doubtless it is instituted for our good. It is no small thing, 'to believe unto salvation.' 'Faith is the gift of God,' a supernatural work; yet, it is not wrought without outward means. The Spirit useth means to begin faith, and also, to cherish it, and carry it on 'from faith to faith,' from lower to higher degrees. It is a great thing to trust for righteousness to justify me, for strength to fortify me against temptations, for succour under all adversity, and for eternal life, as, 'a reward of grace not of debt.' It is a great thing, to trust for all this in one that died, 'who

being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death.' Surely, I have need to be well satisfied, that he is able to do all this for me 'able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him,' and that he is as willing as able. According to the record of infallible truth—'He is the true God and eternal life:' He is over all, 'God blessed for ever:' 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:' He it is, who declared--- 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' Faith may with security rest on such a promise from such a one, though there were not another in all the book of God; but our all-wise Lord knew our weakness, our fickleness and forgetfulness of him; he knew how ineffectual our solemn vows would be, to keep us close to him; and, how useful sensible signs would be, to renew the exercise of our faith in him. If the yearly keeping of the passover were not sufficient to prevent Israel's running into idolatry, though in that solemnity was a lively representation of their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage, how much less would a bare narration have done it? So our blessed Lord knew, that the bare preaching of his gospel, and declaring what he had done and suffered for our redemption from sin and wrath, would not have been sufficient, from age to age, to cherish faith in him; and, therefore, appointed bread to be broken, in remembrance of his body broken for us, and to be distributed among believers, and eaten by them, in token of his body being offered to them, with all his benefits, and received by them as the bread of life, by which their souls must be fed and nourished unto eternal life. In like manner, he appointed wine to be poured out, to represent his blood shed on the cross for them, and to be distributed among them, that every one should drink of it, in token of their trusting in him, to wash away their sins by his blood.---Now, O my soul, with what temper of mind should I approach this gospel-feast? I must, under these symbols, receive Christ Jesus the Lord. In taking the bread, this Lamb of God, with all the blessings of his purchase, is freely offered to

me. As this bread was broken, so I believe the body of Christ, in his agony, scourging, and crucifixion, was broken, wounded, bruised, and chastened for my iniquities. My soul rests on the fulness of that atonement he hath made to the justice of God for my sins, the remission of which I now receive by faith in him. I also receive all needful grace, in proportion to the various occasions of the Christian life. Do I lack wisdom, meekness, courage, humility? These, and every other blessing and grace, hath Christ purchased for me, and freely offers to me. My faith reaches out an empty hand to 'receive of his fulness, and grace for grace.' What can I want, who have 'Christ in me, the hope of glory?' In like manner, when I receive the wine, my heart applies that precious blood, which taketh away all sin,---which hath a cleansing virtue, and is the price of my redemption 'from the wrath to come.' Hereby shall I be fortified and strengthened for every combat 'with flesh and blood, with angels, principalities, and powers.' This precious blood was shed for me. Blessed Jesus? I build all my hopes of salvation on the merits of thy blood. Thou 'wast slain, and hast redeemed me to God by thy blood.' Thou, who hast 'loved me, and washed me from my sins in thy blood,' art [worthy of my most ardent love, and most exalted praises. To thee I humbly consecrate myself, with all I am, and with all I have. To this fountain will I daily have recourse by faith, 'for mercy to pardon, and for grace to help me in every time of need.'

## NARROW ESCAPE FROM DEATH.

*Saturday Night, September 11, 1743.*—I have lately had my hope tried, and it hath been found 'an anchor of my soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.' This day fortnight, by the fall of a frame of timber, my life was in jeopardy, so that I could not tell after my understanding and senses returned to me, whether my skull were fractured or not. Words cannot fully express what a noble, what a divine cordial it was to my throbbing heart, in that awful hour, when my life hung in suspense.

that I had a prevailing hope, yea, a satisfying, joyful assurance, that death could not hurt me, that its sting was taken away, and my everlasting interest secured. Oh! how sweet and dear was an all-sufficient Saviour then to my soul. I had not, indeed, impatient longings of soul to be gone, nor such a ravishing sense of his love, as might make me 'desirous to depart, and to be with him,' though I know 'it is far better.' The sight of my wife and children, for whose comfort and welfare I felt then, a more anxious care than for my own, and in whose countenances I plainly beheld all the marks of most tender concern for me; together with some other considerations; made me, I think, more than willing, if it were the will of God, to abide longer in the flesh: but, I had such a firm faith in God's all-sufficiency to provide for them, and dispose of them in the best manner, that I had no anxiety of any kind; and so far as I remember, had a pleasing enjoyment of myself in an entire resignation to the divine will. My deliverance was great, and calls for great thankfulness. A wise, a righteous, a watchful, and gracious providence was displayed both in wounding and healing me. If 'a sparrow fall not to the ground without our heavenly Father,' much less does a rational being. If Job, plundered by Sabeans and Chaldeans, could say—'The Lord hath taken away' certainly his hand was not less evident, when a frame of timber, which no mortal had touched an hour before, should fall on me, as soon as I came under it. Possibly I might have escaped, had I apprehended the danger near; but though I heard a crash, and an immediate outcry, I was utterly fearless, imagining the danger to be on the remote side, because the workmen were there. Spectators expected, that if my skull were not fractured, at least some of my limbs were broken: but, blessed be my kind Preserver, no pernicious effects ensued. How complete was the mercy! I might have been a burden to my family, a spectacle of pity and horror, dragging out a useless life in pain and misery.—'He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways!' 'He keepeth all thy bones, not

one of them is broken.' ' Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.'

INVOCATION OF CHRIST, AND SACRAMENTAL COMMUNION  
SUGGESTED.

*To his son and daughter, Josiah and Phebe Hanbury.* -

MY DEAR CHILDREN, Church-street, December 4, 1743.

As by your marriage-covenant, deliberately and solemnly entered into according to God's appointment, you are become, in a mystical sense, 'one flesh,' your interests mutual, and your duties in some respects reciprocal, I cannot but feel a tender concern for the welfare and prosperity of each of you. I certainly know that your highest happiness lies in your enjoying the love and favour of God: this you can never enjoy before you are reconciled to him; for, by nature all mankind are aliens and strangers, afar off from God, 'and enemies' to him 'in their minds by wicked works;' 'children of wrath' because 'children of disobedience:' in this state if you live and die, you will certainly be for ever miserable. Now, 'God' is 'in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.'---Without an interest 'in Christ' you cannot be reconciled to God; cannot be saved from wrath to come. Very much, therefore, you have to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, if you would be saved by him; many duties you owe to him, and very intimate must be your communion with him. When you are tempted to sin, and feel a holy fear of sinning, feel pious strugglings within against the temptation, it is Christ that says within you---'Oh! do not this abominable thing that I hate.' When you experience good motions, and inclination to retire from the world, and in secret prayer and meditation to seek the face of your heavenly Father, it is Christ that saith---'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'

I have now, one particular word of advice to you both,

which perhaps was never given you before; and I shall recommend it to you from my own experience. Do not slight or undervalue it because of its novelty. If you sincerely, conscientiously put it in practice, and do not reap sensible and excellent advantage, then let me bear the blame. It is this :---as our Lord says to his disciples a little before his passion---‘Ye believe in God, believe also in me:’ so say I. You have long and often prayed to God; pray also to Christ, Does he not say---‘Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will *I* do; and again in the next verse.—‘If ye shall ask any thing in my name *I* will do it.’\* And is it not meet that we should ask of him those things which he will do? I know these words have been understood to mean—‘Whatsoever ye shall ask’ *of the Father* ‘in my name:’ but, why then, does not Christ say *the Father* will do it?—Why may he not there be understood to mean—Invocation of his own name? The apostle Paul, denominates Christians in general to be such, as ‘call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.’ And those whom Saul persecuted, were such as ‘called on this name.’ The church in heaven will praise him for ever: and shall not his church on earth, which he hath purchased with his own blood, pray to him? Stephen prayed to him in his dying moments---‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Do you think this was the first prayer he ever put up to him? With what propriety can we commit our departing spirits to Christ, if we never pray to him previously?

What suggested the first thought of writing to you, was this:---having risen by four o’clock this morning, I employed myself by reading in an old author, a discourse preparatory to the Lord’s Supper, on these words---‘But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.’ I there met with this awakening passage---“Unless we have a fervent desire to participate of this holy Sacrament, which the Lord hath instituted, and to seal up and increase our spiritual com-

\* Ἐγὼ ποιήσω

munion with him, we are manifestly convinced to be such in whom there is no love to the Lord Jesus." My thoughts presently took a turn towards you both:---God forbid! thought I, that my son and daughter should be such as love not our Lord Jesus Christ, for all such are anathematized by the great apostle! And having time before me, I thought it my duty to put you in mind of yours to the great Lord and head of the Church, and particularly of that positive command of his---'Do this in remembrance of me;' which your own consciences must tell you that you cannot always continue in the omission of, and be guiltless. The same author has also, this observation---"There is danger in hearing the Word, and therefore, our Saviour forewarns us---'take heed what you hear:' there is, also, danger in communicating; 'whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.'" But, is there not danger in neglecting to communicate; as well as in neglecting to hear the Word, since the command is as positive for the one as the other? And, is there not a plain direction how to shun the danger on both sides;---'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup?' I do not write this to inform you of what you know not, but as the apostle says, to 'stir up your minds by way of remembrance.' If you would have solid peace within, that 'peace of God, which passeth all understanding,' you must take care, as Job did, that your hearts do not 'reproach' you so long as you live, and in order to this, you must no more live in the omission of any known duty, than you would in the commission of any known sin. I heartily commend you both to 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' and am with tender concern for your spiritual and everlasting welfare, dear children, your affectionate parent,

J. W:

WORSHIP DUE TO THE LORD JESUS.

*Monday Evening, March 12, 1744.*---I have been frequently in doubt of late, whether I should pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, or not. It has been my prevailing

opinion that I should, and accordingly I have done it frequently for many months, in my secret retirements, with lively emotions of soul; and I think I should do it more in family-prayer, and more in public; but it is with some difficulty I bring myself to it; and I still find in myself a shyness of doing it. The checks I have on my mind which restrain me are, I think, such as these:—

I do not remember that any of our ministers have ever expressly and particularly prayed to the Lord Jesus, except when the late Mr. Bradshaw, in discoursing or preaching, has directed us how we should transact in a covenant-way, with each of the persons in the sacred and mysterious Trinity. On such an occasion he has directed us to say—“Blessed Jesus! assert thy right, erect thy throne in my soul, and bring every power thereof, and every member of my body, into subjection to thy law.” Besides that, I do not call to mind any instance of addressing him directly in prayer. Our Blessed Saviour’s direction is, ‘say—Our Father which art in heaven;’—‘Pray to thy Father which is in secret;’ and his promise is—‘Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.’ And his own example seems to speak for it—‘Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come.’ But then, on the other hand:—

It is a question whether by ‘our Father,’ ‘thy Father,’ and ‘the Father,’ be meant the person of God the Father, as distinct from God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. It seems to me, I confess, that in numerous passages in the New Testament where Christ speaks of ‘the Father,’ he means the Deity in an absolute sense, without respect to any distinction of personality. This seems confirmed by what our Lord says to Philip,—‘He that has seen me has seen the Father;’ ‘I am in the Father and the Father in me;’ ‘the Father dwelleth in me;’ ‘I and the Father are one.’—Our Lord, also, promises—‘Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do;’ ‘If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.’ Now, if Christ will do for us whatsoever we ask in his name, he certainly

hears our prayers. If he hear the prayers offered at the same time, in all parts of the world, and can do what is asked of him, he must be God; and therefore the object of divine worship and adoration. It should seem to have been the general practice in primitive times:—When the Lord had appeared to Saul, as he was going to Damascus, and after that, said in a vision to Ananias—‘Arise, and go to one called Saul of Tarsus;’ Ananias saith—‘Lord, I have heard by many of this man,’ ‘and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind *all that call on thy name.*’ And when ‘straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues,’ ‘all that heard him were amazed and said—Is not this he that destroyed them which *called on this name* in Jerusalem?’ To me it is plain and undeniable, from these scriptures, that the primitive christians called on the name of our Lord Jesus; that is, made him the object of their worship. This is confirmed by the Apostle’s dedication of the first epistle to the Corinthians---‘To all that in every place *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*, both theirs and ours.’ The apostle elsewhere, prays ---‘Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father,’ ‘comfort your hearts;’ and as Christ is, by way of distinction, called *the Lord*, generally, in the New Testament, it is very probable Paul means him when he says---‘For this thing I besought the Lord thrice.’ Farthermore, the Apostle says---‘Ye serve the Lord Christ.’ How do we serve him, if we never pray to him? Again, he says ---‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’ Doth Christ strengthen his people, and ought they not to pray to him for supplies of strength? To me it is no small confirmation of this truth, that I find it to have been the opinion of the Rev. and great Mr. Baxter. In a sermon I have of his, preached at London, at the funeral of a Shropshire gentlewoman, from these words---‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,’ he raises this among many other doctrines---“That Christ is to be prayed to; and that it is not our duty to direct all our prayers only to the Father:” to which he adds this distinction, which I wish I under-

stood better—"Especially those things that belong to the office of the Mediator, as interceding for us in heaven, must be requested of the Mediator: and those things which belong to the Father to give for the sake of the Mediator, must be asked of the Father for his sake." Agreeably to which, when he had observed before, that "Stephen shut up all the action of his life, in imitation of his suffering Lord, with a two-fold request to heaven; the one for himself that his spirit might be received, the other for his murderers, that this sin might not be laid to their charge;" he notes, "only with this difference—Christ directeth his prayer immediately to the Father, and Stephen to Christ, as being one that had a Mediator, when Christ had none, as needing none; and being now bearing witness, by his suffering, to Christ, it was therefore seasonable to pray to him: but especially because it was an act of mediation that he petitioneth for, and therefore directeth his petition to the Mediator." My own experience abundantly confirms me in this opinion, and in a resolution to persevere in this practice to my dying day.

*Lord's-day, April 8, 1744.*—I am confirmed in my opinion as above, with proper limitations, by what I find in Dr. Owen's *Christologia*, or Declaration of the glorious mystery of the person of Christ, God-man; chap. ix. where he proves it to be our duty to invoke the name of Christ, in a practical manner, and that this has been the ordinary, solemn way of the worship of the church. He notes five particular seasons in which this peculiar invocation of Christ, who in his divine person is both our God and our Advocate, is necessary for us, and most acceptable to him:—

"Times of great distress in conscience through temptations and desertions. In this state and condition he is proposed as full of tender compassion, and able to relieve them. In that himself hath suffered being tempted, he is 'touched with the feeling of our infirmities,' and knows how to have compassion on them that are out of the way. 'He is able to succour them that are tempted.' A time of trouble is a

time of special exercise of faith in Christ. 'Let not your hearts be troubled,' saith he, 'ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Distinct actings of faith on Christ are the great means of support and relief in trouble, and it is by special invocation that they put forth and exert themselves."

"Times of gracious discoveries, either of the glory of Christ in himself, or of his love to us, are seasons that call for this duty. The glory of Christ in his person and offices is always the same, and the revelation that is made of it in the scriptures varieth not; but as to our perception and approbation thereof, whereby our hearts and minds are affected with it in a special manner, there are apparent seasons of it which no believers are unacquainted with, and in such seasons are they drawn forth and excited unto invocation and praise. So also, the love of Christ to his church is always the same: Howbeit, there are peculiar seasons of the manifestation and application of a sense of it to the souls of believers. So it is when it is witnessed to them, or shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Then it is accompanied with a constraining power to oblige us to live 'unto him who died for us and rose again,' and invocation of him is no small part of our spiritual life unto Christ."—This was sweetly exemplified in myself on that memorable evening, February 17, 1742.

"Times of persecution for his name sake, and for the profession of the gospel, are other seasons of invoking the Captain of our salvation. At such times their thoughts will be greatly exercised about him, and conversant with him. They cannot but frequently think and meditate on him for whom they suffer. None ever suffered persecution on just grounds, with sincere ends, and in a due manner, but it was so with them. And such persons have deep and fixed apprehensions of the special concernment the Lord Christ hath in them as to their present condition, and of his power to support them and work out their deliverance. They know and consider that 'in all their afflictions he is afflicted,' suffers in all their sufferings, and is persecuted in all their persecutions. In these circumstances it

is impossible for them not to make special applications continually unto him for those aids of his grace which their condition calls for."

"When we have a due apprehension of the eminent actings of any grace in Christ Jesus, and therewith, a deep and abiding sense of our own want of the same grace, that is a special season to invoke Christ for the increase of it. The great design of all believers is to be like Jesus Christ, wherefore, when they have a view of the glory of any grace as it was exercised in Christ, and withal a sense of their own want of the same grace, they cannot but apply themselves to him in solemn invocation for a farther communication of that grace to them from his infinite fulness. Nor can there be any more effectual way or means to draw supplies of grace from him. When in a holy admiration of any grace as exercised in him, with a sense of our own want thereof, we ask it of him in faith, he will not deny it unto us. So the disciples, when our Lord presseth on them a forgiving spirit and temper, pray to him to 'increase' their faith."

"The time of death, whether natural, or violent for his sake, is a season of the same nature. So Stephen prays—'Lord Jesus receive my spirit.' The more we have been in the exercise of faith on him in our lives, the more ready will it be in the approaches of death. It is a part of his mediatorial office to receive the souls of believers unto glory; therefore in that awful hour should they 'direct their prayer, and look up' to him,} 'to keep them from falling, and to present themselves faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.'"

THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.

*Lord's-day, June 17, 1744.*—How amazing is the omniscience of God! What is all our knowledge, what the knowledge of an archangel, if compared with his? Great, omniscient Majesty! thou knewest, from all eternity, whatsoever hath been, is, or shall be wrought in time. Thou knowest and carest for every kingdom, community, family, and person upon earth. From everlasting thou knewest me,

when I should be born, of what parents, in what circumstances, how I should be educated, and what part I should act on this stage of clay. Lord, thou knewest me, whilst I knew not myself. Thy all-comprehending mind takes in, at one view, the several ranks and innumerable families of creatures in their perpetual successions. Not a reptile or insect, not a mite or animalculum, escapes thy cognizance, much less an immortal soul. The whole system of providence is before thee. Thou knewest from everlasting, that I should direct my thoughts to thee at this time, and whether I should do it in sincerity or hypocrisy. Thou knowest how I shall employ myself this day, and what I shall do the next. Thou knowest how I have disposed of one child in marriage, and whether I shall do so by the rest, and to whom, and what joy or sorrow I shall have in them. Thou knowest what quantity of riches I have acquired by thy blessing, what more shall be added, and how I shall bestow it both in life and at death. Thou knowest what farther trials will be set before me, by temptations to luxury, vanity, dishonesty, or unchastity; and how I shall acquit myself therein: what trials of opposition, contradiction, censure, reproach and contempt I shall be farther called to conflict with, for the sake of Christ and of a good conscience: what trials of crosses and loss in trade, or by the perverse temper and behaviour of relations and friends, or by their afflictions and death; and how I shall sustain them: what pains of body I must farther endure, and what measure of patience and resignation I shall exercise under them. Thou knowest the day of my death, the manner and other circumstances of it, which are all hid from me; whether at home or abroad, whether by a sudden stroke of thy hand, or by lingering illness, or gradual decays of nature; whether I shall have bitter conflicts with the enemy of souls, and the last enemy, death, or whether I shall have an easy and complete victory over both;—whether my sun shall set under a cloud, or whether I shall have hope in death and ‘an entrance ministered unto me abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’ Thou knowest

what my passage shall be into the invisible world, which to me is covered with impenetrable darkness; what shall be my state and employment there; whether I shall have my 'portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death,' or in the regions of immortal light, life, and love; whether devils shall triumph over me, insult me, jeer and scoff at me, and drag me, as the executioners of thy justice, from one engine of misery and torture to another; or whether holy angels, those 'ministering spirits,' whom thou dost 'send forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,' shall be my blessed and joyful convoy, through the immense fields of ether, to the heavenly Jerusalem—the paradise of God, and which of the blessed spirits shall be the first to hail me welcome thither.

SELF-EXAMINATION.

*Lord's-day, August 12, 1744.*—The minister\* hath been preaching in a lively and pungent manner, from these words—'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your ownelves, know ye not your ownelves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' He closed his discourse with a pressing exhortation, to examine and prove ourselves, and to do it *now*. It is implied, he said, that if Christians do examine themselves, their rule of trial will be—whether Jesus Christ be in them. Be this my rule of trial at this time. Adored be his grace, who hath 'revealed' his Son in me, I am not afraid to be searched, though I know it will be an awful test. I must stand before the Lord of glory, whose 'eyes are as a flame of fire,' who 'searcheth the reins and hearts,' who hath seen all the sinfulness of my heart, and hath been witness to all my open transgressions and secret abominations. I tremble at the thought of standing before his tribunal, and being sifted by him who is privy to all the intents of my heart. Yet, in the main, I fear not the trial, nor its important consequences.

\* The Rev. Job Orton, then of Shrewsbury, but who afterwards retired to Kidderminster, where he died July 19, 1783, aged 66. He was author of that highly esteemed work, the *Life of Dr. Doddridge*.

'My heart shall not be afraid,' because I know, and he knoweth, 'that Jesus Christ is in me.' 'Christ dwells in my heart by faith.' I look to him, and trust in him, and in him alone, for salvation. Fain would I 'walk in all his ordinances and commandments blameless,' not allowing myself in the wilful commission of any known sin, or omission of any known duty, or indeed, in the negligent performance of duty. Yet, am I not hereby justified, nor do I seek, promise, or propose to myself justification hereby, knowing that 'by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.' My trust for acceptance with God is only in the merits of Christ, his perfect obedience, his atoning sacrifice. This is the 'white raiment he counsels me to buy of him,' and blessed be his name, it is a garment he hath long since given me 'without money and without price.' I have 'come to him weary and heavy laden, and he hath given me rest.' Oh! how sweet is that rest, that holy security and peace, I have in believing: and, as Christ dwells in my heart by faith, so also by love. Though my love to him be too cool and remiss, and the exercise of it be too frequently and too long intermitted; yet, my Lord, who 'knoweth all things,' does know that there is no other object in the world, after which my love is at any time drawn out in such an intense degree as himself. Dear Jesus, thou knowest this, for thou didst kindle the first sacred flame, and thy spirit fans the holy fire. Thou knowest how dead and mortified my affections are to this world, and the world to me, for thy sake. A glimpse of thy glory and thy beauty hath tarnished and eclipsed all mortal glories. A taste of thy love, and of the joy that springs from 'the light of thy countenance;' some cordial drops from that 'river, the streams whereof, make glad the city of our God;' have rendered the sweetest delights on earth tasteless and insipid. Thou knowest, O blessed Jesus, how dear to my soul the remembrance of thee is; and this, not only on sacramental occasions, but in my daily meditations. Can I doubt, then, whether Jesus Christ be in me, when, through adorable grace, I find his

love to prevail, and swallow up all other love? Never did I so fully understand, or so sensibly feel, till of late, what it is to have 'Christ dwell in my heart by faith,' and have my 'fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.' I am sensible, it is but little I know of these things in comparison with what may be known, and which indeed, many others have experienced, and are experiencing at this time: but thus much I know, that it is the happiest life in the world, to 'live a life of faith' on the Son of God, and to have 'Christ in us the hope of glory.' What do I owe to the riches of Divine grace, which hath led me into this blessed knowledge? 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.'

HAPPY TEMPER AT THE LORD'S-TABLE.

*Lord's Day, August 26, 1744.*—Since the eighteenth of this month, we have been blessed with the labours of Mr Fawcett\*, and most excellent and acceptable they are. The whole administrations of the Lord's supper to-day was, through adorable grace, a sweet opportunity, a most delightful gospel feast. How did my 'heart burn within me!' How tenderly did it throb! What streams of tears, even tears of joy, 'joy unspeakable and full of glory,' flowed from my gushing eyes, while Mr. Fawcett was in his introductory discourse! From these words—'As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come,' it was considered, to whom we should shew the Lord's death:—Even to God the Father, who had 'so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:' To Jesus Christ, the Lord and Master of the feast, who was present with his guest, ready to bid us welcome, and to 'spread over us the banner of his love:' To the Holy Spirit, who had formed our hearts anew, and would, by his quickening, comforting influences, 'seal us to the day of redemption:' To the holy Angels, who were present, rejoicing in the grace vouchsafed to us,

\* In this edition, the *name* of the former Editor, which a sense of delicacy obliged him to omit in his own, is placed in the respective passages.

and in our sincere and affectionate devotions: To devils, who would envy, rage and pine at our glorious privileges, while we, 'in the strength of the Lord of hosts, the Captain of our salvation,' might bid defiance to all the powers of darkness: To our fellow-men, both saints and sinners: to animate the former, to strengthen and confirm their hands; to testify to the latter, where our hopes are founded for redemption and everlasting life, and mark out to them the way to blessedness. Lastly, to ourselves; for invigorating our graces, strengthening our resolutions to be the Lord's, and that we may receive of his fulness all needful supplies. With what humble boldness did I appeal to the omniscient God, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that each of the Divine Persons knew the sincerity and integrity of my heart, amidst all the imperfections and frailties with which I am encompassed! With what holy freedom and confidence could I desire of God to search and try me, my own heart not condemning me? How did my heart glow with thankfulness and admiration, at the amazing condescension and love of God in Christ Jesus to a creature so mean, so vile and sinful! Had the tide of sacred joy swelled a few degrees higher, I could hardly have restrained myself from crying out in the congregation—*Oh! he is come! he is come!* Such a sacramental season, I am sure I never was favoured with before. 'Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but to thy name be all the praise.' Oh! may I now more than ever adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour. May I maintain high, reverential thoughts of God, and more lowly thoughts of myself! May I cherish a thankful frame, walk humbly and closely with my God and Saviour in all things! Amen. Hallelujah!

SOCIAL PRAYER FOR THE CHOICE OF A MINISTER.

*Saturday, March 9, 1745.*—Our gracious God hath wonderfully appeared for us, I humbly trust, in answer to our earnest prayers. Our late worthy minister, the Rev. M. Bradshaw, died November 10, 1742. Soon after his death, a few pious friends agreed with me to unite our prayers twice a week, that God would provide for us a

pastor after his own heart. This we did by ourselves in a private room, over and above the many public meetings for prayer on the same account. Ever since we began this course in private, the sensible experience of the Divine presence we have had with us, hath kept up our hope, that 'the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls' would interpose in our favour, and bring our religious contentions to a happy issue; and our deliverance hath been brought about by a remarkable train of providences. Never did I hear such pleadings, appeals, expostulations. Never did I feel such inward wrestlings. Tears I found in abundance. I hope we could all in some degree say—'the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.' Surely, that God, who poured out upon us such a 'spirit of grace and supplications,' hath heard 'in heaven his dwelling place,' and granted us the desire of our souls.

Well said holy Asaph, and no doubt from sensible experience---'It is good for me to draw nigh to God.' A mighty conflict he had with himself, in which he had been sorely tempted to envy the irreligious, and to entertain hard thoughts of a good God, and of his dispensations: but, by conversing with God in exercises of devotion, he was enabled to overcome the temptation, and was confirmed in his choice of God as his 'portion,' and of religion as his way and walk. God had given him a clearer discerning than he had before, of the fearful end of a vain, wicked life, however attended with ease and wealth, prosperity and pleasure; and, howsoever it might be closed, with an entire freedom from those anxieties about a future state, which sully and becloud the period of many a life devoted to God and religion. And, how good hath it been for me to draw nigh to God! Oh! how sweet, how refreshing, how comforting and confirming, have these seasons been, ever since we began our private meetings for social prayer. We first engaged therein not without great fear and 'trembling for the ark of God:' but, such rich experiences, such sensible tokens of the presence of God

were we favoured with, both then and ever since, as marvellously animated our faith in God,—‘caused light to arise out of darkness,’ even when the clouds gathered the thickest blackness, and still ‘in hope to believe against hope.’ How remarkably, how seasonably did God appear for us! He hath far outdone our warmest hopes, our fondest expectations. It plainly appears, that those circumstances, of which we were ready to say, as good old Jacob did—‘All these things are against me,’ have eventually contributed much towards bringing about the desired end.

*Lord’s-day, March 17, 1745.*—Mr. Fawcett, the minister of our unanimous choice, declared his cordial acceptance of our invitation from the pulpit, to a crowded audience to-day; and at the close of the public worship, our congregation sung the following hymn:---

To thy great name, O Prince of Peace!

Our grateful song we raise;

Accept, thou Sun of Righteousness!

The tribute of our praise.

In widow’d state, these walls no more

Their mourning weeds shall wear;

Thy messenger shall peace restore,

And every breach repair.

Thy providence our souls admire,

With joy its windings trace,

And shout, in one united choir,

The triumphs of thy grace!

Our happy union, Lord, maintain;

Here, let thy presence dwell;

And thousands, loos’d from Satan’s chain,

Raise from the brink of hell.

Distressed churches pity, Lord!

Their dismal breaches close;

Unite their sons in sweet accord,

And troubled minds compose.

In all be purity maintain’d,

Peace like a river flow;

And pious zeal, and love unfeign’d,

In every bosom glow.

## NATIONAL CALAMITY CONTEMPLATED.

*To Mr. Barnabas Richards.\**

DEAR BROTHER,

Kidderminster, September 11, 1745.

Our society keeps this day, as a day of solemn humiliation and prayer, on account of the commotions in the North,† and the farther dangers which threaten our king and nation. I own to you, that I do expect perilous times are approaching. If I be mistaken, and the present disturbances should be soon composed, deep humiliation before God, earnest, frequent prayer to him, and diligent preparation of every kind for the worst that may befall, will do nobody any harm. Think not that my apprehensions proceed from an abject timidity. I bless God, I have nothing to fear for myself, and I sensibly experience that the more I am found in the before-mentioned exercises, the more courage I gain, and the more humble confidence in God's faithfulness and all-sufficiency, who will not fail to protect those that trust in him, and commit themselves, their ways, and all their important interests to his conduct, prudence, and disposal. That you and yours; that I and mine; may be 'hid in his pavilion,' 'in the secret of his tabernacle,' 'until the indignation be overpast,' is the daily prayer of your's, &c. J. W.

## CHRIST 'DELIVERED FOR OUR OFFENCES.'

*Lord's-day, November 3, 1745.*---The minister, Mr. Fawcett, hath been discoursing on these words of the apostle---'Who was delivered for our offences.' Strange doctrine! Should I not think it so, had I not been blessed with the revelation of the gospel? That glorious 'mystery, which hath been hid from ages,' and is still hid from most of the nations, is revealed unto me, and blessed be God, not only in the letter, but in the spirit of it. Blessed be God, who hath given me an appropriating faith to say---Jesus 'was delivered to death' for *my* 'offences.' He died as my surety, as a criminal, as a

\* This gentleman, who died about April, 1772, was an Examiner to the Court of Chancery, and married a sister of Mr. Williams: see p. 25.

† Scotland.

sinner in the eye of the law, though not before God, and though 'he knew no sin, that I might be made the righteousness of God in him,' agreeably to the tenor of the new, the everlasting covenant, in which he is become 'the Lord my righteousness;' at the same time that I am a sinner in the sight of God, and 'the chief,' or among the chief in my own account. In the discourse, how did my heart throb! How did every bowel within me roll! How did I long after the conversion of sinners, that those who are yet 'aliens and strangers,' might be made 'fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' and particularly for those of my own household! Sorry I was, at the close of the duty, to see so many dry eyes, when my own had been so drenched; and, so many faces wearing an air of unconcern, while 'my heart burned within me.' And, how sweet was my commemoration of the death and sufferings of Christ at his table! How, 'constraining' was the power of 'his love!' 'I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' 'He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.' Certainly such a sacramental season I have not been favoured with since the memorable August 26, 1744. Certainly, 'it was good for me to be there.' My soul was 'borne as on eagle's wings.' 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name.'

#### THE SAINTS' TRIUMPH OVER DEATH AND THE GRAVE.

I know to saints Death oft is stiled a friend,  
 Who both to sin and sorrow puts an end:  
 But view him in his long and dismal train—  
 Pale anguish, mortal sickness, thrilling pain,  
 The tedious hours, the weary, sleepless nights,  
 Dull, fainting spiri'ts, anxious fears, and frights;  
 Expiring nature's last convulsive strife,  
 The rending throes that close the ills of life;  
 Survey these gloomy scenes, and mark their end;  
 Then say—are these the tokens of a friend?

Ah, cruel Death! thine be the wages strange  
 Of God-provoking sin! how dire the change!  
 That curious engine sacred skill devised,  
 How are its organs now *unmechanised*!

Its ears are stopp'd, its eyes profoundly dim,  
 And sprightly vigour left each unnerved limb.  
 The pallid corpse observe—what horror reigns  
 O'er the whole fabric of the sad remains,  
 Which now demand a mansion under ground,  
 With midnight curtains closely drawn around ;  
 Neglected there, the unweeting victim must  
 Submit to worms, and change to parent dust.  
 Yet, lo ! a day will come when saints shall rise  
 In renovated forms, and gain the skies !  
 Beyond the tomb no foes in ambush rove ;  
 None there but friends, and all the employment love !  
 Why then complain of sorrows that attend  
 Your latest days, and clog your journey's end ?  
 Dim eyes, deaf ears, with each enfeebled sense,  
 Are needful warnings of departure hence :—  
 They give the alarm, and summon every power  
 To stand prepared, and meet the important hour.  
 One sharp dispute will end the arduous strife,  
 And crown the victor with eternal life !

Shall Death be vanquish'd, and his frightful train ?  
 Will ransom'd souls this certain conquest gain ?  
 Are heaven's unfading glories surely won  
 By every saint whose mortal race is run ?—  
 Come, then, ye saints ! anticipate the joy ;  
 Let no base fears your cheering hopes destroy !  
 Oh ! may your hearts with love perpetual glow,  
 And all your breath be praise while here below.  
 Triumph in lively faith, and joyful sing—  
 Grave ! where's thy victory ? where, O Death, thy sting ?

#### HE ASSOCIATES IN DEFENCE OF HIS KING AND COUNTRY.

*Saturday, November 9, 1745.*—Last Thursday night our accounts from the North wearing a threatening aspect, a proposal was made for raising an independent company of volunteers in the service of our king and country ; and, public notice thereof being given yesterday, an association was signed last night by thirty men, and to-day by twenty-five more, and four others offered themselves while I was finishing my letter to the Bishop of Worcester. We have therein engaged, in case our army should be defeated, or even in case our coasts should be invaded by a foreign enemy, in entire subjection to the martial laws, to join ourselves to any of the king's regiments of foot, and en-

gage in any martial enterprise, till the said rebellion and invasion be entirely quelled.

I humbly trust that I have engaged in this association, not from slavish fear, or distrust of the divine goodness or faithfulness, but as a lawful means, necessary to be used in a time of danger, in entire dependance on the protection, direction, and blessing of Heaven: for, with what propriety can I pray for that to be done for me, which I have in my own power to do? How can I trust in God, without presumption, to deliver me from invading enemies, while I neglect to exert the powers he hath given me for my own deliverance? When in the way of earnest, incessant prayer, and dependance on God, I have taken the wisest precautions, and used my best endeavours for my own defence, and all proves inadequate, then I have a sufficient warrant to trust him, for that which is out of the power of man. His ways are infinitely above our ways, nor will he condescend to do what can be done by a creature. When our blessed Lord would raise dead Lazarus from the grave, he could as easily have commanded the stone, that lay upon it, to rise, as he could say—‘Lazarus, come forth!’ but the strength of man was equal to remove it, therefore, he said to them that stood by—‘Take ye away the stone.’ Again, he could easily by the word of his power have loosed the hands and feet of Lazarus from the grave-clothes, and his face from the napkin, but all this, creatures could do: accordingly he said—‘Loose him, and let him go.’ Frequently were the people of God, in Old Testament times, invaded by their enemies; but they were never delivered before they stood forward in their own defence, though oftentimes God interposed in their favour in a wonder-working way. We must ‘trust in the Lord; and do good;’ and ‘commit our souls to him in well doing, as to a faithful Creator.’\*

\* This Association consisted of about a hundred members, accounted chiefly at Mr. W.'s expence. The letter, conveying the approbation of government,

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPIRITUAL IMPROVEMENT IN NATIONAL DISTRESS.

*To Mrs. E. Richards.*

DEAR SISTER,

Kidderminster, November 25, 1745.

'The hand of the Lord is' now 'lifted up' over England. The Lord's voice crieth to the nation—'Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.' Every affliction hath a voice, but this rebellion hath a very loud voice. It cries—'Is there evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' 'Humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God;' and 'sigh and cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst' of us. If you do so, as good old Mr. Blackmore\* told us thirty years ago—"God will note you, and Christ will mark you." Do not give way to despondency, but fly to the promises. That is the way to obtain a holy magnanimity. Sympathize with your suffering brethren. We have not yet seen the rebellious troops, nor experienced the distress occasioned by the immediate alarm of war; yet, let us pity and pray for those who are distressed therewith. 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them.' Sit loose to every thing here. If your 'treasure' be in heaven, your heart will be there; and if your heart be there, your 'conversation' will be there. Cast up the account, what it will cost to part with the dearest of all earthly enjoyments, and try whether you have faith enough to bear your charges. If you can lay down your 'life' for Christ, you can part with every thing else; if not, you 'cannot be' his 'disciple.' This may seem a hard saying to flesh and blood, but it is Christ's own terms, and he will abate nothing thereof: fly then, to that strong hold as a prisoner of hope. Does he not call you to 'come' to him, and bring your 'burdens' with you; your sorrows as well as your sins. Especially, be much in prayer. Whatever ails you, seek

through the medium of the Secretary at War, for this exemplary act of loyalty, was preserved by Mr. W.'s descendants to within a few years since.

\* The Rev. Chewning Blackmore, of Worcester, where he was succeeded in 1737, by the Rev. F. Spillsbury, jun.

relief at 'the throne of grace.' God in Christ is accessible to poor sinners; and he hath mercies in store suited to every case. Whither should children go with all their complaints, but to their Father? How many besides 'Hannah,' having cast their burdens on the Lord, and poured out their souls before him in prayer, have gone away, and been 'no more sad!' Oh! that you knew what experiences of this kind, a poor worthless worm has been favoured with in the last three years. When loaded with new reproaches, times without number, for 'contending earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints;' I had nothing else to do, but to retire and spread the case before God in Christ, and I was sure to find a speedy relief. How oft have I sensibly felt a sacred flame kindle in my soul on my first address to my God and Saviour! How sensible, many a time, have been the tokens of his presence and favour, which has caused me to strain not only every faculty of my mind, but every nerve in my body, to embrace 'him whom my soul loveth.' 'Ask and you shall receive;' but then, you must ask in faith. When the two blind men prayed Christ to have mercy on them, his answer was—'According to your faith be it, unto you:' and how often, in how many cases, do you find him saying—'Thy faith hath saved thee;' 'thy faith hath made thee whole,' &c. Now, faith pleads the promises, and rests on the all-sufficiency and veracity of the Promiser. It believes not only that he can do all things, but likewise that 'he is faithful that hath promised,' who also will do it. We do in effect beg a denial, when we ask 'wavering' and not in faith. What provokes a man more than to hear his veracity called in question? Now we do in effect call in question the veracity of God, when we doubt whether he will bestow on us the mercies his promise hath encouraged us to pray for; and is not that a vile affront to the Majesty of heaven? 'This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.' If we be in Christ we have this confidence; and if we draw near to God

without this humble confidence of faith, we do not behave worthy such a relation or privilege. Every body believes that God can do this or that; yea, that he 'can do all things;' therefore, true faith must be something more than a bare belief of his almighty power: few pray to Christ believing that he will do this or that for them, for his promise sake, and for 'Christ's sake.' That you and yours may be preserved from every evil, bodily and spiritual, is the fervent prayer of, dear sister, your affectionate brother,

J. W.

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN:

AND, A CHRISTIAN REJOICING THAT HIS CHILDREN ARE 'BORN AGAIN.'

*To Mr. Barnabas Richards.*

DEAR BROTHER,

Warrington, January 31, 1746.

It is Saturday night, and I am reflecting on the week that is past. I find it to have been a week of great prosperity in trade concerns; I have been preserved in bad ways and weather; but especially I rejoice to find that the peace and comfort of my mind do not depend on outward contingencies. Oh! what is the hidden life of a Christian; that 'life' of his which 'is hid with Christ in God,' or with God in Christ. Neither miry roads, nor heavy showers, nor stormy winds, can deprive me of the 'joy of faith.' When cisterns fail whither should I betake myself, but to the Fountain that never fails! A footman, whom I overtook in a hard shower, said to me—"Master, you and I are on the wrong side of the thatch." Ay, thought I, but I can 'rejoice in hope' that I 'have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Be the weather as it may, my mind is becalmed, believing that Christ hath delivered me from the 'quicksands' of sin, even of my 'own iniquity,' and hath screened me from the 'snares, fire, and brimstone, and the horrible tempest,' which God will 'rain upon the wicked.' I call and cry—"My Jesus! my Lord!" and he never fails to give me some token of his favour. If I have nothing else to say, I ejaculate—My Jesus! and I have the inward witness

that he hath loved me 'with an everlasting love,' and is drawing me 'with everlasting kindness.' Sometimes I travel with good company; we animate and edify 'one another, to provoke unto love and to good works,' and strengthen each other's hands in God. Sometimes I meet with vain, carnal, swearing company; I heartily pity such, and adore the grace which made me to differ.\* Lord, why am not *I* as vile as they, as ignorant of thee, of myself, of my best interests! Was not *I* by *nature* as blind, as stupid, as corrupt as they?

"Why was *I* made to hear thy voice,  
And enter while there's room;  
When thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come."

WATTS.

*Lord's-day Evening.*—Company came in last night, and prevented my proceeding. I have had but a poor day here. My old friend, Dr. Charles Owen† departed hence, about eleven months ago. A year ago, upon his death-bed, he held me by the hand above a quarter of an hour, expressing in broken accents marks of great affection for me, and great joy for our happy settlement with Mr. Fawcett, and the success I related to him of the Methodists. He was glad to learn that some things he had heard to the disadvantage of the brothers, John and Charles Wesley, were not true; and though he had a higher esteem for Mr. Whitefield, yet he knew how to make allowance for a difference of sentiments while they hold the Head, and rejoiced that Christ was 'magnified' in them and by them. This good man would fain be succeeded by his son,‡ who preaches exceeding accurately, or rather, reads beautiful discourses, full of pretty turns, and quaint contrasts; setting forth practical truths, which every thinking man's reason and judgment must needs assent to; but, not a sin-

\* 1 Corin. iv. 7.

† "He was a man of good learning, of a most amiable temper and polite behaviour, who had usually two or three young men with him, engaged in studies preparatory to the ministry."—Orton's *Letters to Dissenting Ministers*, vol. i. p. xviii.

‡ The Rev. John Owen, who died about 1775. See Orton's *Letters*. Vol. I. page 159.

gle sentence which has any great tendency to work on our fear or hope, love or hatred, joy or sorrow: not a word of our depravity by nature, the necessity of regeneration; our need of a Saviour, the efficacy of his blood; or any thing that is food for immortal souls. How differently does Mr. Fawcett go on! He preaches the gospel of Christ, and the necessity and nature of the new-birth, with simplicity and power; and is 'instant in season' and 'out of season;' visiting and catechising, and privately conversing with the awakened: and God is with him 'of a truth.' He had added sixty communicants to the church, before my daughter Esther, who, with others, was taken in the first sabbath of last month; and, I cannot but hope, great numbers are ripening apace for the sacred supper.

I suppose I told you, when last at London, what hopes I had that, out of six young persons in my family, five were savingly wrought on, and that I was not without hopes about the sixth. Since my return, I had observed growing evidences in the five, but was held in suspense with respect to my daughter Sarah. I have had some remarkable seasons, in which my desires have been carried out for the conversion of each of my children, and others: first, for Phebe, then for Hetty, and more recently for Sally. I experienced great enlargement in thus interceding for the latter, either on Christmas-day, or some evening near to it; and rising from my knees set myself to consider what farther I could do for her. Knowing her modesty and reservedness to be such that I could not engage her to talk freely with me on her soul concerns, I felt strongly inclined to write to her, which I did while the impetus was on my mind, and then put the letter into her hand. After the interval of a week, I asked her very mildly for her answer, when she assured me that she intended one soon, and I encouraged her to take her own time. On the morrow after the fast-day, she put a letter into my hand, which so delights and comforts me, that I cannot forbear sending you a copy of it:—

“ DEAR PAPA.

January 7, 1746.

I am very sorry that I have been so long in answering your letter; it is a great fault in me, but I hope you will not think I have been neglectful and thoughtless about it, for indeed it has occasioned me many anxious thoughts. And now I have begun to write, what shall I say! how, or in what manner, shall I express myself! But I know I need not be over concerned about that, for as you have the tenderness of a father, so you will overlook infirmities. My dear papa, you desire to know in what state I am. I cannot but take great pleasure in reviewing the tender concern you shew for me. You tell me that you hope both my sisters are in Christ, and it is happy for them; and oh! that you could say the same of me, that I am in Christ too. Alas! I have a hard, rocky heart to be subdued, and a nature all depraved, corrupted, filthy and abominable in the sight of God, which can be cleansed only in the blood of Christ—the precious blood of the Redeemer of lost sinners: Oh! how shall I procure an interest in this precious blood? I hope I do desire and pray for it with all my heart; but, ah! ‘my heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.’ I find it so in a very great degree. Yet I cannot say that I have felt nothing else besides a hard heart, for I have sometimes had my heart drawn out in love and desires after Christ and holiness; and thoughts and views of the felicity and glory which are in Christ’s presence above have rapt my soul; but, I must take up my lamentation that it has not been more so with me. My sins have caused Christ to hide himself from my soul. Oh! I long to be set free from sin, and to have Christ ‘glorified’ and ‘magnified’ in me: but I have not seen enough of my sins yet! I cannot yet detest and abhor them sufficiently? Do, my dear papa, go again and again ‘to the throne of grace’ to intercede for me; for indeed I have great need of your prayers. I thank you that you have been interceding for

me; and, that a good God would be pleased to smile upon you, and answer your prayers in his own due time, is the earnest desire of your dutiful daughter,  
S. W.

Now, do not you all rejoice with me, and for me? I am certain you 'do and will rejoice.' Is there 'joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,' and shall not near relations upon earth, shall not a father who has 'travailed,' as it were, 'in birth' to see Christ Jesus formed in every one of his children, rejoice to see, after his two eldest have publicly ratified their covenant to be the Lord's, that there are in his youngest also, such blooming hopes, and 'some good thing found in her towards the Lord God of Israel.'

After all this, my dear brother, give me leave to ask, how is it with *you*? Have *you* received Christ Jesus the Lord? Can you say with poor diffident Thomas---'My Lord and my God?' Is it with a trembling hand you lay hold on him? Why so? have not you seen your absolute need of Christ to be made 'of God unto you wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption?' Is there not fulness enough in him; and freeness enough in his invitation? He offers 'wine and milk without money, and without price,' to 'every one that thirsteth.' On the same terms he counsels you to buy of him 'gold tried in the fire,' 'white raiment,' and 'eye-salve.' What can a 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked' soul want or desire that he is not able and willing to give? What then can hinder your having every thing in him and from him, but an insensibility of your need; a distrust of his ability, or of his willingness; or an unbelieving refusal to cast yourself on his all-sufficiency and grace? If your unworthiness and sense of former slights, and abuses of his grace, discourage you and tempt you to fear, then it would be presumption in such a one as you to challenge an interest in him, or apply his merits to your soul. Remember, he came not 'to call the righteous, but sinners to

repentance.' What said the Samaritan lepers? If we 'enter into the city, we shall die; and if we sit still here, we die also;'---and if we 'fall unto the host of the Syrians, we shall but die.' Apply this to your trusting absolutely in Christ, and see if there can be so great hazard in venturesome believing as in despondency. May 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,' is the wish, dear brother, of yours, in various bonds, J. W.

## SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION ADDRESSED TO A DAUGHTER.

*To his daughter Esther.*

MY DEAR HETTY, High-town, Birstall, February 12, 1746.

When blood-thirsty Saul, spurred on by envy and rage, was hunting David as 'a partridge in the mountains;' and, when that gracious providence which still attended on David, had once and again betrayed the pursuer into his hands, so that he was in a capacity, at one time, to show 'Saul the skirt of his robe' which he had cut off, and at another time his 'spear and cruse' which he had taken from his head, in testimony of his innocence; Saul, covered with confusion, cried out---'Is this thy voice my son David?' So, but from a different principle, and with another temper of mind, on reading the conclusion of your letter, I am ready to cry---Is this your voice, my dear Hetty? Has the blessed Jesus visited you with his grace, and made you to wonder at the freeness of it? Have you found it sweet to attend on him at the table\* he has spread for you in this wilderness? Did you, indeed, lie at the foot of his cross, waiting for the droppings of his blood; the manifestations of his love? O my dear child! it is almost the greatest happiness I could wish for you on this side heaven. I had rather you were lying at the foot of the cross, than wedded to a prince, or sitting upon an earthly throne. As our king sensibly knew within this twelvemonths, earthly thrones are very precarious, and while peaceably possessed, are but poor unsatisfactory things: but, sure I am, they

\* She became a communicant, December 1, 1745.

who now lie at the foot of the cross, shall ere long wear a crown, and receive a kingdom which cannot be moved. I am glad that you are sensible of your unprofitableness, and mis-improvement of the means you have enjoyed. Your humiliation under a sense thereof, is a good improvement of those advantages. Pride was the ruin of the devils, and at the bottom of the grand apostacy of man; the former are hardened beyond all possibility of relenting. Whatever humbles us tends to our recovery. True faith requires the greatest degree of humiliation. It is the most humbling thing in the world to trust to Christ alone for salvation: yea, to deny self entirely, to make no account of our self-denial, of our prayers, repentance and faith;---to trust in none of these, and to renounce our most splendid duties by trusting in Christ alone, is not only the most humbling, but I may add, the hardest thing in the world. Oh! could we do more of this, we should have more of Christ. For want of this soul-humbling trust, many go 'about to establish their own righteousness,' and and so do 'not submit themselves to the righteousness of God,' the righteousness of Christ who is God, even that by which alone God hath appointed to save them who believe. Humble yourself, therefore, in the sight of God, and spare not. Think as meanly of yourself, and of your duties and services as you can; but yet, do not think yourself too mean for Christ's acceptance, while you can say that you long to have your hard heart softened by the blood of a dear Redeemer, and to have the spirit of Christ apply the balm of the covenant to your wounded soul; or while you can say, that you desire to be satisfied with nothing short of a true and saving interest in Christ, and desire to love him above all. With such a temper of mind as the above, to think yourself too mean for Christ's acceptance, is not so much the effect of humility as of unbelief. It is, in fact, to depreciate the love of Christ, the preciousness of his blood, and the fulness of his merit, as if it extended only to the righteous, whereas it extends to the chief of sinners. As a sinner, therefore, and in no

other capacity, venture to lay hold on Christ, and apply his blood to your soul for every saving purpose: for such the Saviour died. You fear that you do not see sin so hateful as you should; do not mourn enough over your depravity; and that you be too backward to, and too partial in self-examination. You do well. Happy they who thus fear always. But if, therefore, you be afraid to go to Christ, and to trust his power and grace to supply what is lacking in your repentance, faith, love, &c. you do ill; you dishonour the Saviour, and wrong your own soul. Whatever you want, Christ is that to your soul; I say, to your soul in particular. He 'is all, and in all.' Go to him with every complaint, every want, and he will 'supply all your need.' Say---Lord, I am nothing, but thou art all things; I am not sufficient of myself to think any thing as of myself, but thou art all-sufficient! What need we to want for any thing while we can have recourse to such a fountain on every occasion; an open fountain, overflowing and ever-flowing? He is the 'pure river of water of life:' I am glad you have tasted of its streams. That living water he hath given you, shall be in you 'a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' Farewell, my dear, but doubt not that Christ is and will be infinitely a better friend to you, than is your affectionate parent,

J. W.

ATTENTION DIRECTED TO THE DEALINGS OF PROVIDENCE.

*To Miss Hannah Wilkinson.\**

DEAR MISS,

Halifax, February 13, 1746.

I compare the packet I received at Kendal, to a nosegay, it is both fragrant and beautiful: my dear wife's part is like the sweet-smelling herbs in the middle, interspersed with the pleasant jessamine. The four other parts I compare to so many beautiful carnations, all different, yet each so agreeably striking to the beholder's eye, as to make it hard to determine which he most admires. I see, with unspeakable pleasure, *streaks* of undissembled piety in each; and,

\* See note to page 112.

together, they make a most beautiful collection. As the bonds of nature are stronger than any other, so to see those descended from myself travelling in Sion's paths, and singing Sion's songs, with lively hopes that they will be my everlasting associates in singing more rapturous songs in the New Jerusalem, affords me the most exquisite delight; next to the joys I experience flowing from a sense of the love of Christ,—that 'love which passeth knowledge.' In addition to the above, it contributes not a little to the fullness of my joy, to see the pious wishes of a fond parent exactly answered in you; to see so noble, so worthy a design succeed agreeably to his warmest desires; and to see a kind providence so remarkably interposing, and conducting the whole scheme; the full extent of which, time must develope. Had I passed by your dear father, and my now dear friend, in silence, when I overtook him returning from chapel, we might not to this day have known the faces of each other; and, had I not, after a short conversation, invited him, and he accepted the invitation to spend the evening with me, we might not have been acquainted. Had not, too, the rebellion broke out and moved in its course toward the south, our acquaintance would scarcely have ripened to such a degree of friendship, as that I must needs seek his company last February; or that he should so freely open to me his concern about his child's immortal interests, and I so readily, on a bare query, offer to receive her into my family. Were they, then, dear Miss, your conversion and salvation, that a kind providence had in view in this concatenation of circumstances? Has my two-fold proposal of sending you to Kidderminster, and to my house, been made some way subservient to this most important, most gracious design? Do you now review with pleasure the time in which we had the gratification of your most agreeable company, and shall not I partake with you in the pleasure of that review? Yea, I do and will rejoice! I was filled with expectation, from the time the dear man inclined to send you, that his pious intention would not be disappointed; and many an earnest prayer on that account,

to which you were not privy, has sounded in 'the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth;' so that your dear father, myself, and Mr. Fawcett, but above all the ever blessed Jesus, now see in you of the 'travail' of our souls. It not only exalts my joy, but excites my wonder, that so many and great events should follow circumstances so minute. Why did I speak with such freedom to your father, when he was altogether a stranger to me? It is not my usual way? Why did I invite him to spend an evening with me? I very often prefer solitude, especially in the evening, before the company of the most agreeable friends! Well may we adore, and wonder: well may it confirm our faith that 'not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father:' well may we believe that either his right or his left hand, his command or permission, lays hold of every circumstance! How careful, therefore, should we be to eye his hand, and follow his leadings. It is true, they are not always obvious to our understandings, but by a careful observance we can scarcely mistake the designs of providence. Is it not so with regard to the important concern which now lies uppermost in my dear nephew's mind? I have asked your father what he would expect or desire of personal qualifications, or of secular advantages in a son-in-law, which he does not find in him; especially as I am determined to take him into partnership:—and, he confessed to me that the proposal contains in it all he can desire for you. Now, since a proposal every way so agreeable, though far enough from my thoughts till last September, has been made, who can doubt but that the complex scheme both of your espousals to the great Bridegroom of souls, and to my nephew, is of God; and that he will make the latter conducive to your temporal, as the former to your everlasting happiness? Yet I will not take upon me to be so positive herein as to exclude earnest prayer for counsel and direction from above. May he who has looked on you with love, and enlightened your darkest moments, choose out your mercies, and mark out your way: this has been and shall be the earnest intercession of him who intends to do

for you all that you can reasonably expect from your cordial friend,

J. W

EXPERIENCE OF THE REV. W. GRIMSHAW, A.B.

*Lord's-day, February 23, 1746.*—I set out on my Northern circuit on Thursday, January 23, and returned in cheerful health on Friday, the 21st instant. Blessed be my kind Preserver, who carried me unhurt through a variety of dangers, and gave me greater success than I could reasonably expect, considering the late march of the rebels through Lancashire and part of Cheshire. On Wednesday the 13th instant I reached Haworth, intending to get the company of the minister of that parish, of whom I had heard an excellent character; and, indeed, the sweet conversation I had with him, abundantly compensated all my sufferings and extreme dangers, arising from the severity of the season.\*

I learned from Mr. Grimshaw that he is thirty-eight years of age, has been fifteen years in orders, and that he was matriculated at Cambridge, where he was sober and diligent the first two years, but, after that time, falling in with bad company, he learned to drink, swear, &c. On

\* The substance of this article is contained in a letter addressed by Mr. Williams to the Rev. Malachi Blake of Blandford: it is dated Kidderminster, March 5, 1745-6, and printed in the Evangelical Magazine for November, 1794, vol. ii. p. 468: and in the succeeding number at page 511, is a note by the Editor of that Magazine respecting it. There are other judicious comments on it at page 32, of "Memoirs of the life of the late Rev. W. Grimshaw, A.B. with occasional reflections: by John Newton: in six letters to the Rev. H. Foster. A new edition, 1814." Middleton's "Biographia Evangelica," vol. 4, includes a respectable account of Mr. G. Subjoined to the table of errata in that work, is a notice to this effect: "The information came too late for insertion in its proper place, but the reader will be pleased to know, that the remarkable passage in Dr. Doddridge's Life of Colonel Gardiner, in which the doctor alludes to an almost similar instance of divine visitation, occurring to "one of the brightest living ornaments of the church of England, and one of the most useful members, of which that, or perhaps any other Christian community can boast, belongs to Mr. Grimshaw, who was brought to the full enjoyment of the love and truth of God, by an incident no less surprising and remarkable." At page 407, Mr. Middleton has given the Rev. W. Romaine's opinion of Mr. Grimshaw, who says, "Mr. G. was the most laborious and indefatigable minister of Christ that ever I knew, and I believe one of the most so, that ever was in England, since the first preaching of the gospel."

his return home, rightly judging that his friends would think their money ill bestowed, if they saw him an accomplished rake, he reformed, or rather concealed, his wickedness from them. He very soon had a good curacy, and for nine years was a 'blind leader of the blind.' About six years ago, he fell under very lively, awakening, and even terrifying convictions: but by what means, either he did not tell me, or I have forgotten. Hereupon, 'being ignorant of God's righteousness,' he went 'about to establish his own.' He reformed greatly, practised the severest morals, said many prayers; and that he might leave nothing undone that he possibly could do, kept two diaries, in one of which, after daily, close self-examination, he particularly recorded the sins of every day; and when he had done so, he confessed them before God, begged for pardon, resolved, prayed, and watched against them. What could any man, in his own strength do more? Still, his 'heart knew its own bitterness;' he was conscious of many sins that he had taken no cognizance of; he groaned under the intolerable burden of 'a wounded spirit;' and he was harassed and buffeted with grievous, unheard-of temptations. At last, meeting with 'Brook's Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices,' and finding many of the cases there described to correspond exactly with his own, he was brought to the brink of despair, concluding himself to be Satan's easy prey, and that he should never be rescued out of his captivity. About this time, two of his parishioners attempted to destroy themselves, one by hanging himself, and the other by cutting his throat, but the lives of both were marvellously preserved: Mr. Grimshaw was sent for to the latter, and his first reflection thereon was—"Hah! I don't know how soon I may do so too." Thus, for fifteen months, he groaned under a 'spirit of bondage,' 'wrestling' not only with his inbred lusts, but likewise 'against principalities, against powers,' &c. in his own strength, and therefore getting no ground of either. At last, at a house of one of his friends, he providentially lays his hand on a book, which, on opening, he finds to be 'Dr. Owen on Jus-

tification ;' he borrows the book, studies it well, becomes illuminated, hath 'a new heart' given him, and now--- 'behold, he prayeth.' He is led into God's method of justifying the ungodly, and his Bible becomes a new book to him ; before this he knew it only in the letter, but now, he sees it in its spirituality ; yea, he told me, that had God drawn up his Bible to heaven, and sent him down another, it could not have been newer to him. He now, also, began to preach the gospel, to which, before, he was himself a stranger. About four years ago he removed to Haworth, where he found the people as ignorant as the country is wild, but found them a 'willing' people, and the Lord soon began to own and bless his ministry to them.

One Lord's-day morning\*, I think, not long after Mr. Grimshaw came to Haworth, as he was reading the public service, he was seized with a dizziness, or swimming in his head, which prevailed to such a degree that he found himself incapable of proceeding in the service ; whereupon he beckoned to a man who was near him, and desired to be helped out of the church, for he was very ill. Under some apprehension that this seizure might issue in death, he, all the way through the church and church-yard to the clerk's house, very earnestly exhorted the people---"to prepare to die ; to be always ready ; to fly to Christ ; to abide in him ; to trust in him alone for salvation," &c. As soon as he was set down, *in the room where he related this to me*, he fell into a trance : the particulars of which he gave me, and I have since penned them down ; after more than an hour he rose up, found himself perfectly well, and went through the remaining services of the day with great cheerfulness. Since this circumstance, his ministry has been remarkably blessed, so that he reckons at least six score souls to have been savingly renewed, and such an endless diversity he observes to have been in the Spirit's operations, that scarcely any two of them have been wrought upon in the same way ; and as soon as he has seen reason to conclude they are thoroughly converted, so

\* September 2, 1744.

as to be turned 'from the power of Satan unto God,' he forms them into religious societies of about ten or twelve in each: the members of which frequently meet for mutual edification, and other purposes of religion. In each of these little societies, Mr. Grimshaw takes care that there shall be one man at least, who, *to use his own words*, hath received the gift of prayer, so that among the duties of religion exercised by them, such as reading, singing, and religious conference, prayer may always be one. It is also the same person's business to watch over this little flock, to mark the growth or decay of each individual, of which at proper times he gives an account to Mr. Grimshaw, that he may the better know how to speak a suitable word to them. He told me that many of his people had lately received the gift of prayer in a remarkable measure, to which, before he came among them they were entire strangers. He reckons, if I remember rightly, about three hundred families in his parish, which, for the greater regularity in visiting them, he hath divided into four parts; and he makes it a rule, never to be departed from, if he have sufficient strength and opportunity, to visit three families in each division every month. His way is, to fix upon one of the larger houses, and to invite thither two or three of the nearest families; when they come together, after prayer, he gives them a serious exhortation, without taking a text, or confining himself to any particular method. In general, he puts them in mind of the depravity natural to mankind in consequence of Adam's apostacy; the necessity of a thorough change to be wrought in them in order to their being made fit for the employment and blessedness of heaven; that in order to obtain a new, a divine nature, they must go to God through Christ, by faith and fervent prayer, and must practice self-denial and mortification; must 'exercise' themselves 'unto godliness,' and abound in all 'the fruits of righteousness,' yet still relying solely on the merits and righteousness of Christ for pardon of sin and acceptance with God; thus, but with a constant variety of expression, he preaches

the gospel from house to house. Mr. Grimshaw told me, that in the good work carried on in his parish, he hath had much assistance from two laymen, the one a Scotchman, and an old disciple, the other a parishioner, converted as he supposeth, by his own ministry; these men appearing to him to be suitably qualified, have, with his approbation, expounded scriptures, given exhortations, and prayed, in private houses, where numbers have, almost every day, resorted to their ministry: and he told me, more than once, with an air of pleasure, that he verily believed God had converted a considerable number, perhaps some scores, by them. The former of these holds particular election, the latter universal redemption. "My business," said Mr. Grimshaw, "is to hold the balance as evenly as I can betwixt both, and to keep them from disputing. The doctrine of election, I think, belongs only, or chiefly, to the assured; to them it must be a pleasant reflection to think—God hath from the beginning chosen me to salvation, &c.; but I cannot imagine of what use it can be to preach this doctrine to the unconverted. My business is to invite all to come to Christ for salvation, and to assure all that will come of a hearty welcome."\*

\* He died April 7, 1763. The editor cannot refrain from presenting the reader with what he deems an appropriate close to this article. It is extracted from the work already mentioned in the note, at page 225, by that eminent servant of Christ, the late Rev. John Newton, Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth:—

"The last time I was with Mr. Grimshaw, as we were standing together upon a hill, near Haworth, and surveying the romantic prospect around us, he expressed himself to the following purport, and I believe I nearly retain his very words, for they made a deep impression upon me while he spoke.—"When I first came into this country, if I have gone half a day's journey on horseback towards the east, west, north, and south, I could not meet with or hear of one truly serious person: and *now*, through the blessing of God upon the poor services of the most unworthy of his ministers, besides a considerable number whom I have seen or known to have departed this life like Simeon, rejoicing in the Lord's salvation; and besides five dissenting churches or congregations, of which the ministers and nearly every one of the members were first awakened under my ministry; I have still at my sacraments, according to the weather, from three hundred to five hundred communicants, of the far greater part of whom, so far as man who cannot see the heart (and can, therefore, only determine by appearances, profession, and conduct) may judge, I can give almost as particular an

HIS OPINION OF THE STATE OF RELIGION: AND HIS NEPHEW'S  
SPIRITUAL CONDITION.*To Mrs. Richards.*

DEAR SISTER,

Kidderminster, March 15, 1746.

This being Saturday evening, I have been repeating to a room full of serious hearers, the substance of two sermons preached by good Mr. Spilsbury, almost thirty years ago, on the words---‘Sir, we would see Jesus.’ There seemed to be some lively emotions and workings of desire among the hearers; and I wish I could impart to you what I felt in my own soul, while I was reading what I had before me, but to which I could not forbear adding, now and then, a sentiment warm from my own heart. I greatly enjoy these seasons of preparation for the approaching sabbath. From April, 1742, when Mr. Bradshaw was laid aside, till March 1745, when Mr. Fawcett was given to us, sabbaths, which used to be my most delicious seasons, were really, for the most part, burdensome to me. I mean those parts of the day which were spent in public worship. We were fed with chaff instead of wheat, and with much better reason than the children

account as I can of myself. I know the state of their progress in religion. ¶ By my frequent visits and converse with them, I am acquainted with their several temptations, trials, and exercises, both personal and domestic, both spiritual and temporal, almost as intimately as if I had lived in their families.” “A stranger,” continues Mr. N. “who had stood upon the same spot, from whence he could see little but barren mountains and moors, would scarcely think this declaration credible. But I knew the man well, and of all the men I ever knew, I can think of no one who was less to be suspected of boasting than Mr. Grimshaw. I could not omit this recital, though it may seem to confirm an objection that is frequently made against those ministers of the establishment, whom the world is pleased to brand with the stigma of Methodism. It is said that we, especially if placed in the country, whatever we profess or pretend, do but in reality promote and extend the dissenting interest: that when a clergyman of this description dies, unless he is succeeded by one of the same stamp, his people presently build a meeting-house, and wholly forsake their favourite church. The truth is, when the minister preaches agreeably to the tenor of the liturgy and articles, which we consider as the standard and bulwark of the establishment; and if his life and conversation be agreeable to the rules of the gospel, he seldom labours in vain,” page 100—3. “I believe the number of those who remained in communion with Mr. Grimshaw to the end of his life, was much greater than those who withdrew from him: with regard to the latter, the most that can be said against him, (if it be indeed against him) is, that he found them little better than heathens, and left them evangelical dissenters.” page 107.

of Israel said of the manna, I was often saying---My soul loathes this light food. The apostle Paul, who well knew, saith 'Christ is all and in all;' but, we did not have him even alluded to in most of the sermons of those three years: Blessed be God, who hath given us, in answer to a thousand fervent prayers, 'a man after his own heart,' by whom we are now 'fed with knowledge and understanding;' while, alas! in most of the dissenting churches around us, the people are now perishing 'for lack of knowledge.' In this declining state of religion, it has been the joy of my heart to see the Lord choosing instruments out of the church of England (a church which has been more than eighty years sadly degenerated), and forming them for eminent usefulness; so that I think in my conscience the Lord hath brought home to himself, for seven years past, more souls by a few hands selected out of that church, than by the body of dissenters of all denominations. I hope nobody that knows my education and profession will suspect this sentiment to be the effect of prejudice, bigotry, or partiality. To me it is evident, and I behold it with joy, that God hath given an uncommon measure of the Spirit to Mr. Whitefield, whom I must name first,\* Messrs. Wesley, and many others, their 'fellow-helpers' in the Lord. I am not insensible to their differences in opinion concerning some points, which I do not esteem to be fundamental articles of the Christian faith. God is certainly with both one and the others of them; they all hold the Head; they preach salvation by a crucified Jesus with one consent.

I will now, my dear sister, inform you what God is doing for our dear nephew Watson; and I do not think it an employment unfit for the *Lord's-day*, having been prevented from proceeding with my letter last night. I must, however, premise, that *every day* my heart is kept warm with the sense of Christ's love. I go to him with humble confidence, as to a Friend; yea, infinitely my best friend.

\* See March 31, 1750.

at the same time, I humbly adore him as my Sovereign. More than once he hath gratified me, to my joyful surprise, with the very mercy I have begged of him, even while I have been asking it; an instance of which you shall presently have: should I not, therefore, love him and trust him, the very walls of my 'compting-house would cry out against me. In that place, a week since on Wednesday last, having returned at eight o'clock from our evening of prayer, I found our nephew reading in a pensive posture, and with a dejected countenance. On my coming in he rose, but lingered at the door as if he were unwilling to go away, or wished to speak to me; but not a word passed. However, after I had been there in retirement about a quarter of an hour, he knocked gently at the door, and on my opening it, sprang in, evidently trembling, and wiping his eyes, with every mark of being in distress. On my asking him very tenderly, what was the matter, he burst into a passion of weeping and sobbing, and for some time could not speak. I waited for his words, for I found he was in the case of the good Shunamite when he held Elisha by the feet. At last, came out in broken accents---"What shall I do to get an interest in Christ?" I spent an hour with him in conversation and prayer, while floods of tears gushed from his eyes, and many an interjection from his heart. After this, I sent him to his closet, with Clarke's book on the 'Promises' in his hand, having previously set a mark against a collection of promises of converting grace, &c. I advised him to plead them before the Throne, confidently assuring him that if he did so, and would persevere, 'asking,' 'seeking,' 'knocking,' he should 'receive' and 'find,' and the door should certainly be 'opened' to him. From that time I heard nothing from him on this subject, till this morning. I had called him and the rest of the young ones up at six, advising them to redeem an hour for secret devotion, and on going into my private room found a note laid in my way, which exceedingly affected me, and though I had before been pouring out my soul to God in Christ, it brought me

on my knees again and again. The contents are as follow:—

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I cannot help letting you know by these few lines, how little my soul is made sensible of sin. I know I am a sinner, but I cannot feel it. Nay, my heart is so dreadfully hard I cannot pray. I go on my knees, and conduct myself as though it were a God of inflexible justice I was speaking to; as if my soul were not in the least danger of eternally perishing; and if I cannot pray, how can I expect mercy? Oh! that I could in the anguish of my spirit cry out—‘ What must I do to be saved?’ Would to God this may fall into your hands at a time when your soul is filled with the sensible tokens of the love of Christ; then, dear sir, as you know the dreadful condition of being out of Christ, plead at ‘ the throne of gracé’ earnestly on my account. I know he will hear the prayers of his saints, if they be agreeable to his will. Pray hard, give the Lord no rest on my account, for I am dreadfully afraid that he will reject all your petitions for me; but if he should, you will not lose your ‘ labour of love,’ though it will greatly heighten my condemnation. I hope you will excuse this freedom, and pray that I may see my sins, both original and actual, that I may have a soft heart to feel my undone condition without an interest in Christ, and that I may have faith to believe in his all-sufficiency.”

Now, is not this a comfortable sign that he is really possessed of that sensibility of sin and tenderness of heart he is lamenting the want of? ‘ Blessed are they who’ thus ‘ mourn, for they shall be comforted.’ My dear sister, I commend you and my brother to the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, earnestly praying that you may be as a well ‘ watered garden,’ and that he would meet you in all your approaches to him, and make you full of joy from the light of his countenance; and believe me to be, your affectionate brother,

J. W.

## THE DOUBTING CHRISTIAN COMFORTED.

*To his Nephew Watson.*

DEAR COUSIN,

Sarum, April 15, 1746.

I thank you for your freedom in laying before me the thoughts of your heart. Certainly, I should rejoice to hear that the Lord had spoken peace to your soul, and assured you of your interest in his everlasting love. Yet, I must tell you, I am not sorry, nay I rejoice, to hear you are *lamenting* after him. No doubt you want to be an established Christian at once, and to ‘walk in the light of God’s countenance.’ It is a laudable ambition; but, perhaps, infinite Wisdom sees you are not yet fit for such a state. So the apostle Paul would fain have been rid of his ‘thorn in the flesh;’ but then, probably, he would not have been so humble, nor have prayed so much, or so earnestly: therefore, the Lord said to him—‘My grace is sufficient for thee;’ that is, thou shalt not be overcome by the temptation, but it is good for thee to be farther exercised therewith. So in your case,—the power and grace of Christ, it is plain, are not withheld from you. Else, why these lamentations after the Lord? It is an evidence you thirst for grace. Why do you mourn over the hardness of your heart? Surely, there is some degree of tenderness. Do not think your prayers denied, only for want of ‘peace and joy in believing,’ or, that you cannot ‘rejoice in hope of the glory of God.’ The apostle did not think his prayers denied, while sufficient grace was afforded. Let the Lord work his own work in his own way. Rejoice that he hath ‘not taken his Holy Spirit from you.’ The longer you are held in this soul-humbling state, the stronger may your comforts be in due time, the clearer your evidences, and your thankfulness raised to a higher pitch:—

These threatening trials, fears, and dangers past,  
 Your soul, with full salvation crown’d at last,  
 More clearly may its countless value know,  
 And to the Saviour endless praises owe.

Go on asking, seeking, knocking, and depend upon it, for

they are Christ's own words—'Every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.' You may assure yourself of an interest in the daily prayers of, dear cousin, your's, &c.

J. W.

COUNSEL TO THE DESPONDING.

*To his Daughter Hanbury.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Church-street, August 18, 1746.

In whom 'I travail,' and wrestle, and importune continually to see Christ Jesus 'formed,' and concerning whom I have more than once received a comfortable pledge, that 'the Lord hath heard the voice of my supplications;' oh! that you were filled with the love of Christ. None that hath not tasted, that hath not drank deeply of his love, will believe, or can imagine the freeness of that grace, with which he indulges those who cast themselves entirely, absolutely, into the fulness of his all-sufficiency: and who, quitting all self-confidence, and all despondency arising from a sense of their past ingratitude, inconstancy, and unprofitableness, venture to plunge into that immense ocean, relying fearlessly upon his truth and faithfulness. You are distressing yourself with fears and jealousies that you are not in Christ; that your repentance and faith are not sincere; and, therefore, that you have no right to approach his table to partake of the memorials of his death—the pledges of his everlasting love; the seal of the new covenant in his blood. It is well: it is well, I say, that you have such fears. A thousand times better so, than if you had no fear, no concern about these things: but, would it not be better still to triumph over those fears, and to have a well-grounded hope? "This," you will say, "is the very thing I want! how shall I attain to it?" Not by dwelling upon the badness of your state; not by examining your past conduct, in order to discern whether you have been sincere in time past, or not; though these things are good, and useful in their places. Are you labouring, and heavily laden with sins, with fears, with unbelief?

Does your soul desire rest? Has not Christ a bosom on which weary souls may repose? Has he not directed you to 'come' to him for 'rest;' and promised, himself, to give you rest if you will come to him? And can everlasting Truth fail? Your soul is not at rest in Christ because you have not 'come' to him: you have seen somewhat of his beauty; felt somewhat of the attractive influence of his goodness and grace; and have thought—how happy you should be if you were interested in him, and could obtain an infallible evidence thereof:—but all this is not coming to him; though I confess it is a useful and necessary preparative thereto.

Come then, at last, my dear child, 'come' to Christ Jesus, that friend of sinners, that compassionate lover of souls, and he will receive you with open arms. May I not say to you, as the people did to blind Bartimeus?—'Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.' Are you still looking for something in yourself, some qualifications to recommend you to his mercy and love? There needs no other, he expects no other qualification than a sense of your need, and of his suitableness to 'supply all your need.' Let me illustrate this case by a similitude taken from yourself. I know you have the heart of a parent. Let me ask you now—'Can you 'forget' your 'sucking child?' Can you forget the son of your womb? What is it that recommends him to your love, a love mixed with the tenderest compassion? Is it any particular qualification in the child? Must it needs be in a healthful state, or else you cannot love it? Does not your sense of its weak, helpless state greatly recommend it to your compassionate and affectionate regard? And is it not just so in the present case? Has not Christ the heart of a father, and declared—'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out?' Whatever, then, be your present state, whatever your want, Christ is that to the coming, believing soul, and he will do for you 'exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think!' If I can make a little time in the evening, I intend to wait on you, and converse with you; if not, give me an opportunity to—

morrow; for I assure you that the salvation of my children lies much upon my heart, nor can any thing afford greater joy to your truly affectionate father, J. W.

SELF-EXAMINATION BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

*Friday Night, September 5, 1746.*—The minister, Mr. Fawcett, hath given us a preparation sermon on these words—‘ Lord, is it I?’ May I learn, from the example of the disciples of my Lord, to be cautious and fearful of judging others; to be jealous over myself; and in all my self-judging to appeal to Christ, as the discerner of my heart, and the judge of my integrity. O my soul, how sad will my state be hereafter, how shocking and dreadful my disappointment, after all the profession I have made, and the glorious hopes I have entertained, should I at last be found a hypocrite? I doubt not, I am esteemed a sincere convert, a true believer, by numbers of my fellow-Christians. I am sensible my wife, my children, my most intimate friends esteem me such. So probably did his fellow-disciples esteem Judas. It should seem that every one of the eleven was more ready to suspect himself than the real traitor. They did not ask—‘ Lord, is it this man?’ but on the contrary—‘ Lord, is it I?’ It was Christ alone, the ‘ discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,’ who could discern the hypocrite. What will the good opinion of fellow-Christians avail me, in the great decisive day, if Christ, the sovereign Judge, should condemn me? What confusion must cover me in that awful hour, if he, who is the faithful and true witness, do not testify for me? If I only wear religion as a mask, to cover carnal views and sinister ends, the time is certainly coming, when the mask will fall off, and then, what is my hope? ‘ Shall not my hope be cut off, and my trust be a spider’s web?’ How terrible would it be, after I ‘ have eaten and drunk in his presence’ so often, to hear him profess, ‘ he never knew me?’ How could I bear to hear him say—‘ *Depart?*’ But, for ever ‘ blessed be the God and Father of my Lord Jesus, who hath begotten me again,’ and, through whose adorable grace, I am ‘ born again, through sanctification of the Spirit

unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, and raised unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Oh! the glorious hope, to which my God and Father hath begotten me again. This is the life of my life, the health of my health, the riches of my riches. What would all this world, my near and dear relations, health and prosperity, be to me without this? They are all loseable, perishing things, and I must die and leave them all behind me; but this I shall never lose. Or, should my hope, as to the lively exercise of it, be clouded and intermitted for a season; yet, the thing hoped for shall never be lost. It is an 'inheritance,' to which the 'heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,' have a just claim. It is 'incorruptible, and undefiled, and fadeth not away.' It is 'reserved in heaven for me;' and I 'am kept by the power of God through faith unto' that 'salvation.' Of this I have satisfying evidences, *not so much taken from what I have done for God, as what God hath done for me.* He hath given unto me to hate sin, to love holiness, and to love God above all. He hath given me repentance for all and every sin. He hath given me to see myself 'poor and blind,' guilty and undone, without a Saviour; to see Christ as suitable and all-sufficient, and humble faith in him as my righteousness; even Jesus as my all. He hath given me to see myself 'complete in Christ,' worthy through his worthiness, righteous through his righteousness, and 'strong' only 'in the power of his might.' Adored be his victorious, distinguishing grace. Hallelujah!

COMFORT LAID UP FOR FUTURE TRIALS.

*To his Daughter Hanbury.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Chorley, February 17, 1747.

It hath long been matter of my warmest desire and most earnest prayer, that all mine may be the Lord's: and now, 'I have no greater joy, than to see my children walking in the truth.' I have long entertained hopes of you and your sisters, that I have not in vain prayed and laboured, and, as it were, 'travailed in birth again, until Christ' be 'formed in you.' Oh! that parents and children may be all ripen-

ing apace for God and glory. As for you, my dear, who are in a married state, let me remind you to be expecting trouble in the flesh.' The more you expect it, the better you will be prepared for it, and the more easily will it be borne, and prove the more advantageous to your best interests. You have been made to 'bear the yoke in your youth,' by afflictions in your own person, which 'for the present were not joyous, but grievous.' Expect a return of these. They will not come the sooner. Your children have been 'chastened sore,' though 'not given over unto death.' Expect to see them 'taken away with a stroke.' Realize to yourself such a trial. Your husband, to whom God hath given sound health, may leave you a widow, and your children fatherless.\* Your father and mother may be gone too, or may be utterly incapable of comforting you. I suggest not these things to distress you, or to abate your present comforts. No; my desire and aim are, that you may have growing comfort; and that, in every stage and state of life. Therefore, take up your 'portion' in God. Fetch all your joys from your covenant-relation to God through Jesus Christ. God is a fountain that never fails, even when creature-cisterns are dried up. Look on your children as lent, rather than given. Consider who is the proprietor: and may he not 'do what he will with his own?' Be willing, then, since his glory is concerned in it, that he shall 'do with you,' with your husband, with your children, 'what seemeth him good.' The more you depend on him for comfort, and draw your comforts from him, the more you will find, that outward changes cannot deprive you of your 'joy.' David could fetch comfort from the covenant, when one of his sons had been guilty of incest, another, of murder and rebellion, and a third, of treason. Habakkuk could 'rejoice in the Lord,' and 'joy in the God of his salvation,' when creature-comforts were entirely 'cut off.' God is the same now as then. 'The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary.' We are never

\* Mr. Hanbury died in less than seven years after this.

duly prepared for trials, till we are willing to let go those enjoyments which God may call for, whether health, substance, children, husband, &c. Nor can we willingly quit this mortal life, till we are assured of immortality; nor part with present enjoyments, till we are assured of better in reversion. There is enough in a covenant God, enough in the love of Christ, to raise us superior to every changing scene of life; to keep us humble and heavenly-minded in prosperity; and to make us patient and cheerful in adversity. Jesus is a precious name. To be able to call him, *my Jesus*, '*my Lord and my God*,' *my* 'All in all,' is more than to have the whole treasures of the Indies: It is more than to have an army for our guard, or a legion of angels for our convoy: It is more than to have all the birds of music serenade us at our window every morning; and a band of musicians in most enchanting concert, to attend us all the day. Why may not all this treasure, strength, honour, pleasure, be yours? Jesus is a sea of love. As the sea spreads itself to receive all, that from every coast shall venture to launch forth, and finds room enough, and to spare, for every one; so does the blessed Jesus, with open arms, receive and embrace every soul, that with humble confidence rests upon his promise and all-sufficiency. To his blessing I commend you and all yours. May the grace of 'the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.' May 'the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush,' and the love of him that hung on the cross, be ever towards you. So prays your truly affectionate parent,

J. W.

PROMOTING PIETY IN A SON-IN-LAW.

*To Mr. Josiah Hanbury.*

DEAR JOSIAH,

Chorley, February 17, 1747.

As you stand in the relation of a son, and are become bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh, who 'is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,' I find and feel my heart and affection drawn out towards you, and tenderly concerned for your interests; especially, for your spiritual prosperity. For this, my soul hath been poured out in earnest intercessions many a time, more particularly of late, both

before I began this journey and since. I have seen reason to hope that you attend with seriousness to the most important truths: and would hope, that you have experienced what it is to be 'a new creature,' to 'be born again,' to have 'old things passed away, and all things become new.' Nevertheless, as this is a most important point, the very hinge on which your salvation turns, since without it a man 'cannot see the kingdom of God,' allow me to ask—What evidences you have that this change hath indeed passed upon you? As there are but two states which divide the world of mankind in eternity, reason tells us that there must be a wide difference in the characters of one and the other here in time. They who are 'made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,' will never be thrust out of it; as, on the other hand, the unmeet for heavenly society and employment will never be admitted. The chief meetness for heaven is love to God and Christ. We do not love God at all, if we love him not more than all. 'If any man,' says Christ, 'cometh to me, and hateth not father, mother, wife, children, house, lands, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' The meaning is, that we must prize an interest in Christ above all the world, and be willing to let all go, rather than by sin lose the Saviour. It is a great thing to love God and Christ in this high degree. The ways of holiness are irksome to corrupt nature; and though the unconverted may shew some regard to God and his ways, yet this is the language of their hearts—'Behold, what a weariness is it!'—It may be difficult to determine, whether you love God and Christ above all, which was my own case for many years; yet, you may certainly know, whether any remarkable change hath ever passed on your temper of mind; whether at some particular seasons you have been filled with concern for your soul, and with distressing fears lest you should perish for ever; whether you have sometimes had such a sight of the emptiness of all creature-enjoyments, that you would have given all the world to obtain the favour of God and an interest in Christ; and whether you have been made to prize the gospel, as the

means for securing your eternal salvation. You may know, whether you have been convinced of the sinfulness of your heart and life, so as to 'abhor yourself, and repent in dust and ashes;' whether you have also seen your absolute need of a Saviour, the all-sufficiency of Christ, the freeness of his love and grace, and his readiness to receive and embrace every returning sinner; and whether, as a sinner, you have been enabled to trust the promises of the gospel. You may know, whether you have been grieved for your former, as well as latter sins, and particularly for your ingratitude to Christ; and have been determined for new and better obedience. I am not ignorant of the modesty of your temper. If you cannot talk with me, you may write to me. Be not discouraged. 'Is there no balm in Gilead! Is there no physician there?' Believe this freedom to proceed from the abundant love and tender concern for your everlasting happiness, of your affectionate father,

J. W.

CHRIST WITH THEM THAT MEET IN HIS NAME.

*Saturday Night, February 28, 1747.*—Our Lord says—'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Surely, there is more implied in these words, *in my name*, than I have hitherto conceived. Many will meet to-morrow in places of worship, but, will they all meet in the *name* of Christ? Will they all enjoy his presence? Scripture is its own best expositor:—'Jerusalem' is called 'the city which the Lord did choose, to put his *name* there,' that is, where he would be worshipped. Elijah said to Baal's prophets—'Call ye on the *name* of your gods, and I will call on the *name* of the Lord.' The Psalmist says—'The *name* of the God of Jacob defend thee.' He also says---'In the *name* of our God we will set up our banners.' The prophet Micah observes---'All people will walk every one in the *name* of his God:' and concludes, 'We will walk in the *name* of the Lord our God for ever and ever.' Here are implied, worship, obedience, and trust. So, 'baptizing in the *name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' is a covenant transaction, implying dedication, worship and allegiance to the Sacred Three.

When our Lord says---‘ I am come in my Father’s *name*’---  
‘ The works that I do in my Father’s *name*:’ When Peter  
said---‘ In the *name* of Jesus Christ rise up and walk’---  
‘ There is none other *name* under heaven given among men,  
whereby we must be saved’---‘ Signs and wonders done in  
the *name* of Jesus’---‘ Paul spake boldly in the *name* of the  
Lord Jesus;’ such passages must imply, that they who ‘ *are*  
gathered together in the name of Christ,’ believe that Christ  
regards their worship. They believe that Christ is able to  
give the mercies they pray for. They not only believe him  
able, but willing also, to grant their requests: ‘ for all the  
promises of God in Christ are yea, and in him amen.’ To  
meet in his name implies, that they are gathered together  
in the love of Christ. They cultivate, cherish, and exercise  
love to him, and desire to be like him in every attainable  
degree. It also implies, that they ‘ put on Christ.’ The  
Apostle says---‘ As many of you as have been baptized into  
Christ, have put on Christ.’ And he exhorts---‘ Put ye on  
the Lord Jesus Christ.’ If we ‘ put on Christ,’ we do by  
faith apply him to our souls with all his merits. Again, it  
implies, not only that we have done so in some former in-  
stances, but that we do it in the present act of worship. If  
a servant be sent to ask or buy something in his master’s  
*name*, the person he treats with, does not so much consider  
the character of the servant, as that of his master, and being  
satisfied he is such a one’s servant, gives or sells accord-  
ing to the regard he hath for the master; for he con-  
siders the servant as vested with the master’s character.  
So, here, if I ‘ ask in’ Christ’s ‘ name,’ I must ‘ put on  
Christ.’ I must believe his righteousness mine, his obedi-  
ence mine, and the virtue of his sufferings and atoning  
sacrifice to be mine:—for me he was born, was circumcised,  
fulfilled all righteousness, was made sin; that is, he stood  
in the place of me as a sinner, for me he suffered and died,  
for me he bore the wrath of God, and made full satisfaction  
to the justice of God. It does not hence follow, that I, in  
Christ, did and suffered these things: but, it will follow,  
that I share in the atonement Christ made for sin by his

meritorious sufferings and sacrifice, and am interested in all the blessings of his purchase.

A REVIEW OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH HIM.

*To the Rev. R. Pearsall.*

Kidderminster, — 1747.

MY DEAR AND MUCH HONOURED BROTHER,

I think I do esteem it a greater honour to be a 'worker together' with God, in bringing home precious souls, who are as sheep going astray, to their great Shepherd and Bishop, than to be the king's son-in-law. This is an honour the Lord has not altogether denied me. Though I cannot say---he has made me the instrument of converting *one* soul, I trust he has made my poor endeavours some way serviceable, in connection with more excellent labours, towards the conversion of seven young ones in my own family, within these few years. I have the joy to see all my children walking, I trust, in the truth; and to see 'servants,' which 'serve the Lord Christ.' But, alas! I have been a very unprofitable servant. Many talents have been put into my hands for improvement, and still more and more talents, and yet I have not a heart nor zeal to improve them as I ought. I am sensible many blame my too great forwardness, my too much zeal about the affairs of religion: but my own conscience tells me it is too little, and that I am too apt to hide my talent 'in a napkin.' O pray for me, that God would show me what he would have me to do, and give me courage, resolution and unwearied diligence to do it: and yet, to the praise of his rich, free, glorious grace, be it spoken, he is exceedingly kind and gracious, and ever indulgent to me. I may truly say, as you do---"I know none he has bestowed greater favours upon, and I know none that hath slighted them more than myself."

To look over the various scenes of his providence, and the methods of his grace, for forty years past, towards a poor, worthless, sinful worm, is quite amazing, and shows me to myself a monster of ingratitude. What a gay, giddy, unthinking, creature was I! prone to all manner of vanity,

and averse to every thing of a serious, religious nature ; though I had a religious education, and had religious principles early and diligently instilled into me. But how rich and adorable was that grace, which saw me labouring to break asunder the bonds of education, and 'making provision for the flesh to fill the lusts thereof;' saw me and pitied me ; and, sometimes by a threatening providence ; sometimes by a seasonable word of counsel, caution, or reproof, from a pious parent or friend ; sometimes by a rousing sermon : at other times, by the reasonings and reflections of my own mind, when solitary ; and, once or twice, by a reproof from a play-fellow, much more wicked than myself, who would ask me—Whether my father (who was a remarkably grave and pious man) taught me this or that, which he either saw or heard in me ? I say, by these, and a much greater variety of methods, the Lord often checked, controuled, restrained, my eager career in sin and vanity : and made me think seriously of my immortal interests and everlasting concerns. Well do I remember the times and places, when taking a solitary walk, almost forty years ago, and conversing with myself about present and future things, I had such an affecting sense given me of the emptiness and insufficiency of all created comforts, and the vast importance of invisible realities, that it swallowed up all my thoughts, even all my soul ; made me for the present, quite dead to every thing here below ; fixed my resolution, whatever became of me here, to make the immortal 'crown' the object of my main pursuit ; and caused me one time under a rick, another time behind a buttress of the steeple, or under a bush, or in the corner of a hedge, to pour out my soul, with strong cries and floods of tears, to Him 'who seeth in secret,' that he would save me from the sins and follies of giddy youth, draw me to Christ, and give me an 'inheritance among them that are sanctified,' through faith that is in Christ Jesus. Well I remember the morning (it was a Lord's-day morning) some time after this, when awaking pretty early in summer time, and reflecting with bitterness

on my inconstancy in religion, and the unevenness of my walk, it was strongly and suddenly impressed on my mind, to rise and put the grand, important concern out of doubt. Accordingly, I arose, 'my heart was hot within me:' all the while I was dressing, I resolved to be the Lord's; I bowed my knees before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and made a solemn dedication of myself, soul and body, with all that I have and am, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and begged his divine aid to confirm my resolution. I rose from my knees, made a new book, and wrote down, as the Lord was pleased to enable me, my solemn covenant with God, my renunciation of every sin and lust, the dedication of myself to his service, and resolution, through grace, to be the Lord's on his own terms. I then determined to call myself to an account every evening, how the several parts of the day had been spent, and the several duties of it performed, and to record what observations I made. Thenceforward, I was filled with such a reverential awe of the Divine Majesty, as in secret prayer swallowed up all my thoughts; so that I have hardly been conscious of a wandering thought, while I have been praying a quarter of an hour or more. Thus, did my gracious God and Father restrain and guide my giddy youth: and, whereas I felt but little, comparatively, of my absolute need of a Saviour, but trusted too much in my early piety, and the sensible and visible change in my heart and life, the goodness of my frame, &c. he took occasion by degrees, from my many falls and backslidings, to lead me to Christ, and to trust in him alone for salvation, and every thing preparatory to it.

My hopes and fears after this, prevailed by turns for many years, though generally hope had the ascendancy. For, now and then, the Lord was pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon me, and to give me peace and joy in believing: and one time, about the year 1718, this continued with little interruption, for the space of a month or more. One Lord's-day afternoon, April 23, 1721, after the second meeting, having been reading in a very

searching book, 'A Treatise of the Affections' by Mr, Fenner, I was led to a close examination of myself. I was willing to be tried to the bottom; but the more I compared my heart and life with the rules laid down, and the more I drew conclusions, the more reason I saw to fear I was but an 'almost' Christian. I went on, nevertheless: at last my conscience convinced me that I was but a hypocrite! and I was filled with dreadful fears, that all I had done in religion had been done in hypocrisy, and that all my comforts had been delusions of Satan. I had now been a communicant for thirteen years; and I concluded, if, after all, I had been a hypocrite, a hypocrite I should live and die. Oh! what a consternation did it put me into: 'my flesh trembled for fear of God, and I was afraid of his judgments.' Having occasion to come down stairs, walking through the kitchen, my dear and pious wife, when I returned, observing my countenance changed, followed me into the place of my retirement, and with pensive looks—"My dear," she asked, "what is the matter?" My heart was so swollen with grief and anxiety, I could not answer a word, but to beg of her to leave me to myself. She was not to be so put off, but, in the most endearing, yet pressing manner, urged me to tell her what was my grief? My heart was ready to burst. I would fain have been excused from publishing, even to her, my shame: but, when she would by no means be satisfied without knowing what had altered me so, I gave vent to my sorrow, and owned to her—I was afraid I was a hypocrite. She, poor heart, thereupon said all she could to comfort me; told me of many good marks of sincerity she had observed in me, and some even of late: but it was all nothing to me: 'the heart knoweth its own bitterness:' and, with a heavy heart, I went at five o'clock to the last meeting. Good Mr. Spilsbury, who has been in heaven these twenty years, used to expound some portion of Scripture in the evening. He knew not of my case, but the Lord had directed him to a passage, the most suitable of any in the whole book of God. He expounded the last verses of the

57th chap. of Isaiah. While he was reading the first verse—'For the iniquity of his covetousness, I was wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth; and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart:' oh! thought I, this is for me: this is my very case. He went on—'I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners:' oh! then thought I, there is help; there is yet hope. I ate up all his words as they fell from his lips. I perfectly hung upon his lips, through the whole of the sermon. He arraigned me, he condemned me, and then he pardoned me. I came home cheered; my spirit was greatly refreshed. I could say with Jeremiah—'Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' After this, I went on comfortably for a while, though not without some mixture of fear. But in the year 1724, having been married then some years, and the Lord having blessed me with considerable increase from a small beginning, covetousness began to prevail. I was aware of it, and not wholly insensible of the danger; and yet, such was the sweetness of gain, that I observed my first and last thoughts were apt to run very much upon it.

In the spring of 1725, having accustomed myself to devote the first hour of every day, to reading, meditation, and prayer; and being then upon Mr. Baxter's 'Saints' Everlasting Rest,' when I came to that part, where he gives particular directions in the work of self-examination—Now, thought I, will I 'give diligence to make my calling and election sure.' He advises us, in this important work, in order to discern the truth of our state God-ward, not to multiply marks, but to clear up these two points:—Have I, in my practical judgment, chosen God for 'my portion?' and then—Have I, in my practical judgment, chosen Christ for my Saviour? In this matter, I took abundance of pains from morning to morning; searching and sifting both my heart and life, and begging earnestly that God would 'search' and 'try me,' and discover me to myself; and this for

several weeks. Still, my soul hung in doubt; sometimes hope, and sometimes fear prevailed; but hope had generally the ascendancy: and I am convinced more and more, that though it be every Christian's duty, to 'give diligence to make his calling and election sure,' it is not in his own power to accomplish it. It is God alone can give us, 'in the behalf of Christ,' to 'believe;' as well as it is he alone can give us to 'suffer for his sake.' Well, when the Lord had convinced me I could not do it with all my diligence and labour (for he will have us to labour for it), he took the matter in hand himself, and did it for me presently in his own way. He brought me into the wilderness, and there he spake comfortably unto me. He brought me into sudden and deep adversity; so that, whereas from beginning the world with a certain sum, in five or six years I had gained twice that sum, he, at one stroke, took away one-third from me, and, three months after, another. The stock I had to begin with, still remained with me; but I began to think, as in Job's case, all was gone! and, which was the most humbling trial of all, my character was severely censured, and my good name, though very unjustly, trampled in the dirt. I had now no refuge but the Rock of ages; I could appeal to him with humble confidence; I sought him more than ever; I redeemed time every evening for solemn meditation, to converse with God and my own soul. He did not fail to meet me. He, who joined himself to the travellers going to Emmaus, did not withhold his presence from a poor, suffering worm. It is pleasant still, at the distance of twenty-two years, to survey the private walks I then took in the twilight; and one particular hedge, under which I had many sweet tokens of his presence. By this time, my 'joy' was such a 'stranger intermeddled not with.' I had lost two-thirds of the little I had possessed; but I had found the 'pearl' of inestimable price. My heart was dead to the world (and blessed be his name, it has been so, in a great measure, ever since), and I could no longer doubt whether God were 'my portion;' for I found enough in him to fill all my wishes, and

satisfy all my desires. I found I could enjoy all in God, though I were stripped of all. Oh! how good, how kind was he to sinful dust and ashes. He might have justly withheld his presence; left me to struggle with my difficulties alone; and have abandoned me to contempt and despair: but, 'as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him:' He 'gave me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' To this day, I always reflect on that humbling season with pleasure and praise. Having cured me of covetousness, the next year he more than made up all my losses; and ever since he has given me prosperity enough, and has given me to enjoy him in all.

For ever blessed, and adored, and loved, be his Name, for what he has done for a worthless unprofitable servant, and is still doing. He has called me since that, to encounter greater trials; but he is always before-hand with the gifts of his bounty, and the tokens of his love; so that I could pretty well conjecture when any sharp trial was coming, by the sweet manifestations he first made of his love to my soul. 'O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!'

J. W.

CONFIRMING PIETY IN A DAUGHTER.

*To his Daughter Hanbury.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Fordingbridge, May 2, 1747.

'I have no greater joy,' except rejoicing in Christ Jesus, 'than to see my children walking in the truth.' I hope you have all 'chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from you;' and, I sensibly find such a glorious hope hath contributed not a little, for many months, towards keeping me in high spirits. To see the partner of all my joys and cares, and all my children, travelling with me Sion-wards, and to look forward to the day, when we 'shall' all 'sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of our Father'—oh! it is the life of my life: It puts life into my prayers: It fills me with gratitude, when approaching the divine footstool: It 'is abundant, also, by many thanksgivings unto God:' It cheers

many of my lonesome hours: It assures me, that each of you will never want such a measure of earthly good, as is best and most conducive to your immortal interests, for 'all other things' shall be added unto you: And, it tends perfectly to obliterate envy from my breast, for I think no man upon earth happier than myself. My dear child, it is indeed, desirable to find our souls always upon the wing God-ward and heaven-ward, 'ready to every good work,' our faith always lively and strong, 'taking heaven by force,' and in our wrestlings with God saying—'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' It is highly desirable to have love to a dear Redeemer always flaming, and our affections to all created comforts duly regulated, so as to love him better, love opportunities of conversing with him, and prize his presence, and the tokens of his love, even above our necessary food. It is very desirable to find, that indwelling sin, the corruption of our nature, the workings of unbelief, our deadness in duty and backwardness to it, are our daily burthen, under which we 'groan, being burdened.' It is good to renew daily and deeply, our repentings for actual sin, and find a growing hatred to it and watchfulness against it, and a holy jealousy over ourselves following us into all places, companies, and employments. As a consequence of these things it is desirable to have a joyful hope, that we are indeed 'passed from death unto life;' that 'God is our God for ever and ever,' and 'will never leave us, nor forsake us;' that 'the Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirit' to our being 'the children of God;' that we find heaven already begun in our souls,—even the dawnings of an eternal day; and, that 'the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,' and 'the sun of righteousness arisen' there 'with healing in his wings.' These are true riches, solid pleasures, and substantial honours. In ourselves 'we are nothing,' and of ourselves 'can do nothing:' Christ is the fountain of life and grace, and the more we go to him, and to God in his 'name,' the more abundantly shall we receive. Christ stands with blessings in his hands ready to bestow upon all

that come; and the more and the oftener we come to him, the more shall we have; for 'he giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.' He does not tell us, as we are too apt to tell our fellow-mortals—You were at my door yesterday, or very lately, and I relieved you; how can you have the face to come again so soon? No; 'his ways are not our ways.' He bids us 'pray without ceasing;' and if we pray without ceasing, we should receive without ceasing. 'Why are the King's children so lean from day to day?' Is it not because they have too little, and too seldom recourse to the fountain? They who frequent the court, learn a genteel and courtly behaviour: have we a heavenly temper? If not, it is because 'our conversation is' not 'in heaven.' We never shall be lively Christians, till we live much with Christ. Nehemiah could 'pray to the God of heaven,' while he was waiting on an earthly prince. Cannot we pray more than we do, while walking, sitting, working, nursing, or conversing with fellow-mortals? Mr. Herbert, speaking of such ejaculations, tells the Lord—

"Thou canst no more not hear,  
Than thou canst die."

He also represents the Saviour as saying---

"Sighs will convey any thing to me."

Were it not for our corruptions, our pride, our selfishness, it would be thought no great matter to believe the word, 'the promise of God that cannot lie:' It would be as easy to believe God's word, as to credit the word of the best man upon earth. Do you start at that? I speak it to the shame of my own unbelief. Do you, indeed, as readily, as strongly and without a doubt, believe the promises of your heavenly Father, as you would a promise made by your earthly parent: and yet, does not your judgment readily consent, that there is an infinitely firmer foundation for believing the former than the latter! Why are we, then, so faithless? Go to Christ with this very complaint. 'They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength.' Christ 'saves his people from their sins,' as well as from 'the wages of sin.' Bear me much upon

your heart, and believe me to be your tenderly affectionate father,

J. W.

COUNSEL AND COMFORT TO THE AFFLICTED.

*To Mrs. Sarah Crane.\**

MR DEAR SISTER,

(On a South Journey,) May 4, 1747.

I can tenderly sympathize with you. I have known what it is to part with desirable children. May you never know such piercing grief, if it be the will of our heavenly Father. I am glad to find you can resign your dearest comforts, your *Isaacs*, to the Lord. The apostle John says very truly—‘This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’ Indeed this is that which overcometh worldly love, and worldly fear. What are worldly losses, or worldly gains, to him whose ‘treasure’ is in ‘heaven’? Or what is the loss of the dearest earthly relative to him who can say—‘My beloved’ Saviour ‘is mine, and I am his?’ Pain indeed, will be felt; and though ‘the spirit of a man may sustain’ many ‘infirmities,’ yet sharp pains, and of long duration, will subdue the stoutest spirit and the strongest constitution; but it is a noble support, even in that case, to ‘know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’ Dear sister, fly to the Lord in all your fears and griefs. For my part, I knew little of him, little of his all-sufficiency, little of the ‘open access, through Jesus,’ which we have to him, little of his readiness to fly to our relief, till some years ago. He then graciously condescended to make such a discovery of himself, of my relation to him and interest in him, as I had never known before: and never did I see myself to be such a polluted worm as then. I have still great need to desire, ‘that I may know Christ,’ with one apostle; and, as another exhorts, that I may ‘grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’ I am sure ‘the love of Christ passeth knowledge.’ However, blessed be God, I

\*Of Bromsgrove: and formerly a Miss Pearsall. Her younger daughter was, at this time, in a very afflicted state. She was not related by marriage to the gentleman mentioned in page 33.

have now for years known no anxiety. Whatsoever I want, I fly to 'the throne of grace' for. I pour before him my words, I plead his promises, his all-sufficiency; I tell him—Lord, thou canst, thou wilt provide for me; and he hath never put my hope to shame. Oh! that I could prevail on you to trust Divine all-sufficiency, and believe, that God 'is able,' and as willing as able, 'to do' for you 'exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' It is not asking in faith, it is not trusting, but doubting, unless we believe he will, as well as can, fulfil all his promises. May you have a more abundant 'supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,' and then we 'know that all things work together for good.' This is the earnest desire and prayer of, &c.

J. W.

WORLDLY SUBSTANCE IMPROVED.

*Lord's-day, May 31, 1747.*—The minister, Mr. Fawcett, hath been discoursing on our Lord's saying—'Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness.' Thus, we are taught true wisdom, even by iniquitous examples; and, to consider all worldly riches as of a deceitful nature. Indeed, all created enjoyments are vain and dissatisfying; our happiness does not consist in the abundance of them; their abundance rather increases the miseries of life; they can do nothing for us in the hour of death, and will make our future account the more awful and difficult. O my soul, wisely improve these hints. Sit loose to the world. Catch not at riches too eagerly, nor grasp them too closely. Use them for the ends for which they were given. 'Use' them 'as not abusing them.' Be solicitous to 'make thyself a friend' in heaven, by a right distribution 'of this mammon of unrighteousness.' Remember the saying of Chrysostom—"A man does not become rich by laying up abundance, but by laying out abundance; that is, by laying it out for God."

A TRIBUTE TO CONJUGAL AFFECTION.

*To Miss Wilkinson.*

DEAR MISS,

Kidderminster, June 1, 1747.

Do not imagine, because you are out of sight, that you are out of mind; I bear you frequently on my thoughts,

and do not always forget you when before the Throne. I never found my nephew so deaf to my advice as since I saw your father's last letter. I have been labouring to open his eyes to see a Providence in the obstacles which retard the consummation of his fondest wishes; but I promise myself a more tractable disciple in you. I tell him that more insuperable bars were thrown in my way, which kept me in a state of disunion, not indeed of hearts, from the object of my supreme earthly joys, for more than three years; and yet, our mutual affection being fully tried, I am persuaded a firmer friendship was laid for that conjugal affection which still subsists, and is still increasing. She sent me some endearing verses in my last journey. You cannot be supposed to take the pleasure in them that I do; but as you were so lately one of my family, you are not yet quite unconcerned about its interests. I will, therefore, submit to your inspection what, in my lonesome hours, I put together and sent to my wife on the fourth of May:—

MY BEST BELOVED, thy honest, pious lays,  
 Justly demand thy grateful partner's praise.  
 Unknown to *Clio* in thy blooming age,  
 What spark, so late, roused thy poetic rage?  
 'Twas a celestial spark, ' a living coal  
 From Salem's altar,' touch'd my Phebe's soul.  
 Though love connubial first engaged her hand,  
 Her heart—a nobler passion doth command.

Fain would she bring her distant lover near—  
 Explores her heart, and finds her Pythias there.  
 She finds *him* there, nor sovereign, nor alone,  
 But finds *Messiah* regent on the throne.  
 " My Lord," she cries, " I humbly recommend  
 To thy blest care, my dearest earthly friend.  
 O, Israel's Saviour, present every where!  
 Be to my spouse, my Pythias, ever near,  
 Let some fair seraphs guard the paths he'll tread,  
 And nightly keep their stations round his bed;  
 From stage to stage his circuit still attend,  
 Prepared, each threatening moment, to defend.  
 And, O thou fairest of ten thousand fairs!  
 Let thy loved presence soften all his cares:  
 Daily let flames divine his bosom warm,  
 And his dear heart thy matchless beauties charm."

I yield to thee : the throne do thou embrace!  
 Content, I there, but claim the second place.  
 In Christ let Pythias with me here combine,  
 And in thy glory both hereafter shine."

To Pythias next her glowing heart descends,  
 Accosts him, dearest of all earthly friends ;  
 With moving meekness begs his kind regard ;  
 And while her vows address their common Lord  
 Before the mercy-seat, the pious fair  
 Bespeaks his daily suit to meet her there.  
 No studied compliment employs her pen,  
 No flattering praise, to borrow praise again ;  
 Nor chides her spouse, nor peevishly complains,  
 But cheers and counsels him in tender strains :  
 In love, provokes to sacred service due,  
 And holds the bright immortal crown to view :  
 Invites him to a share in heaven's employ,  
 And leads him to anticipate the joy.

My dear, let pious motives thus improve,  
 And daily feed our growing mutual love ;  
 Till both, released from cottages of clay,  
 Ascend to courts of never-ending day.

But to return : I doubt not it will appear to be in mercy to each of you that the important event is for a time delayed. I would never run before Providence, but follow its leadings. You will remember, dear Miss, that ' the time is short,' that ' one thing,' and but one, ' is needful.' Let your care about your soul's immortal interests absorb all other cares, and your love to Christ, all other loves. Assure yourself of a cordial friend in your humble servant,

J. W.

THE WORLD ECLIPSED BY A SIGHT OF CHRIST.

*To his Daughter Esther.\**

MY DEAR,

Kidderminster, June 7, 1747.

Had you been bred and lived till this day, on the side of a forest, or in a wide, open common, where you had only seen a few scattered cottages ; and, had known no other employ than feeding a few domestic animals, or milking a cow ; nor any other conversation than that of a few country lads and lasses ; how would your eyes have been delighted,

\* Then on a visit in London.

and your mind enchanted, with the sight of such a town as Kidderminster! But now you have seen London, St. Paul's, Ranelagh, &c. how mean must your native place appear in your eyes, and how far must it be from exciting your wonder or admiration! Apply this to a soul, who by faith hath seen Christ and heaven, and can call Jesus its beloved and its friend, and the joys of heaven its own. Time was when the great and gay things of this life, the treasures, the pomp, and the entertainments of this world, were the most tempting objects that soul could look upon; but now it looks upon the world, with all its riches and its gayest scenes, as a little, mean, despicable thing: and, if the world begin to flatter it again, by looking great and tempting in its eyes, it looks again to Jesus and his salvation; thus, the world quickly loses all its splendour and allurements. Have you, my dear child, had such a sight of Jesus, and salvation through him? Have you seen his personal excellencies, his almighty power to save? Have you seen the inconceivable treasures of his wisdom and knowledge; how well able he is to confound all the policies of hell, and defeat Satan's most subtle devices, when he contrives mischief against his redeemed ones? Have you seen his love and compassion; and, that his willingness is equal to his ability 'to save all that come unto God by him?' Have you read this in his incarnation? Have you traced it in his labours and travels; in his preachings, and pleadings with obstinate sinners all day long; and, in his midnight wrestlings with God upon the cold mountains? Have you heard and believed it, in his kind invitations and melting language?—'Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters:' 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:' 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' Have you seen it in his quiet submission to cruel sufferings and bitter reproaches; in his agonies in the garden, when the tortures of his soul drew from him 'strong cries and tears?' Have you seen his perfect righteousness and atoning blood to be a righteousness not

wrought out for himself but you,—blood shed not for himself but you? Have you understood it as the language of his arms, when spread out naked on the cross—that he is ready to embrace every coming sinner? Have you heard this as the voice of every wound of his body, while expiring amidst his blood and groans--‘ Look unto me, and be ye saved?’ Have you seen him procuring pardon of sin, and justification unto eternal life;---that he hath made satisfaction for the vilest of crimes, and the chief of sinners;---that he hath a human nature which could die, and an in-dwelling divinity which could put an infinite value upon his sufferings, and make it an all-sufficient atonement for all your sins and guilt;---that he hath fulfilled God’s perfect law, which we never could fulfil, and bore the curse, which would have sunk us down to endless misery; and all this, not for himself, but for us? Have you seen his righteousness to be such as shall never be abolished, though the heavens are melted down, and the pillars of the earth taken away; and, that he hath ‘ finished the transgression,’ ‘ made an end of sins,’ made ‘ reconciliation for iniquities,’ and brought in ‘ everlasting righteousness?’ Have you been fully convinced that ‘ all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth;’ and, ‘ that he is able to keep what is committed unto him against that day?’ Have you seen him to be ‘ the faithful witness,’ who ‘ liveth and was dead,’ and is ‘ alive for ever more, Amen; and hath the keys of hell and of death;’ and, that ‘ whom he loves, he loves unto the end?’ Have you also, from a sense of your sin and misery, your guilt and corruption, your inability to save yourself—with inward grief and sincere repentance—solemnly committed your soul into his hands for salvation, relying entirely upon his all-sufficiency and faithfulness? And, are you frequently, in every religious duty, and in the intervals of duty, looking up to him as the ‘ Lord your righteousness and strength?’ If you have thus, and upon these accounts, committed yourself by prayer and humble dependance into the hands of Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, sin-

cerely and earnestly desirous of his salvation in all the parts of it; salvation from sin, as well as from hell; depend upon it my dear child is a believer in Christ, and shall certainly be saved. Now, if this be your happy state and case, as I hope it is, what are all the great and gay things below the skies to you? How much more excellent and desirable do you see holiness, even in poverty and rags, than impiety and irreligion, though attended with the greatest pomp and grandeur! What a rich treasure are 'the promises,' as they 'are all yea and amen in Jesus Christ!' Nor do the threatenings wear a dreadful aspect, if you have seen Jesus with an eye of faith. Even the face of God, which is dreadful to the guilty soul, you may look upon without dismay, since you have seen 'God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.' Nor, need you be surprised with overwhelming fears of sorrows or sufferings, or even death itself, since Jesus 'hath abolished death,' and taken away its sting. Happy souls that are in such a case! How careful should such be of their way and walk, lest they wound their consciences by contracting fresh guilt, sully their evidences, and mar all their comforts. O 'flee youthful lusts, which war against the soul.' By no means neglect prayer, nor starve your soul for want of frequent recourse to the Fountain of all grace. 'Keep yourself in the love of God,' 'looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' I 'commend you to' him 'who is able to keep' you; and am, dear child, your truly affectionate father, J. W.

## REITERATED ENDEAVOURS TO RECLAIM A BROTHER.

Wednesday, July 8, 1747.—Several times of late I have had some enlargement in prayer for my brother John, that he may be converted and saved. With this view, I wrote him a long letter last week, in which I put many searching questions, desiring him to put them closely to his conscience. Yesterday morning, reading in Mr. Baxter's 'Call to the Unconverted,' and being struck with the pungency of his arguments, it was suggested to my thoughts—that I should try to engage my brother to come every evening, and

hear me first read to him in that book, till I had read it through, and then conclude each evening with prayer. I immediately wrote him a short letter, which I began with telling him plainly, that I was more and more convinced he was yet in an unconverted state, that is, in an unpardoned state, and was going to hell as fast as the wheels of time could carry him; withal, signifying my firm persuasion that he might yet obtain mercy, and desiring him to come to me in the evening. He did not come; therefore, this morning I sent a messenger, desiring him to come this evening. The messenger presently returned, and brought me a sealed letter. I was afraid to open it till I had poured out my soul to God for him, and had much enlargement given me in pleading for him, which greatly animated my hope that God will have mercy on him. When I opened the letter, I found it contained an excuse for not coming before, and a promise to come this evening. Accordingly, this evening he hath been here, and finding him in a pliable disposition, I took him into a private chamber, and made the proposal to him to which he readily agreed. I read several pages, and then he joined with me in prayer, in which I put in suit that promise—‘If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.’ The Lord was with us of a truth. I had great freedom, boldness, and confidence: he had sighs and groanings unutterable. We afterwards embraced and kissed each other with great affection. He complained of a hard, obdurate heart: but I hope sovereign grace will mollify it, notwithstanding all the efforts of Satan to the contrary. ‘I will now hear what God the Lord will say,’ and attend to what he will do. Oh! may we ‘never be weary of well-doing.’\*

\* At this place it is proper to state that, in a letter to the Rev. R. Pearsall, dated Kidderminster, January 18, 1749, Mr. Williams writes: “I have the pleasure to tell you that several old, hardened sinners here, are at this time under deep convictions; and among them my own dear brother. I have hopes, though he hath sinned away many very pungent convictions, that these may be abiding.” And it is proper, also, to remark that Mr. W. had another brother, named Paul, who entered as a private into one of the regiments of Horse-guards. Family informa-

## SAINTS SHINE WITH BORROWED RAYS.

*At Sherborne, July 22, 1747.*

'Twas on the day, when sacred rest  
 Kind Heav'n enjoins to man and beast,  
 Bright Phoebus shot an early ray  
 Across the chamber where I lay,  
 But the refulgent effluence found  
 My sense with downy slumbers bound.  
 Anon, from sleep's dominion freed,  
 I gaz'd around with mindful heed,  
 And mark'd, surpris'd, close by my bed,  
 A sun-beam on the ceiling spread.  
 I rose, this mystery to trace,  
 And, lo! a mirror's polish'd face,  
 Set to confront the god of day,  
 Oblique retorts his borrowed ray.

Just so, thought I, the Saviour gives  
 The graces every saint receives;  
 Just so, with borrow'd rays he shines,  
 Whilst Jesus all his soul refines,  
 Each Christian is a looking-glass,  
 And Christ the Sun of righteousness.

## OBLIGATIONS TO DIVINE GRACE.

*To the Rev. R. Pearsall.*

DEAR BROTHER,

(On a journey,) August 15, 1747.

Blessed be God, who looked upon your distress, and commanded the bitter 'cup to pass from you.' 'For us to live,' may it be 'Christ!' Many 'talents' are put into your hands, and many into mine, of which we must render 'an account:' and 'the time is short.' Oh! how little do I attend to the main ends of life, as one that knows and believes I shall shortly die. I often wonder at myself, how

tion has not conveyed any farther particulars of him than that he became a deserter two if not three times, and that on being ultimately sentenced to be shot, he wrote a letter to Queen Caroline, in three languages, and with exquisite penmanship, in which he informed her Majesty, that—having been educated as a protestant dissenter, the *profession* of arms *offensively* exercised, was repugnant to his principles, and that the immorality of his associates rendered his situation loathsome, but that of his loyalty, and good conduct while in his regiment, he could furnish her Majesty with sufficient testimonials, &c. &c. Her Majesty was so impressed with the contents and execution of the letter, as graciously, to procure his pardon; after which, he went with the regiment to Germany, and while employed in a foraging party, was shot by the enemy. His personal appearance and his address were extremely fascinating, and his society much sought after; these circumstances contributed to feed that personal vanity which was the cause of his unsteady disposition, and led to his dissipating a considerable fortune.

unaffected I am with the most surprising acts of grace. Fain would I have been a libertine in my giddy youth, and then sovereign grace prevented me. Fain would I have trod the downward road. Oh! what scenes of wickedness did I sometimes meditate. No doubt I should have carried them into practice if opportunity and impudence had been in proportion to inclination. For ever adored be the grace of Christ, who redeemed me, not only from the guilt, but also, from the power of sin, and not only from the guilt and power, but likewise from the pollution. "Oh! what a Christ have I." He 'bare' my 'sins in his own body on the tree.' I am 'complete in him;' so complete, that there is 'no more conscience of sins.' Oh! what a glorious privilege, to 'have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' How inexcusable am I, if I do not 'love much,' for I verily believe 'much hath been forgiven' me! And, why this grace to me! Why am I not 'committing sin with greediness,' and 'filling up the measure of my iniquities!' Why am I not as vile as the vilest! At least, why am I not as vile as I would have been! I am sure that 'to will' a vain, sensual, flesh-pleasing life 'was present with me,' and prevalent over me; and many a time it grieved me, that I could not sin more impudently and without controul. Who changed the bias of my will, and turned the current of my affections? Who made me first dread, and then hate the things I had dearly loved; and, love the things I had loathed? Certainly, it was Almighty Grace; nothing less could have done it. The voice that called dead Lazarus out of his grave, caused me, when 'dead in trespasses and sins,' to hear his voice and live: but, why did he exert such power, and bestow such grace on me? Oh! infinite grace; boundless compassion! free, rich, unmerited, distinguishing love! And, why doth he now, while I am writing, 'shed abroad his love in my heart,' which, when I began to write, was as dull as a clod of earth! How many, who have lived more accurately and more usefully than I, are 'feeling after him, if haply they might find him!' Why is not this bewitching world a greater snare to me? A much less increase of its possessions ensnared my heart formerly.

Why does not the abundance of it overwhelm my heart, and quench the coal of devotion? When I was not possessed of half so much, he gave me to think it enough; and since that, without much plodding or projecting of mine, hath marked out my path to riches, and caused them to come rolling in upon me, and more and more from year to year. Even now, though, alas! not without a corrupt mixture, he is making his gifts matter for praise, and incentives to love, and inclines me to 'make unto myself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.' 'This is the victory that overcometh the world,' its smiles as well as its frowns—'even our faith.' Blessed be his Name, twenty-two years ago he enabled me to despise the *frowns*, when they appeared threatening enough; and now, adored be his grace, he shews me better things than the Syren's enchanting *smiles*. O adorable Jesus, thou art 'all in all' to my soul! 'Let their money perish with them,' who esteem thousands and ten thousands of gold and silver, worth one friendly look, one assuring word from thee. 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Never, sure was such grace bestowed upon such a worthless, ungrateful, unprofitable worm. Let love with faith be the pulse, and praise the breath of our souls: So shall we have 'peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.' Faith and love will do wonders. Let us pray for one another. I am, wishing all grace to abound towards you, yours indeed, J. W.

THE STATE OF THE RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS NOT THE  
CRITERION OF SAFETY.

*To Mr. and Mrs. Richards.*

DEAR BROTHER,

Kidderminster, September 5, 1747.

I have been reading over yours of the eighth of July, in which I see a clear illustration of what the apostle observes --- 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'---

It is certain, sin is your disease, and your only physician Christ. To deal freely, you seem to me to be 'seeking,' and to be in the right way to 'find;' but scarcely to have 'found the pearl of great price.' What has hindered? The wise merchant 'sold all that he had,' and bought that pearl; have you sold all with a view to 'win Christ?' Is there nothing that stands in competition with him? No known transgression you will not let go; no positive duty you shun; nothing in your habitual course, that your heart condemns you for, either of omission or commission? Is there nothing else you trust in besides God, his word, his promise, his covenant, and his oath? Do you not sometimes, when you have enlargement of soul in duty, entertain hope; and quit your hope when your heart has lost its fervour? Then, you do not trust solely in Christ, but partly in the goodness of your frame. The affections are mutable, and while you trust in them your hope will also ebb and flow; but the promise, or rather the Promiser, is always the same. He 'is the Rock of ages,' 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' If you trust in him, neither when in a lively frame will you think your state God-ward better, nor when in a dull frame will you think it worse. Do not mistake me; I do not say that a dull frame in duty is as good as a lively frame: no! it is highly desirable to have the soul ever on the wing; love, flaming and rapturous; faith, active and vigorous. Doubtless, the very life and soul of all true religion consist much in vigorous affections: but, I say, having chosen God for our 'portion,' having closed heartily with gospel invitations, and found in ourselves the marks of true believers, we ought to rest on the promise made to such, and not on the goodness of our frames. The sun shines as brightly when a cloud intercepts its beams, as when there is a clear sky; and God loves his children as really when 'he hides his face,' as when they 'walk in the light of his countenance;' accordingly they are directed when they 'walk in darkness, and have no light,' 'to trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God.'

DEAR SISTER,

What I say to my brother I say also to you, as far as it is applicable to your case. You are both sensible you are undone without Christ; venture, therefore, having discarded every rival, to claim him as your Lord and your God. Is it not his own invitation?—‘If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.’—‘I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.’ Why do you call in question *his* love to you? Perhaps you will say, and too justly—Because you doubt *your* love to him. Have you been sufficiently thankful for what his Spirit hath wrought in you? Among men, thankfulness for benefits received often obtains more. You have many peculiar mercies to be thankful for. Who shewed you ‘the exceeding sinfulness of sin;’ your need of a Saviour, and his all-sufficiency? Was all this the work of nature, or of grace? For these things, ‘abound in thanksgiving; and go to him not only praying, but trusting in his promise, and pleading too—‘that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’ Thus, plead the compassions of his nature, and the promises of his grace, and if he reject your suit, yours will be the first he ever did reject. To his blessing I commend you, and remain your affectionate brother,

J. W.

CHRIST CALLS HIS SERVANTS, FRIENDS.

*Lord’s-day Morning, October 4, 1747.*—How astonishing is the condescension of Jesus to all true believers! ‘Henceforth,’ says he, ‘I call you not servants,’ ‘but I have called you friends’:—‘Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.’ The great Apostle thought it a high honour to be entitled—‘*a servant of Jesus Christ.*’ So it is, but certainly, more is implied in being his ‘*friends.*’ Now, where there is friendship, there must be *a oneness of nature.* We see there is a kind of friendship among the brutes; but their several associations are only of those of the same species:—The ox herds not with the swine, nor the pigeon with the crow. So man cannot strike up a

friendship, but with one of his own nature. If, therefore, Christ call and treat his people as his friends, there must certainly be a oneness of nature subsisting between him and them. Accordingly, we read—‘ God was manifest in the flesh.’—‘ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ There can be no friendship between a holy God and sinful man, but in and through Christ, who unites both natures in himself. There must, also, be *a conformity or likeness of dispositions and tempers*. ‘ The same mind must be in us, that was in Christ Jesus.’ Was he, ‘ holy, harmless, undefiled,’ and ‘ separate from sinners?’—none are the friends of Christ, nor will he own them as such, in whom there is not, in a prevailing though imperfect degree, the same Christ-like disposition and temper! for, ‘ if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.’ Now, O my soul, is the same mind in thee, which was in Christ Jesus? He ‘ came to do the will of his Father who sent him,’ and his Father’s honour was dearest to him. When death, with all its horrors, stared him in the face, so that frail nature could not but pray—‘ Father, save me from this hour,’ he presently checks himself—‘ But for this cause came I unto this hour: Father, glorify thy name.’ When he was in his agony in the garden, he prayed more earnestly—‘ Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.’—‘ Not my will, but thine be done.’ Now, is this the supreme desire and endeavour of my soul—that God may be glorified in me, by me, and upon me, whatever become of me, whatever advantages I must give up, and whatever scorn and reproach I am called to pass through. Again, there must be *a oneness of interest*, that a cordial friendship may obtain; at least not a clashing of interests. What then is Christ’s interest?—in all things to have his Father glorified, and himself, who is ‘ one with the Father;’—‘ to seek and to save that which was lost;’—‘ to take away sin,’ and to destroy it;—to subdue Satan;—and ‘ to put all his enemies under his feet.’ Do I esteem it my best interest

to glorify God and Christ, to save souls, to subdue or suppress sin in my heart and life, and counteract the malicious designs of Satan?

INVITING A RELATIVE TO THE LORD'S TABLE.

*To his Nephew Watson.*

DEAR COUSIN,

London, October 30, 1747

Having with difficulty rescued an hour for retirement, it has been impressed on my mind to write and ask you—Why do you not eat bread and drink wine, in remembrance of Christ, according to his command? Is it not a glorious privilege, to ‘eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man’—the ‘Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world?’ Would you not think it a great hardship, a distressing circumstance, to be excepted by name, and forbid ever to partake of this solemnity? Have you enough of Christ? Do you enjoy as much of him as you desire? Or, do you imagine you can enjoy as much of him in the neglect, as in the use of his own prescribed means? Does not our Lord Jesus best know in what ways to manifest himself, and impart his grace to the souls that ‘do hunger and thirst after him?’ Bread and wine are in themselves means of nourishing our bodies and cheering our spirits; and it is well remarked by Mr. Herbert—

“ Not in rich furniture, or fine array,  
Nor in a wedge of gold,  
Thou who for me wast sold,  
To me dost now thyself convey :  
For so thou shouldst without me still have been,  
Leaving within me sin.

But by the way of nourishment and strength,  
Thou creep'st into my breast,  
Making thy way my rest,  
And thy small quantities my length,  
Which spread their forces into every part,  
Meeting sin's force and art.”

Does not this, figure out the design of Christ in the sacrament of his Supper? Does your soul hunger?—here is spiritual bread; come and partake of it. Does your soul thirst and droop?—here is spiritual drink, a rich cordial; come, satiate your thirst; come, cheer your heart with the

love of Christ. Have you strength enough for every duty, and against every temptation? Is your faith strong? Are your hopes firm and bright? Does your heart burn with divine love? Are your comforts lively? Is all within as you would have it? If not, come where all supplies are freely exhibited; where you may eat and be strengthened; may drink and forget your sorrows. Do you say?---I intend coming to the sacred feast some time, but fear I am not yet duly prepared for it. But if you come some time, why not now? Would you come when you have more strength, or when you have less? This feast is not for those who are full, but for the hungry. It is for those who know that they are 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Are not you one of these? What preparation would you make? Does the Master of the feast expect a present at your hands? Yes, he does:---'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' Come, yield yourself unto God. 'Come, join yourself to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.' Is it nothing to have a whole Christ freely exhibited to you, even Christ with all the benefits and blessings of his purchase? Certainly, it is that on which your soul-prosperity much depends. Does Christ say?---'These things I have said unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full?'---and may not this with great propriety be applied to his institution of his Supper? Therefore, as you value growth, establishment, and perseverance in grace; as you value 'joy and peace in believing;' celebrate the memorials of a dying Saviour, the all-sufficient friend of sinners. It is because I greatly desire your edification and comfort, that these things are thus proposed to you by yours, &c. J. W.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT UNDER AFFLICTION.

*To his Daughter Esther.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Winchcomb, November 5, 1747.

I thank you for your letter, but feel concern on account of your state of health. Let it be your first care to eye the hand of God therein. Not only should you 'acknow-

ledge him in all your ways,' but likewise in all the blessings you enjoy, and the afflictions you endure. 'Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.' What beauty and propriety are here! It is not without a constant, regular interposition of a divine providence, that you partake of your common mercies; but affliction and trouble are brought about by special acts of providence. I hope you are one of God's children. It is 'if need be,' when they 'are in heaviness.' He chastens them for their profit, for 'he doth not afflict willingly,' nor delight to 'grieve the children of men.' He expects them neither to 'despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when they are rebuked of him.' They despise his chastening, who do not humble themselves under his mighty hand, or inquire—'Wherefore contendest thou with me?' Humble souls will ask their own hearts—What is amiss? and—What has been so? in their temper or conduct, which the Lord would have them to correct by his visitation. Let me endeavour to assist you in your soliloquy:—

I am sensible it is not by chance that I now languish under this disorder. I do believe my blessed Saviour hath a gracious design in it. He is the Physician of my soul as well as my body, and knows the most suitable remedy for my spiritual maladies. It much concerns me to learn the true meaning of this visitation; and to remove its cause, lest, if these gentle strokes fail, I provoke him to encrease the chastisement. May I not, in some measure, read my sin in my punishment! This sickness changes my countenance: have I not been too proud of its comeliness? Are not reading, hearing, meditation, prayer and praise irksome to me? Have I not been too negligent, and too formal in those duties? Praying as though I prayed not, the coldness of my request may oft have procured its denial! Alas! too often have I risen from my knees before my heart was warm in the duty. Have I heard, as for eternity; carefully applying the word, whether it were for conviction, caution, counsel, or

comfort; and mixed faith and prayer with the word preached? Have I hid God's word in my heart, and daily meditated thereon? And, has my heart gone before my voice in singing his high praises? I have been lately at London. There I saw much of the pomp and splendour of this world. Was I not, in some measure, inclined to be 'conformed to the world,' and was it not higher in my estimation, and more my desire, than to be 'transformed by the renewing of my mind?' It is kind then, in God to give me so soon, a sensible conviction of how little this world can do for me. Happy they who live above the world, being called by grace out of the world; whose 'treasure' is 'in heaven,' and whose 'conversation is in heaven, from whence also they look for the Saviour!'

Thus, 'commune with your own heart,' and 'accomplish a diligent search:' and what your conscience may accuse you of, humbly confess and amend, and fly to Jesus for pardon and strength. This is the best regimen, and is prescribed by the great Physician. What a sweet consideration is it, that though a child of God accepts of every chastisement as the reward of sin, yet our heavenly Father 'will not alway chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever.' Be careful then, that in the dispensations of his rod, you 'receive not the grace of God in vain,' and rest assured that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment,' shall work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Such is the tenor of my daily prayers for you, and it is now my earnest request that you do daily offer up like supplications for your affectionate parent,

J. W.

REJOICING IN A FRIEND'S EARLY PIETY.

*To Miss Wilkinson.*

DEAR MISS,

Kidderminster, December 12, 1747.

I remember still that you were once my charge. Though I cannot say—'I have begotten you through the gospel,' yet the share an indulgent Providence allowed me therein, affords me many a delightful reflection. How transporting is the hope I have, that no less than seven young

souls under my roof have been born in a spiritual sense, within the space of two or three years! It is the life of my life. I have, indeed, growing hopes, that every child of mine is a child of God, and every servant of mine (I mean domestic servants) is a servant of Christ, besides two other persons who were only sojourners\* with me, 'and I do and will rejoice therein.' It is more to me, than all that outward prosperity with which it hath pleased my bountiful Lord to bless me. And are you, dear Miss, of that happy number? You will never be able to pay the mighty debt of gratitude and love you owe to Him 'who hath saved you, and called you with a holy calling.' Do but consider what you were when he first began to 'draw you to himself with bands of love.' At that time 'you were dead in trespasses and sins,' 'without Christ,' 'having no' well-grounded 'hope, and without God in the world.' Could you change your own heart? Did every one who heard the same word, which was made effectual to your awakening, so 'hear the voice of the Son of God,' as to 'live' a new life? Why were *you* made to hear it? 'As many as' receive Christ, 'and believe on his name,' are 'born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' 'Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.' 'Where is boasting then? It is excluded.' What praise is due to him, who 'hath quickened you together with Christ,' and 'saved you by grace!' Oh! the blessedness, to be rescued from eternal misery, to which we were doomed, and to be advanced to the dignity of children of God, and the heirs of an incorruptible crown. Imagine you have seen a condemned malefactor in his chains for execution, whose downcast looks excited pity in every beholder. Imagine again, that you saw this piteous spectacle released from prison, his fetters knocked off, stripped of his prison-garments, 'arrayed in vestures of scarlet and fine linen,' adorned with the royal 'ring, and a golden chain about his neck, made to ride in the

\* Herself, and a Miss Birkett. See December 30, 1748.

second chariot,' as Joseph, or in the third, as Daniel, 'and made ruler over all the land;' then, you will have a faint idea of what sovereign grace hath, I trust, done for you. Does not all this engage you to a life of gratitude and self-denying obedience? For, as this was the price of blood, the blood of the king's son, how great are your obligations to the Ransomer of your soul! When I think of such love to my own soul, alas! how languid are my returns of love, how feeble my essays of praise! Monstrous ingratitude!

"Were it not common, would not this be strange?

That 'tis so common, this is stranger still."—YOUNG.

My dear Madam, suffer no estrangement betwixt God and your soul. Be jealous of whatever may damp your love to, or enervate your faith in Jesus. 'Pray without ceasing.' Let the clock be your monitor to ascend on high on wings of faith, and in flames of love, as the cock to Peter, when he 'went out and wept bitterly.' The sacred flame must be fanned, or it will be choked with ashes. Often warm your heart in pious conversation with experienced Christians. 'Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.' Bear me upon your thoughts in your best moments. Assure yourself, that though you are far distant, you yet are frequently remembered by, dear Miss, yours, &c.

J. W:

PROCRASTINATION REPREHENDED.

*To his Nephew Watson.\**

DEAR COUSIN,

Kidderminster, January 20, 1748.

God has given us understanding to discern the folly of procrastination, if we would but consider. Alas! however, we have always *something else* to do; some scheme in view, or business in hand which seems to claim prior attention to our best interests. When shall we be wise for eternity in proportion to the importance of eternal over temporal affairs! When will the different application of our minds to these things, be proportioned to the different estimate

\* Then at Kendal, on a journey.

our cooler judgments, in a serious hour, make of one and the other! Nothing but the fear of God will drive us, or the love of Christ draw us to due consideration. Oh! could we say, as I know one who could—"Blessed Jesus! is there 'fulness' in thee? then am I sure to be a partaker of it. I feel the quickening influences of thy love, and I find it to be stronger than death, and more insatiable than the grave. What will it be to see thee 'face to face!' What to feast through eternal ages on the communications and displays of thy love and grace! What, to 'behold thy face in righteousness,' and to 'awake with thy likeness!' 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'"—Dear cousin, rest as much assured as ever of a fast friend in your loving uncle,

J. W.

## 'CHARITY ENVIETH NOT.'

*Concerning a Rival in Trade.*

January 20, 1748.—Be not at all dissatisfied, that Mr. R. is before me, or that he obtained some orders I should have had, if I had been before him. The great Householder careth for all the families of the earth, and Mr. R. hath a family to provide for as well as I. It is all for the best. It is as Providence, unerring Providence, hath appointed, who never mistakes the interests of his children. The Holy Spirit says—"Be careful for nothing:" "I would have you without carefulness:" "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you:" let this be the governing temper of my mind. Leave it every day to the great and wise Disposer to deal out to me that measure of success in business he sees best for me. Be not only willing, but desirous he should choose for me. Receive disappointments, as well as prosperity, with thankfulness to Him who sees a mixture of both best for me. Labour to love Mr. R. as myself, and enjoy his prosperity. Envy hurts none but the envious. Let not a thought of envy find place in my heart. God is doing his people good oftentimes, when they are ready to say, with good old Jacob—"All these things are against me."

## OBJECTIONS TO RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER, CONSIDERED.

To his Nephew Watson.

DEAR COUSIN,

Kidderminster, January 21, 1748.

Your objections against your coming to the Lord's table are—The general vanity of your mind, contrary to all your desires and resolutions; and, the more particular *distracting* situation you are now in. But, if you must not partake of the Lord's Supper, till you can do it 'without distraction,' is not this an 'offending against the generation of God's children?' According to this, I have been an unworthy communicant thirty-six years. Besides, is not God as really displeas'd with our distractions in prayer, as at the Lord's table? Would it not be a high affront to King George, if, while you were petitioning him for your life, or any great favour, you should stop every now and then, and turn away from him, to listen to the buzzing of a fly, or to stare at the company? Is it less displeasing to the Majesty of heaven; first, to be solemnly invocated to 'bow the heavens and come down' to listen to your humble cry; and presently, to see you turn your back on him, break off the thread of your address to him, and attend to every trifle that comes into your mind? But, will you therefore, leave off prayer? I know you abhor the thought. Yes! you are sorry that it is so; you are griev'd that you cannot 'attend upon the Lord without distraction;' and you gladly fly to the blood of atonement 'for mercy to pardon' your unallowed infirmities. Yet, let me tell you, you may as justly 'restrain prayer before God,' as neglect to commemorate the dying love of a dear Redeemer, because you cannot do it clear of *distractions*. You seem, indeed, aware of such a consequence, and in order to obviate it, you intimate, that you never expect to be in such a situation as to be free from wandering thoughts: but you also seem to intimate, that there is something in the wandering thoughts occasioned by a love-affair more peculiarly unfitting for the Lord's Supper, than in those which spring from other sources:—I can assure you, from my own experience, that there is no

such thing. Were yours a criminal amour, had you any dishonourable intention in prosecuting it, your reasoning on that head would hold: but, as the consummation of it, which you are seeking and longing after, is an ordinance of God, and instituted in Paradise; and, as the object of your wishes appears every way worthy of them; there is no more reason for your being ashamed of it, or conscious of any guilt on that score, than for your being ashamed of any other lawful business. Yet most young people, I believe, are haunted with a kind of conscious shame in such prosecutions, and it seems to be wrought into our very nature. Milton represents Eve, in her state of innocence, as not entirely free from it:—

“ She heard me thus, and, though divinely brought,  
 Yet innocence, and virgin modesty,  
 Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,  
 That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won:  
 Not obvious, not obtrusive; but retir'd;  
 The more desirable: Or, to say all,  
 Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,  
 Wrought in her so, that seeing me she turn'd.”

Now, lay all these things together, and then tell me, why an honourable love-affair should any more, or any more perniciously, distract the mind, and unfit it for the nearest approaches to God, than our six days' work. Nay, I can assure you, from my own experience, that worldly cares, the cares of a family, which are common to all men, have sometimes been more distracting to my mind in converse with God, than courtship, though mine was attended with much greater difficulty than yours. I rejoice, that you can say—you can appeal to him ‘who knows all things,’ that you ardently desire to love him, and can look back on the time, when all sin became odious to you, even your greatest burden. What though you have not that full assurance of your interest in Christ, which you desire: no more, had I, till fourteen years after I was a communicant. The means of attaining it, is to wait on the Lord in his own way, and expect it in his time. The more you

feel the love of Christ, the less you will doubt your love to him. The way to feel more of his love, is to wait on him there, where his love is most sensibly displayed, where by sensible signs he is freely offered, nay, given to you, even Christ with all his benefits. Fix your resolution now, never to be altered, that you will take the first opportunity of publicly 'giving yourself to the Lord, and unto his people by the will of God.' Your prosperity for both worlds will much augment the joy of your assured friend, and seryant for Jesus' sake,

J. W.

A NATIONAL FAST.

*Wednesday, February 17, 1748.*—O my soul, the government God hath set over us, hath proclaimed a fast. This is the day set apart and appointed to be kept with fasting and prayer. Consider now, O my soul, how I ought to keep it; or, 'what is the fast the Lord hath chosen?' We, of these kingdoms, are a very sinful, God-provoking people. All ranks of men among us are become degenerate. We have apparently been growing worse. It is a most profligate, degenerate age in which we live, 'Iniquity hath abounded,' long. Religion is at a very low ebb among its professors. 'The love of many waxeth cold.' Should I not 'cry and sigh for all the abominations that be done in the midst of us?' Should not 'my soul weep in secret places' for the prevalence of 'pride' and luxury, and all that wickedness practised in the land? And, should I not be deeply humbled for my own sins in particular? In order to which, should I not bring my heart and life under a strict and impartial examination, that I may discover what is the plague of my heart, and may put away whatever is evil from me? This is 'the fast that the Lord hath chosen—to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free;' that we 'break every yoke;' and 'deal' our 'bread to the hungry.' The Lord help me to keep such a fast, that if 'wrath be gone forth from the Lord, and evil be determined against this land,' I may at least 'deliver' my own soul.

## REFLECTIONS ON SPRING AND AUTUMN.

*To his Wife.*

MY DEAREST,

Bristol, April 9, 1748.

It is pleasant to survey the works of nature; to observe new life stirring in the vegetable world, and its glorious Author blessing the springing thereof. Every tree, hedge, and bush is budding, or shooting forth its leaves; and some of them begin to display their blossoms; beds of primroses skirt many of the banks, and bespangle the bosoms of others: while a universal verdure makes the fields and meadows look young again. How many quickening reflections should such a scene suggest to me! Shall my immortal spirit be dull and dead, or inactive, whilst inanimate nature is operative in a thousand forms? Even the grass, which hath no cultivation, springs and shoots out its spires; and shall I, who enjoy so many and rich advantages for improvement, be like a barren clod? Even the birds, who know nothing of their Creator and Preserver, warble forth his praises; and shall I be silent in his praise, who know him, or rather am known of him, and am conscious of benefits and obligations so innumerable? Very different was the scene which presented itself in my last journey in October and November. Old age was then far advanced upon the various tribes of the vegetable kingdom, and death was extending its vast empire all around. Millions of leaves were fallen, or falling, into the lap of mother-earth, which, shortly, shall receive you and me. Is it a melancholy thought! No; let but faith draw the veil aside, and the thought is joyful. As surely as I now behold a kind of resurrection in the works of nature, so surely shall these bodies arise from the grave. The sapless leaf is fallen and perished, and fresh buds fill and adorn every spray: so surely shall this 'corruptible' 'put on incorruption, and this mortal' shall 'put on immortality.' Let us not fear to go down into the grave. He that raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead, shall certainly raise up us also by him. Nor, let us fear to trust our souls, our immortal interests with him 'who died for us, and rose again.' As the sun

with its genial beams is now cheering and invigorating all nature, and drawing forth its germinative powers, so shall our souls be drawing fresh supplies from the Sun of righteousness, and be 'going from strength to strength.' Let us meet daily before the Throne, till through adorable grace we ascend thither. My love to every child, servant, relation, and friend. 'Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.' I am, my dearest, yours most affectionately, J. W.

VISITING, A SNARE TO PIETY.

*To his Daughter Hanbury.\**

MY DEAR CHILD,

Kidderminster, June 9, 1748.

It is not the bodily health and cheerfulness, and outward prosperity of my children, that I principally look at. Bear with me if I entertain a degree of jealousy concerning the temper of your mind. You are now in a state of leisure, and among friends, who will do all in their power to render your stay with them easy and cheerful: but, are there not snares attending every state, and particularly *that* you are now in? The cares of a family are attended with one kind of snares; leisure, inaction, and obliging regard of friends, with another kind. For my part, I have always found friendly visits and engagements had a tendency, for a time, to loosen my regards for my best Friend and best interests. Such is the weakness of our minds, we can attend but to one thing at a time; and so contrary is the spirit of the world to the Spirit of God, and the interests of the world to the interests of Christ, that while we are studious to please and oblige, and make ourselves agreeable to our friends, we naturally have our hearts and affections drawn off from God. I do not say this, because I would have you otherwise than easy, and cheerful, and obliging, among your friends. Nay, I really think it is your duty, in present circumstances, to cherish and cultivate a cheerful temper, and dismiss carefulness and anxiety: it may, as means, conduce much to the recovering of your health and strength. There is 'a time to laugh, and a time to dance,' as well as 'a time to

\* Then on a visit in Gloucester.

weep, and a time to mourn.' Yet, beware of too much levity, lest your heart should be thereby estranged from God and religion. It will require you to be much upon your guard. Spend as much time as you conveniently can in secret: 'Commune with your own heart: ' 'Converse with God in Christ: ' Every hour at least, and in whatever company, be lifting up your soul to God: by these means your cheerfulness will be the more decent and womanly. I know not whether you thought of it, to take a Pocket Companion with you, and therefore I have sent you one. That you may be under the protection and blessing of the Almighty, and that the 'grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' may 'be with your spirit,' is and shall be the prayer of your affectionate father,

J W.

## CAUTION AND COUNSEL ENFORCED.

*To his Daughter Kirkpatrick.*

MY DEAR ESTHER,

Kidderminster, July 29, 1748.

The original letter of which I send you a copy, came to hand on Wednesday.\* As your good uncle was solicitous

\*DEAR COUSIN,

Taunton, July 25, 1748.

What surprising news has reached me this morning! That a niece of mine should be married, and I not hear of the courtship, is what I should never have supposed; but strange things happen; and since this is as true as strange, I make all possible haste to wish you joy on this agreeable occasion. Believe me, I do it in the most sincere and ardent manner: and as it is not possible that you can now experience any joy without wishing Mr. Kirkpatrick to share it, I wish also, that you may be *unisons* in all conjugal satisfaction, since Providence has made you *one* by virtue of this relation.

You may expect me to congratulate you in a peculiar manner on your being married into an affluence of the things of this world. I assure you I am not so much a *Stoic* as to be insensible, nor so much a *Cynic* as not to pay a proper respect to the possessors of them; but it affords me infinitely greater comfort to learn that the gentleman to whom you are married is a *good* man. Indeed, were he not so, but vain, gay, carnal, as is too often the case with the rich; your uncle would have been in danger of mingling his tears with your laughter. 'I have seen an end of all perfection;' and have found that pleasure of every kind, which is not consistent with, or founded on religion, will be bitterness at last. You, my dear cousin, have, I trust, had a clear conviction that the favours and smiles of the Most High alone, through a precious Redeemer, yield a real satisfaction. Put yourself, therefore, solemnly under the divine protection. Intreat the Lord, with earnestness, to keep you humble. Corrupt nature is too apt to shew itself in pride, on a sudden flow of riches. The best circumstance belonging to the possession of

to present you with his congratulations and good advice, on the first opportunity, I thought the regard I owe him, as well as my concern for you, required me to forward it without loss of time. I am very thankful to him, as, I hope, you will also be. His apprehensions of your danger exactly coincide with my own, and bring to mind a beautiful passage in Dr. Young:—Night the First:—

KIRKPATRICK! “fortune makes her court to thee :  
 Thy fond heart dances while the Syren sings.  
 Dear is thy welfare ; think it not unkind,  
 I would not damp, but to secure thy joys.  
 Think not that *fear* is sacred to the storm :  
 Stand on thy guard against the smiles of fate.  
 Is heaven tremendous in its frown? most sure :  
 And in its favours formidable too.  
 Its favours here are trials, not rewards ;  
 A call to duty, not discharge from care ;  
 And should alarm us, full as much as woes ;  
 Awake us to their cause and consequence ;  
 O'er our scann'd conduct give a jealous eye ;  
 And make us tremble, weigh'd with our desert.  
 — Beware what earth calls happiness ; beware  
 All joys, but joys that never can expire :  
 Who builds on less than an immortal base,  
 Fond as he seems, condemns his joys to death.”

Indeed, my dear, I am jealous over you ; not that I distrust your temper and conduct more than I should another's in these circumstances, nor so much as I should my own ; but I have not forgotten how it was with me when I was newly married. I look on the first two or three years, and especially the first two or three months, after that memorable event, as my soul's most impoverishing season, since I first knew the Lord, or rather was known of him. I would not have it so with you. It cost me tears and groans, and as distressing fears as ever my soul experienced.

riches is, that it affords a glorious opportunity of doing good. They who only employ their wealth in a carnal way, will be found to be unfaithful stewards and will wish they had never had it. I have known, I am sorry to say, many good people evidently the worse for riches. Do you, my dear niece, conduct yourself so that you and Mr. Kirkpatrick may both hereafter adore the providence, that through so many intricacies, led you from such a distance, into each other's embraces. Mrs. P. joins in congratulations to you and Mr. K. with my dear, your affectionate uncle and servant,

R. PEARSALL.

‘Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the worm-wood and the gall: my soul hath them still in remembrance:’ therefore, I warn you from my own example. If you think me over-solicitous, consider it as owing to the fondness of a father. I earnestly desire that you may be an ornament to your sex, the delight of your husband, and a pattern to all around you; and this, not for a week or a month, but for life. I would have you stand high in the divine favour, live a life of communion with Jesus, and ‘adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.’ I know this is your desire: but then, you must daily put on ‘the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.’ You must be ‘poor in spirit,’ even mean, and nothing, as it were, in your own eyes; and be daily, continually, ‘looking unto Jesus,’ in whom ‘all fulness dwells,’ that ‘of his fulness’ you may receive, ‘and grace for grace.’ ‘See that you reverence your husband,’ and, ‘as the church is subject unto Christ, so be you subject to your own husband in every thing.’ This is your commanded duty, and will be no less your interest and honour. As the Christian must have no will but God’s, so I would persuade and entreat you to have no will but your husband’s; it is the surest way to make him delight to gratify you, in all things reasonable. Do not affect an idle life: you never have been idle, and I hope never will; for certainly, a diligent life is the most pleasurable and most satisfactory. Accustom yourself, habitually, to make a sanctified use and improvement of every occurrence in life, whether prosperous or afflictive. You love your husband, let this lead you up to the Fountain of love, and of all rational delight. Do not set a greater value on yourself for any external decorations: remember the meanest flower is finer than any wedding suit. Let your ‘adorning’ ‘be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible:’ above all, let it be the ‘white raiment’ which the adored Jesus counsels you to ‘buy’ of him. Having become a possessor of a house you may call your own, and finding every thing to your wish, beware of taking up your ‘rest’ there; account

yourself a 'stranger' and a 'pilgrim;' be looking towards that 'city which hath foundations,' and towards those 'mansions' Jesus is gone before 'to prepare.' Take the first opportunity to perfume your closet with the sweet incense of daily prayers and praises. I am persuaded that you dare not live in the neglect of closet-duties, but I know you will find this to be a time of great temptation; bear with me, therefore, when 'I stir up your mind by way of remembrance.' We met this day, to return thanks to God for a remarkable answer to the prayers we offered up, this day fortnight, on behalf of Mr. Benjamin Lea's wife, who began to recover from the very hour of prayer, and was present on this occasion. How much should such experiences animate our faith in a prayer-hearing God, and confirm our resolution to 'call upon him as long as we live!' On this occasion also, yourself, your partner, and fellow-travellers, were had in remembrance before God. Farewell, my dear, and know that you wrong me if you think of me otherwise than as your most affectionate father,

J. W.

THE DESPONDING CHRISTIAN COMFORTED.

*To Mr. Barnabas Richards.*

DEAR BROTHER,

Kidderminster, August 21, 1748.

May he that was 'anointed with the Spirit of the Lord to bind up the broken-hearted,' direct me to speak a word in season to you. Your complaints run thus:—"I cannot find that the word of God hath effectually touched me. I know I have 'an evil heart of unbelief,' but am not feelingly sensible of it. I see reason to fear the worst, but this fear is not prevalent. I am dull and dead, formal and supine in the most solemn duties, and under the most awakening sermons. My heart is most lifeless in seasons the most enlivening. So far am I from 'serving God in spirit and in truth,' that I can scarcely serve him even with my lips; oftentimes addressing him with words without a heart; at other times with neither words nor heart. And when I think on these things, I conclude myself to be in a very bad state."

— Were this really the judgment of God concerning your temper and state, I too should think you in a very bad state. I am glad it is only your own judgment. You are ‘judging yourself,’ that you may ‘not be judged.’ Now give me leave to ‘judge you out of your own mouth,’ not what your final state is, but by the nature and tendency of your complaints, from what principle they flow; and whether it be not possible that you are forming a wrong judgment of your state. Suppose you should hear me say—“My head aches much, or my stomach is very sick, but I do not feel it:” suppose at the same time, you were convinced that I enjoyed a right exercise of my senses: what would you think of me? I will not flatter you: I really think your state is not such as it should be, nor such as ought to be rested in. After all the sense you have of your own sinfulness and weakness in yourself, and absolute need of a Saviour, you have not yet ‘come to him labouring and heavy laden.’ If you had, these complaints would have been in some measure at an end; for, to such as come to him he hath promised ‘rest unto their souls.’ What he hath promised, he will certainly perform. Accordingly, the apostle says—‘We which have believed, do enter,’ or, as I think it should be rendered, *are entered* ‘into rest.’ It seems to me, you are not brought to such a degree of ‘poverty of spirit,’ as to see your own nothingness and insufficiency; to be emptied of self and all self-confidence. Or, if you have, yet you have not seen ‘the fulness that is in Christ,’ a fulness of every divine perfection—a fulness of merit, of compassion, and of goodness: for if you had, you would rest upon the Saviour, and upon his immutable promise, how much soever you find matters out of order in yourself. You would believe, that ‘he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;’ and, as a sinner, you would come to him, lay hold on him, and put in your claim to all the blessings of his purchase. Though your state is not such as I could wish, yet I cannot pronounce it bad. Though you seem not yet to have ‘found the pearl of great price,’ it is plain you are seeking after it, and the

promise is—‘Seek, and you shall find.’ When you say—“I would fain have such an inward principle of grace, that my duty should become my real delight, and it should be as natural for me to serve and love God, as it is to eat and drink;” the meaning is, you would fain serve God better, and be more entirely free from corruption and sin, from backwardness to duty, and dulness in it, than any man upon earth. He who ‘spake as never man spake,’ says of this temper of mind—‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.’ He scruples not to pronounce such blessed, who have an unfeigned sorrow for past sins, who earnestly desire the mercy of God in Christ for pardon and sanctification, who are displeasèd with their own doubting and unbelief, and desire to believe in God through Christ. They are blessed; for the time draws near, when they shall have plenty of faith, and assurance of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus,—‘for they shall be filled.’ Their present desires are the motions of God’s Spirit, and the true pledges of his grace: they are the beginnings of that ‘faith,’ of which Christ is ‘the author and finisher.’ Certainly, ‘he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it,’ will perfect and complete it, ‘until the day of Jesus Christ.’ If you would have ‘joy and peace in believing,’ you must be ‘wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked’ in your own eyes. In such a temper go to Christ, and take him at his word. If you delay till your apprehensions of spiritual things, your humiliation for sin, your zeal and fervour of devotion, your faith, and hope, and love, be such as you would have them to be, let me tell you, you will never go to Christ at all: but if, under a sense of your pollution and poverty, your guilt and unprofitableness, you will go to him, repenting, and believing, for every thing you want, he will not ‘send you away empty.’ Do you want to ‘be converted’ and ‘born again?’ go and tell him—he hath promised to ‘give you a new heart,’ and ‘put within you a new spirit.’ Do you want faith? cry to him—‘Lord help mine unbelief;’ ‘Lord, increase my faith.’ Do you want repentance? plead how ‘God hath

exalted him, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins.' Do you want love? Can plants and flowers go up to the sun for cheering rays to make them spring and flourish? no; but the sun can visit them with genial beams: and is not Christ the Sun of righteousness? Go to him with this very complaint—Lord, I want to love thee, but I cannot: I would fain love thee more fervently than I love any mortal object, but I cannot make my love ascend: Lord, thou canst 'shed abroad thy love in my heart,' and then I shall not fail to reflect thy own beams. My dear brother, if you think to get love to Christ any other way than by prayer for his love to you, you will be mistaken. It is not so much what you have done for Christ, as what Christ hath done for you, that must lay the foundation, and raise the superstructure too, of your comfort and joy: but, what need I enlarge to you, who enjoy much better helps? I am, dear Sir, your affectionate brother, J. W.

A COMPARISON OF WORLDLY CIRCUMSTANCES.

*To his Daughter Kirkpatrick.*

MY DEAR ESTHER,

Kidderminster, August 24, 1748.

This is the anniversary of my wedding-day; a day thankfully to be remembered by me. The psalmist says---'A thousand years in the sight of God are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.' Really, the last twenty-nine years are, in the retrospect, but a very small portion of time, in my esteem: and will not twenty-nine future years as quickly roll over your head, should your life be so far prolonged! May they be crowned with mercies as mine have been, and more abundantly: and if your future years be filled with their proper duty, it will not matter whether there be many or few. Though mine was as surely fixed in the decrees of Providence as your own, yet by how different methods were we led on to our marriage-days. For more than three years after I had chosen, and was approved by, the object of my wishes, thorns and briars in a long succession obstructed my way, while clouds and darkness hung over my head. You have

had nothing to do but to observe the 'pillar of a cloud and fire,' which marked out for you a lucid, a smooth, and a straight path! Yet I know not which of us is under the greater obligation to be thankful; for I quickly saw, and more clearly since, that the *remoræ*, or hindrances I met with, saved me from ruin. What a difference too, in worldly circumstances! Our beginning was small; yours is opulent: but still I am uncertain on which side the advantage lies, considering how much our 'latter end' has increased. Our strait circumstances rendered us unable to perform such acts of generosity and charity as your plenteous circumstances require you to abound in: thus our usefulness was more limited, but a disposition for pride and luxury was restrained in us, while you are exposed to more danger. I much prefer a competency, with humility, to great abundance and a haughty spirit. In this consideration of the different tendencies of different circumstances I would excite you, as well as myself, to much circumspection, humility, and thankfulness. My hope is strong, that the fear and love of God have such an influence on your heart, as to regulate your speech, and your actions, the general frame of your mind, and the conduct of your life. I daily commit you to 'Him that is able to keep you from falling,' because I am your kindly affectionate father,

J. W.

## ADVICE TO A NEWLY-MARRIED PAIR.

*To his son and daughter, James and Esther Kirkpatrick.*

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

Kidderminster, September 5, 1748.

But first to my *new relative*: I trust that kind Providence which directed your way into Worcestershire, and so remarkably led you into new connections, has also conducted you and your companions safely to Newport. Though it has been to me a costly sacrifice, I doubt not your heart is filled with exultation on the occasion. You have received many congratulations, and every day fresh incense is offered: You look on your other self with love and delight, and have pleasing thoughts of encreasing happiness as days and years advance. You do well. It is

expected that 'the bridegroom' should 'rejoice over the bride.' The wisest of mere men seems to be not ironical when he directs to 'live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun,' 'for that is thy portion,' or the quintessence of thy happiness 'in this life, and in the labour which thou labourest' (as it is in the Septuagint) 'under the sun.' May your joy be abiding and increasing! This I say, however, 'rejoice with trembling,' for 'the time is short,' and 'it remaineth, that' 'they that have wives be as though they had none;' 'for the fashion of this world passeth away:' that is, rejoice as one who considers the mutability of all earthly things; as one who is daily deriving his most exalted pleasure from that Fountain which is inexhaustible, while creature-streams are liable to fail, and the sweetest of them to be tinged with bitterness. Perhaps your present circumstances may not improperly be compared with *divine* Herbert's, who, after his conversion, thus sings:—

"At first thou gav'st me milk and sweetness;  
I had my wish and way:  
My days were straw'd with flow'rs and happiness;  
There was no month but May.  
But with my years sorrow did twist and grow,  
And made a party unawares for woe."

But under all the vicissitudes of life, this may be your consolation—'all things work together for good to them that love God.' You may in future years see reason to be as thankful for the bitters as for the sweets of life, and to bless a taking as well as a giving God. This, I assure you, has been the case with me through the whole of my life.

And now to my *dear Esther*: Presuming that you are by this time settled in your new abode, I congratulate you on being surrounded with blessings. The Lord hath dealt very bountifully with you. He hath given you, unless I be so mistaken as I never was yet, one of the kindest and best of husbands, and made you the subordinate head of a family of good repute; and what the world can contribute

towards comfort and satisfaction, is, in a sense, at your command. These are talents committed to you for improvement, and the possession of which cannot be entered on with too much care, diffidence, and holy jealousy. Impress your mind deeply with this sentiment—that none of these things are your absolute *propriety*. You are but as a steward over them, or as a tenant at will, and may be quickly dispossessed; therefore, what you may wish when you come to die, that you had done, up and be doing now with all your might. Be careful of doing any thing that will not bear the most mature deliberation and the coolest reflection. My dear child, I hope well of you: I hope you ‘have tasted that the Lord is gracious.’ Therefore, though surrounded with temporal blessings, you cannot fail to hunger and thirst after Christ. You will find in him a perfect suitability to your wants and necessities. Live then, by faith upon him, and in due time you will ascend after him to glory.

As my time is limited, I can only add, that I am, my dear children, your faithful monitor and truly affectionate father,

J. W.

THE HAPPINESS OF LIVING BY FAITH.

*To Miss Wilkinson.*

DEAR MISS,

Kidderminster, September 24, 1748.

I often call to mind Dr. Preston’s excellent advice—“Not to make those things necessary to our happiness, which we may possibly be deprived of.” This is the glorious privilege of them, who have chosen God for their ‘portion’—that their portion is always present, and that it is not in the power of any thing to deprive them of it. With the great apostle, they may triumph—‘that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ They may be tortured with pain, emaciated by sickness, reduced to poverty, imprisoned, or captives in a strange land, and torn away from the embraces of the nearest part-

ners of their blood; but still their 'portion' abides with them; a present God, an all-sufficient Saviour, can and will support them in and under all. Nothing can make us happy in the absence of such a friend; nothing can make us miserable in his presence. Who would not covet, who would not cultivate such a friendship! I am glad to see your last letter breathe so much of such a spirit. I am glad you have been taught to seek 'rest' in Christ alone; not merely in religious exercises, however desirable as appointed means. Our tempers vary; our comforts ebb and flow; if we rest in these, we must be restless: but 'Christ' is 'the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' Sooner 'shall heaven and earth pass away,' than one 'word' of his fall to the ground. Build your hopes upon his promise, and all the artillery of hell shall not be able to shake them. Stand upon this rock, and you will 'be as mount Zion:' but, if you trust in your own frame, in your own sensations, you will be 'like a reed shaken with every wind' of temptation. How hardly are we brought to this—to trust in the promise alone, or rather in the Promiser! How many pious, but trembling souls have I known, and now know, whose judgment is convinced that God in Christ is the ultimate object of faith, and a sure refuge to all that shelter themselves under the shadow of his wings, and yet cannot get rid of their fears. Why? Because they only rely upon him when their affections are stirred, or when their devotion flames. But certainly, it is our duty, our interest, to 'trust in the Lord at all times.' This is the cure God himself proposes for the soul 'that walketh in darkness and hath no light'—'let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' This is to 'come unto' Christ, as those 'that labour and are heavy laden,' to whom he promises—'I will give you rest.' If, therefore, we do not find rest unto ourselves, it must be because we do not come labouring and heavy laden, deeply humbled, and entirely quitting all other refuges,—as poor sinners, as helpless creatures. Thus, 'having no confidence in the flesh,' we are best prepared to 'rejoice in Christ Jesus.' I

greatly desire your establishment in grace, and joy in the Lord. I commend you to the blessing of the Almighty, and desire your devout remembrance of, dear Miss, yours, &c. J. W.

WISE CHILDREN MAKE GLAD PARENTS.

*To Miss Philipps.*

DEAR COUSIN,

Kidderminster, October 1, 1748.

I commend you for taking up so pious, so self-denying a resolution. You see how desirous those are to 'die the death of the righteous,' whenever they admit a thought of it, who will not live the life of the righteous; but their 'fleshy lusts' they will gratify, though they cannot but know they 'war against their souls.' Oh! how thankful should we be, if God hath inclined our hearts to mind the 'one thing needful, and choose that good part which shall not be taken away from us.' How thankful, if we have been made to see our need of a Saviour, so as to 'hunger and thirst after' him, to 'eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man,' and to be enabled to rejoice in him!--- I lately had a letter from each of my dear children. The youngest, Sarah, who has not yet finished her fifteenth year, melted my very soul with expressions of her gratitude and duty, a sense of her privileges and obligations, and her ardent aspirations in favour of her parents. After magnifying her peculiar advantages, these are her expressions:---

"My gratitude to you, dear Sir, surely should warble in the sweetest strains, and sparkle with the most refined lustre: I am sure it warms my heart; indeed, if it did not, it might justly be numbered among the greatest absurdities in nature.—My dear Papa, I again return you most grateful thanks for your earnest concern for my soul's prosperity. Surely, it shall not all fall to the ground. God will reward you for all your tender care, and diligent watchfulness over your children's souls. I would desire to make it always my most earnest petition—that my dear parents may have blessings doubled and redoubled, returned to them again. When you come to us, may a

celestial band be continually hovering over you, and screen you from all inconveniences and disasters. Winter begins to sound an alarm. The warbling songsters are growing still, and reserving their melody for the returning blooming season. The fragrant flowers close up their cheering aspect. The verdant meads and shady trees will soon wear winter's rough attire. But, this is your constant happiness—to know that the bright world, to which you are hastening, cannot suffer a gloom amidst its most refined enjoyments; no withering autumn to veil its brightest scenes:—

“ There everlasting spring abides,  
And never-withering flowers.”—WATTS.

None but a parent knows the heart of a parent. Nevertheless you cannot be insensible, that to a fond father the contents of this letter must be very grateful. Blessed be God for all his consolations, through whatever mediums. Doubt not, dear cousin, of a blessing in store for you. Salute my much honoured aunt in my name, and accept this token of love and respect, and forget not to pray for your's,

J. W.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

*October 15, 1748.*—A delightful meditation I enjoyed yesterday on these words—‘ He ever liveth to make intercession for us.’ I considered how Christ intercedes for us;—that he presents his sufferings and sacrifice in our behalf and in our stead. As the high priest went not into the Holy of Holies without blood, to make atonement for the people; so, our glorious High Priest presents before God his body, that body which was sacrificed for us; and he intercedes, by earnestly desiring the forfeited blessings to be restored to us. But, what are the blessings which Christ intercedes for in behalf of his people? ‘ While I was musing’ upon that, ‘ the fire burned,’ and I was enabled, in full assurance of faith, and with sacred joy, thus to apply (as I went on in my journey):—He intercedes for the pardon of penitent and believing sinners: ‘ Father, forgive them:’ therefore, I hope, my sins are

pardoned. He intercedes for the preservation of his people in their temptations and afflictions: 'Holy Father, keep them through thy own name:' therefore, I shall be preserved and kept. He intercedes for their sanctification: 'Sanctify them through thy truth:' therefore, I shall be sanctified, and be enabled more and more to 'die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.' He intercedes for a union of his people with God and with one another: 'That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us:' therefore, I am and shall be vitally united to God in Christ Jesus. He intercedes for their consolation: 'That the world may know that thou hast *loved them* as thou hast loved me:' therefore, the God of peace shall fill me with all 'joy and peace in believing.' And finally, he intercedes with the Father to give his people everlasting glory: 'Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, *that they may behold my glory*, which thou hast given me:' therefore, 'as for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' How amazing, how unchangeable is the love of our glorious Immanuel! How safely may believers trust their souls in his hand, and rest satisfied with his intercession!

DIRECTIONS FOR EXAMINING AND PROVING OURSELVES.

*To Mr Joseph Green.\**

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, December 17, 1748.

Yours of November 8, was here a little before my return, which was not till the 14th. Since then, it hath lain before me as a monitor, and now I find an opportunity and inclination to acknowledge it. I knew nothing of the mistake you mention, nor ever should, if you had not told me of it. I will very willingly give you credit for

\* This gentleman, of whom the reader will find an interesting recital in the first article dated December 30, 1748, (p. 272) died in 1782, † aged 70, after having honourably filled the office of Deacon, and having lived a life of respectability and usefulness.

† This should have been June 13, 1802; on the authority of Mr. Isaac James of Bristol.

the sun till April, when I hope to see you again, if it shall please God so far to protract our lives.

The evening after we parted, riding between Rumsey and Southampton, by moonlight, and alone, I had a delightful meditation, of which I will give you a little sketch:—

As I beheld ‘the moon walking in brightness,’ I was led to consider---how punctually it performs its daily and monthly revolutions: I then considered the impulsive, or directive cause of the punctuality of its motion and various appearances; which I resolved into His sovereign pleasure, and omnific power who worketh ‘all and in all:’ even ‘the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night;’ ---who hath made a ‘covenant’ ‘with day and night,’ and hath ‘appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth;’ and appeals to the perpetuity of those ordinances as a pledge of his fidelity to ‘the seed of Israel.’ I next considered ---that He who so exactly regulates the motion of the moon, and marshals all the stars, as certainly superintends, and as nicely regulates the affairs of kingdoms, families, and individuals: yea, that his care extends to all created things, both animate and inanimate, and appoints to all their seasons. What a glorious privilege! thought I, to have this almighty, all-wise, omnipresent God for *my* God; my God in covenant; and this ‘covenant ordered in all things and sure.’---On the other hand:---what a dreadful thing to have such a God for an enemy! Certainly, he is either our friend, and of friends infinitely the best; or he is our enemy, and of enemies infinitely the most formidable; therefore, nothing can concern us more than to know which of the two he is to us. John, in the Revelations, saw that ‘whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.’ Now, we cannot search the register kept in heaven, to see whether our names be written there, but we may search our own hearts and lives, and in them we *may* read whether our names be ‘written in the Lamb’s book of life.’ ‘Ex-

amine yourselves,' saith the apostle, 'whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' Do *we*, then, love God above all? do we 'love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?'---If we do not love him above all, we love him not at all, in his account. It is the degree of our love to him that evinceth its sincerity or insincerity; for he saith---'He that loveth father or mother,' 'son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.' Now, we certainly know whether and in what manner we love our near relations,---and more evidently still, whether we love our own lives. If we 'examine' ourselves impartially, therefore, we may learn our state by such marks as these:---

A child of God delights in the presence of his heavenly Father.—There is such an enjoyment to be obtained even upon earth: God's presence is enjoyed particularly in ordinances; in reading and hearing his word: and in prayer. Pious souls, if by reason of business or company, or any other diversion, they pass by the stated seasons of duty, are uneasy, are in pain, they feel a sensible concern till they have found an opportunity to converse with God. Here let *us* 'examine' ourselves. Do *we* love the presence of God in duty, and is it a pain to us to put by seasons of devotions? Can *we* go on from day to day, neglecting to converse with God in his word, and by prayer? Let *us* inquire again: are *we* 'grieved' when God is dishonoured? He is dishonoured by profane swearing, by sabbath-breaking, by debauchery of every kind. David could say—'I beheld the transgressors and was *grieved*; because they keep not thy word:' can *we* say so? If not, where is our love to God as our Father: nay, where is our loyalty to him as our King, if we can see his authority trampled upon without any concern? Do *we* admire and love to meditate on his perfections as they are displayed in his works of nature, of providence, and of grace? Do *we* rejoice when he is honoured: and, when at any time we

have been overtaken in a fault, are we grieved not only for fear of hell, but because our heavenly Father is displeased?

My dear friend, I have given my thoughts full scope on this occasion, that I might help you, if possible, to get a clear knowledge of your state God-ward.—If on the whole, you have good evidences that you can love God with all your heart and soul, then certainly you will admire and adore his grace who ‘first loved’ you! If you cannot find satisfactory evidences, do not despair, but ply ‘the throne of grace’ with restless, unceasing importunity; for he hath promised to give ‘a new heart,’ ‘and a new spirit,’ to them that seek him in sincerity. If now, you will take this friendly freedom in a friendly manner, and will write to me again soon, you will greatly oblige, dear Sir, your cordial well-wisher,

J. W.

DIRECTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONDUCT.

*To his Daughter Kirkpatrick.*

MY DEAR ESTHER,

Kidderminster, December 26, 1748.

I have reason to thank you for your last. I wish you ‘all joy and peace in believing;’ but these you cannot have without humble, close walking with God; nor, in your present situation, without abounding in good works. You must be ‘filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.’ Remember what I sent you July 29, from Dr. Young:—

“Is heaven tremendous in its frown? most sure:

And in its favours formidable too,” &c.

You are as ‘a city set on a hill.’ Many eyes are upon you. Be jealous, therefore, over yourself; and be strict and frequent in the examination of your conduct, lest in any respect, you fail of your incumbent duty; to which you are now under many more obligations than when you were under my immediate care. Employ your influence for God; and by the amiableness of your deportment, credit religion, recommend the good ways of the Lord, and do honour to your husband in the sight of all. By your own example labour to preserve your husband’s

authority in his own family inviolate. His will must be yours in every lawful and reasonable thing; for what is otherwise I do not expect he will ever require. More especially, watch over your temper in little things. They are generally trifling matters about which good husbands and wives disagree. Is it not a pity that your husband's mind should be made uneasy by trifles? His uneasiness would not fail to work your own disquietude. To conduct yourself properly towards your servants will require constant care and watchfulness, so as neither to weaken your authority and influence by making yourself too familiar with them, nor by austerity to discourage them. It is proper to wink at little faults when done through inadvertency, and to animadvert with severity only on such as are done obstinately and maliciously. As you know by what means a spirit of religion has been cherished and maintained in this, beyond many neighbouring towns, so, do you endeavour to set on foot such exercises at Newport as private meetings for social prayer, the reading of sermons, spiritual conversation, the comparing of experiences, and the like. Who knows whether Providence hath not settled you there, for this purpose! God can make use of any instruments. A love to Christ, and to the souls he died to save, where it is strong will work wonders. Now, my dear child, 'I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.' May 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,' and be 'sufficient' for you in every time of need. I put my very heart into the petitions which I present daily on your behalf. Let this office of Christian, as well as filial love, be also daily retaliated to your affectionate parent,

J. W.

DESIRE TO DO GOOD TO SOULS.

*Friday-night, December 30, 1748.*---It hath long been my earnest desire and prayer—that the blessed God would make me instrumental in awaking and converting precious souls. For this purpose I took pains with many of my

young friends 30 or 40 years ago. He gave me a desire to 'travail' in spirit for every one of my children, particularly, when in baptism I solemnly devoted each of them to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and for those that are dead, that in their last sickness, their guilt and filth might be washed away in the blood of Christ; and more especially for the three which survive from the time they came severally to 17 years of age. At sundry times my very heart hath been drawn out in earnest prayer for each of them; as also, for each of my domestic servants, that 'Christ' may 'be formed' in them. How far my poor prayers and endeavours have contributed to the working a saving change in them, as also in Miss Wilkinson and Miss Birkett, whose parents desired that they might for awhile be under my roof, perhaps God only knows. However, I have the 'joy' of seeing, or hearing, that they all 'walk in the truth.' I have the joy of hoping and believing, I think on good grounds, that no less than *seven* young souls have been born to God in my family within these three or four years. May all the praise be ascribed to him 'who worketh all in all.' I am just now not without hopes, that the Lord hath made use of my poor endeavours to awaken one, if not two, who before seemed to lie fast asleep in sinful security.

Last October, at Bradford, Wilts, after transacting business with a dissenter in that town, among other things which fell from him in conversation, he let me know, that he had once in his life failed, or broke. Presuming thence that he had paid his debts only by composition, I asked—whether he had ever paid the surplus, or that which was due to his creditors over and above the composition? He owned he had not. I therefore told him, with a degree of stern solemnity, that he must do it. I even asked him—How he would dare to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, his just debts not being paid, and he being able to pay the whole? Many more things I said to the same purpose, and in the most solemn manner; for he appears to be in affluent circumstances. The same person told me also,

that he intended to ride out in the country next day. I inquired—what necessity there was for his travelling from home on the Lord's-day? Perceiving there was none, I laboured to dissuade him from his purpose, but could not find that my dissuasions availed anything. I saw nothing of him at the two first meetings, but in the evening he came, and sat in the table-pew, where I also sat. He seemed to be greatly affected under the sermon. I was very glad to see how he melted under the word, and resolved to spend part of the evening with him. Accordingly, I went to his house, and spent about two hours with him in very free conversation and prayer. I spared not to set his sins in order before him, and to shew him the necessity of repentance and faith in the blood of Christ in order that he might obtain acceptance with God. He wept sore, and freely owned to me many convictions he had had, and resolutions he had formed, which had all come to nothing: and that to that day he had lived in the neglect of prayer, but signified his conviction of the necessity of it, and his resolution, by the help of God, to begin, and constantly keep up prayer in his family. I prayed with them, had great enlargement, and he, by his groanings and tears seemed to be much engaged. I took an opportunity of speaking to his wife, who seems to be a truly pious woman, and endeavoured to convince her of the necessity for his paying all his just debts, if he would make his peace with God by repentance and faith in the blood of Christ. She seemed to hearken to me. He accompanied me afterwards to my inn, and promised to act agreeably to the advice I had given him. Since that I wrote to him to the same purpose. May the Lord set my addresses home to his heart.

Before I entered on the same journey, Mr. Joseph Green, a young man of Bristol, desired leave to travel with me. I quickly found my companion had conversed with some Deists, and though he would not own it, had too much given into their infidel notions. Many a dispute we had upon the road, while we travelled together almost a fort-

night. Many times I had it in my mind to talk with him in the most searching manner. At last Providence gave me a most fit opportunity, at Lyndhurst, a night or two before we were to part. Many a struggle I had with myself, but at length all my foolish objections were silenced, and I conversed with him, about three hours, concerning 'the deep things of God.' Before I had done, he seemed to be convicted, and frankly owned his want of love to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ, and appeared to be sensible he was no more than a nominal Christian. This gave me great encouragement, and I parted with him at Salisbury, with full intention to prosecute, by writing, what had been begun in conversation. When I returned home, I found a letter he had sent me a few days before, and it was no small disappointment to me to find it was about a small pecuniary affair, but not a word about the state or interest of his soul. His letter lay before me some weeks, before I found an inclination to answer it. At last I could forbear no longer. I wrote to him on the 17th of this month. He answered me on the 28th. But, oh! how was I transported with joy, to find that God had set home the searching queries and considerations I had sent him, to the awakening and deep conviction of his conscience. How honestly and nakedly does he lay before me the temper and unusual workings of his soul! He owns he hath no love to the duty of prayer; that he can omit it, and can go a whole day without any sensible concern. He laments the sad state he is in, and seems to be in good earnest in his applications to the 'throne of grace,' through a Redeemer, for deliverance from the body of sin and death. May the Lord carry on and 'perfect the good work he hath begun' in his soul!

CHERISHING SERIOUS IMPRESSIONS.

*To Mr. Joseph Green.*

VERY DEAR SIR, Kidderminster, December 30, 1748.

Your letter hath filled me with the greatest cheerfulness. My soul rejoices, and even exults in your salvation. How many times, and with what transports of joy, have I, on my bended knees, been praising and adoring the God and Fa-

ther of our Lord Jesus Christ for this grace vouchsafed to you, and particularly for making me the unworthy instrument of it! The news hath reached heaven, and there hath been 'joy over you in the presence of the angels of God;' and shall I not rejoice? Perhaps, Sir, you fear that I triumph before the victory; and I wonder not, if you do. I was encouraged to write to you in the manner I did, because you freely acknowledged your fears, that you were destitute of the love of Christ, which I had been describing. Had you justified yourself, instead of confessing your fears, it would have discouraged me from writing; but your frankness convinced me, that the Spirit of God had in some measure opened your heart to receive an all-sufficient Saviour. Our Lord says—'When the Comforter is come, he will reprove,' or convince, 'the world of sin, because they believe not on me.' Whence it is plain, that not believing in Christ, is the sin of the world: but persons will continue in unbelief, till they are convinced of their need of a Saviour, and of his willingness to save them: and, if their life and conversation be unblameable in the sight of men, it is the hardest thing in the world to fasten conviction on such. None but the Spirit of grace can do it. I remember, three years ago, in conversation with two gentlemen of my acquaintance, one of which had been a notorious debauchee, the other a boasting pharisee, I laboured to convince them both of their sinfulness, in order to lead them to Christ. The former seemed to yield a little, but the other was too full of his own righteousness to admit any conviction. Thus, 'men love darkness;' love to be in the dark as to this important piece of self-knowledge: they will not submit their hearts and lives to a strict and impartial examination, for fear they should be convicted. Their pride will not suffer them to think so ill of themselves, as their state deserves, so they bolster themselves up to their everlasting undoing.

Faith and love always go together. In proportion as faith believes the promise, and relies upon the Saviour, love will certainly embrace him: but neither of them can

find place in the heart that is not sensible of its need of Christ. The inviting promise is made only to such as 'labour and are heavy laden' under the guilt and burden of sin. If the soul be brought to this, and made sensible of its sin and danger, and of its utter inability to save itself, then the work is more than half done. When a man finds that he hath never loved God with all his heart, and yet sees that he cannot be saved without such a supreme and predominant love to God, he is ready to look round about him for help, and is glad to accept of help from Christ. At first, he can scarcely believe, when he hears Jesus say—'Look unto me, and be ye saved:' 'Come unto me, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' But, the more he tries to look unto Christ, and come to him, and trust in him, the more strength he receives from Christ, and the more hope he entertains that Christ 'loved him, and gave himself for him,' and therefore he cannot but love Christ the more: How delightful is that love, when the heart and soul is drawn out after Christ. And, have not you, my dear friend, felt something of the power of Christ drawing out your desires after him? Though, from a sense of your impotence, you cry—Where is my inclination? where is my will? Yet, have you not, in some measure, found his grace 'working in you, both to will and to do?' Whence come all your complaints, if there be not a will to be as God would have you be, and to do what God would have you do? Whence come such pious breathings—"Oh! might this Holy Spirit dwell with me," &c. Is not this a hopeful pledge, nay, 'fruit of the Spirit?' Is he not producing in you 'a spirit of grace and supplication?' Is not this a sign of the new birth? I heard a pious old gentleman say, about thirty years ago—"God hath no still-born children." No; we come into the world crying, and so we do into the new world, the world of grace. It was Christ's remark concerning Paul's first change—"Behold, he prayeth." But remember, Sir, you have but just drawn the sword against your spiritual enemies. Expect now to be vigorously, and perhaps incessantly attacked with new temptations. You

have need to 'take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.' If Satan find he cannot keep you back any longer from 'striving to enter in at the strait gate,' he will do all he can to hinder you, to distress you, or to make you ashamed of the good ways of God. He hath a thousand treacherous arts to beguile 'unstable souls.' Be continually on your guard: 'Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.' And under every new temptation fly to 'the Captain of your salvation;' who is mighty, who hath vanquished all the hosts of hell, and 'reserves them in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day;' and 'who, having himself suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted. What a glorious privilege is this—that we have leave and encouragement to 'trust in him at all times!' I heartily commend you, and will 'commend you to his' blessing and 'grace, who is able to build you up,' 'to keep you from falling,' 'to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified' 'by faith that is in' Christ Jesus, and 'to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.' Write to me again soon: I shall long to hear how you go on. 'Be not faithless, but believing.' Be assured of the constant prayers of, dear-Sir, yours, &c.

J. W.

RICHES NOT THE PROPER OBJECT OF THEIR POSSESSORS' TRUST.

*To his Son-in-law, Mr. James Kirkpatrick.*

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, January —, 1749.

It gives me great satisfaction that you are sensible of your obligations to the great Giver of all your mercies, and that you are so well disposed 'freely to give' of what you have 'freely received:' this is the surest way to have your prosperity continued,—to be prepared for the account that must one day be rendered of the talents with which you are entrusted—and to be entitled to the applauding sentence of 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' 'Charge them,' says the apostle to Timothy, 'that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but

in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works ready to distribute, willing to communicate: laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.' I apprehend these instructions are to be enforced by every gospel minister: whether you have been so 'charged' by any, I know not, but permit *me* to enforce what may have been done, and to endeavour to supply what may have been omitted. Indeed 'I am jealous over you;' not because I have discovered you to be 'high-minded,' but because I know that riches are ensnaring, and that it is their natural tendency to make the possessors of them 'high minded;' than to be which, it is incomparably preferable to be poor and humble. An excellent help in this case is, as I doubt not you have often experienced, frequently to acknowledge God to be the sole proprietor of all things, and yourself to be only as his steward. A sense of your dependance on him will keep you humble, and excite your thankfulness. It will enable you, as often as you bestow aught for the relief of the poor, or the support of the gospel, to say with David, when he and the princes had offered willingly to the Lord towards the building of the temple—'Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.' Mr. Gouge, in his "Sure Way to be Rich," recommends what I consider to be an excellent rule, and which I know to be practised by some persons; it is, to "sequester a tenth part of your yearly income, and solemnly devote it to God and his service." The portion, I think, should not *generally* be less than a tenth. By such a practice provision is made for every occasion, and there will be no temptation to give grudgingly, because that portion will no longer be considered as our own; and it is well to keep in mind that 'God loveth a cheerful giver.' I desire fruit, which may abound to your present usefulness and comfort, and produce for you a glorious reward. Be assured the best of blessings are daily asked for you and yours of Him

who 'is able to do exceeding abundantly' for you, by,  
 dear Sir, your affectionate parent and humble servant,

J. W.

BOLDNESS AT THE THRONE OF GRACE.

*February 10, 1749.*—I think I have not met with a more humbling, self-emptying thought, or a thought which hath pleased me better, than in reading Herbert's poem, entitled—*Gratefulness*, where he is pleading with God, and raising an argument from the many mercies God had already bestowed upon him, to give him one thing more;—a thankful heart, without which all his mercies would be in a manner lost upon him. He then adds---

" But thou didst reckon, when at first  
 Thy word our hearts and hands did crave,  
 What it would come to at the worst,  
To save.

Perpetual knockings at thy door,  
 Tears sullyng thy transparent rooms,  
 Gift upon gift, much would have more,  
And comes.

This notwithstanding, thou went'st on,  
 And didst allow us all our noise,  
 Nay, thou hast made a sigh and groan  
Thy joys."

What is there, that sinful worms are prone to value themselves upon more than their prayers and penitential tears? In what a just and pride-mortifying light hath this devout writer set these very productions of ours, which, I fear, even many Protestants are ready to look upon as almost meretorious! It is true, asking, seeking, and knocking at mercy's door, is our duty; Christ hath commanded it, and hath annexed gracious promises. But in itself, what is it, that it should *merit* mercy at the hand of God? Just as much as a beggar's knocking, and crying loudly and importunately, at my door, for an alms; and his persisting, after I have relieved his present wants, to knock and beg still more importunately for more and greater gifts; and even refusing to give over, unless I give him, or at least promise him, enough to maintain him as long as he lives. Nay, there is less merit in my asking of God; for God hath made me a debtor to

the poor, whereas he owes me nothing. Is not this a fair representation of the case? At first, when a poor sinner is made deeply sensible of his lost condition, and that he stands every moment exposed to divine vengeance, what would he give for a pardon! He wants nothing else but a pardon. How glad would he be to be assured he shall not fall under condemnation! When he hath obtained this, nothing less will serve his turn than a title to a kingdom, and that not an earthly one; no, he would not be contented with all the dominions of King George. Nothing short of the kingdom of heaven will suffice his large desires. Well, when he hath cleared his title, and is assured he is and shall be 'a king and priest unto God, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ;' then, he begs to wear the royal 'robe' of Christ's own preparing, and be clothed with 'the wedding garment,' and be adorned with the most brilliant jewels, even all the train of Christian graces, nor ever thinks himself fine enough. Nay, he is not content without 'gold tried in the fire, that he may be rich:' and lest this should not be sufficient, he insists upon having 'bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.' In short, he asks for gift upon gift, and the more he receives, the more he covets, and therefore is perpetually knocking and crying at heaven's door. Nor, is he at rest, unless he be brought every day,—if it were possible, every hour,—into the presence of the great King; and no less a personage than the King's Son must introduce him, and be his Advocate. Also, while he is there, if he be not treated as a courtier, as the King's friend he is quite discouraged. But by all this pray who is the gainer? and wherein is the King benefited? How astonishing is the Divine patience, which allows us all our great importunity? How rich the grace, which bids us 'pray without ceasing;' and, 'in every thing by prayer and supplication' 'let our requests be made known unto God?' This is the more wonderful, considering in what a careless, and too often in a rude manner, we address the Divine

Majesty. Do we not approach the great God with less care and reverence, and more unpreparedly, than if we were going into the presence of King George? But is there any proportion, or comparison, between a mortal man and 'the King eternal, immortal, invisible!'

## AN HYMN.\*

Oh! may I, at the *morning* ray,  
Begin with pray'r the op'ning day:  
In praises bid my soul arise,  
And with the sun ascend the skies:

As that proceeds, my zeal improve,  
With ardour glow for Jesus' love;  
Nor cease, but with the setting sun  
My *ev'ning* worship be begun.

And, may the gloom of solemn *night*  
To sacred thought my soul invite;  
While day descends, and planets shine,  
Ascend, my soul, to courts divine:

Ascend, and tread the milky way,  
To thy grand palace, Lord of day  
Thy courts admire, for favour sue,  
Or friendship with my God renew.

Great Lord of nature, O controul,  
Subdue the rebel in my soul;  
Thou, who canst still the raging flood,  
Restrain the tumults of my blood.

With firmness teach me to sustain  
Alluring joys, assaulting pain;  
To pant for thee in each desire;—  
Let grace foment the holy fire!

Let hope aspire and grasp the prize  
Which in my Saviour's bosom lies;  
And fearless, at Doom's-day, behold  
Thy Book, that fatal Book! unfold.

Then, wafted to the blissful seat,  
From age to age my song repeat;  
My God, my Life, my Saviour see,  
And dwell for ever, Lord, with thee!

\* Accommodated from "The Day of Judgment," by Dr. Young.

## SELF ABASED, AND CHRIST EXALTED.

To the Rev. R. Pearsall

DEAR BROTHER,

Kidderminster, February 24, 1749.

Your commendations do me hurt rather than good: though I have determin'd, many years ago, that by grace assisting me—

Speak I of honours, they to God belong !  
 Who honour me, a worm, my Maker wrong :  
 My indignation, all such honours raise ;  
 Unless through me to him ascend the praise.  
 Man's commendation I nor seek nor love ;  
 But will, when render'd me, for God improve.

All this notwithstanding, I do think commendation does or hath a tendency to do me hurt. It pinions my muse, cramps my invention, and enervates what genius my Maker hath given me. Meditations on Christ, and communion with him, do me abundantly more good. I think there is nothing I covet more than daily communion with God in Christ, and entire resignation to his will.--- There is nothing I desire more than, through divine grace, to be able to say—

By a wise Providence I'm brought to this—  
 Dead to all creatures my affection is :  
 To every joy and pleasure here below  
 My heart hath giv'n the sacrificing blow.  
 This one, this sole ambition I retain--  
 Oh ! may with me my Jesus still remain ;  
 Dwell in my heart, do for me all I need !  
 On him to live, and ever on him feed,  
 Sufficient is : may but this bliss abide,  
 I shun not to be stripped of all beside :  
 Whilst I with studious care that end pursue,  
 I'm led to him by motives not a few ;  
 And each new *mean*, my Saviour to address,  
 Inspires a joy no language can express :  
 However riches, learning, knowledge grow,  
 Not all of these could e'er transport me so!

Being with Christ sums up the heavenly state  
 And thus my soul does heaven anticipate.  
 By swift believing thoughts on him employ'd,  
 A heaven on earth my soul hath oft enjoy'd ;  
 Such light, and peace, and joy, possess the mind,  
 'Tis heavenly dawn, 'tis purity refin'd,

I to expressless contemplation soar,  
 Whilst Christ, God's word and wisdom, I adore  
 Him, the creation's Archetype, I see;  
 In whom exist, from all eternity,  
 Original ideas infinite  
 Of all his hands have form'd in worlds of light:  
 Nor less his works in lower worlds declare;  
 The substance he, the creatures shadows are.  
 To pass through death this reconciles my mind—  
 Sure, what I lose below, in him to find,  
 When sensual joys afford a dear delight,  
 'Tis this to him directs my frequent flight—  
 I think—What richer sweets in Christ are found:—  
 More lasting blessings do in him abound:  
 And when aught choice, or lovely is deny'd,  
 In him such loss is plenteously supply'd.

Terrestrial riches suit not my desire;  
 Them, I exert no labour to acquire;  
 Too mean I count them to engage my care:  
*Occasions to do good*, my riches are,  
 With all that helps to burnish and refine  
 My thinking powers and make them brighter shine.  
 Riches unknown in Jesus I possess,  
 And all my wants before his presence cease.

I have told you, brother, what *would be* rather than what *are*, the real workings of my heart. Alas! I frequently find myself immersed in sense, immersed in worldly cares, and attached to sensual enjoyments and gratifications: but this thought helps to reconcile me to death—that as soon as I have closed my eyes on all mortal scenes, I shall be absolutely free from all their attachments. Then, shall my unpinioned spirit fully aspire towards the centre of its supreme wishes, and enter into joys, of which all my former sensations afford me very low and imperfect ideas. I account it a sad and pitiable case, when the hearts of old people, for such you and I are, 'cleave to the dust,' and endeavour to take a faster and faster hold of what they must so speedily and necessarily be divorced from. It is more than time for such to be advised by the late pious and ingenious Mr Reynolds:

"Thus let it be our work and rest,  
 To learn the labours of the blest,  
 Loosen from clay, and upward move  
 As candidates for realms above."

May the approaches of death to us be rather desired than shunned, be rather joyful than terrible, and may we be assured, that when it is come, we shall change our place, not our company, nor altogether our employment.—The Lord increase your work amongst precious souls, and your strength in proportion. I dare not but pray for you, and hope you cannot omit praying for, yours, &c. J. W.

## SACRAMENTAL MEDITATION.

*Lord's-day Morning, March 5, 1749.*—O my soul, whom art thou to see, with whom art thou to converse this day? I am this day invited into the presence of the King of kings, to a banquet he hath prepared for his 'friends,' and for none but friends. To such, and to such only will he shew his face. To them he will unveil his beauties and glories; while others see 'no form nor comeliness' in him. To such, he will appear 'fairer than the children of men,' infinitely desirable; whilst others see 'no beauty' in him, that they 'should desire him.' Such, shall be entertained and fed at his table with heavenly dainties, and 'he will give them to eat of hidden manna;' while others are put off with a mere morsel of bread. Such shall be regaled with a 'full draught of the water of life,' and have a taste of that 'wine, which is ever new,' which saints and angels above, without any fear or danger of excess, are for ever drinking in the celestial Paradise: whilst others shall drink only of the juice, the adulterated juice of the grape. Oh! with what sights is the eye of their faith fed, and with what joys are their hearts sometimes made to overflow. O my soul, am I a friend of this great King? To such, he gives a spiritual eye, that they may discern spiritual objects. To such, he gives a spiritual appetite, that they may feast on his dainties, which to carnal, sensual appetites are insipid. Such, he cleanses from all their stains, and brings them into his presence, beautified with his beauty, clothed and adorned with his best robe, and most brilliant jewels, even all the train of Christian graces. The robe they wear is of his own working. Their graces are wrought in them by his own Spirit. O my soul,

hast thou bought of him 'eye-salve,' and applied it; and is thy dim sight thereby cleared? Dost thou 'hunger and thirst after righteousness,' and the bread and water of life? Hast thou put 'on the wedding-garment?' Art thou 'clothed with humility?' Art thou mean and vile, yea, nothing in thy own eyes? Thou art very prone to pride; who gave thee to see thy own deformity, with thy Lord's transcendent loveliness? Thy appetite was keen after 'the husks' and trash of this wilderness; who gave thee to relish heavenly fruits? Thou wast all over defiled, yea, wallowing in filthiness; who hath cleansed thee? Thou wast covered with rags; who hath so richly clothed thee, and put upon thee beautiful ornaments? Oh! that I could love my Lord in proportion to his loveliness, trust him in proportion to his power and faithfulness, and praise him according to his grace and bounty.

## CHRIST THE SUPREME OBJECT OF LOVE.

To Mrs. Hannah Bunnell.\*

DEAR COUSIN,

Sherborne, April 9, 1749.

I trust you are now, more and more satisfied that your father's and your mother's God, who is also your God, hath 'chosen your inheritance.' As you *have* seen, so in every future stage of life I hope you *will* see, the 'pillar of a cloud,' and the 'pillar of fire' going before you. I congratulate Mr. Bunnell, and I congratulate you on your happy settlement. 'In every thing give thanks,' therefore 'acknowledge God' on this occasion: and do not be always praying to him for more, but *praise* him for those mercies which *have* crowned your lives. Follow the advice of the apostle, who says—'Let all your things be done with charity,' for on this mutual happiness much depends. They must be strangers to happiness who are strangers to a spirit of love. 'A prudent wife is from the Lord,' so also, a prudent, loving husband is his gift; per-

\* She was the daughter of the distinguishedly pious lady mentioned in the note to January 31, 1716, and mother of Messrs. Joseph and Zechariah Bunnell, of London; gentlemen whose names, at this time (1815), occupy an honourable place in many lists of committees and subscribers to benevolent institutions. She died May 13, 1792, aged 68.

haps a newly-married pair may think these observations needless, but they would do well to get them 'written' 'in the fleshy tables of the heart.' 'Be kindly affectioned one to another.' How much more do they who do not cultivate conjugal, filial, or brotherly love, deprive themselves of comfort, than they deprive those persons of it, towards whom love is required. None can be happy, for instance, even in the great Supreme, who does not love him, and that supremely! Happy is that person who can say—

"Come dearest Saviour to my breast,  
For all my love is thine!"

Is this your case? If you doubt, you may suspect whether you love him at all. Thus, I have led you to see that your truest, highest happiness, consists in the lively outgoings of your love to God in Christ, and that love to the creature is best bestowed where it can be made subservient to a mutual cultivation of that 'love of God,' from which 'neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you.' That the Lord may multiply blessings on you and your partner, and shine in upon your souls, prays, dear cousin, your loving uncle, J. W.

SYMPATHY WITH THE AFFLICTED.

*To Mrs. Crane.*

DEAR SISTER,

Kidderminster, May 17, 1749.

Your pious letter opened the sluices of tenderness, and sent me to my closet.\* Indeed, I do sympathize with you

\* In a letter to his brother, the Rev. R. Pearsall, dated May 19, 1749, Mr. W. says—"Poor Sarah Crane is worse. Her sister Anna has been with us some time, and last Wednesday our sister sent a man and horse for her, and she wrote thus:—"In my judgment, Sarah is weakening apace. Since I am disappointed in my hopes of seeing by brother Richard this Spring, I have had the advice of Dr. Wall: Sarah takes his prescriptions, and they agree with her; but her fever is very bad. But, (she concludes) O brother, my chief errand to you is for prayer, and direction how to behave when called to part with so dear and tender a child. Oh! beg I may not be left to a stupid frame, nor yet be overwhelmed. I know the grace of God is sufficient for me, but I want to see my title to the promises. Methinks I could part with my dearest earthly comforts for one smile from heaven:—but I rebuke the thought,—for I know I am not to purchase divine blessings. They are a free gift. I would, therefore, lay myself, and all I call mine, at the feet of mercy, and say—'Do with me as seemeth good in thy sight.'"

and at the same time rejoice over you. Doubt not, that our good God will either cause 'this' bitter 'cup to pass from you, or put such ingredients into it, as shall make it more than palatable. He is, certainly, too wise to mistake his children's interests, and too good to neglect them. 'Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.' Either the child shall yet recover, and then this 'return of the clouds after the rain' is for the trial of your faith and resignation, that you may taste a double sweetness in the mercy; or else, the Lord will *give* you what is far better, in lieu of what he *takes away*. It is my earnest desire and prayer, that if he be pleased to take away, he will first give such an abundant 'supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,' that she may go off triumphantly, as her good aunt Housman did, and so recommend the ways of God, and particularly early piety, to all around her. Dear sister I am glad to find you at the foot of Mercy. There, I have chosen to lie till my latest breath; nor do I desire a better place to all eternity. There still to lie; I do not mean, there to lie inactive, but there to lie continually. I know no other situation so safe, so peaceful, so joyful. Whilst I lie at the divine footstool, sensible I am nothing, and at the same time see myself 'complete in Christ,' I find nothing can harm me, no, not afflictions, nor death itself. I am truly glad to find you laying yourself there, and all you have. Blessed be God, who gave you this temper,---this absolute resignation. He is 'better to' you therein 'than ten' children could be. To his blessing and grace I commend you, and all yours, particularly the dear child. I am, &c. J. W.

CLEARING UP A TITLE TO HEAVEN.

*To Mr. Joseph Green.*

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, May 24, 1749.

You say nothing in your last letter of the state of your soul. O my friend, 'one thing is needful;' and that one thing should be uppermost. How is it with you? Are your hopes strong: are they well grounded? Have you a strong, a practical belief and persuasion, that there is in-

deed a state of perfect, everlasting blessedness? And, if you have a firm belief that there is a heaven of everlasting 'rest' with God and Christ, with angels and saints, can you forbear contemplating it? Can you forbear inquiring after your title to it? Can you have ease or peace in your mind, before you know whether your everlasting portion will be there, or whether it will be in 'the blackness of darkness for ever?' If your title be clear, can you forbear meditating on that most delightful of all subjects? Suppose you were a minor, and were to enter on the possession of a large estate when you came of age; could you forbear thinking of it? Would it not fill your mind? At least, would you not have some pleasing thoughts of it every day? And is there any proportion or comparison, between ten thousand a year, and a mansion in the New Jerusalem? Suppose your title were not quite so clear as to exclude all doubt concerning it, would you not run and ride for evidences, and stick at no pains to clear it? Suppose it were a free gift from the King, and you had the royal patent under his sign manual, how would you rejoice! How highly would you esteem and extol, how dearly love, the royal donor! Would you think any service too great, too difficult, which you could possibly render? Apply all this seriously, and impartially judge by the fruits of faith, whether you do indeed believe the heavenly 'rest.' If your belief of it be weak and ineffectual, it is as good as none. Oh! beware of that faith, which does not produce suitable works. An unoperative faith is a dead faith. Let me beg of you to peruse attentively "Mr. Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest." I have read it over and over. Blame my judgment, if you do not find it one of the most soul-enriching books, next to the Bible. Believe me to be, dear Sir, your soul's well-wisher,

J. W.

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

*To the same.*

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, June 14, 1749.

It is one thing to eat bread and drink wine at the table of the Lord, and another to eat the flesh and drink the

blood of the Son of man. Though by the way, I do not apprehend that when our Saviour says—'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you,' he there means---eating and drinking sacramentally, but only *believing* on him. Many, I doubt not, have had spiritual life in them, and have been admitted to life eternal, who have not had opportunity to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ sacramentally. Believing on him, unto the saving of the soul, is so great a work, that it is fitly set forth by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Do not wonder that I call it a 'work;' it is our Saviour's own word--- 'This is the *work* of God, That ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' But unless we do thus 'eat' and 'drink,' there is no partaking worthily of the Lord's Supper. To suppose that a bare 'remembrance' of Christ is all that is required in the participation, because he says---'This do in remembrance of me,' is greatly erroneous: a remembrance there must be, but certainly, much more is meant thereby than is expressed. No doubt, *they* of whom the apostle speaks, where he says---'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep,' had some kind of remembrance of Christ in the participation, but were far from 'discerning the Lord's body:' they partook of the elements, but did not feed upon Christ as figured out thereby. It is not a Christ professed; not the naming of the name of Christ, but a Christ received into, and dwelling in our hearts by faith, that must save us. The elements of bread and wine are set apart from a common to a peculiar use, and 'sanctified by the word of God and prayer,' to remind us that 'the man Christ Jesus' was sanctified and sent into the world by the Father, who prepared him a body to do his Father's will, to reveal it more fully to the world, and to 'save his people from their sins.' And the bread is broken, and the wine poured out, to remind us of the sufferings of him who 'was wounded for *our* transgressions,' 'bruised for *our* iniquities;' for 'the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we* are healed.'

But still, why this representation of his sufferings in the gospel-feast? No doubt to produce various effects:—

To put us in mind that *sin* was the procuring cause of all his sufferings, and to humble us for our own. As Dr. Watts says—

“ Each of my crimes became a nail,  
And unbelief the spear.”

—To animate our *faith* in him, as a willing and an all-sufficient Saviour. Paul says, Acts xx. 28---‘ God hath purchased the church with his own blood.’ I ask, therefore, and with fear and reverence be it spoken---What stronger proof could Christ, who is God, give of his willingness to save as many as come to him by faith, than by shedding his blood, and laying down his life for them. ‘ He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?’

—To kindle and inflame our *love* to him, and our *joy* in him. ‘ We love him, because he first loved us.’ ‘ These things,’ saith Christ, ‘ have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.’

Every communicant, when he *worthily* receives the body of Christ, as typified in the bread, receives him with all his purchased blessings; feeds on him by faith; actually relies on his merits and expiation; and trusts in him alone, for all needful grace here, and for glory hereafter. And so, when he drinks of the cup, does he not receive the remission of his sins, and purification from all the filth and pollution with which sin hath stained his soul? In both these actions he, as it were, sets to his seal, that he is and will be the Lord's, in the bonds of the everlasting covenant: and the Most High God as surely seals to him, by a reciprocal transaction, to be his God; as it was in old times, when Moses said to the children of Israel---‘ Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God,’---‘ and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people.’

This sacrament, therefore, is not to be approached unto without great solemnity, suitable qualifications, and due preparation.

I am glad you are seeking after 'Baxter's Saints' Rest.' I hope by this time you have procured it. Take it all before you from beginning to end; and as you go along extract those particular passages which strike your mind most deeply, that you may have the benefit of reviewing them for future use. This is what I have done; and it is my plan when I read for edification, to read a little, and digest it as I go on, by mixing meditation and ejaculatory prayer with it, but not to run over a great deal in a little time. Do you follow this plan, and remember that--'to them, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality,' God will render 'eternal life:' That this may be your portion is the earnest desire and prayer of, dear Sir, your cordial friend, &c.

J. W.

SUCCESS IN PRAYING WITH A POOR MAN.

*Friday, June 30, 1749.*—I have been conversing with one of my workmen concerning the state of his soul, and find reason to hope he is awakened, and brought under a sense of his sinful, lost, undone state, and his absolute need of a Saviour. I asked him---how long he had been under a concern for his soul? I had the pleasure to hear him tell, that his deep concern for his soul began whilst I was praying with him and his wife, about three years ago, when they were distressed by affliction in their own persons and several of their children: and that this was the expression in particular which was set home upon his conscience, and which, he says, he shall never forget;---"O thou who tookest, or foundest 'Manasseh among the thorns,' 'and when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers; and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him.'" He could not but think his circumstances at that time might most fitly be compared to thorns, and the thorns pricked his conscience. I remember my heart was mightily drawn out in pity and compassion to them, and to him in particular, and likewise in very earnest desires after his conversion. Mr. Fawcett called on

him soon after, and prevailed with him to set up family-prayer. Blessed be God, who hath in any measure 'heard the voice of my supplication.' May it appear, in his life and conversation, that convictions have been followed with sound and saving conversion!

## THE NOMINAL CHRISTIAN.

*July 14, 1749.*---The other morning I was taking a solitary walk in a path I had never trod before. I stopped a little to look into the river. There I observed a number of water-spiders, a young fry, treading the surface of the water, rowing against the stream, in which they seemed to keep stroke, rank and file, but still continued just where they were. I stood viewing them some minutes, and observed, that though with repeated strokes and incessant labour they were all still springing forward, yet, being borne gently down the stream, they lost as much as they gained, just keeping their position and distance from each other. In that situation, for ought I could see, they were likely to continue days and weeks to come, if not to the end of their existence, unless the rapidity of a flood should bear them forcibly away. I was considering—to how little purpose was all their labour; of what use could they be in the creation; that as God had made the earth, and all things in it, for the service of man, and had made nothing in vain, for what use or intent hath he made these? Presently a thought started, which became a subject of meditation to the end of my walk. See here, thought I, a lively emblem of a nominal Christian. He makes a profession, treads a circle of duty, and does 'many things,' but still he is where he was. 'They come unto thee,' saith the Lord to Ezekiel, 'as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them.' They hear, they read, they pray; but for want of a principle of holiness in their hearts, they cannot 'increase with the increase of God;' but, after ten, twenty, thirty, forty years, are still where they were. 'But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'

Like as these tread the surface of the water, and never dive or bathe themselves in it, such is the hypocrite with respect to religion; he only treads the surface of a religious duty or ordinance, and does every thing superficially. What a piteous case is it, to be labouring all our days, and lose all our labour! What matter of thankfulness is here, for those who 'have tasted that the Lord is gracious,' and are carried up against the stream of their corrupt affections, temptations, and carnal appetites, and are getting still nearer and nearer to the Fountain! Surely, such cannot be silent in his praises, 'who hath loved them with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness hath drawn them.'

A JOURNEY SPIRITUALLY APPLIED.

*To his Daughter Kirkpatrick.*

DEAR ESTHER,

Kidderminster, August 2, 1749.

Through the great goodness of God, the travellers are come home in health and safety. I need not say what were the joys of meeting. Their safe return, after so long an absence, and the amendment of your sister Hanbury's health, seems to have spread a pretty general joy through the town. Indeed, I never knew how much your mother is beloved and respected till she had been some time absent. She tells me that she had a very pleasant journey: that in every place of abode she found very kind and agreeable friends; in the several coaches respect from fellow travellers, and at every inn the most ready attention. I tell her—How uncomfortable it would have been, had the case been every way the reverse of this: How melancholy, to have been frowned on wherever she had been; to have been ill-treated, abused, destitute of every comfort, and no friend to look on her, nor money to make a friend! To apply this: You and I, your husband, and all who belong to us, must certainly take a more important journey ere long. Who knows how soon! Dismal it will be to be compelled to quit our abodes, abandon all that is dear, and take a flight into the world of spirits! Dismal, to have no friend to countenance us, or to defend us from sur-

rounding foes; and to be continually exposed to their scoffs; the helpless victims to hellish, insatiable rage! On the contrary—how joyous will it be to be received into the embraces of the Lord Jesus, to whom we have been enabled while here, in the confidence of faith, to commend our spirits! How joyous, as soon as we shall have closed our mortal eyes in death, to find ourselves under the protection of a heavenly convoy, spirits which ‘excel in strength,’ and which ‘minister to the heirs of salvation!’ Unspeakably joyous, to be welcomed by such into a blissful eternity; and infinitely more so, to hear ‘God the judge of all’ welcome us ‘into the joy of our Lord!’ Oh! who would for ever miss of such happiness, through the neglect of a little diligence and self-denial for a few transitory days: especially, when by consideration we may know, that the path of self-denying obedience though ‘narrow,’ is vastly smoother and more delightful than the ‘broad way that leadeth to destruction.’—Your mother and sister join, and I heartily unite with them, in cordial thanks to you, to yours, and to every other kind friend for the many marks of respect and friendship conferred on them. I am, my dear Hetty’s most affectionate father,

J. W.

## DESIRING GOD ABOVE ALL.

*Saturday Night, August 12, 1749.*—I have been walking this evening, and as I went along, was begging God to give me a text, and assist my meditation. The words impressed on my mind were—‘Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.’ There is a God in heaven. He is my God. I have none in heaven, I have none on earth, comparable with him in my esteem. Then, as surely as God is in heaven, he will bring, he will receive me thither. ‘My flesh and my heart’ will fail, must fail; and let them fail, since ‘God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.’ ‘This God is my God for ever and ever, and will be my guide even unto death.’ I have chosen him for my God and portion: but, I should never have chosen him, if he had not chosen me first, and directed my choice: I should never have

loved him, if he had not first 'loved me with everlasting love, and with loving-kindness drawn me.' 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies towards me!'

GODLY JEALOUSY, OVER SELF, PRESCRIBED.

*To his Daughter Kirkpatrick.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Kidderminster, August 26, 1749.

How well does a temper of habitual thankfulness to our great and good Benefactor, become creatures to whom he owes no obligation, but is, nevertheless, daily loading with benefits! We could not fail to cultivate such a temper, were we mindful, as the Psalmist was, to 'set the Lord always before us.' You and I have peculiar motives for thankfulness. When it pleased God at first to give me prosperity, it proved a snare. I grew too much in love with it, and valued myself too highly on it; for which, God was pleased to humble me to the dust, and if possible, below the dust.—I now see reason to bless and love him as long as I live, and to all eternity, for his humbling influences which he sent first, and his humbling providences which followed. For these last twenty-four years I have been jealous of prosperity, lest I should be again ensnared: this I esteem a greater blessing than prosperity itself, of which God hath given me enough. Now, I cannot but be jealous also, over each of my children. Allow me to say that I am jealous over you, lest the great prosperity with which God hath blessed you, in a fulness of worldly enjoyment, a good husband, a good estate, and servants to fulfil all your pleasure, should cause you inordinately to love the world, over-value yourself, not to make a suitable improvement of these mercies by exhibiting suitable fruits, and to omit to give God all the praise; for great as your mercies are, if not duly improved they will become curses instead of blessings. Mistake me not! I have neither seen nor heard any matter of which to accuse you, on the contrary, your deportment is more agreeable to me than all your outward prosperity; but, that I am still jealous over you, impute only to the tenderness of a father, who intreats you always to maintain a godly jealousy over yourself, as you value

that 'peace' which our dear Saviour bequeathed to all his disciples; peace with God, and peace in your own conscience. Farewell! I am while I breathe, your affectionate father,

J. W.

SETTING THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE US.

*To Mr. Joseph Green.*

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, August 26, 1749.

My mind hath been much impressed, every day, for a week past, with that text—'I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.' It is a point of vast importance. I understand by it, not only a firm assent to, and hearty belief of those two attributes of God, his omniscience and omnipresence: but likewise, a practical consideration of them, or an actual applying them to the government of our lives: and, we must thus set him before us, as the supreme, the most holy, righteous, and the only lawgiver, and as a bountiful rewarder of the obedient, as well as a severe and just punisher of the disobedient. Not that we must necessarily think of God's omniscience and omnipresence every moment of our lives, and actually apply our belief of these to the most minute actions of our lives. No; but we ought to live under such an habitual sense of them, as may influence the general course of our lives; more particularly, in times of great temptation, either from prospects of pleasure, or from difficulties and dangers; as also, in seasons of religious worship, whether public or private. In a time of prosperity, health, liberty, and fulness, we should make use of this as an antidote against the poisonous snares of such a state. In a time of adversity, this should compose our spirits, and reconcile us to the Divine dispensations, considering that God allots no more afflictions to his people than he sees to be good for them: and, how bitter soever the cup is which he puts into their hands, it is of his own mixing. The advantages of thus setting the Lord always before us are inexpressible. It would give a check to the first risings of impure, unchaste desires, and inclinations to fraud, dishonesty, or covetousness. It would be a most impenetra-

ble shield against, and preservation from temptation. As Joseph successfully argued—‘How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?’ And Nehemiah could say—‘So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord.’ It would make us more watchful over our hearts and thoughts. Then do we ‘keep our hearts diligently,’ and ‘with all keeping,’ when we consider, that ‘the eyes of the Lord are as a flame of fire,’ and that ‘he searches the thoughts and intents of the heart.’—It would be a good preparative for every religious duty, and would prevent distractions therein, as well as many careless neglects of duty. It would excite us to frequent ejaculatory prayer all the day long, which is an excellent means of increasing in holiness. If we were in our non-age, and were in the presence of our earthly father all day, we should think of many things to say to him, and ask of him. Setting the Lord always before us, would be a sharp spur, and a quickening motive, to all holy actions. It would greatly promote humility in our temper, and in our whole deportment.—We should be ashamed to give ourselves proud airs in the presence of King George; how much more, then, in the presence of the King of kings! It would tend to make us sincere and upright in the whole course of our lives, as it would lead us to think—‘If I regard iniquity in my heart,’ ‘shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.’ It would tend to prevent, or cure, that extreme carefulness or solicitude we are so prone to about the affairs of this life. Finally, it would help us to rely upon God in every strait and exigence in life, and at the hour of death. ‘I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved:’ ‘therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope.’ I am persuaded, that the great difference apparent in the general conversation of a good man and a mere nominal Christian, and likewise between a good man and himself at different times, may be traced up to this source. ‘As Moses’ face shone,’ ‘when he came down from the mount,’ where he had so long and so intimately conversed with God, so who-

ever they be that 'set the Lord always before' them, it will be seen in their conversation. Happy they, who can set the Lord before them, not only as their supreme Lord and omniscient Judge, but as their indulgent Father, Friend, and Saviour.

I am well satisfied with your views in approaching the Lord's table. May you and I always make our approaches there with desires to 'see Jesus.' May he be 'known' of us 'in breaking of bread;' and, may we never see his body represented as broken, without broken hearts. May 'the cup of blessing,' be to each of our souls 'the communion of the blood of Christ.' I agree with you, that the table of the Lord ought not to be too severely guarded. May all that are admitted there, have knowledge to 'discern the Lord's body.' May they all look upon the distribution of the elements as an exhibition of Christ with all his benefits. May they all have faith to receive Christ, and to feed upon him: and may they all have unfeigned repentance, and sincere love to Christ, such as are productive of new obedience.

The *tea* came safe to hand, but it hath lost the elegant flavour it had when we drank of it at Sherborne; owing, I suppose, to its conveyance in paper, which, being very porous, easily admits effluvia from other goods packed up with it, and emits effluvia from the tea. Such are the moral tendencies of evil communications among men, which nothing will prevent (like canisters for tea), but taking to us 'the whole armour of God.' Had the tea been packed up with cloves, mace, and cinnamon, it would have been tinctured with those sweet spices: So, 'he that walks with wise men shall be wise.' He that converses with heaven-born souls, whose 'conversation is in heaven,' whose 'treasure,' and whose 'hearts' are there, will catch some sparks from their holy fire; but 'evil communications corrupt good manners.' I have put the tea into a canister, and am told it will recover its original flavour: So the pious soul, who hath received some ill impressions from vicious or vain conversation will, by retiring from the world, by communing with

his own heart, by heavenly meditation, and by fervent prayer, recover his spiritual ardour. Have you not experienced, in their turns, all the consequences I have mentioned as proceeding from such like promises?—I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

J. W.

GOD'S GIFT OF HIS SON.

*Wednesday, September 6, 1749.*—Come, O my soul, contemplate the love of God in giving his own, his only Son, to be my Saviour. How could I have borne, how could I now bear to see a child of mine stripped; scourged with uncommon severity, before thousands of spectators; treated with the utmost scorn; most barbarously insulted; and then put upon the rack? How could I bear to see any one of my daughters' joints distended, her whole frame convulsed with pain, her eyes rolling in anguish, and at last fixing upon me with anxious looks, and to hear her cry out to me for help and pity? How would every bowel roll within me, to see her in such extremity of pain, in the agonies of death, and find myself incapable of affording her any relief? But, do I love any child of mine, as the blessed God loves his own, his only begotten son? and, what are the sufferings I have described, to those of the Son of God? Oh! the unmeasurable love of God to a sinful world. He saw, he appointed the agony and bloody sweat, the scourges, the thorns, the nails, and the spear, which his Son endured to redeem rebel worms, to redeem them from hell, their deserved portion; and advance them to heaven, which they had not at all deserved. Can such love be fathomed? Can such grace be estimated? What have sinners to render to him for such love? Am I interested in this love? Do I share, and shall I for ever share, in the fruits, the blessings, the benefits of his redemption? And does not my soul say—'What shall I render to the Lord?' Blessed Jesus, what shall I render unto thee, who didst 'endure the cross and despise the shame' for the sake of worthless me! and shall I not love thee? Shall I not praise thee? Shall I not live to thy glory? Shall I not absolutely devote

myself, my all, to thee? ‘Unto him that loved’ me, ‘and washed’ me from my ‘sins in his own blood, and hath made’ me a ‘king and a priest unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever, Amen.

A SUMMARY OF DUTIES FOR THE NEWLY-MARRIED.

*To his Daughter Kirkpatrick.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Kidderminster, September 30, 1749.

I suppose you have heard that Miss Birkett is married, and gone to live at Eaglesfield, in Cumberland. I do not find her husband has a great deal of the riches of this world, but is, it is hoped, possessed of the true riches. Her father very lately presented cousin John Watson with some advices he had sent them, of which I here supply you with a copy:—

“*Abstract to my Son-in-law.* If God in his kind providence have answered your prayers with regard to your choice of a yoke-fellow, it should be matter of rejoicing and thankfulness to us all. We assure you it is so to us, that your spouse is in all respects so agreeable to you; but you must not expect to find her free from human infirmities. Remember, she is not an angel, nor as one of ‘the spirits of the just made perfect.’ We would have neither you nor her set your expectations over-high, lest if you come to perceive you have over-valued one another at first, you should under-value each other afterward. The transition from one extreme to the other is often very facile, and sometimes too speedy. May the God of peace perpetuate between you a just and regular esteem for each other. What you say of your wife’s satisfaction in her choice, is abundantly confirmed in a letter we have had from her own hand. May our dear Jesus make you mutual blessings whilst you live.”

“*Abstract to my Daughter.* Live on Christ by faith for righteousness and strength, light and guidance, and dedicate all you are and have to his service and glory. Give to God, the Father, Son and Spirit, your supreme affection. Be importunate that he would take and keep possession of your heart. Let it be a frequent reflection in your mind—

that he or she who loves any object more than Christ is utterly unworthy of him. Pray much for, and cherish the influences of the Spirit of grace; but beware you take nothing for divine influences that are not so. Tremble at the thought of deception or delusion. We are commanded to 'try the spirits,' and are told that 'Satan' can transform himself 'into an angel of light.' All the operations of the Spirit of God are conformable to the scriptures of truth which he himself inspired. Discharge the duties of the marriage relation with diligent integrity. It will not be amiss sometimes to review the matrimonial solemnity, and to observe the obligations that are upon you. As you are joint-head of a family, use all becoming endeavours to lay a foundation and raise a superstructure of genuine Christianity in each of its members. Who knows how God may succeed the weakest endeavours; for he despiseth not 'the day of small things!' As much as may be, maintain a cheerful frame of mind. Never attempt compliance with the above advices in your own strength, but rely entirely on the all-sufficiency of the Redeemer's grace, without the concurrence of which, we despair of ever having our best counsels made effectual for the saving benefit of you and yours; for, if you leave out Christ and set up self in his place, you will fail in every duty, and be in danger of falling into every sin."

*“ Abstract to Son-in-law and Daughter. You both appear very desirous of our advice and instruction. It is, indeed, much more easy to give, than to take good advice: We pretend not to be expert at either; and if we were expert at the former, it would avail little without Divine influence to bring our counsels home to your hearts. In the hope, however, that you will importunately supplicate for that influence, in the name of our prevailing Intercessor, we proceed to meet your desires as far as we are able.--- Remember then, that you are sinners, fallen creatures, and really need a Saviour. Be sure to give the honour of your salvation, your recovery from sin and misery, to none but him who has undertaken it, and is every way sufficient for*

that undertaking. Remember that he well deserves to be your Lord and Governor, and will be both or neither. This need not disgust you, for his service is perfect freedom: his 'yoke is easy, and his burden light,' to regenerated souls. Get well established in the grounds of Christianity. This should have been the first advice, but the want of method you will excuse. It is much to be lamented that the greater part of those who call themselves Christians, are Christians on no better grounds than Turks are Mahomedans: they are of the religion of the country where they were born and educated. We wish you to read some of the best advocates for Christianity, they will enable you to give 'a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.' Make religion the governing business of your lives. Mind the 'one thing needful.' You cannot love God or hate sin too much. Let your hands be diligently employed, but be sure to keep the world out of your hearts; that is, an immoderate, sinful, anxious care about the world. It is a hard task, and *we* know it well, to pursue the particular callings, assigned us by Providence, in a becoming manner, and not to exceed due bounds. A distrust of the Divine care for us and ours, and a neglect of diligence, prudent concern, and management are equally faulty. They who have the prospect of an increasing family should use all Christian endeavours to provide comfortably for each of its members, and they should cheerfully and freely commit the success of their endeavours to the all-wise Creator. We hope you will not despise either Christ or the holiness his gospel prescribes: so neither ought you to contemn morality, which is of excellent use in its proper place. To love our neighbour as ourselves, is one of the great commands. We should 'as we have opportunity, do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' It is true charity should begin at home; but it ought by no means always to stay there. True Christian charity is a very extensive grace. Lastly--- Maintain conjugal affection, and discharge conjugal duty with the utmost fidelity and constancy. A failure here

would doubtless be of the most fatal consequences. By all means avoid whatever may excite even the suspicion of disrespect; and be sure to put the best construction on each other's words and actions: remember, that 'charity thinketh no evil.'"

May the blessing of heaven rest on you and yours: I hope it does. Do not forget in your best moments, yours,  
&c. J. W.

## DEATH OF A GRAND-CHILD.

*To his Daughter Hanbury.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Reading, November 4, 1749-

I have been sensibly touched, and am still, with that bereaving providence it hath pleased our heavenly Father, who 'hath done all things well,' to exercise you with. I have wanted to say something to you ever since I heard the mournful tidings. I know what parental feelings are, even to those occasioned by bereaving dispensations. Let us, my dear, consider under such circumstances, that we have a God to go to, who allows us to make our complaints to him, though we may not complain of him, nor of any of his dealings. Whatever you do, be sure to be found daily in the exercise of holy love, for certainly, 'all things work together for good to them that love God.' I have transcribed for you the hymn which Mr. Darracott\* made for his own use when under a similar affliction with yourself:---

" In humble duty I would bow,  
Before my Father's feet:  
Convinc'd whate'er he does is right,  
I cheerfully submit.  
His gifts I thankfully would own  
As altogether free:  
And what he takes I can't dispute,  
Because he gave it me.  
Blest be his name! he more does give  
Than he will ever take;  
He gives in covenant--*Himself*;  
Nor will that covenant break!

\* See note March 25, 1752,

My soul assur'd it has a part  
 In *such* a lasting bliss,  
 Whatever comfort he withdraws,  
 It can't *that* comfort miss.

Though all my other comforts go,  
 If but my God remain,  
 Happy in him, I'll bear the loss  
 Without a moment's pain."

What I write to you, I write also to your husband, who is dear to me, and with whom I tenderly sympathize. 'Pray without ceasing:' pray with entire submission: pray for yourself, your family, your friends, and for your affectionate father,

J. W.

#### CHEERFUL VIEWS OF A FUTURE STATE.

November 7, 1749.—While I was waiting on that day for my breakfast in my inn, at Beaconsfield, I observed, on a pane of the parlour-window, the following lines :---

" Distrust and darkness of a future state  
 Make poor mankind so fearful of their fate:  
 Death in itself is nothing ; but we fear  
 To be, we know not what, we know not where."

I pitied the ingenious author. The lines were often revolved in my thoughts that day ; and in the evening, being alone at Watlington, my reflections on them were spun out in the following manner :---

At thy command I meekly yield  
 My body to the dust ;  
 Jesus, I trust in thee alone,  
 And know in whom I trust.  
 Fix thou the time : The time is fixt  
 In the divine decree ;  
 Call, when the time is fully come,  
 And I will answer thee.  
 My flesh and soul I give to thee,  
 In their united state :  
 And is it more to trust thee, Lord,  
 With each, when separate ?  
 I claim thy promise—Here below,  
 To come and dwell with me ;  
 And why not trust the word that says  
 ' Where I am, thou shalt be ?'

Thy glorious angels stood prepar'd,  
 Soon as the beggar died,  
 His parting spirit to convey  
 To faithful Abraham's side :

In all my ways those morning stars  
 Have been my daily guard ;  
 And will they not, when loos'd from clay,  
 Direct me to my Lord ?

Soon as pale death hath clos'd my eyes,  
 Those radiant sons of light  
 Are present to my mental view :—  
 Oh ! what a joyful sight.

They'll bear me up in friendly hands,  
 To regions yet unknown,  
 And, wafted o'er ethereal seas,  
 Safe land me near thy throne.

How glorious is thy gift of faith,  
 That cheers the darksome tomb,  
 And through the damp, the noisome grave,  
 Can shed a rich perfume !

Precious the faith that lifts the soul  
 Above desponding fear,  
 Joyful in hope of heaven her home,  
 And longing to be there.

THE CHRISTIAN DUTY OF HABITUAL PRAISE INCULCATED.

*To his Daughter Kirkpatrick.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Kilderminster, November 20, 1749.

As it is nearly a month since you went to Southampton, these lines may find you in possession of your best friend ; and may they find your health and strength much restored. The same kind Providence which has so often bade me go and return in health and prosperity, made my late south journey the most complete scene of travelling mercies ever afforded to me on that circuit. Such was the indulgence of that wondrous Being whose right, or left hand of command or permission, is in every event. Oh ! that I could act strictly up to that precept of an inspired penman -- 'In every thing give thanks.' Sure I am, a life of 'thankfulness must be the most happy life ; for what can more contribute to the cure of impatience and fretfulness, and to produce a state of true Christian contentment ? I say *Christian* contentment ; because it is one thing to be con-

tent from affluence and a fullness of creature comfort, than which nothing can be more precarious; and it is another thing to be content from a sense of the Divine love, joined with an humble sense of our unworthiness and a grateful sense of our infinite obligations. Not only when we are eating and drinking, putting on our necessary apparel, or warming ourselves by a good fire: not only when in the evening we recount the mercies of the day, or in the morning those of the night, but we should continually and habitually take occasion from every occurrence to ascend to God in devout aspirations of praise. It is said of good Nehemiah when king Artaxerxes inquired of him what request he had to make, that Nehemiah immediately, in the king's presence, 'prayed to the God of heaven:' in like manner, we should take occasion, in whatever place or in whatever company, not indeed always with our lips, but always with our hearts, to praise God. To instance in some particulars:---You see a necessitous person, and afford relief; instantly and ardently praise God that you are not that wretched and indigent person; that you abound in all the gifts of providence; and that God has given you a heart to pity and relieve creatures made after his similitude: thus your grounds for praise are threefold! Again: You hear a wretch swear profanely; immediately bless God who hath put his fear into your heart; for who else 'made you to differ?' You overtake or meet a poor person trudging on foot, perhaps carrying a burden too; bless God that you have money in your pocket and are not subjected to such toil and indigence. You see your servant employed in some act of drudgery; bless God who hath made you the head, and implore him for grace that you may walk worthy of your station. You converse with a person who discovers great ignorance of the things which belong to our peace; bless God who hath given you a knowledge of himself. You hear a minister preach and engage in holy things excellently; or, you hear a private Christian pray well, and speak of God with pious skill; bless him who hath put such 'treasure into earthen ves-

sels.' Thus, if you will but make this fruitful subject your study, and habitually practice accordingly, you will not find any occurrence which does not yield an occasion of praise, and that too, whether the occurrence be in itself good or evil. Christians it is said, have a large field for prayer; and have they not a large field for praise! What can be better for them, or tend more to humility? Thankfulness and humility go hand in hand, they embrace each other. Let me persuade you, I hope you are already persuaded, vigorously to attempt this course of praise; and tell me in your next letter whether you do not find it the best expedient to supply the want of private opportunities, and an excellent preparative for every kind of religious ordinances. It may be objected to some things I have advanced, that there is but one instance recorded in the Bible of thanking God that we are not as other men, and that is blamed by our Saviour. To this I answer—he spake that parable, not to reprove any who humbly bless God for distinguishing grace; but to reprove those who 'trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.'

May showers of blessings be constantly descending on you and yours: so wishes your ever affectionate father,

J. W.

PROMOTING PIETY IN A YOUTH.

*To the Rev. R. Pearsall.*

DEAR BROTHER,

December 20, 1749.

My daughter Kirkpatrick's second disappointment in the loss of a son, was to me a tender stroke: but, through grace, I hope never to be dissatisfied with any instance of adversity. 'It is the Lord, let him do with me,' and with mine, 'as seemeth good in his sight.' 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.' He hath given me himself to be 'my portion,' and not any loseable creature-enjoyments. Should he see meet to take away my most important relative, I hope, with 'Aaron,' to hold my 'peace.' One little incident let me mention to you. I crossed over to the Isle of Wight,

intending to return to Portsmouth the next day. A horse was lent me from Newport to Ryde, but the vessel was gone off sooner than usual. A butcher's apprentice, a youth about seventeen, was sent to bring back the horse, whom I took up behind me, and returned to Newport. Having a companion, I had a mind to make the best I could of him, and do the best I could for him. I began with the Ten Commandments, catechising him, expounding them to him, and inculcating them upon him. He seemed to drink in knowledge, as the thirsty earth drinks in the rain; saw clearly the reasonableness of every command, and his answers most humbly, and tenderly, and thankfully echoed to all I told him. When we were come to the last mile, I thought it time to ask him if he could so carefully and punctually observe all these commandments, as thereby to obtain heaven? He roundly answered "Ay, I hope so." I then laboured to undeceive him, assuring him, that no man, no, not the holiest and best man upon earth, could do it. At this he seemed astonished. I then, in the plainest manner I could, set before him the gospel method of salvation by Jesus Christ, and what a friend the Lord Jesus Christ is to us sinners. The poor youth could not sufficiently express his thankfulness; and told me often he had never heard so much before, and promised me over and over to read, and pray, and follow every rule I prescribed him, and when he had 'done all,' trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. I persuaded him to apply, himself, to my son-in-law Kirkpatrick, to whom I said I would speak on his behalf, to give him Baxter's Call, and other books. The lad seemed ravished and amazed at what he had heard. I was highly delighted with my disappointment, and should be glad to meet with such a one every day of my life, be the issue what pleases God.

LUKEWARMNESS LAMENTED.

*To Mr. Joseph Green.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Kidderminster, December 23, 1749.

You express shame for your slow advances in the way of religion and duty; and, for the coolness of your love and

gratitude to, and of your zeal for the honour and interest of your Creator and Redeemer. It is well that you are sensible of your short-comings in these respects: It is better still if you be filled with an humble, holy shame on these accounts. I have reason enough to take up the same lamentation; and so, I believe, hath the most eminent saint upon earth, in some degree. We none of us bear that love and gratitude to, or zeal for the honour and interest of God and Christ, which our obligations thereto require: but, let us beware how we deceive ourselves in a matter of infinite importance. It is a sad state to be 'lukewarm, neither cold nor hot.' It is better, in our Saviour's judgment, to be *cold* than neither cold nor hot. There is an absolute need of a cure. How may this lukewarmness be cured? The infallible recipe from the great Physician is this---'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.' Wonderful condescension! He does not command us as a Sovereign, but counsel us as a Friend. Christ will have none but a 'willing' people. All his soldiers must be volunteers. What is this *gold*, but faith and holiness? What is the *white raiment*, but the 'righteousness of the saints,' with which it 'was granted, that the Lamb's wife should be arrayed?' So that it was not a righteousness of her own, but a granted, a given righteousness, even the meritorious righteousness of Christ imputed to her. What is this *eye-salve*, but the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit? As for Christ's counsel, that we should buy these things of him, it refers to that prophetic and evangelical invitation---'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' How is it possible we should give our Saviour an adequate price for his heavenly blessings! No; his grace is free. Yet, something is implied in our buying them, and what can it be but humble, and obedient believing on him?

That is all the price we can possibly give. Accordingly, we find the promise of eternal life so often made to *believing*. ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not,’ or disobeyeth ‘the Son, shall not see life.’ It is hard to believe, because it is contrary to our natural prides, empties the creature, humbles the soul, and makes us to see ourselves to be nothing, that the Lord alone may be exalted. To the renewed soul, it is easy, yea delightful, so to believe as to lie at the feet of Jesus in low prostration; and there, he will desire to lie in time and to all eternity: when he is thus abased he is most safe. Thus may your soul prosper. I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

J. W.

AN ENDEAVOUR TO PROMOTE THE CONVERSION OF A FELLOW-TRAVELLER PROPOSED.

*To his Nephew Watson.\**

DEAR COUSIN,

Kidderminster, February 13, 1750.

It is my prayer to God that you may be instrumental in awaking your fellow-traveller to serious consideration, and of enlightening his mind with the knowledge of Christ, so that his will may be renewed. The conversion of precious souls is God’s prerogative; it is the work of the Spirit; and the most honourable employment in the world is to be a worker therein together with God. “Join hands with God to make a man to live,” is a powerful argument for alms-giving, used by Herbert. What can fire holy ambition if such a thought applied to the present case will not! God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth: for this end he hath given his only-begotten Son that men ‘might live through him;’ and for this end he hath given us the word of life; but men, not angels, must hold it forth to their fellow men. Let us then, “join hands with God to make” Mr. O. “live” in newness of life, a divine life, which may grow up to life everlasting. Be not discouraged, ‘it is God who worketh’ with us, as well as ‘in’ us ‘both to will and to do of his good pleasure.’ Our reward will be sure, whether his soul be ga-

\* Then at Kendal, on a journey.

thered into Christ's fold or not; for he that refused to make David the builder of his house, told him—'Thou didst well that it was in thine heart.' God accepts the will for the deed. I am going, by and by, to a meeting of prayer, and you and your companion shall be commended to the grace of God. Oh! that Jesus would be entreated to make one with you, as he did with the two disciples going to Emmaus, and make both your hearts to 'burn within' you. Do not be afraid to tell him that you fear he is yet 'in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.' The Lord direct and bless you in all things. I am with endeared affection your loving uncle,

J. W.

CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT OVERLOOK THE CAUSER OF CAUSES.

*To Mrs. Richards,*

MY DEAR SISTER,

Kidderminster, March 15, 1750.

What a wonderful thing is 'the fear of God!' It swallows up all other fear. Nor is 'the love of God' in Christ, less wonderful; for it mortifies, or moderates at least, all other love! No fear is so distressing as that which comes on hypocrites and bold transgressors, and no courage so heroic as that which arises from the fear of God. This holy fear is ever accompanied with faith: now faith applies the promises, making them all in Jesus Christ 'yea' and 'amen:' it beholds God reconciled, our pardon sealed, and our names 'written in the Lamb's book of life.' Who then, with faith and a good conscience can entertain a slavish fear? The possessors of them are safe under all events: they 'shall not be afraid of evil tidings whose hearts are fixed, trusting in the Lord:' they 'shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be moved.'

The account of the first earthquake at London excited in me hopes rather than fears, and I sensibly found the account of the second, increase them in proportion to its attendant circumstances.\* In a measure, I cannot but rejoice in these exertions of our heavenly Father's tremendous power; and that he has given a proud, sinful city

\* On Thursday, February 8, between twelve and one o'clock, P. M. and Thursday, March 8, between five and six, A. M.

and nation, such demonstrations that he can easily destroy us, and yet destroys us not. It grieves me, however, that so many persons are busy in searching out the natural, rather than the supernatural cause of the concussions. The sun gives light and heat; but, who made the sun? It would be preposterous, atheistical philosophy, to ascribe to the sun what is due to its Creator and Regulator! Fire, water, and air, are doubtless, secondary causes of earthquakes, but wherefore should we overlook the Causer of causes;—‘*He* looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.’ My dear sister, ‘let none of these things move’ you; ‘the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal—The Lord knoweth them that are his;’ such ‘shall be hid in the day of his anger.’ What though you be exercised with afflictions, ‘all things shall work together for good to them that love God.’ I remain, your truly affectionate brother, J. W.

## AN ADMONITION TO THE CLERGY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.

*To the Rev Nicholas Pearson.\**

REV. SIR,

Kidderminster, March 31, 1750.

I love and honour Mr. Whitefield, as one, to use the words of Dr. Doddridge—“Whom the Lord hath highly honoured.” Yea, I esteem him, after a great many hours’ personal conversation, second to none I know of all the human race, all things considered: I greatly rejoice that, by his instrumentality, many hundreds, perhaps many thousands, have been awakened from a death in sin to a life of righteousness. It is full six years since I heard good old Mr. Blake, of Blandford,† say—“He verily believed Mr. Whitefield was commissioned and sent forth by the Holy Ghost:” nevertheless, I am far from approving all he has done, or all he has said. I apprehend there has been a considerable mixture of enthusiasm, and some-

\* For a short time dissenting minister at Newport, Isle of Wight.

† The Rev. Malachi Blake, who died February 15, 1760. For an account of him see Wilson’s ‘History of Dissenting Churches,’ vol. ii. p. 276, note. In addition, it may be remarked of the church at Blandford, that Mr. B. and the Rev. Henry Field have successively been pastors, for the unprecedented period of 104 years.

thing of vain-glory; and I am glad he has humility enough to acknowledge it publicly. Let me trouble you with a quotation from the ingenious and pious Dr. Hartley:—"There are great complaints made of the irregularities of the Methodists, and I believe not without reason. The surest means to check these irregularities is for the clergy to learn from the Methodists what is good in them;—to adopt their zeal and concern for lost souls. This would soon unite all that are truly good among the Methodists to the clergy, and disarm such as are otherwise."\*

THE IRRATIONALITY OF PRIDE, &c.

*To his Nephew Watson.†*

DEAR COUSIN,

Kidderminster, May 2, 1750.

Mr. \*\*\*\*\* breathed his last yesterday morning. Two years ago he was at the top of his honour; this year he is a prey for worms. 'Every man, at his best state, is altogether vanity.' How inexcusable and irrational is pride, or covetousness, in mortals! Such examples should 'mortify' our pride, covetousness, voluptuousness, our 'every inordinate affection:' and that is not enough; for nothing but the love of Christ and faith working by love, will humble us to the dust, crucify us to the world, and purify our hearts. We shall never be dead to terrene enjoyments till we know that our life 'is hid with Christ in God.' Lord! teach us the heavenly art, to weep as though we wept not, to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and to buy and sell as though we possessed not, but were stewards only 'of the unrighteous mammon;' and may 'we use this world as not abusing it.' As Mr. Baxter sings—

"My grave and coffin are at hand;  
My glass hath but a little sand;  
Now I am writing—but anon,  
They'll also say of me—He's gone!"

For ever adored be that Power which enables me with cheerful confidence to adopt the following lines:—

"Then I shall see that shining face,  
Which is the glory of yon place."

\* Observations on Man, Ed. 1749, vol. ii. p. 452.

† Then at Newport, Isle of Wight, on a journey.

Yet, I may well continue to say, with the author—

“ But lest in vain I hope and run,  
Lord! perfect what thou hast begun.”

Dear Cousin, every day your interests are warm in my mind. Do not forget, on your part, your loving uncle and faithful partner,

J. W.

DISSUASIVES FROM ANXIETY.

*To his Daughter Hanbury.*

MY DEAR PHEBE,

Lancaster, August 5, 1750.

Though you are yourself a parent, and, together with your consort, at the head of a family of your own, yet I remember, yea and feel as sensibly as ever, that you are still *my child*; and I tenderly sympathize with you under the burdens it pleases our heavenly Father to lay upon you. When you see others of your own sex, and under similar circumstances, enjoying health of body and cheerfulness, no doubt many uneasy reflections are excited. But, will my dear child weigh in an even balance, her mercies over-against her afflictions, her comforts over-against her crosses, and then judge whether *she* hath any cause to repine! or rather, whether *she* hath not cause for abundant thankfulness! Especially if she do consider that she hath all her mercies from her Sovereign, to whom she hath forfeited every mercy. O my dear child, cultivate by all possible, by all prescribed means, that temper recommended by the great Apostle—to ‘be careful for nothing.’ Consider yourself as nothing but what God makes you to be, as having nothing but what his bounty hath given you to possess, as capable of doing nothing but what he gives you abilities and qualifications to perform. Consider him as ‘All in all,’ and yourself as sent into the world to answer the purposes of his wisdom and grace. The more you do this, the more you will find ‘all things work together’ for your ‘good.’

The decayed health of your mother affects me much. I was sorry to leave her, but it could not be well avoided. Urge her to use means, and to take farther advice, the best that can be had; let no cost be spared. I know God

alone is the great Physician: but means must be used in dependance on his blessing.

My dear child, I commit you to God. Trust in him at all times. 'In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.' He will hear you when you 'call' upon him. 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might:' and when nearest to him do not forget your affectionate parent,  
J. W.

DISAPPOINTMENTS OF PROVIDENCE TO BE ACQUIESCED IN.

*To his Daughter Kirkpatrick.*

MY DEAR ESTHER, (On a north journey), August — 1750.

I take as kind your concern that I should receive a letter from you before I left home. Glad I am that the Lord hath dealt graciously in restoring, in so good a measure, your health and strength. You receive the mercies, I hope, with great thankfulness, and are studious chiefly to improve them to his glory, in whose hand is your life with all your ways. The more you make his glory your care, the better security will there be for present as well as future blessings; and the more you love God you will find 'that all things are working together for your good,' even those providences which, at present, seem most to cross your pleasing expectations. Use all possible means, my dear child, for cultivating the great apostle's exhortation—to 'be careful for nothing.' Regard yourself as nothing; as being nothing but what God has made you to be; as having nothing but what he has given you; as capable of doing nothing without ability to perform from him; and as capable of enjoying nothing, but what his presence and blessing make delightful. He is 'All in all;' therefore, every thing he doth is right. Look on yourself as sent into the world for no other end than to answer the purposes of his wisdom and grace, and use every mercy he gives only in a subserviency to that end; consider all your enjoyments as portions of his bounty; and let it satisfy you under afflictions and disappointments that his will is done in and upon you. 'No good thing will the Lord God withhold from

them that walk uprightly.' Is this your character? then what has been withheld would not have been good for you in time past, but be assured, when it is good for you it shall no longer be withheld. Oh! that you and I could entirely acquiesce in the will of our heavenly Father. Is it not enough that he hath enabled us to say—'My beloved is mine, and I am his;' not enough, that Jesus hath 'loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood!' Do we 'know in whom we have believed,' and are we 'persuaded' that he will 'keep that which we have committed unto him against that day?' then you will join with me in these lines:—

By nature vile, by nature blind,  
 And wand'ring far astray!  
 Has Christ the dim suffusion clear'd,  
 And wash'd my sins away?  
 Is pardon purchas'd with his blood?  
 Have I that grace receiv'd?  
 Is my salvation nearer now,  
 Than when I first believ'd?  
 What glorious, animating views,  
 Does this unfold to me—  
 God is my 'reconciled God,'  
 And Jesus I shall see!  
 'Twas wond'rous pow'r! abounding grace!  
 Restor'd my ruin'd frame.  
 What shall I render, O my soul,  
 To the victorious Lamb.  
 "Give me thy heart is my request,  
 That boon I will receive:"  
 Lord, if a thousand hearts were mine,  
 A thousand hearts I'd give!  
 And then, too cool were my desires!  
 Too slow, affections move!  
 Lord, send down coals of heavenly fire,  
 And make my soul ALL LOVE!

I received a letter at Preston, from my nephew, dated the 30th past, it contains the disagreeable news that your mother, who was somewhat better when I left home, has been much declining since. Her constitution seems so much broken by the frequent returns of her disorders within these three months, that I cannot but greatly fear

the issue. Farewell my dear child. Pray for me, as I daily pray for you and yours. I remain your affectionate father,

J. W.

INCULCATING RESIGNATION.

*To his Daughter Hanbury.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Bristol, October 27, 1750.

I am indeed grieved for you, and tenderly sympathize with you in the affliction our heavenly Father is *again* exercising you with : \* but can we complain? Yes, we may complain; but let us not murmur. 'It is well,' and it will be well. 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' Who does not see God's paternal tenderness to you in delaying this visitation so long, whilst you were less able to bear it? He is now trying you, trying your husband, trying me, and every one of us, whether we can trust in his hands a life he hath so often made his care, a life he hath so often rescued from the most imminent danger. Do, my dear, give up your child to God, whose he is, to deal with him how he pleaseth. Do it unreservedly, and not by halves. Believe it reasonable, that God should do what he will with his own. What did you mean, what was the language of your heart, when you devoted him to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in baptism, according to Christ's institution? Did you not then acknowledge God's absolute right to dispose of him, as he should see fit? And will you not abide by that surrender? This is the way to have him spared. If there be any creature we make an idol of, no wonder the Lord, if he hath a love for us, remove it out of the way, that he may have our whole heart. I say not this to reproach you; no, nor to reprove you—far from it—but to quicken you, that you may be quite absolute and unreserved in your surrender of this dear child to the Lord. 'Though he' should 'slay' the child; though he should slay you; still resolve—'Yet will I trust in him.' I have a cheerful hope the Lord will be 'entreated:' and I would have *you* hope in his mercy. Assure yourself I shall not cease to pray for his life; but,

\* See November 4, 1749.

with all due resignation. Hath God, who fills heaven and earth, who 'inhabiteth eternity,' made over himself to you, to be your 'portion,' to be your God in covenant. You cannot, then withhold any thing from him. Is he your God? That is enough! 'He will guide you by his counsel, and afterward receive you to glory.' In the mean time, he will cause 'all things to work together for your good.' To his blessing I commend you, who am your sympathizing parent,

J. W.

HIS WIFE'S DEATH.

*Friday, December 7, 1750.*—My dear wife was all the summer in a bad state of health. I took her to Bath, where I attended her three weeks; but her recovering some strength seemed to be remarkably owing to her journey home. At her desire, I set out on the south journey in October: "For," says she, "I apprehend this will be a lingering illness, and probably I may want your company more during the journey after Christmas than this." I received several favourable letters, but she departed November 28,\* and the awful event was hid from me till the 4th instant, when a special messenger, Mr. B. Lea, met me at Bengworth, with whom I hastened home to pay the last sad office of love. From the grave we went directly to the meeting-house, where her funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Fawcett, on words of her own choosing, which she had often comfortably adopted;—"I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." Mr. Fawcett had been asking her some questions relating to the state and temper of her mind, and she let him know—"The tempter was restrained! that she had a cheerful, stedfast hope in Christ, and had not a doubt." She had enjoyed a more comfortable state of mind in general the last two years, than perhaps any other two years of her life. In my journey, October, 1748, she told me in one of her letters—"After you were gone, Hetty being married, and

\* Aged sixty-one.

Sally gone to be with her for a time, I seemed to myself as one forlorn, bereft of all earthly friends. Upon this I was very pensive: but, recollecting myself, I retired to my closet, and tried if I could not find an all-sufficient Friend there: the Lord was pleased to 'lift up the light of his countenance upon me,' and to afford me such sweet tokens of his presence, that my soul rejoiced 'in the God of my salvation.' 'I had all' things 'and abounded, I was full,' and hardly missed your company." Before that, she sometimes had her liftings up, and at others her castings down; but, from that time, I think her hopes constantly prevailed. Also, she was often complaining to me, that although she had many waking hours every night, she could not get her mind to engage on spiritual and divine subjects. Afterward, it was otherwise in this respect, and many a morning, at my first awaking, she hath told me, with an air of devotion and thankfulness, how sweet her waking hours had been to her; and, hath related to me some particular passages of scripture which had been impressed on her mind, and the breathings excited and drawn out thereby; and sometimes she hath mentioned her particular evidences and tokens of the Divine favour. As her sickness, pains, and weakness increased, so did her patience and resignation to the will of God. Very remarkable were her humility and thankfulness for the care taken of her. When I proposed and urged her going to Bath, she thought herself not worthy so much cost and pains, and expressed great thankfulness for every thing that was done for her. Under the discipline of the rod, she ripened apace for a better world. Her 'path,' like that 'of the just,' shone 'more and more unto the perfect day.' But, it still hangs heavy on my spirits that I should be absent from her, when her dissolution approached. Blessed be God, who did not then hide himself from her, but gave her living comforts in her dying moments. Farewell, thou dearest partner of my heart. Lord, hasten the time, when 'I shall go to her,' since 'she shall not return to me!'

## GOD, HIS REFUGE IN AFFLICTION.

*To the Rev. Thomas Randall.\**

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, December 26, 1750.

I was favoured with yours of the 15th past, at London, where I arrived in health and safety the 24th, having had rich and large experience of His preserving care, who numbers the hairs of our heads, and in whose 'hand' our 'times are.' I condole with you and your spouse, on the unexpected disaster which so suddenly dashed your blooming hopes. But all things are of God; and, to his hand you do wisely to refer all. You know 'all things work together for good to them that love him.' I shall be glad, nevertheless, to hear, by your next, that he is turning the captivity of Mrs. Randall; and for this, you may be assured, I have been 'striving with you in my prayers to God for you.'

You will expect me to say something of my own affairs. Alas! I may say with Job—'The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.' I feel, in a much greater degree than ever before, the poignancy of those lines in Dr. Young's 'Night Thoughts:—

" Thought! busy thought! too busy for my peace,  
 Strays, wretched rover! o'er the pleasing past,  
 In quest of wretchedness, perversely strays,  
 And finds all desert how, and meets the ghosts  
 Of my departed joys, a num'rous train.  
 I rue the riches of my former state.  
 Sweet comfort's blasted clusters make me sigh.  
 I tremble at the blessings, once so dear,  
 And every pleasure pains me to the heart."

My dear Phebe, whose memory will be always dear to me, took her flight on the evening of November 28; but the thing was entirely hid from me till the evening of December 4. It was not only with her full consent, but partly at her desire, that I left her to undertake my late long journey. The first three accounts I had by post of her

\* Late of Stirling. He died July 25, 1780, aged 70.

health, were all encouraging; the fourth not so; and the fifth very encouraging again; the sixth, which found me at London, was the most discouraging of all: yet did I not from that gather any apprehension that her end was near. My children sent a person to meet me more than twenty miles from home; and when I saw him at the Inn, from which he called to me, I had no suspicion, or misgiving thought, what might occasion him to be there. When I asked him---“How does my wife do?” he cheerfully replied---“When I saw her last, she was much as when you left her.” This looked pretty well: but when I inquired farther---“When did you see her? When did you come from home?” and found he was beginning to answer me in a studied, formal, circumlocutory way, then my heart began to throb.

This, beyond all dispute, is the heaviest stroke I ever felt, and oft-times heavier by night than by day: for when I say---‘My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint,’ alas! it renews my sorrows; it is strowed with pricking thorns, and furnishes gloomy ideas. I have often had limbs of myself broken off and torn away from me, and felt the throbbings of a father’s heart, and was still solaced and cheered by the presence and conversation of my other self: but now that my other self is divided, is separated from me, is torn away from my embraces, to whom shall I flee for consolation? Indeed, the burial service furnishes a pertinent answer:---“Of whom shall we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?” What should I do now, if I had not a God to go to? I would not part with the hope I have of an interest in his covenant love, for all our king’s dominions. I pity poor wretches, who amidst all their pomp and luxury, acknowledge no God, or ‘whose God is their belly,’ their wealth, or their honour: therefore, I have great reason to bless a ‘taking,’ as well as a ‘giving’ God. He taught me, fifteen months ago, more than ever before, ‘in every thing to give thanks.’ I have, since that, been longer and more frequently in a

praising frame, than in any other fifteen months of my life. This, I think, I have found to contribute not a little to give me a sense of my obligations to him, and to lay me humbly and submissively at his feet. I will praise him who did not take her away whilst my children were young, and more dependant on her maternal care. I will praise him who crowned the thirty-one years of our marriage-union, as Mr. Philip Henry observes concerning his own, with more than thirty-one thousand mercies. I will praise him, that, through the whole, and particularly in her last long illness, she wanted no assistance, no comfort, no convenience of life, (except my presence with her at last), which money could buy, or Christian friendship afford. I will praise him for the growing hope she had of eternal life, and the cheering prospect of a blissful immortality;—that she was not afraid to die, but had a complete victory over the great enemy of nature; for she knew whom she had believed, as she had often expressed during her weakness and particularly the day of her departure, when Mr. Fawcett, just before he kneeled down by her bedside, proposed some questions to her, to all which she answered cheerfully and satisfactorily: this was a direction to him to choose that passage for the subject of her funeral sermon:—‘ For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.’ Above all, I will praise and bless ‘ the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten again’ unworthy me ‘ unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.’ I will praise him that I ‘ sorrow not’ as one that hath ‘ no hope,’ but can pursue her departed spirit, trace its wondrous way, and realize to myself her unseen, unknown blessedness and glory, in the confidence of faith that I shall not only follow, but overtake her ‘ who through faith and patience, doth now inherit the promises:’ ‘ This is all my salvation, and all my desire.’ Indeed, I very sensibly adopt these lines of Dr. Young:—

“ I lov'd her much, but now I love her more :  
 Like birds, whose beauties languish, half conceal'd,  
 Till mounted on the wing, their glossy plumes,  
 Expanded, shine with azure, green, and gold :  
 How blessings brighten as they take their flight ! ”

May a gracious God restore Mrs. Randall, and spare you long to be mutual blessings. In the mean time, may your labours in the Gospel be crowned with signal success.

I am not without hopes, another soul in my family is awakened ; one who has been a giddy, careless youth, till last Lord's-day but one : then the marble began to weep under the morning sermon, but wept more plentifully in the afternoon : and I am not without hopes that the impression abides. God grant he may not lose his sense of religion in these days of idleness and vanity. You will scarcely expect from me the usual compliments of this season. May your heart and mind, and Mrs. Randall's, more and more rejoice, that Christ is born indeed, by this lively pledge—that *our* souls are 'born again.' May 'he that ministereth seed to the sower,' 'multiply' and fructify every handful of seed you sow, 'and increase the fruits of your righteousness.' Dear Sir, your always rejoicing, though, at this time sorrowful friend and servant, J. W.

MOTIVES FOR THANKFULNESS.

*To the Same*

REV. SIR,

Kidderminster, January 19, 1751.

Many kind letters of condolence, since it pleased our heavenly Father to blast the sweetest, the dearest of all my earthly comforts, I have been favoured with ; and none of them, either from minister or Christian friend, hath been made more instructive, more consolatory, or conveyed more quieting, silencing considerations to my heart, than yours of the 4th instant. I thank you for it : It was a word in season : Oh ! that I may more especially and more warmly praise Him who gave it to you. Yesterday, indeed, I received one from the Rev. R. Darracott ; who, having seen a letter or two I sent lately to my brother

Pearsall, instead of condoling, congratulates me, not because God hath taken away the desire of my eyes; but, because "God gave you," as he expresses himself, "such an excellent wife, and made your lives so comfortable for so many years; that, he gave her such comfort in death, and hopes beyond it; and, that you are still rejoicing behind; rejoicing in the presence of God in your own soul, and in the work of God in your family." He then prays I may go on thus to rejoice, and asks—"What should damp your joy? Hath God made, not only with you, but yours, 'an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure,' and is not this all your salvation, and all your joy? Most surely it is."

I never received more satisfaction in my own mind, with regard to the departure of my dearest from me, than I did this morning, as I was walking in the church-yard, where I love to take a turn every day, sometimes more than once, and often cast an eye towards her grave: Not only had I a joyful hope, as I have all along had, that her spirit is made perfect, and is now an associate of blessed saints and angels, but, 'or ever I was aware,' I felt somewhat of a ravishing sense of her present blissful employment and rapturous joy. It seemed to be some sweet, though transient, participation of her blessedness. I came home more than satisfied with the Divine, though mournful dispensation; I came home rejoicing, assured that 'he hath done all things well.' Indeed, I have had full satisfaction all along, that the wisdom of God, and even his goodness too, have had a bright display in this dispensation. I saw from month to month, the two last years of her life more especially, her evidences and her hopes brightening, and every grace ripening for glory. My brother Pearsall took particular notice to me, when he was with us at Bath, how much riper she now seemed for heaven than when he was at Kidderminster the year before: and he took notice how much she was improved in the Divine life since his last visit. I have been very sensible that she enjoyed a more comfortable frame in general the last two years, than in any other two

years of our acquaintance. I know not whether it might not be dated from October 3, 1748, the evening of that day when I set out on my south circuit. Somewhere I received a letter from her that journey, in which she told me—that in the twilight, reflecting that Hetty was married, and gone to the Isle of Wight, and she might not see her again, she knew not when; Sally being gone to be with her sister for many months; and now her husband gone from her for six weeks; she seemed to herself as one forlorn, bereft of all her dearest earthly friends. Upon this she grew very pensive: but, after awhile, reflecting how unprofitable it is to indulge such gloomy apprehensions, she resolved to go into her ‘closet, and shut the door,’ and try if she could not find an all-sufficient friend there. She did so; and the Lord was pleased to lift upon her the light of his countenance, and to afford her such sweet tokens of his presence, that her soul could ‘rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of her salvation.’ The sweet savour thereof seemed to abide upon her mind when she wrote, some weeks after, so that she could tell me she had all things and was full, and had scarcely missed our company since.—We see, in this instance, a specimen of the Lord’s usual way of comforting his children. He first empties them of the creature, before he fills them with himself. The heart is not fit to be filled with Divine consolations, till creature-streams run low; nor, will it so entirely lean on Christ, till creature-props are taken away. This, I would apply to myself in present circumstances. Oh! may my soul now, and henceforward, go out more freely, more fully to her Beloved. May Jesus always afford me a bosom to lean upon. Blessed be his name, I will bear witness for him, he is a *faithful* God. I was taking some pains a week ago, to look into the meaning of *that* epithet, as applied to God and Christ, and to the word of God. I was led into it while studying that necessary qualification of a bishop—‘One that holdeth fast the *faithful word*.’ I at once saw, that it must in that passage be taken in a passive sense, viz. a gospel which may be depended upon, ‘sound doctrine,’ a ‘form of sound

words,' which will not disappoint them who practically believe it. And, it did me good to consider, that with respect to God, it must be taken as well in a passive as in an active sense, a God absolutely to be depended on. But this is a digression.—Whatever afflictions my dearest at any time laboured under, she could look with a steady faith and hope to the joyful issue of them. Before my October journey, she was oft complaining to me in a morning, that whereas she had many wakeful hours in the night, she could not get her mind to engage closely, or with a desirable coherence, in meditating on divine subjects: She would say, she could make little or nothing of meditation or prayer when in bed. Afterward it was much otherwise.—Once or twice, when I have accidentally been awake in the night, and she has thought me still asleep, I have heard her, with a whispering, breathing out her soul to Him who is not dull of hearing by night or by day. And my youngest daughter, who used to lie with her in my absence, tells me to-day, that she hath several times heard her in like manner. It was evident, through the many months, I think about seven or eight, that her health was in a declining state, her affections were more and more loosened from the world; and as her sickness and pains, and weakness increased, so did her patience and resignation to the will of God.—But it still hangs heavy upon my spirits, that I should have been absent from her when her dissolution approached.—I have the pleasure of telling you, the arrow of conviction sticks fast in my apprentice's heart.\* A carnal girl, who saw the change, but knew not the cause, cried out lately—"What's come to Dick of late, he is so civil and silent!" 'Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.' I was jealous how he would stand the temptations of the holidays; but they were nothing to him. He spent all his evenings in his chamber, and does still. Blessed be God, I scarcely knew any thing that hath contributed so much to my comfort and joy under my family affliction. Yours, &c.

J. W.

\* See page 322.

## FRIENDLY CONDOLENCE.

*To the Same.*

VERY DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, March 1, 1751.

It grieved me much for your sake, and that of your poor spouse, that those 'ministering spirits' who are 'sent forth to minister' to the 'heirs of salvation,' had it not particularly in charge concerning her, so to keep her in all her ways, that neither her tender foot, nor the chair she rode in, might be 'dashed against a stone.' But what shall we say? Was it not permitted, appointed, by Him who 'doth all things well' and wisely?

"Cease then, nor order imperfection name;  
 Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.  
 Know thy own point :—  
 Submit—in this, or any other sphere,  
 Secure, to be as blest as thou canst bear.  
 All nature is but art, unknown to thee;  
 All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;  
 All discord, harmony, not understood;  
 All partial evil, universal good:  
 And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,  
 One truth is clear—Whatever is, is right."

But, I rejoice to see you have a better, more Christian view of this matter, than ever Pope appears to me to have had. 'In their affliction,' says our Father, 'they will seek me early:' and his ways are not like the ways of the fathers of our flesh, who are soon tired with their children's importunity: he loves to be sought early, earnestly, importunately: he loves it because he loves us, and knows it is always best with us when we lie lowest before him, and keep nearest to him. Again, how difficult is it to use, and go on in the use of well approved means, with entire dependence on the great Efficient! Or, if we set out right, with our eye fixed entirely upon him, how apt are we to grow weary of looking up! Our Father will have honour from his own children, and he knows how to get it. Neither, are we apt to be thankful enough for mercies begun; but, he will teach us in 'every thing,' yea, under the greatest disappointments, to 'give thanks.' He tried Job thoroughly, and we must all be tried according to our

measure, whether we can trust in him, where we cannot trace him; and love him even when he frowns, or seems to frown upon us. I have been frequently recommending your case to his tender compassion, and hope you will quickly let me know, that he who hath prepared our hearts to pray, hath also inclined his ear to hear.

It does my heart good every day to see how my apprentice goes on; and how diligently he embraces every week-day opportunity, and what a thorough change is in his temper and conduct. He that was once unprofitable, is now profitable both to his pastor and to me. How good has God been in timing this his gracious visitation! Yea, I have reason to think, that ‘out of the eater came forth meat:’ that the removal of my dear partner, together with the many lectures of mortality it drew after it, and prayers accommodated thereto, were the first means of mollifying the marble and preparing, it to weep under that rousing, awakening word, which so exactly coincided therewith. Oh! what consolation has this afforded me. How good hath God been to me! What reason have I still to trust and praise him, even under the severest of his dispensations! It is true, He hath taken away the dearest of all my earthly comforts, and I could not but mourn such a loss:—he expected me to mourn. He would not have been so well pleased to see me unconcerned, whilst his hand was heavy upon me: but I have not ‘sorrowed’ as one without ‘hope:’ and, “why should the children of” such “a King go mourning all their days?” He calls us to rejoice more than to mourn—to ‘rejoice in the Lord alway, and again’ to ‘rejoice.’ Yours, &c. J. W.

PROSPERITY IN TRADE.

*Saturday Night, April 13, 1751.* We have had flowing prosperity in trade. Were my wife now alive, I should tell her, with an air of pleasure, if not thankfulness, as I formerly have on like occasions, of the bounty of Providence to us: but, what is this, were it ten times more than it is, to her now? She used to be very little moved, or elevated, by instances of remarkable prosperity while here.

What is buying and selling, and getting gain to her now? They are now nothing to her, nothing at all 'to the spirits of just men' and women 'made perfect.' And, oh! how near do I stand to the verge of eternity. How soon may my soul be launched into that boundless ocean; and then, what will all these things be to me! O my soul, bless and adore, love and praise the bountiful Author of all thy mercies; but, 'use this world' which thou must shortly leave, 'as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away.' My soul, 'set thy affections on things above,' things durable, substantial, and satisfactory. If my 'treasure' be there, 'there' let my 'heart be also.'

HIS DAUGHTER SARAH'S MARRIAGE.

*Lord's-day, September 29, 1751.*—Mr. Fawcett has been preaching a farewell-sermon to my daughter Sarah, who with her husband will leave this place to-morrow for their residence in London. From the text—'If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence,' the preacher stated that the special presence of God, of God the Father, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, was there intended; and we may know we have it, if it produce in us a child-like temper and behaviour towards God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fruits of the Spirit. This Divine presence is peculiarly desirable when difficult and important duties are to be performed; great afflictions to be endured; ensnaring comforts to be enjoyed; when entering on new stations and relations, or places of abode; and when removing from this world to another. I hope it was with the Divine approbation that I gave my daughter in marriage to Mr. Winter, at Worcester, the 12th instant. I had earnestly sought direction from God, but when Mr. Winter came down we called friends together, and set time apart, to 'seek the Lord,' and afterward had the almost unanimously concurring approbation of friends and relations. My brother R. Pearsall in particular, about nine weeks ago, wrote thus—"I hope she and you will have reason to conclude, with comfort to yourselves, that the matter is of the Lord, and designed for her improvement

in goodness, by the multiplication of the means of grace. I trust Mr. Winter will be a good husband, as he is a truly worthy and very valuable man, and I rejoice in the prospect of my niece's agreeable settlement."\*

THE RELIGIOUS TRADESMAN.

*To Mr. Peter Bunnell.†*

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, September 30, 1751.

I rejoice to hear of your prosperity. I trust God is building you a house. May his 'candle shine on your head?' May the 'secret of God be upon your tabernacle?' 'I wish, above all things, that your soul may prosper and be in health.' An apostle 'beseeches' his friends to suffer the word of exhortation,' and I now beseech you to suffer a word of *caution*. I well remember when it was with me as it is now with you in some respects. I had a wife whom I dearly loved, delightful children, and a prosperous trade. These most desirable enjoyments proved a snare to me. Riches increased, and the love of riches increased as fast. I made an idol of that which should have enlarged my heart in gratitude to the bountiful Giver; and, by my perverseness, constrained him, as it were out of love to my soul, to deprive me of that which might otherwise have destroyed me. I had been sensible how inordinately 'my

\* The Rev. Richard Winter, B. D. was, for a time, co-pastor with the celebrated Rev. Thomas Bradbury, at the Meeting in New-court, Carey Street. Mr. B. dying in September, 1759, Mr. W. remained pastor the long period of forty years, until his own death, March 29, 1799, aged 79. Mr. Winter had a son who discovered a gaiety of disposition that excited concern in his venerable parent; but his last illness was sanctified, and at the age of 22 years, 1784, and near the close of his apprenticeship, he finished his course with joy. The father preached the son's funeral sermon, from the expressive words—'This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' The discourse has been much admired, and made useful. Mr. Winter had, also, two daughters, both of whom were ornaments to their sex. Martha, first wife of the Rev. Frederick Hamilton, now of Brighton, died November 18, 1805. That Lady long survived her sister Sarah, who died in February, 1782, and who had married Samuel, a son of the Rev. Stephen Addington, D. D. formerly minister at Miles's Lane, Cannon Street. A memoir of Mr. Winter is printed in the Evangelical Magazine for September, 1799. It is from the same pen as the memoirs alluded to in the notes to July 11, 1738, and December 14, 1751.

† See April 9, 1749. He died September, 28, 1796, aged 78.

heart went after covetousness,' and that my spiritual interests were in a declining state; yea, I prayed against it often, and as I thought strove against it, yet, still it prevailed, till it pleased God in great mercy to cast me into deep adversity, and thereby give me a sensible conviction what a poor *portion* money is, and how unfit a thing for me to set my heart upon. Yet adversity itself would not have wrought so effectually upon my heart, if God had not at the same time given me a taste of his love, and by that specimen convinced me that he himself is an infinitely better 'portion.' Now, give me leave to ask you, at least let me advise and persuade you to ask yourself—How do matters stand betwixt God and your soul, on the one hand; and betwixt the world and your soul, on the other? Excuse my freedom; I have nothing in view but your good. Whose interest is uppermost in your heart? What are your first thoughts in a morning, and your last thoughts at night usually fixed upon? Are your first thoughts of God? Do you consecrate the earliest hour to reading, meditation, and prayer? Can you leave your bed the earlier, that you may redeem time to converse with Christ? How can you say you love him, if you suffer the world to rival him in your heart and affection;—if you cannot sometimes 'watch with' him 'one hour?' Can you say with *divine* Herbert—

" I cannot ope' mine eyes  
But thou art ready there to catch  
My morning-soul and sacrifice:  
Then we must needs for that day make a match?"

Or, are you pleasing yourself, early and late with thinking, how much you shall gain by this commodity, and how much by that? Just so it was with me: but, if this be the case with you, expect to smart for it, as I did. My dear and honoured father generally devoted the first hour and a half, or sometimes two hours, to religion: and I would advise every tradesman who fears God, who prizes communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, constantly to devote the first hour, or half hour, at least to religious exercises. The soul must have its meals and repasts, as well as the body,

or it will certainly be in a languishing state. I do not much fear but you will take well this friendly caution and counsel. The love of the world is downright idolatry. We cry out against the Jews for selling 'the Lord of glory' for money; but every covetous wordling plays the same game over again, and 'crucifies him afresh:' but I hope 'better things of you and things that accompany salvation.' Believe me to be, with great respect, dear sir, your cordial friend and humble servant,

J. W.

FAITH AND JOY DISCUSSED: AND THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY  
IN BOTH.

*To his Daughter Kirkpatrick.\**

MY DEAR CHILD,

Kidderminster, October 9, 1751.

I was reading lately in Mr. Robert Bolton's Directions for a comfortable walking with God, and I met with this remarkable passage—"As certainly as he that hath a corporal eye, knoweth that he sees, so certainly, he that is illuminated with the light of faith, knows that he believes." This is an approved author, and recommended by Mr. Baxter. Now let me ask—Do you certainly know that you do by faith behold our blessed Redeemer lifted up, as the brazen serpent, for the everlasting cure of your wounded conscience, and rest on him? If not, is not your faith defective? The grace of faith is as a bright lamp in the soul; and where a lamp burns it not only discovers other things, but is itself discoverable by its own light. The glorious splendour of the heavenly jewel cannot but shew itself, and shine clearly to the heart in which it is set. The apostle John says—"This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." If you rely on this promise, then do you believe that you have eternal life; but if you question your *own interest* in it, then it is plain you doubt rather than believe the promise. There may be, indeed, and certainly is, 'the faith of God's elect,' where there is not always an assurance, or clear evidence of it; just as there is day though the sun may be under a cloud. It is highly desirable, however, and is the most happy thing

\* She died September 23, 1763, aged 39.

in the world, to have the heavenly lamp lucid. The sun often shines brightest after a shower; so does faith after penitent tears. Would Christians believe the prophets, and the apostles, would they believe Christ himself, and not undervalue God's infinite mercy, but would conceive aright of the bottomless depth of his free love, who is ever most compassionate to a truly broken and contrite heart, then might they, even in their lowest state, exercise the faith of assurance. This species of faith is the more desirable, because without it we cannot, as we ought, put in practice one of God's sweetest commands, frequently and earnestly charged upon us—'Rejoice in the Lord,' yea 'rejoice evermore!' The apostle seems to make it a necessary qualification to being a true Christian, when he says—'We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus.' God would have his people be a joyful people. The psalmist says—'Let the saints be joyful in glory?' Why then do we not cultivate this sacred joy. And yet it cannot be done unless we *know* the Lord to be our Lord: Paul says—'I know whom I have believed.' Let that be our first inquiry; and if we *know* God, it is our privilege to '*rejoice*' in him; therefore as '*praise is comely for the upright,*' the righteous but humble person should rouse, and expostulate as the psalmist did—'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.' Little does a vain world think what a joyful life a holy life is; and the more holy the more joyful.

October 11. That I may converse with God, with my own soul, and with you, my child, I have again retired. I love solitude best. I gain most when alone. Our blessed Saviour in his prayer for the apostles says—'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' I rejoice in this evidence of my not being of the world---that I find more and more I cannot relish the conversation of the men of the world, 'who mind earthly things,' and who can converse about nothing but the things of the world:---

“ Their hope and portion lies below ;  
 'Tis all the happiness they know,  
 'Tis all they seek.”—

WATTS.

Blessed be God I do know a better, a higher happiness : and shall I not seek it? I do believe, yea, I know ‘ there remaineth a rest for the people of God,’ and I cannot but seek that rest! I know that ‘ here’ I have ‘ no continuing city,’ and am seeking ‘ one to come;’ but, alas! far too feebly, far too inconstantly! Your dear mother is gone; and *I* am going; but how slowly am I ripening. Fain would I have *you* mend your pace, and both of us to put more spirit and life into our prayers. Surely, I am not sufficiently thankful for the bounties of Heaven, nor sensible enough of my own great unworthiness of them. Oh! for a more thankful sense of my daily mercies; for a more humbling, self-emptying sense of my unworthiness of the least of Heaven’s bounties: then should I regard them as obligations to fruitfulness in every good work: as helps, and not hindrances of my faith, my hope, love, obedience, my humility, and my holy joy in the Lord!

I trust my dear child, our prayers for each other ascend daily before the throne. May they be perfumed with the incense of a better sacrifice. Next to my own happiness, nothing lies nearer my heart than that of all my children, but which of them lies nearest, cannot be discovered by their and your affectionate father,

J. W.

THE APOSTLES' CREED PRACTICALLY APPLIED.

*To his Son-in-law Mr. Josiah Hanbury.*

DEAR SIR,

Bristol, October 17, 1751.

A blameable modesty often restrains friends from shewing themselves so friendly as otherwise they would do. Nature has knit my heart to your wife, and as marriage hath made you one with her, you share with her in my love and parental concern. Allow me, therefore, now to manifest my regard for you in the most free manner. I doubt not you will do well for the present world; I am chiefly solicitous for your welfare as it relates to the future eternal world. ‘ One thing is needful;’ have you made that

your choice? If so, your spiritual case will bear the necessary duty of self-examination; the neglect of which is no good sign. A train of thought occurred to me two nights ago, in my retirement, and I then resolved to propose the substance of it to your serious consideration. I expect you will find what I am about to offer entirely new; let me entreat you with the deepest seriousness, as in the presence of God, to apply it closely to your conscience.

You have often repeated the Belief, or what is called The Apostles' Creed: Did you ever do it *practically*? I mean thus:—"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." You cannot practically say this, unless you believingly apply it to yourself. If you do believe in God as your Father, it is because 'the spirit itself beareth witness' with your spirit, and teaches you to go to him as your Father: so that in all your wants, fears, and perplexities, you approach him with the same trust and dutiful regard, as a child does to his earthly father, for protection, counsel, and assistance, in all cases of difficulty or distress. If you do not act thus, you may utter the words, indeed, and yet not believe what they are intended to convey. Again;—"I believe" "in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord." How can any person say this unless 'Christ be formed' in him? You do not, cannot believe in him without a disposition of mind, suitable to the great end for which he came into the world; and unless the same 'mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' You may "believe" that he "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;" but not as suffering for your sins, unless that belief prove the means of your mortifying your lusts and corruptions. If, therefore, you believe aright in a *dying* Saviour, you have like him an utter hatred of sin. You may also, pronounce the words—"he rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven:" but you do not believe in a *risen* Saviour, in a proper manner, unless you find that Power which raised him quicken your heart, and raise you to heavenly-mindedness. You believe not in an ascended Saviour,

unless you ascend with him and as the apostle saith---‘ sit with him in heavenly places.’ You will not be much cast down with any trouble or disappointment, if you believe that Christ our head is in heaven, and that you are vitally united to him, as one of his members; but if you be not so united to him, you do but talk of your ascended Saviour, without believing in him as such: ‘ If you be risen with Christ,’ saith the apostle, ‘ seek those things which are above.’ By believing in him in a right manner, you will not only seek, but savour of things that are spiritual. You “believe the forgiveness of sins:” how can you say this aright unless you really believe your own sins to be forgiven? If they be, you certainly love him above all, who hath forgiven them: and consequently, you have ‘ joy and peace in believing:’ for they who are ‘ justified by faith’ ‘ have peace with God,’ yea, and ‘ rejoice in hope of the glory of God.’ ‘ Be of good cheer,’ saith our Saviour, ‘ thy sins be forgiven thee;’ therefore, if you believe that your sins be forgiven, you will be of good cheer; holy love and gratitude will be excited in you. You “believe” “the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting:” what effect hath this upon you? Are you afraid to die? If so, it argues, not that you believe, but that you doubt what you say you believe! The contrary to this cannot fail to infuse a holy courage. You now lie down at night, in the hope of rising in the morning; but you would lie down unwillingly, if you expected never to rise any more: yet if you truly believe that your body will rise again to life everlasting, you need not fear to have it deposited in the grave. In like manner, if you believe that Christ will “ come to judge the quick and the dead,” will it not have a powerful effect on your life and conversation? If you be forgetful, from day to day, that for every thing you must render an account; if you be making ‘ provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;’ if you do not to all men, ‘ as you would that men should do to you;’ if your mind be wholly or chiefly occupied about the concerns of the body and the present life, and but little about the soul and life eternal—how can you be

said to believe in a future judgment? Such interesting points of belief as these, will have a powerful efficacy on our minds and practices, if we be but sincere in them: therefore, we may conclude, that if we feel not such an efficacy, we are not *practical* believers. Alas! how few are there who do not lie to God when they repeat the apostles' creed.

I might have descanted more largely, had time and paper sufficed; but now let me entreat you, as you would find peace to your soul, give yourself no rest till, in the confidence of faith, you can give your full assent to every one of the foregoing points. 'My heart's desire and prayer' for you is that you 'might be saved,' and in order to it, assure yourself of the best assistance in the power of, dear sir, your affectionate father,

J. W.

HIS PROSPECT OF A SECOND MARRIAGE.

*To his Daughter Hanbury.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Taunton, October 26, 1751.

I hope my love to my dear echildren, who have all been always strictly dutiful to me, will never abate. I love you for my own sake: I love you for your mother's sake, as so many pledges of that endeared, mutual affection which death alone could dissolve, but the remembrance of which will be always dear and refreshing to me: and I desire to love you most of all for the lineaments I joyfully behold of your heavenly Father's image upon each of you. May I have the increasing joy to see my children, and their dear companions for life, walking in the truth! And oh! how should I love our good God, our indulgent common Parent, for the comfortable circumstances in which you are all placed. I am amazed, and desire to be abased even to the dust, under a sense of my own great unworthiness, when I consider how large his bounties are to me and mine! May he have all the praise who is the kind Dispenser of these mercies, and may our hearts be lifted up only in the ways of God, and in praise to him. It was, indeed, an awful, melancholy breach he was pleased to make upon us all, and upon myself in particular, eleven

months ago : but it was he who first 'gave' whom he 'hath taken away;' nor did he take her from us till he had made her completely ripe and ready for her heavenly Bridegroom. Nothing is wanting to complete what felicity earth can afford me, but to have that breach made up in such a manner as may be most agreeable to my dear children. I know it is what *you* in particular have advised and tenderly enforced—that I would seek out a proper companion. I have been incessantly looking up to Him, from whom alone 'a prudent wife is,' and now I have a prospect of such a one, and I cannot conceal from you some circumstances relating thereto. Whilst Mr. Darracott was with us, he came to me one day, and Mr. Fawcett with him, on purpose to recommend to me a Mrs. Biseck, of Biddeford; a maiden lady; and, indeed, when I heard her excellent character, I thought it a very great honour done me to hear from the same friend, that he thought me the most suitable person for her. After maturely weighing the affair, and looking up, I commenced a correspondence with Mr. D. on the subject, and he hath introduced the affair to the lady, and matters are so arranged that I am to have an interview on Tuesday next : as this will reach you on Monday evening, I entreat your earnest intercessions for direction. The Lord bless and keep you, my dear, 'and cause his face to shine upon you:' so prays your affectionate father,

J. W.

## COUNSEL AND COMFORT TO THE AFFLICTED.

*To Miss Hannah Green.\**

MY DEAR NIECE,

December 14, 1751.

I cannot express what I have felt for you. The heavy tidings greatly surprised and grieved me. What then must

\* This lady was the younger daughter of Mr. Nathaniel Green, of Kidderminster. Her mother, the first wife of Mr. G. was the sister whose death Mr. Williams so affectionately recorded in the article dated August 6, 1738. From about the age of twenty Miss G. resided in Bromsgrove, under the care of her aunt Watson, another sister of Mr. W. In that town, the Rev. John Freeland became pastor of a new Independent church, about the year 1740; and subsequently, being impressed with the good sense and unaffected seriousness of Miss G. made proposals of marriage to her; but, having removed to London, in 1747,

your grief be! How deep your wound! How incurable! Do I set it bleeding afresh? That thought adds to my grief. I would not add affliction to the afflicted: but—how can it be avoided? Indeed, a more pertinent question is—how can it be healed; or, at least, the smart thereof assuaged? None but the Father of spirits, the great Physician, your covenant God, can do this: He can do it; and he will do it in his own time and way: but, is there nothing to be done on your part? I doubt not you have had better comforters; better advisers: I trust before this can arrive, you have in a good measure learned to practise the best advice I can give you: yet, let me offer my advice, which, I am very sensible, it is much easier to give than take.—Examples speak louder than words. Remember Aaron:—when he saw two sons cut off by a sudden stroke; yet, because it was the Lord's hand, 'Aaron held his peace.' Remember Eli:—when his two sons were to be cut off in a day, and in wrath, as a consequence of a Divine threatening for their sins; yet, because it was the Lord, he patiently submits to the sentence. Above all, 'consider the Apostle and High Priest of our

to preside over the Scots' church now of Crown-court, his health quickly declined; and he returned to Bromsgrove for the benefit of the air: death, however speedily ensued, and prevented the intended union. This event gave occasion for the above excellent and consolatory letter. In 1754, Miss G. married Mr. Henry Dowler, of Bromsgrove; a gentleman of considerable property, uncommon sweetness of temper, and genuine piety. In a few days Mr. Williams addressed to them the valuable letters dated January 17 and 18, 1754: but their union proved of short duration, for Mr. D. died in 1762, aged 38. Three or four years after, Mr. Benjamin Humphrys, of the same town, and whose first wife was sister of Mr. D. having been left a widower, with four small children, formed a new connexion, with Mrs. D. which lasted nearly twenty-three years, when Mr. H. died, April 10, 1789. "An account of *his* exemplary life and triumphant death," is given in a sermon preached at Bromsgrove, April 19, by his son, the Rev. John Humphrys (see the note to July 11, 1738; and to September 29, 1751), who was also called to the melancholy duty of recording the death of his highly-revered mother-in-law, whose life terminated December 7, 1802, aged 87. Her memoir was originally printed in the 'Theological Magazine' for June 1803; but it possesses such general and permanent interest, that soon after, the Rev. G. Jerment transferred it into his *additional volume* of "Memoirs of eminently pious Women, who were ornaments to their sex, blessings to their country, and edifying examples to the church and world: by Thomas Gibbons, D. D."

profession, Christ Jesus,' who, 'though he were a son yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered.' Now, in the season of your sore trial, more especially 'look unto Jesus,' not only as your example, but as your helper, 'who, in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' When it is said—*He is able*, more is implied than expressed: it certainly means, he is as willing to help, as he is able. Many considerations might be suggested, tending to bring your mind to entire resignation; some, taken from the unerring providence of God; others, from his unchangeable decrees. I might point out a variety of circumstances, which, had they been permitted, would have greatly aggravated the stroke. I might instance to you trials far more grievous, which others have borne, and are now bearing: but the best advice I can recommend, as the nearest and surest way to comfort, is, as I before said, to—'look unto Jesus.' Through him 'direct your prayer, and look up.' 'Trust in him with all your heart.' Cast yourself upon his all-sufficiency. Plead your relation to a covenant God in Christ, and in effect say—"I am thine, Lord save me. I am thine, Lord support and comfort me. I am thine, Lord, sanctify this awful stroke." Heaven is witness to my earnest cries for you, and tender sympathy with you. Yours, &c. J. W.

## HIS SECOND MARRIAGE.

*January 25, 1752.*—Four months ago I was observing, that my children are all married, and, through the blessed hand of an indulgent Providence, well provided for; that through the Divine bounty and goodness, I enjoy easy circumstances, and flowing prosperity, without much worldly encumbrance; that my health seems firm, nor do my spirits flag, or fail of their wonted alacrity; and that a suitable companion seems more desirable to me than a single state. I *then* wanted to know what the mind of the Lord was, willing either to continue a widower, or to marry again, 'only in the Lord,' which he should please to choose for me. *Now*, the Lord hath carried me through a won-

derful and delightful scene, which I would not quickly forget. He hath given me a most agreeable wife, for which I desire daily to bless his Name. Oh! may we be mutual helpers of each other's holiness, faith, hope, love, and joy in the Lord. I was, as I thought, at a point whether to marry again or not, and resigned to the Divine will; but importunate in prayer, that if I were to marry again, God would give me one of his dear children, and he hath indeed granted my request. Blessed be his Name, who inclined Mr. Darracott to mention her to me, and whose providence so nicely adjusted every circumstance of my journey to Biddeford, inclining me to go at the instigation of my daughter Winter, when I had laid aside the thought of going. Blessed be his Name, who so exactly marked out all my steps, and made my way plain and prosperous; inclined her heart towards me, and formed her every way suitable to my temper and wishes. 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits,' and for this instance of his bounty in particular!

THE RELIGIOUS TRADESMAN'S CONDUCT IN PROSPERITY.

*To Mr. Peter Bunnell.*

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, February 6, 1752.

I doubt not you will take in good part any hints of counsel from one who would gladly contribute to your happiness, as it relates to both worlds. I continue to rejoice in your prosperity. You are not, however, to expect unmingled joys in this abode of guilt and sorrow. The way to ensure a continuance and increase of prosperity is to be thankful for what is enjoyed, whether that be more or less. I do not think the apostolic precept—'in every thing give thanks,' enjoins us to give thanks *for* afflictions, crosses, and disappointments as such; but I am sure we ought to give thanks *in* all these; yea, in the very worst that may befall us. Cherish a thankful temper, till it become the habitual frame of your mind; but, recollect, it cannot be obtained without much application. Faith, love, and humility, are all promoted by thanksgiving. We cannot praise God without 'believing that he is,' and that he

is gracious; and without appropriating the subject of our belief to ourselves. Such a course will make us love our Benefactor; and the more we love him for his benefits, the more we shall inquire what we have done to merit them at his hands: if that do not humble us, we neither know him nor ourselves. Let us live as those who are not of this world. Young people may think the counsel here laid down, well adapted to persons in the decline of life; but, as we are not exempted, in any stage of life, from the stroke of death, so no age nor other circumstance can excuse the neglect of a diligent preparation for death! Sit loose then, to all earthly enjoyments; yet, be 'not slothful in business,' for so it is prescribed, but engage in it as a duty, not from any love to the world. Believe me to be, with great respect, dear sir, yours, very affectionately,

J. W.

FUTURE HAPPINESS CONTEMPLATED.

To Mrs. Darracott.

DEAR MADAM,

Kidderminster, March 25, 1752.

I am induced to put pen to paper, not only to acknowledge my obligations, but to tell you they are much increased by the important loan you have so cheerfully sent us.—Since Dr. Doddridge is gone to heaven, I scarcely know another man upon earth, at least not another in Europe now Mr. Whitefield is gone to America, who merits so cordial a welcome to my house, my hand, or my heart; or who could excite by his presence, so much pious joy, as Mr. Darracott; and yet, through the smiles of an indulgent Providence I am not destitute of many very dear and desirable Christian *friends*. I do not, however, know the *minister* who, in the absence of our revered pastor, is more esteemed by the serious part of our society.—The agreeable company too, of Miss Mary Darracott and Miss Theodosia adds not a little to my happiness; so that to use our blessed Saviour's words, 'good measure, pressed down,' 'and running over, is given into my bosom.' From this instance of earthly felicity I have been led to ask myself—What will the society of heaven be? No doubt,

the love and favour of God, with the smiles of the glorious Emmanuel, will be the heaven of heaven; and yet, the society of angels, and of 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' affords a prospect of rapturous delight. Oh! what will it be to be 'called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb.' What, to 'sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob;' with Moses, David, Paul, Peter, and John; with Baxter, Doddridge, and 'the general assembly and church of the first-born,' in the kingdom of our Father! There, your Mr. Darracott, my late dear Pbebe, my present dear Jane, you and I, with numbers of friends who are gone before, or will come after, shall enjoy each other's company to such advantage as in the present state we can neither conceive nor sustain. 'Haste, happy day! when 'there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.'—My time will not permit me to enlarge. May this find you, dear madam, who are daily 'walking in the fear of the Lord,' walking also 'in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' May that heavenly Friend abundantly make up what joy the absence of your dearest earthly friend must needs substract: and with all, may 'the grace of' him that 'hanged on the tree' 'be with your spirit.' I am, with tenders of much respect, and under many obligations, dear madam, your obliged humble servant,

J. W.\*

#### SACRAMENTAL MEDITATION.

*Saturday Night, April 4, 1752.*---'Do this,' says our Lord, 'in remembrance of me.' What am I to do? I am to eat bread and drink wine, believing these, when set apart from a common to this peculiar use, do represent the body and blood of Christ. Infidels may laugh at this part of our holy religion; but, lovers of Christ, and believers in him, make great account of it. Certainly, our Lord had a wise

\* This letter is an abridgement of that in p. 71 of a publication entitled—the Star of the West; being memoirs of the life of Risdon Darracott, minister of the Gospel at Wellington, Somerset: by the Rev. James Bennett, 1813. If the reader desire a farther acquaintance with the character of this excellent minister, he would do well to peruse the memoir mentioned above.

and kind design in the instituting of it. Oh! that I could see fully into, and not mistake his design. Come, blessed and most adorable Jesus, thou who hast endured the greatest, the vilest indignities and cruelties for the sake of sinful men, and voluntarily submitted to the most painful and ignominious death of the cross, in order to atone for sin, shew me wherefore thou hast instituted these sacred memorials of thyself, and what share, what interest I have therein, and what thou requirest of me.—I am to do this in remembrance of my Lord. I am to remember, that ‘the Son of God,’ ‘the Lord of Glory,’ ‘which is in the bosom of the Father,’ ‘was made flesh,’ or assumed the body prepared for him, Oh! ‘the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.’ Though, ‘in the form of God;’ and though he ‘thought it not robbery to be equal with God:’ yet, he ‘made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.’ But, ‘forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself,’ who was to redeem them, ‘likewise took part of the same:’ for, how could he have ‘borne our sins on the tree,’ if he had not had a body? Or, how could he have vanquished ‘him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,’ but by dying and rising again from the dead, as ‘the first-fruits of them that sleep’ in death?—I am to remember, that in this body he bore the wrath of God due to us for sin. Oh! what horror and agony did his soul endure at Gethsemane. He endured the utmost contempt from those he came to save, with all the torture which their hatred, spite, and rage could inflict upon him. ‘He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; he hid not his face from shame and spitting.’ Oh! the compassion and condescension of Jesus. But, what is all this to me? Yes, ‘he was wounded for my transgressions, he was bruised for my iniquities;’ he ‘bare my sins in his own body on the tree,’ that ‘by his stripes I might be healed,’ and by his death I might live.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

*To a Minister.*

DEAR SIR.

Kidderminster, April 15, 1752.

I am glad you are filled with a due sense of the vast importance of the work of a minister. I confess, to me it appears the highest and most honourable, the hardest and most laborious, and at the same time the most awful and important office that is borne by any man upon earth. If a senator of Rome would not have matched his daughter with a king, no doubt he esteemed himself greater than that king: and, is not an ambassador from the King of kings greater than he? To protect and defend the lives and liberties of a whole kingdom or empire, is certainly a very high and honourable office; but to be God's instrument in saving immortal souls is far higher, and more honourable. To be invested with a commission from heaven, must be the highest investiture. To preach the gospel is an honour never put upon angels. If ministers be, indeed, 'ambassadors for Christ,' if they serve Christ, God will honour them, and men will honour them, 'and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake?' but if they do not faithfully deliver their embassy, notwithstanding their high station in the church, they 'will be lightly esteemed.' Certainly, every wise and faithful minister, who understands his office, and 'fulfils his ministry,' finds it to be a great as well as a good work. If he discharge the secret duties of the closet and the study, and the private duties with his family and with his people, and the public duties of the pulpit; if he 'be instant in season, and out of season;' no doubt he hath work enough for every waking hour. Then, what in the world can be a more awful and important work, than that, upon the success or unsuccessfulness of which, depends the eternal salvation or damnation of precious souls! "The eternal salvation of one soul," according to Dr. Doddridge's striking reflection, "is of greater importance than the temporal salvation of a whole kingdom or empire for ten thousand ages, or indeed any given duration of time. Because there will come up a point

in eternity, when that one soul will have existed as many ages as all the individuals in a kingdom, ranged in close succession, will altogether have existed at that given period. Therefore, one soul is capable of a larger share of happiness or misery to an endless eternity, than all the inhabitants of a whole kingdom are capable of in ten thousand ages." How just is this remark! How agreeable to our necessary notion of eternity! And what an affecting idea does it give us of the importance of salvation! Well might the apostle call it '*so great salvation.*' If the salvation of those who hear the gospel be possible, how should every minister, and indeed, how should every one 'who is saved and called with a holy calling,' bestir themselves, and use their utmost endeavours, agreeably to their several stations, if by any means they 'might' 'save some.' Surely, we may learn this from our Lord's saying—'It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment,' than for those who repented not under his own ministry. I am, &c.

J. W.

## VILLAGE ITINERANCY.

*To Mrs. Darracott.*

DEAR MADAM,

Kidderminster, April 15, 1752.

I again return you unfeigned thanks, and that not in my own name only, but of multitudes, for your valuable loan. God will abundantly reward both you and him. Mr. Darracott longs after his other self, his children, and 'the flock of God which is among you.' On the receipt of your last letter he seemed determined to leave us next Monday. Knowing that many are under deep impressions from his ministry, and that our good people earnestly desire his longer stay, I could by no means see his way open to leave us; and, when he would not otherwise be persuaded, I proposed to call some praying friends together, and 'ask counsel of God.' This, he could not refuse. Accordingly we met yesterday, and seven of us engaged. God was with us of a truth; and in the conclusion the good man was 'bound in the spirit,' as we prayed he might be, to prolong his stay. There is, indeed, a remarkable stirring among us. In our

neighbourhood is a parish called Auveley, to which some laymen have thought it their duty for some years past, to go in their turns to pray with and read to a few poor people every alternate Lord's-day, but those persons being now joined by others have lately gone to that place every Lord's-day. Last Monday was the return of our monthly prayer-meeting for a blessing on our endeavours at Auveley; on which occasion my nephew Watson particularly prayed that if it were the will of God Mr. Darracott should prolong his stay. God would be pleased to give him a token of his will, by sending some persons to apply to Mr. D. under soul-concern. The Lord was pleased to give a signal answer to the prayer, for two persons made application to be introduced to Mr. Darracott that very evening, to both of whom he went the next morning and found them under a work of grace, many of his discourses having been blessed to them. Mr. Darracott preached lately at Auveley, and there is reason to hope his discourse was 'a word in season' to many: about twenty persons came from thence, six long miles, to hear him last Lord's-day: and many more we expect on the next, from that and other places. The Lord open his month, and the hearts and consciences of his hearers! It is the ardent wish of numbers here, that Mr. D. may continue with us till Mr. Fawcett can come and water what he hath planted. During his absence, may you experience so much of the Divine presence as to enable you to 'rejoice in the Lord,' and to 'joy in the God of your salvation;' and may you find 'all things work together' for your good. My dearest joins in all respectful dues with, dear madam, your obliged friend and humble servant,

J. W.

AN HUMBLING PROVIDENCE.

*To the Rev. T. Randall*

REV. SIR,

Kidderminster, May 19, 1752.

"I have been thinking, for four or five months past, that my happiness was as full and perfect as this world will well admit of. Blest with a sound constitution; with flowing prosperity; and now again, with one of the dearest and

best of wives: a cheerful heart, arising from peace of conscience and 'peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;' my children all well settled and provided for; and many agreeable friends; what could I wish or desire more? Hence I have conceived many fears; I have expressed them to several praying friends, and begged their help at 'the throne of grace,' lest such a fulness should betray me into pride, unthankfulness, and earthly-mindedness. You know, 'Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked.' I was made sensible that I needed the goad in my side, nor was wholly without expectation thereof. Well, our heavenly Father is not forgetful of his children's best interests, and well knows how to secure and defend them. Coming last Lord's-day evening, from the last meeting, as slow as I could well walk, the pavement being slippery with rain, one of my feet slid away, by which, whilst I strove to recover, so as to prevent a fall, I wrenched my right ancle to a violent degree. I was carried to my own house, and the pain was so acute, I was ready to faint away for some time. By the help of a skilful surgeon, there is hope I may again have the use of the injured limb, but, in the meantime, I am forced to lay it along in a box, night and day; sometimes am full of pain, and sometimes tolerably easy, but cannot take a step without crutches. I am the prisoner of providence; but blessed be God I am a prisoner of hope. Really, I take pleasure in this painful confinement. My Father will surely do me good by it; 'you also helping together' therewith, by your prayers to God for me. I esteem it an instance of his paternal kindness and care. I enjoy this affliction, and by means thereof, enjoy the company of many of my dear, praying Christian friends. It is an humbling providence, and such I wanted. It is the more distressing, because my partner set out on a six-week's journey but two days before; and that makes it so much the better, because so much the more instructive. The other day, 'my mountain' stood 'so strong;' but how soon am I troubled! How absolutely do I hold all my enjoyments dependent on the will of my Father! How

graciously hath he limited and moderated this affliction! Here might have been a broken bone, or dislocated joint. I have a thousand times more to praise for than to complain of. Hereby I am better instructed to pity and pray for your dear partner, together with yourself. I can now more sensibly sympathize with you than before. Blessed be God for wholesome pains,—for the healing rod. But I must conclude, or be too late for this post. May the Lord love and bless you, ‘and cause his face to shine upon’ you.

We have had some remarkable stirring here lately, under the ministry of Mr. Darracott, who made an exchange, for six Lord’s-days, with Mr. Fawcett; whilst he, and Mrs. Fawcett, have been down at Taunton. The Lord carry on the good work wherever it is begun. My kind respects to Mrs. Randall: I shall be glad to hear how it is with you. Believe me to be, dear sir, your much obliged, and most obedient humble servant, J. W.

THE DUTY OF SYMPATHY.

*To his Nephew Watson.\**

MY DEAR COUSIN,

Kidderminster, May 27, 1752.

Many useful instructions, were I not very dull, might be learned in the school of my present correction. I had some love to ordinances, but did not sufficiently prize them: now I am in a fair way to be taught their worth by the want of them. I have always seen the beauty and admired the loveliness of humility; and I have warmly recommended it to my children, and other persons under my immediate care: oh! that I had recommended it more by my example. My stout heart has been too refractory. The Lord, who will have me humble, knows how to humble me: may I be not passive only, but active, in consequence of his dispensation. I have seen somewhat of the amiableness of a sympathizing spirit, ‘bearing one another’s burdens:’ alas! I have felt too little of it, notwithstanding it is a law of Christ, and powerfully recommended by his example. Jesus wept with those that

\* Then at Wellington, Somersetshire, on a journey.

wept; yea, he wept over obstinate sinners, who were bringing 'on themselves swift destruction.' In these respects, may the same 'mind be in me, which was also in Christ Jesus.' It will be a blessing to be chastened, and at the same time taught, out of the divine law. I am, dear cousin, your faithful friend,

J. W.

AN AFFLICTIVE ACCIDENT IMPROVED.

July 4, 1752.—I would now *review* a sore disaster, which a wise and gracious Providence appointed unto me. Oh! that I might do it with a suitable temper of mind. On Lord's-day evening, May 17, when my partner in trade had been gone but two days on a six-week's-journey, coming from meeting, I fell, and gave my ancle a violent strain, felt exquisite pain, and was quite disabled from rising. I had much pain many days and nights. The part is now weak, and possibly may never recover former strength. Certainly, this providence hath a voice, and it is the voice of God. Who would not listen, when God speaks, and be solicitous to understand him! He calls to consideration:—'In the day of adversity, consider.' He calls to humiliation and sorrow for sin: Jeremiah complains of God's ancient people—'Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction.' Is not this word, the word of the Lord to me, at least by way of caution and counsel, that I may 'not harden my heart, after the same example of unbelief?' I am, therefore, called to serious, close examination, whether I have grieved when I was stricken; and, whether I have received, or refused to receive correction? Have I laid to heart this chastisement? Have I received it as from the hand of God? Have I humbly inquired his will; what is the Lord's voice herein: what is the meaning of this rebuke? Have I been humbled under a sense of what I apprehend to be the procuring cause? Have I been so humbled as to mortify my pride and vain-glory? Hath it excited my thankfulness for preservation in long and various journies? Hath it animated

my faith in his power and care, and to pray for constant preservation? Lord, help me to improve it as I ought. Shew me more and more thy kind designs; thy designs of grace in this humbling providence. Is it not especially 'that I may partake of thy holiness?' Yes, this is the Lord's primary design, in all his messages of grace, and in all the rebukes of his rod. My soul's happiness is bound up in my love and likeness to God. God would have me happy, and therefore holy. By nature I am unholy, and, alas! by practice too. Oh! what a precious treasure is the word of God, which holds forth our recovery, as well as our ruin. Do mankind know that such a treasure lies in the Bible? Then, certainly, they *will* make it their study night and day. No, they *will not*: though they know it contains the mind and will of God, both for their faith and practice; yet, very few *will* be at the pains to study it.

Why will not mankind, who are reasonable creatures, and know they are dying creatures, attend diligently to those things which are of everlasting importance? It is owing to their unbelief. It is one thing to have a notional, and another to have a practical belief. '*It is appointed unto men once to die.*' Who questions the truth of this? Yet how few suffer this word of God to have its due weight upon their own conscience! Did men really believe it, would they neglect any means in their power to obtain the favour of their Judge, that, when they are judged, they may be acquitted? How rarely hath it been known, that persons imprisoned for capital offences neglect any means in their power, that they might be acquitted when brought to their trial! The reason is, they believe the assize will come; and that they are to be acquitted or punished according to their final sentence.

What reason can be assigned, why men generally neglect the means of preparation for death and eternity? Certainly they have not a practical, heart-affecting belief, that they shall die, and that their death may be near. When

they think at all about it, they have no doubt of its reality, but they look not upon it as near, nor do they suffer their thoughts to dwell upon the subject as Dr. Young says—

“ Man thinks himself immortal.

All men think all men mortal, but themselves.”

They ‘ put far away the evil day.’ It pleaseth God, therefore, sometimes, in great mercy, to take his rod in hand, and by sickness, pain, or adversity, to bring men to serious consideration. Some are quickened by the rod, others are more hardened. Certainly, it is a great aggravation of guilt, not to *grieve* when God strikes; nor, when he consumes, to receive correction. Grieve, for what? Not merely because the Lord hath stricken, or because men are afflicted. He expects them to grieve for that which hath been the procuring cause of their chastisement; and not only for sin in general, but for that particular iniquity, which he would by the affliction bring to their remembrance. When this is discovered, it must be grieved for, repented of, and put away. He expects us to ‘ put away the evil of our doings from before his eyes,’—‘ to cease to do evil,’ and ‘ learn to do well.’

Now, O my soul, the Lord hath stricken me. Have I grieved? It was certainly his hand that caused my foot to slide; otherwise one of my strength and activity might have walked safely enough. He hath not indeed consumed me, but he hath in part consumed my strength. Have I received correction? Mr. Whately observes—“ We may read our sin in our punishment.” Few men of my age, walk with so much ease, vigour, and activity. Hath not this been fuel to my pride? It is fit I should be taught by sensible, smarting experience, to acknowledge the hand which alone gives strength, and can ensure safety. If He gave strength who hates pride, he gave it me not to value myself upon it. Be grieved and humbled, O my soul, for every motion of pride. Lie humbled and abased at his feet, and let the Lord alone be exalted. If he have given strength and vigour, he hath also shewed how easily he can turn strength into weakness, vigour into languor. Oh! let me

be quickened in future to employ all my strength, vigour, and vivacity to his praise. Think well of him, O my soul, and of what he is doing to me, and let me love and praise him for this rebuke. When God says—‘ Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone;’ or when he says—‘ Why should ye be stricken any more; ye will revolt more and more:’ how sad is the case of such a people, or person! O my soul, bless the Lord, who does not count me unworthy of correction. Let it be my solicitous care to ‘ turn to him that smites’ me. Let this affliction pain, and weakness, warn me of that time (who knows how soon!) when I must conflict with heavier afflictions, heart-sinking pressures, and overwhelming pain. Let this confinement to my house and chamber forewarn me of a longer, closer one. ‘ I know,’ O Lord, ‘ that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.’ Let my heart and soul say to the grave---Thou art my body’s ‘ long home:’ ‘ to corruption—Thou art my father: to the worm—Thou art my mother and my sister.’ Ere long, not one foot, one ankle, one leg only, shall be maimed and disabled, but every limb, every joint shall stiffen in death, and every power of my body be incapable of any action or motion. This goodly animal frame, which hath served so many useful purposes, shall not only be altogether useless and unprofitable, but loathsome and ghastly, a spectacle of aversion and horror. My dearest friends, my children, and the wife of my bosom, when they have viewed it, will turn away from such an unsightly lump, and desire it may be ‘ buried out of their sight.’ Then shall I be entirely ‘ cut off from the land of the living.’

HIS OWN DEATH CONTEMPLATED.

*December 31, 1752.*—Another year is just concluded! In the night of the 10th instant Mr. Butler’s life concluded suddenly. How do I know but this night *my* life may come to a period? Mr. Butler was more than a year younger than I, corpulent, and seemingly strong. How absolutely does my life depend on the Divine will! A little more than two years since, in an hour when I seemed

to enjoy perfect health, I was suddenly seized with a swimming in my head, which afflicted me, not without intermission, for seven weeks. That which made my head swim might have made it sink into the grave, had God so willed. It might as easily have been an apoplexy as any thing else. Mr. Whitefield observing me, about six weeks ago, to look more hale and fuller of flesh than usual, remarked to me—"You will die suddenly." Be it so, if that be the will of my heavenly Father. As to the time, the manner, and other circumstances of my death I desire to have no will of my own. May 'Christ be magnified' in me, whether in life or death, and it is enough. My generation-work, so far as concerns my temporal affairs, is done. Through the good hand of a kind Providence, my children are all well settled, and well provided for. What have I, therefore, to do in life? Nothing, but "to glorify God,"—to do all the good I can to the souls and bodies of those around me. Oh! that I might 'bring forth much fruit in old age,' 'be fat and flourishing, to shew that the Lord is upright.' Who is under greater obligations than I am to lay out all my powers and my substance for God! Great and manifold are the mercies he has bestowed on me!

## AFFLICTIVE DISPENSATIONS.

*To the Rev. T. Randall.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Kidderminster, January 13, 1753.

I had been expecting a line from you much sooner, and was intending to send a writ of inquiry after you; for I can assure you, such letters as yours are more grateful to me, and more elevate my spirits, than letters with orders for ten or twenty pieces of our manufacture. My last, I wrote in pain, but not unmingled pain. It was indeed a pleasurable pain. Blessed be God for that visitation. I was quickly released from confinement, and have had the free use of the injured limb this half year, though not without some merciful touches now and then, to mind me of my mercies. Oh! that I were more thankful: oh! that I were always in a praying frame:—the same I wish for you, my friend. At the worst, we have more to praise than to pray

for; ten thousand times more to praise for than to complain of. What can become a child of God more, than praise to his heavenly Father? What can be more profitable to himself? Do not we praise best, when we have the deepest sense of our unworthiness? And does not the very exercise of praise naturally tend to cherish such a sense? Does it not tend to humble? Does it not imply our dependence and obligation, animate faith, fan our love, cherish hope, and diffuse cheerfulness and joy? Oh! how happy are the saints above, who are all love and praise. Well, but *I* did not praise enough—was not enough humble: therefore, our heavenly Father kindly took another rod in hand; for he hath store of them, but they are all dipt in love. He smote me through the sides of my dearest other self:—toward the latter end of July, my better half was visited with a putrid fever, a rush fever. Her life was in jeopardy, She was pressed beyond measure, above strength, so that she ‘had the sentence of death’ in herself; and I was called up one morning at two, to take my leave of her: but, the Lord had mercy on her, and on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. When, after a revival, the pressure on her spirits returned, so that she ‘mourned’ like ‘a dove,’ that she could not die, and yet she could not live, I called in some praying friends. The first prayed with great affection and importunity: the second exceeded, and would have no nay, but relief must be sent now, immediately: my faith was much animated; and, when he ceased, and I had engaged a third, I stepped into her apartment, to see how it was with her, and, to my joyful surprise, found her sitting up in the bed, wonderfully relieved, the burden fallen off, cheerful and thankful. So I went back, and concluded the service with praise to Him, who, whilst we were calling, heard, and before we had done speaking, answered.

This occasions me to tell you, that at this very time that friend who prayed second lies dangerously ill of a putrid fever. Certainly you heard me several times tell of Mr. Symonds, an apothecary; such another ‘good man,’ for

whom the apostle supposes, 'peradventure some would even dare to die:' a man of such unwearied diligence for both worlds, especially the upper, better world, that we have no man like-minded; and I really question, whether you can find his equal in the united kingdoms: up in the morning at five, seldom in bed till after midnight; upon his knees three or four times every day; though a strict Calvinist, full of good works, as if he thought to *merit* heaven; mortified to the world as any hermit, and yet, diligent in business, as though he were most covetous. This good man began to be ill more than a fortnight since, but would not remit of his diligence till Saturday last, when he was forced to submit. Since that he has been closely confined; and the last five days, to his bed. The physician judges his case much worse than my wife's. Monday he was extremely low. Tuesday, we spent some hours in prayer, in the room with him. Wednesday, a little revived. That evening, Mr. Fawcett gave us a sermon in public (as usual the first Wednesday after the sacrament) from these words—'Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.' Then, after praying for him with great enlargement, Thursday being our market day, he invited as many as were willing, to meet at two o'clock on Friday, to pray for Mr. Symonds. Accordingly yesterday, a large assembly met; four prayed, and three suitable hymns were sung; and then Mr. Fawcett concluded with prayer. Is not this the right way? Blessed be God, to-day he is much better. He lies full of Divine consolations, at a point whether to live or die. He is about fifty-one, and the eldest of his five amiable children about twenty-one. His eldest son, aged fourteen (converted about four years ago, when his father was more dangerously ill, and for whom there were then eight or nine meetings for prayer), is bringing up with a view to the ministry.\*

I agree with you, we should never be anxious, either

\* That office he afterwards filled with an exemplary fidelity. See "A Sermon occasioned by the death of the Rev. Joshua Symonds, Pastor of the Congregational Church which assembles at the Old Meeting, Bedford: By John Ryland, jun. November 27, 1788."

for a chastisement, or a comfort, only 'in every thing, by prayer and supplication,' &c. we may securely leave all to the great, the all-wise Disposer. We have here been under uneasy apprehensions of an opposition to Mr. Fawcett several years. Scarcely a tenth part of the congregation disrelish him, but many of these are rich; and Mr. Butler hath all along been at the head of the opposition. In the night of the 10th of December, about midnight, he died suddenly, without a struggle or a groan; and our fears, in a great measure, died with him. As you observe—Whether should we most admire, the depths of the Divine mercy, judgment, or prudence?

I thank you for your fellow-feeling, both of my pain and my joy. I have not been, nor am, wholly insensible, either of dear Mrs. Randall's sore affliction or yours, and have often had freedom to intercede on your behalf. I have a cheerful hope, that both she and you will be armed with patience, and that it shall turn to your mutual benefit, which is better than the removal of the affliction. I doubt not you have long since adopted the language of the prophet—'Woe is me for my hurt, my wound is grievous: but I said, truly this is a grief, and I must bear it.'

I very much approve your repeated proposal for forming pious youth to the ministry. Academies are, as they are managed, serviceable or disserviceable. I do not think even Dr. Doddridge's was strictly enough governed.\*—Youth, I think, whilst there, should, as the apostle speaks of 'the heir' 'differ' little or 'nothing from servants,' and be under strict restraint; whereas, I fear, they have differed too little from gentlemen.† It is certain, many under his tuition have run into the scheme of the Remonstrants, and some into licentious practices. These consequences would be prevented by the method you propose: but, I am afraid, few of the most pious, either of our dissenting ministers or people, will readily fall in with it. Mr. Pike, of London,

\* See remarks on this subject in Orton's Letters to Dissenting Ministers, Vol. i. Let. 1.

† *Ibidem.*

hath set on foot something of that nature ; but it seems to be despised, and laughed at.\* There is a too prevailing aversion, even among the pious, to laymen (those who have not had a liberal education), ministering in ‘ holy things ;’ and what can be expected from others ? However, I intend to recommend it to the persons you have named. I offered myself to the work above twenty years ago, and several old, pious ministers † encouraged the thing ; but it was generally frowned upon, and treated with disdain. Even my own minister, ‡ a pious man, when I called praying friends together, to ask counsel of God, would not vouchsafe so far to countenance the thing as to appear among us. God will do his own work, and send his own instruments.

I think I must conclude my letter with Dr. Doddridge’s swan-like song, lately come to my hands, which it is said he composed, and oft with pleasure repeated, on his death-bed :—

“ While on the verge of life I stand,  
 And view the scene on either hand,  
 My spirit struggles with its clay,  
 And longs to wing its flight away.  
 Where JESUS dwells, my soul would be ;  
 It faints, my much-lov’d Lord to see.  
 Earth, twine no more about my heart,  
 For ’tis far better to depart.  
 Come, ye angelic envoys, come,  
 And lead the willing pilgrim home :  
 You know the way to JESUS’ throne,  
 Source of my joys, and of your own.  
 That blessed interview ! how sweet,  
 To fall transported at his feet !  
 Rais’d in his arms—to view his face  
 Through the full beamings of his grace.  
 To view Heav’n’s shining courtiers round,  
 Each with immortal glories crown’d ;  
 And, while his form in each I trace,  
 Belov’d, and loving, all t’ embrace.

\* See Wilson’s History of Dissenting Churches, vol. ii. p. 86.

† Among whom were the Rev. R. Pearsall, Dr. Owen of Warrington, the Rev. J. Mottershead of Manchester, and the Rev. — Wood of that neighbourhood, or the Rev. James Wood of London, who died May 15, 1742.

‡ The Rev. M. Bradshaw.

As with a seraph's voice, to sing;  
 To fly, as on a cherub's wing;  
 Performing with unwearied hands,  
 A perfect Saviour's high commands.

Yet, with this prospect full in sight,  
 I wait his signal for my flight;  
 For 'tis a heaven begun to know,  
 To love, and serve my Lord below.\*

I returned, in health and safety, the 25th of November, from a six-weeks' journey, in which I had great experience of the providential care and kindness of our heavenly Father, having been rescued from two threatening dangers, preserved in perfect health through all the journey, and had delightful interviews with my children, both at the Isle of Wight and at London. And now, dear sir, farewell in the Lord; may you be receiving, from time to time, large supplies of the Spirit, spending and being spent in his service, and bringing many sons and daughters unto glory. May the Lord love you, and bless you abundantly. My best respects to your dear partner. My dear Theodosia,\* though unknown, would salute you both in the Lord. I am, in great sincerity, yours,

J. W.

SANCTIFIED AFFLICTIONS.

*To his Daughter Hanbury.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Kendal, March 5, 1753.

I hear no harm of you; nay, I hear what is very good; for a friend of yours, and much more of mine, tells me that you are much better. But it implies, that you have been much worse; and this I cannot hear without some feeling of your griefs, though past. The psalmist says—'As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him:' which implies, that he who hath the heart of a father, cannot but pity his child under affliction. I can truly say, since I have been a father, I have never wanted a tender concern for mine, nor for yourself in particular. Nor, is my pity for you unattended with an earnest concern, that your afflictions may be productive of the choicest mercies. An approved author says—"Sanctified afflictions are heavenly promotions." You have had a large share of bodily

\* The Editor has not discovered who this person was: see, however, p. 341.

afflictions. Have they been sanctified to you, so as to increase your ‘humiliation under the mighty hand of God?’ Have they been the means by which you have been more ‘crucified to the world, and the world to you?’ Have they made you pray more and better, with greater enlargement; and with more entire resignation to the Divine will? These are some of God’s gracious ends in afflicting his children; and these, I trust, have been answered in some considerable degree, by the many great trials, though chiefly of a different kind, which his wise and gracious providence, from time to time, hath seen meet to exercise me with. Often have I had just occasion to sing, with Mr. Mason:

“O happy rod!

That brought me nearer to my God.”

Be not over and above solicitous for health and ease: but you cannot be too solicitous for a sanctified use and improvement of afflictions. ‘Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.’ The blessedness does not flow merely from chastening, but from the chastening as connected with the teaching. Under our chastenings, therefore, may we never fail to search and inquire diligently, nor ever forget to pray that God would ‘shew us wherefore he contendeth with us.’ My prayers shall be for you, as well for the recovery of your health, as the sanctifying of your afflictions. Cease not to pray for yourself, your husband, your children, and likewise for your affectionate father,

J. W.

ON REJOICING IN TRIBULATION, &c.

*To the Rev. T. Randall.*

VERY DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, April 21, 1753. 7.

‘Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.’ I cannot forbear telling you, that part of the two last days has been employed in reading over *The life of Dean Prideaux*, author of ‘*The Connection of the Old and New Testament.*’ It is a society-book, and came to me, together with ‘*Fordyce’s Art of Preaching.*’ The latter I intended to peruse: to the former, I thought I should vouchsafe no more than a cursory view: and yet, it has so fallen out,

that I have perused the former before I have read a page of the latter. What induced me to do so, I can scarcely tell: but it seems to me, that no book has done me so much good a great while. Perhaps you may be ready to wonder what great good such a Life can do me: Here is deep erudition, zeal for external reformation in the University, a most scrupulous exactness in setting and dividing the temporalities belonging to the cathedral, strenuous zeal against popery, and really a becoming zeal for reforming the lives and manners of the clergy, as also for propagating Christian knowledge in the East Indies; a most critical knowledge of the historical part of the Bible; and, together with all this, there appears in his writings a deep penetration, great strength of reasoning, exactness of judgment, a large compass of thought, and, in short, every thing I could wish or expect to see in a gentleman, a scholar, or even a divine, except the 'one thing needful.' Perhaps, the defect might lie in the biographer; but so it is, though I read every line in the book, consisting of 280 pages, I can find nothing in the accounts of the Dean's life, or death, or in his writings (which make up about one-half of the book), that has the least savour of experimental religion, or carries any evidence that he knew any more of the new birth than Nicodemus. I do not much wonder at it. Is it not a fulfilling of the Scripture?---such 'things are hid from the wise and prudent:' and, 'not many wise men after the flesh, &c. are called.' But I wonder greatly at the riches of that grace of God by which I am what I am. I have not felt such workings of humble thankfulness to God, for his special, distinguishing grace, a great while: and, it has led me also, to wonder at my stupidity and ingratitude, and thoughtless insensibility, at so rich a vouchsafement. I remember a private Christian, of distinguished eminency,\* told me, with an air of uncommon solemnity, thirty-eight years ago, that "nothing tends more to grieve the Holy Spirit, and cause him to withdraw, than the unthankfulness of Chris-

\* Mr. Clymer; see January 31, 1716.

tians for his special, renewing, sanctifying grace." Oh! for a more thankful sense of this his everlasting love. How should it command all my powers, and subject every thought! Is it not the new song of Heaven—'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy own blood?' and shall we not begin to sing, here upon earth—'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood?'

Good Mr. Symonds, betwixt whose life and death the balance was sometimes preponderating to the right, and sometimes to the left; and for whom 'prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God;' is again to a miracle, restored to his usefulness: and so are many other valuable friends, since I wrote you last. It was a season of much sickness here, many months, by the prevalence of a putrid fever. Scarcely a week, from Christmas till the middle of February (and longer than that, as I have been informed), in which a number of praying friends, often six or seven, besides others who joined, were called together, to intercede with God for some important life, then in jeopardy. A remarkable 'spirit of grace and supplications' was poured out; great freedom of access, and boldness, and enlargement; and, in several instances, even whilst we were calling, the Lord heard, and the patient was wonderfully revived before we rose from our knees: nor, was a single life denied us, among six or seven, for whom united intercession was made. It is, however, worth observation, that whereas the Lord being determined to take away a desirable young man, the eldest son in one of our best families, whose father is my dear kinsman and very particular friend, he would not suffer us to meet to pray for him. The young man was confined a fortnight by a slow fever, and no danger apprehended, till Lord's-day evening. His parents had agreed to call us together next morning; but he was snatched away about four o'clock, before any of us were up. For these things 'shall every one that is godly' make his prayer unto Thee. What honour hath the Lord bestowed

on social prayer! And yet, we cannot expect that it shall be always so.

But I would ask dear Mrs. Randall, as Dr. Watts does—

“ Whence, then, should doubts and fears arise?  
Why trickling sorrows drown our eyes?”

The answer is obvious: Not because there is not sufficient provision made in the everlasting covenant: but, as we read in the next lines—

“ Slowly, alas! our mind receives  
The comforts that our Maker gives.”

The Apostle says—‘ But I would have you without carefulness;’ and he certainly spoke the mind of Christ. Christ would have every disciple of his without carefulness, without anxiety; and this, as to spirituals, as well as to temporals. He would have us cast all our cares upon him, because he careth for us: and, as Dr. Watts sings—

“ His arm shall well sustain  
The children of his love:  
The ground on which our safety stands,  
No earthly (*no, nor hellish*) power can move.”

Believing is—not doubting, nor fearing:—though I deny not, that some degrees of doubt, and fear too, may stand with true faith, yet as ‘ perfect love casteth out fear,’ so perfect faith excludes doubting. Were our own interest out of the case, is it not a pity so tender, so kind a Friend should be distrusted! Would not Mrs. Randall think herself dishonoured, yea provoked, and her regard slighted, if she promised me something in her power, and I told her to her face, I did not believe her? Has the Lord Jesus promised any thing he is not able to give? And is not He witness to every distrustful fear? I would persuade Mrs. Randall to consider what a peculiar advantage and opportunity is put into her hands, by means of this tedious confinement, this long affliction (under which I sincerely pity and sympathize with her and you), of doing honour to the Lord Jesus, ‘ and to the doctrine which is according to godliness,’ by rejoicing in tribulation, rejoicing in Christ Jesus. How must it recommend his good ways, when others ob-

serve that his children and servants, not only sing at their work, but under the rod too! Sure, they will conclude, such a one serves a good master, who gives her comforts we know nothing of.—Certainly, such a one's religious principles, on which she builds all her hopes, must be right, which can enable her to pray and praise with a merry heart, like Paul and Silas in the stocks. It is an honour to religion, and to its Author, when, in health and strength, and full prosperity, it teaches us to deny 'ungodliness, and worldly lusts,' &c. ; and, I think, no less so when it cheers under adversity, and makes the heart glad that otherwise would be bowed down by afflictions. What a glorious figure does Habakkuk make, 'rejoicing in the Lord and joying in the God of his salvation,' when besieged with wants! And this, reminds me of a passage I took notice of many years ago, in Dr. Preston on the Divine Attributes, to this purpose---"That if we would be happy, in whatsoever state, we must not make too many things necessary to our happiness;" and insists, that we must make but 'one thing' necessary thereto. All other things we may be deprived of: but that 'one thing' none can take away from us. If we set our hearts on a husband, a wife, a child, health, prosperity, this or the other desirable entertainment; all these things are loseable: but if we take up our 'portion' in God and Christ, 'that good part' none can take away from us. Yours, &c. J. W.

## HAPPINESS NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH SUFFERING.

*To Mrs. Richards.\**

DEAR SISTER,

Kidderminster, April 23, 1753.

If we look only with eyes of flesh there is no happiness without health and strength; but if the eye of faith be clear, we may be happy without either. The three men were never so happy as while they were in the 'fiery furnace,' and that because 'the Son of God' was with them. Is he not as certainly with every child of his who may be in the furnace of affliction! I am, indeed, sorry for your indisposition, but

\* She died a few years after her husband (see p. 183), and has been described to the Editor as "a woman of great beauty and commanding talents."

why should I be so? You are under your Father's discipline, who will surely do you good by it: therefore, whether your health continue to decline, nay, whether you live or die, I shall not 'sorrow' as one who hath 'no hope.' 'No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous,' and we are expected to 'weep with them that weep;' yet as I have entered into the last stage of life, it is more than time that I should 'weep as though I wept not.' I do not want many months of the age of our dear and much honoured father, when his stronger constitution was worn out by pains and cares. How long I am to sojourn in this tabernacle I know not, neither do I wish to know; as Mr. Baxter sings—

"It is enough that Christ knows all."

My strength, as yet, is firm, my health uninterrupted, my children well settled and provided for, and 'my steps washed with butter.' Why all this? Not for any worthiness in me; nor any superior prudence over others in ordering my affairs!—It must be resolved into 'the good pleasure of his will.' God certainly hath wise ends to promote by your present affliction, or it would not be bestowed on you; and what 'he doeth we know not now, but we shall know hereafter.' To the care and love of our heavenly Father I heartily commend you, and am, dear sister, your sympathizing brother,

J. W.

SACRAMENTAL MEDITATION.

*Lord's-day, July 8, 1753.*—O my soul, this is the last sabbath in which I am to join in public worship in our old meeting-house; to-morrow being the day fixed on for beginning to take it down, in order to its being rebuilt on additional ground. This, therefore, is the last season I am to have, of renewing my covenant with God, in the place where I have done it, in the space of forty-two years, near five hundred times. Will this be my last covenanting season in the old meeting-house? And, how do I know it will not be my last upon earth, the last before the 'house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved!' Dissolved it must be. 'It is appointed unto men once to die.' I am now

an old man, and if I were not, I am a mortal man. Blessed be God for a glorious hope of a blissful immortality beyond the grave. Oh! for the quickening, humbling, cheering influences of his good Spirit at this time, that whilst I am sealing my covenant with the Lord, he may also seal his covenant with me, and to me.' May I be all reverence and fear in his presence, all love and thankfulness to Jesus! Oh! that in this last gospel-feast in the old house, I may have a foretaste of that wine which is ever 'new in our Father's kingdom;' and, may this be a day, and this a season, much to be remembered in future time, and through a joyful eternity! So be it. Amen, come Lord Jesus.

*Evening.* Blessed be God, the God of ordinances, this shall not, I trust, be reckoned among my lost sabbaths. He that 'was known of the brethren at Emmaus,' made known himself also to me 'in the breaking of bread.' 'Or ever I was aware, I was as the chariots of Aminadab.' 'Rejoice, O my soul, in the Lord always.'

TRADING FOR CHRIST RECOMMENDED.

*To his Nephew Watson.*

DEAR COUSIN,

Manchester, September 4, 1753.

Last Lord's-day Mr. Whitefield, after praying for those who preach for Christ, prayed also for those who *trade* for Christ. May you and I be of that happy number Of other tradesmen it may be said, 'they have *their* reward;' while *these* are laying up for themselves 'treasures in heaven,' and in the mean time have a higher relish of what they possess, be that more or less. If we trade for Christ we must, every day as we go on, praise him for all our success, ask counsel of him how we shall lay out the increase, and do all we do by the rule of his word, and with an eye to his glory. If we trade for Christ, we shall not have our hearts much lifted up with mere worldly prosperity, not lifted up in pride, though they will be in praise that we have wherewith to do the more for his glory. Nor need we, on the contrary, be much cast down by adversity; unless, indeed, it have befallen us through our own fault or neglect; when, we ought to be

humbled for our unfaithfulness in our stewardship, and to watch and pray the more. Perhaps, also, we ought to be so far affected as to grieve in some measure, that through our inability to advance the interest of Christ it hath suffered any diminution. If we trade for Christ we certainly trade with his stock, and whatever we give to his church, or to his poor, we shall give to him; and, therefore, need not do it grudgingly. In short, if we trade for him, our minds may be 'kept in perfect peace,' being in all events 'stayed' on him, and trusting in him. Who, now, would trade for themselves only, when they may have such an able, wise, bountiful Master to trade for? I am, dear cousin, your faithful partner,

J. W.

GOD, THE DIRECTOR OF OUR STEPS.

*Saturday, September 15, 1753.*—This day week I returned from a North journey: and I would now remark, that I found on this, what I have often experienced on former occasions, not too resolutely to abide by an intention to set out on a long journey on any appointed day; but to observe and follow the leadings of Providence, believing that though 'a man's heart deviseth his way, the Lord directeth his steps.' The contingency of second causes is nicely adjusted by an unerring Providence. Several remarkable and pleasing incidents which occurred on my journey, depended on my setting out having been postponed from Monday, July 30, to the following Wednesday. On that day, Mr. Fawcett, as a preparation sermon for the ensuing sacramental occasion preached from the words—'O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.' The discourse was wholly applicatory—to such as were brought into the bonds of the covenant in their infancy, but had never made it their own act and deed; to those who had renewed it in secret, but never publicly; and, to such as are often renewing it at the Lord's table. The last of these classes were exhorted "often to reflect on their solemn covenant transactions in the language of the text." This came to me with power, and was fixed on my mind. It greatly pleased me, and I resolved to be more than formerly in direct acts of recog-

nizing my interest in God, and my relation to him; and that for these reasons:—because it is the most important transaction I have to reflect on in my whole life, and the best bargain I ever made: because otherwise I shall be in great danger of forgetting it: and, because such employment is most pleasant and profitable. In the evening, I commenced my journey; and the next day, riding alone, I took occasion to say to the Lord—‘Thou art my Lord;’ and ‘my soul magnified the Lord, my spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour.’ Thus, I frequently, during the journey, called to mind my privilege of having the Lord for ‘my Lord,’ and my heart triumphed in holy joy; my faith was kept in lively exercise; and I often felt pleasure that I did not turn my back on ordinances, but made worldly pursuits truckle to religious opportunities.

COUNSEL TO THE FRIENDS OF A MINISTER  
WHO WAS UNDER DEJECTION OF MIND.

*Addressed to a Daughter of that Minister.*

DEAR MADAM,

Kidderminster, October 20, 1753.

It grieves me much that the evening of your honoured father’s life is so overcast. That such a vessel of mercy, a chosen vessel, a vessel to honour, should be like a broken vessel; and, that he who has instructed and comforted many, should now need instruction from others how to obtain comfort, grieves me for his own sake: and it grieves me, madam, for your sake; for that of your brother and sister, who I know sensibly share in the affliction; and, also, for Mrs. —, who shares more deeply and sensibly still. I am no less grieved on account of his church, his dear charge, who cannot but share in the stroke by which their good shepherd is wounded.

Let us, however, make the best of this dispensation of Providence, which is an instructive lesson, and confirms to me what experience, in some measure, taught me twenty-eight years ago, that no man, be he ever so close and circumspect a walker with God, ever so diligent and sincere in self-examination, can make his ‘calling and election sure:’ and, consequently, cannot keep his evi-

dences of salvation bright and clear. I would not be mistaken : we can ' give diligence ' in order thereto, but cannot effect the thing. As it is free grace that adopts us into ' the household of faith,' so is it the same grace that gives us the evidences of our adoption : such a choice gift, such a free gift the Lord bestows on whom he pleaseth. In great mercy he bestows it on some, and in as great mercy withholds it from others of his children. Let us, therefore, ' give diligence,' this is our duty ; and if we obtain the inestimable gift, let us not lay claim to any merit for our diligence, but render thanks to the bountiful giver. Because his gift is free, let not any child of God be discouraged. The comforts of the Holy Spirit contribute much to the well-being of a Christian, but are by no means necessary to the being a Christian. The ends of Providence are equally wise in withholding, as in shedding abroad, the light of his countenance. Indeed, it is but little at most, that we can know of the ends of divine Providence in particular dispensations ; for, ' Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor ? This we do know, that all his ' ways are judgment ; ' yea, that they are all ' mercy and truth.' When the Lord lifts up, it is for the exalting of his praise ; often, indeed, it is to fortify the soul previously to some sharp encounter in his battles ; and often, to dispose the mind for some very self denying service to which he may call it : so, when he casteth down it is to ' hide pride from man.' Certainly, whatever humbles, is profitable for such poor, proud worms as the best of mortals are. By casting down, the Lord cures or prevents spiritual pride, the worst of all pride ; he brings us on our knees before him in the lowest prostration ; pours on us ' the spirit of grace and supplications ; ' and having thereby fitted us for a reception of his favour, he at once fulfils his promises, and glorifies the riches of his mercy in granting us the mercies for which we have been asking, seeking, and knocking at his door.

Who knows, madam, whether in your father's case the

Lord be not reproving you, me, and others, rather than him; and at the same time instructing us, that we may the better know our duty! If you ask—For what may he be reproving us? I must not shun to answer—Idolatry! When any creature is in any degree set in God's stead there is a corresponding degree of idolatry. About twenty-seven or twenty-eight years since, an eminent Christian, my father's friend and my own, fell into a deep melancholy; so deep as to lay violent hands on himself. He had been a man of such conspicuous piety, humility, and universal goodness, that no person moved his tongue against his character. Nevertheless it was a dark providence. A pious friend in Gloucestershire, who had long known and greatly admired the person to whom I allude, wrote for my opinion, how I thought such a dispensation might be best accounted for. Really, I could think of nothing so likely to have brought such a dark cloud over this setting sun, as his having been overvalued by many Christians in town, both ministers and people. He was too much trusted in. For my own part, if I were in any perplexity, and could but procure his advice; or if I were sick, and could get him to pray with and for me, I had, methought, nothing to fear, but every thing to expect. Now, the Lord will have his children dearly loved, and duly esteemed, but he is jealous of his honour. If they rival him in our hearts, down they must go, and we must be taught to 'cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?'

Again; who knows whether or not, the dark providence under which your honoured father labours be to stir up all his spiritual children, but particularly those of his own family and his own flock, to pray the more for him: I do not mean singly only, but socially. 'The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than the dwellings of Jacob.' We do not ordinarily pray so fervently, or so copiously on any particular case, in our devout retirements, or even in family worship, as when half a dozen, or half a score serious Christians meet before the Lord, unite their supplications

as one man. There are peculiar promises in favour of such a method of proceeding. The praying men of your society cannot but look on this event as a loud call to them to intercede most fervently at 'the throne of grace.' When any corporation or community has a favour to ask of the legislature, every member does not send his individual petition, but all join in one united address or petition. The eyes of God in Christ are always open, and his ears attend both to the single and social supplications of his people. Your good friends, I doubt not, are all, in secret duty, praying without ceasing for their pastor. I hope, also, they are in the practice of meeting, at least once a week, to pray with each other for him. If not, I do now very deliberately advise and earnestly beseech them, as they value the life and labours of their pastor, without delay to set about it. Assure them from me, that when we were destitute of a pastor, a number of us, for the space of two years, never failed, twice a week, to meet and implore at 'the throne of grace,' mainly, that God would provide us a pastor after his own heart: nor did we seek him in vain! for before a month was past we had a signal answer to our prayers; a good pledge in favour of the particular mercy prayed for. The answer was given in God's time, which is always the best time. Let me persuade you, dear madam, to use your interest to engage your friends in this duty, if they have not yet begun, which I can hardly doubt; and to persevere therein at least once a week. If they do so, the prayer of faith will prevail. Your friends may assure themselves of the concurrence of our prayers.

I have one word of advice to give your good father: which is, that he should not only pray for faith, but at the same time put forth an act of faith; not only pray for an appropriating faith, but exert appropriating faith. This was the way I obtained assurance twenty-eight years ago, after I had been on the borders of despair. I and many of our church lost considerable sums by a bankrupt merchant of London. Mr. Bradshaw on that occasion preached

from the words—‘Thou art my portion, O Lord.’ When I was employed in my business day by day, the aspiration was in my mind, and forty times a day I wished and prayed—Oh! that he were my portion; Oh! that I could say with David—‘Thou art my portion, O Lord.’ At last, I thought I would venture to adopt his language and make it my own. I ventured, but still with a trembling heart. Believing in Christ is a venturesome thing. I first, rather chose to say—Thou *shalt be* my portion, O Lord; but afterward, I was able to say with some degree of confidence—‘Thou *art* my portion, O Lord.’ From that time it was my frequent ejaculation; and is at this day; and it hath contributed much to feed my hope and comfort. I would persuade your father to adopt this course. Let him cry—My Jesus! my Beloved! and, my friend! for thus saith the Lord—‘Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.’ I would recommend your praying friends to preface their intercessions on your father’s behalf, with thanksgiving for what they so long enjoyed in and under him. I am, with great respect, dear madam, your obliged humble servant,

J. W.

## SELF-EXAMINATION.

*Saturday Evening, December 1, 1753.*—It was five weeks yesterday since my daughter Hanbury was within my doors. Poor woman! how little did she, or any person think what a mournful scene was then opening upon her; what an awful change was passing upon her husband! In the midst of life we are in death. The evening after my daughter had been with us, I and my wife went to see her, not knowing that her husband was ailing. We found both of them extremely ill. *She* began quickly to mend; but *he* grew worse apace, and after long wrestling with death, he died, Lord’s-day, November 11. Now, what am I to learn from this awful stroke of Providence? He possessed a good constitution, and was in full strength, being in his forty-second year. Does it not speak to me, who am nineteen years elder, and say—‘Be ye also ready, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when you think not?’

Come then, O my soul, and submit to examination. Strictly survey thy heart and thy ways. Speak, conscience, and speak impartially. I shall be judged at another rate, by Him whose 'eyes are as a flame of fire,' who 'searcheth the reins and the hearts' of all. Nevertheless, 'if my heart condemn me not,' if mine be a duly enlightened conscience, I may 'have boldness towards God.' Yea, I know he does not condemn me, for my conscience does not condemn me. I do not love him as I ought, yet 'he that knoweth all things,' does surely 'know that I love him;' yea, that I love him supremely, more than I love any thing else in the world. There is no creature upon earth I love as I do my wife: yet surely, I love Christ more than my wife, and love him the more for making her so suitable and agreeable to me, and so studious to please me in all things, and to please and oblige every one of my children. I love my children, and rejoice in all their prosperity: but, what is my wife, or what are my children to me, compared with Him, who 'hath loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood!' He hath given me great worldly prosperity, and is still making it to grow; yet, through the riches of his grace, 'though' earthly 'riches increase,' hitherto I have 'not set my heart upon them.' I would rather live a life of communion with God, in utter poverty, than enjoy the greatest fulness of outward prosperity without it. I would rather know, that 'God is my portion,' and hath 'loved' me 'with an everlasting love,'—that Christ 'is my beloved, and I am his,' than have all this earth to be mine, without such knowledge. I would rather endure abject poverty, and together therewith, scorn, reproach, contempt, and persecution; yea, 'to be hated of all men, for the sake of Christ,' than be the greatest and most honourable man upon earth, without good evidences of the love of God. Certainly, I rejoice in prosperity, but I rejoice in it as the gift of God, and as a means whereby I am rendered more capable of supporting his interest, and promoting his glory, to which I am daily devoting all I have, and all I am. I thought it

my duty to give a hundred and fifty pounds towards building a house for God. But I am amazed at the profusion of the Divine bounty since I did that. I am fully persuaded the Lord hath given me more since that subscription, than I ever gained by trading before in the same number of months. This experience hath confirmed my resolution to contribute, according to my ability, whatever his cause may want. I bless God, the heaping up of wealth is nothing in my esteem. The doing of good works, whereby God may be glorified, and my neighbour edified, so far as I know my own heart, is a thousand times more to me, than to have it said, when I am dead—He died worth so much. I love my life. Every man loves his life. It is a principle implanted and rooted in our nature. I must cease to be a man, before I can cease to love my life. ‘The father of lies’ spoke a great truth, when he said—‘Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.’ I can die but once, and that trial is not yet come. Am I willing to die, if God should call me hence? Could I cheerfully part with life and all its comforts, now that I enjoy such a fulness of prosperity, and a vigorous constitution beyond most of my years, for the sake of enjoyments that are out of sight, and can only be viewed by the eye of faith? Indeed, it is hard to say, before it comes, how shall I bear such a trial: but, as I have often ‘rejoiced in hope of the glory of God,’ and as I have no present doubt of the pardon of my sins, or of my interest in the blood of Christ, so the thoughts of death, at present, wear no terror. ‘I would not live always.’ Methinks ‘I have’ rather ‘a desire,’ when God hath wrought all his work in me, for me, and by me, ‘to depart and to be with Christ, which’ I firmly believe to be ‘far better.’ ‘Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.’

HIS LIBERALITY REWARDED.

*To Mr. Benjamin Watson.*

DEAR BROTHER,

Kidderminster, December 3, 1753.

Your son and I are getting money like dust, and as dust may we always esteem it, but not so dispose of it: for

money is an important trust, and we must use it as those who are to give an account. I am really amazed, when I look at the profusion of the Divine bounty to us, particularly since I devoted, seven months ago, a hundred pounds, and your son thirty, towards building a house for God. Since I first 'purposed in' my 'heart' to do this, once or twice it has been ready to recoil at the fear lest the above sum might be too much for me to give, but at such times the words of the 'man of God Amaziah' have darted into my mind—'The Lord is able to give thee much more than this:' and really, he has abundantly proved that, to be not only his own word, but his word to me. On looking over our returns in trade for the last seven months, I find them to amount to about ——— pounds more than we ever before returned in the same number of months; out of which our profits cannot be so little as ——— pounds. Here is at least two hundred and fifty pounds more than our usual increase, which the Lord has already given us as bounty-money for the hundred and thirty pounds we lent to him. Now, why should I set limits to what I contribute for the service of the Lord, who is dealing out favours to me with so unsparing a hand! What do I give him but his own! God forbid, that I should glory in an ostentatious way; but, why should not 'my soul make her boast in the Lord,' and tell of his faithfulness? I lately heard it remarked in company, that—"The elder men grow, they are apt to become more and more covetous." I have always thought it to be a shame for a man to grow more covetous because he grows elder. Why should we cling faster to the world, the nearer we are to leaving it? If God be a man's 'portion,' and heaven his inheritance, and he have 'good hope through grace,' he will set his heart on nothing so much as on his portion and inheritance! Certainly, it must be so where faith is in lively exercise. The more our hearts are set on God and heaven, the more we shall seek to have 'our fellowship' 'with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ,' and to have 'our conversation' 'in heaven;' for the love of the world and the love of God are inconsistent.

“In old age,” as the late pious and ingenious Mr. Reynolds sings---

“—Let it be my work and rest,  
 To learn the labours of the blest,  
 Loosen from clay, and upward move,  
 A candidate for realms above.  
 So, when this busy, silent age  
 Shall finish its appointed stage,  
 Thus fill'd with life, and fir'd with love,  
 To the transcendent realms above,  
 With dutiful content may I,  
 An honest, old plebeian die;  
 Or *puritan*, if so you please,—  
 The race lov'd piety and peace!”

I am, dear brother, yours affectionately, J. W.

ON THE PHRASE---“ A MERRY CHRISTMAS.”  
*To his Son-in-law Mr. James Kirkpatrick.\**

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, December —, 1753.

It is customary for friends to wish each other a *merry* Christmas. I confess I wish no such thing either to you or myself. Such holy mirth as Christ came in human nature, to fill the hearts of those he came to save with, I heartily wish you: and in this sense, and from such a motive, may you, I, and every redeemed soul, not only rejoice at Christmas, but ‘rejoice evermore.’ I can hardly forbear wishing you had heard the sermons Mr. Fawcett gave us yesterday, especially his third sermon, from the words—‘For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.’ He concluded with these advices:—“Account that a work of the devil which disfits you for the love and service of God and Christ, and tends to encourage others in sin: Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; but rather reprove them: If we choose wicked people for our companions we shall soon be like them: Never engage in any design, of whatever kind, on which you cannot seriously beg the Divine blessing by fervent prayer: The works of the devil are directly contrary to a spirit of prayer; he hates nothing so much as prayer: Where is the man who is going to card-playing,

\* He died November 4, 1782, aged 71.

who can lift up his heart to God in prayer and say—Lord, make this recreation profitable both to my soul and body; and enable me to engage in it to thy glory! Take pleasure in spending those hours to the glory of God, and the furtherance and cultivation of the peace of your own consciences, which others spend in vain and sinful pleasures.” That this last sentiment might be more acceptable, Mr. Fawcett closed with these lines, which are a paraphrase, by Dr. Doddridge, on the motto of his own coat-of-arms—*Dum vivimus vivamus* :—

“ Live, while you live, the epicure would say,  
And seize the pleasures of the present day.\*  
Live while you live, the sacred preacher cries,  
And give to God each moment as it flies.†  
Lord, in my view, let both united be:  
I live in pleasure, when I live to thee!‡”

I heartily wish, and I will labour to my utmost power, to promote the happiness of you and yours, and am, dear sir, your cordial friend, &c. J. W.

HIS RELIGIOUS CORRESPONDENCE ALLUDED TO.

To Mr. Joseph Green.

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, December 29, 1753.

Why should you refuse to correspond with me in a way which you seem to apprehend would be beneficial to you? For my part, I enjoy as much worldly prosperity, and am getting money as fast as my heart can wish: and yet mine is a deceitful heart indeed, if my *religious* correspondence be not by far dearer to me than any other: those favours by which I obtain the most lucrative acquisitions, may all ‘make themselves wings’, and ‘fly away’ before my *soul* shall have taken *its* flight into the regions of immortality. If not, I shall shortly drop such correspondence, which will be no longer mine, together with this ‘earthly tabernacle’: but my religious correspondence has given my soul many a lift heaven-ward, and has proved the means of animating my faith in God—inflaming my love to him—drawing forth

\* 1 Cor. xv. 32.

† Eccl. ix. 10.

\*\* Dr. S. Johnson had sufficient candour to call this, one of the finest epigrams in the English language.

my desires after him---mortifying my love to this world---ravishing my soul with heavenly joy on earth---and enlivening and confirming my hopes of future glory. Is there any other gain comparable with such gain as this? Besides, our 'works' will 'follow' us, be they good or evil; and our *letters* are some of our works.---It hath often comforted me under reproaches, to think that my Saviour 'searcheth the reins and hearts,' and that my 'works' will take their colour at 'that day' not from the construction men put upon them, but from the real intents of my heart, which are all 'naked and open unto him' 'who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire.' To him may we be continually referring all we think, speak, and do, since all will surely be called over again. 'The Lord grant unto' you, that you 'may find mercy of the Lord in that day.' This has been, and shall be, the earnest prayer of, dear sir, your cordial friend, and humble servant,

J. W.

THANKS AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

*Monday night, December 31, 1753.*—A bountiful and indulgent Providence hath just brought me to the close of this year: Oh! what a year of mercies hath this been to me. What enjoyments am I blessed with, both of a temporal and spiritual nature! Health of body, peace of mind, flowing prosperity, a most agreeable, dutiful loving wife; a suitable partner in trade, with whom I have gone on hitherto in perfect harmony; many other agreeable relations and friends; plenty of gospel ordinances both public and private; hope in God, in his word, his promises and covenant; hope of the glory of God, and sometimes the light of his countenance shining in upon my soul. These, are some of the mercies I have to reflect upon, and the enjoyments I have been favoured with in the last year. These, have not been common to all, nor, indeed, to all the dear children of God, many of whom have been sick and weak, or poor and indigent, or been sorely perplexed in their affairs and worldly circumstances, and many who have walked closely with God have nevertheless 'walked in darkness and seen no light' of God's countenance. Oh! may I

abound in thankfulness and thanksgiving; and always lie humble at the feet of the Lord Jesus.

THE DUTIES OF A HUSBAND.

*To Mr. Henry Dowler.\**

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, January 17, 1754.

Since it hath pleased an allwise God, who guides with an unerring hand all the mighty wheels of nature, providence, and grace, to bring you into a near affinity to me; as I have often congratulated myself on that account, and have often offered up my most ardent supplications for you and your spouse, that you may be indeed mutually 'helps meet,' and always dear to each other, and that all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, in constant streams, may flow down upon you both; so now I congratulate you, sir, upon this happy union, which is, I doubt not, a union not only of persons but of hearts. Since you have enjoyed great advantages, particularly under the ministry of the late worthy Mr. Freeland, as well as of your present pastor, it may seem the less necessary for me to offer any thing by way of advice. Nevertheless, as the duties of this new relation you have so lately entered into are many of them of a very tender and delicate nature, and seldom touched upon, much less fully handled in the pulpit; as God hath so twisted our duty and happiness together, that the latter is inseparable from the former; and, as by more than thirty years cohabitation with my former and my present wife you may suppose I have gained some experience, over and above all the knowledge I have acquired by reading or hearing, you will perhaps be pleased, at least take it in good part, if I freely offer a few hints.

You will certainly find, sir, that all your conjugal happiness is bound up in love; that there is a possibility of bursting the bands of the most endeared conjugal love, at least for a time; that there is a possibility, also, of preserving these bands inviolate; and therefore, means must be used to preserve them. All our happiness both for time and eternity, consists in love, and is inseparable from it. Love to God

\* See note, p. 338.

in perfection, together with the full communications of his love; is the heaven of heaven: and, the more our hearts are going out in love to God and Christ in meditation, prayer and praise, whilst here; and the more too, we are favoured with the tokens of his peculiar love, the more we enjoy of heaven upon earth. And as to outward enjoyments, what happiness can we derive from meat or drink, that we do not relish; or, from employments, diversions, or company, that we do not love? It is not, I think, so much my wife's love to me, as mine to her, that tends to my conjugal happiness; at the same time I must allow, that there is a necessity of both to complete my happiness. No doubt, if her love to me should fail, mine to her would also languish: but certainly, it is my love to her that I feel, though a sense of hers to me enhances my relish of it; and the way to perpetuate my relish, is, never to let my love to her cool, nor to entertain an unkind thought of her. It is possible this may be your case, at least for a time; nay give me leave to say, there is danger of it. It hath been the case in many good families, and may in yours. The more you are apprized of the danger, sir, and the more you dread it, you will be the more upon your guard against it. You have a will of your own, and so hath your wife. These may not always be the same in all things. What will you do, sir, when such a case happens? I assure you, I would have you always keep your place. The husband is 'head' of the wife, and it is her duty to yield: but, what if she will not; or, what if she cannot immediately do it? must I fly in a passion, and violently bear down all before me, because I am the stronger of the two? is that the way to cherish love? As God hath appointed me 'to rule my house,' so he expects me to rule it 'with meekness of wisdom,' and to behave as one that is worthy to rule. Love is founded on esteem: but, by flying in a passion, I shew my weakness, which will neither raise me in my wife's esteem, nor tend to preserve her love to me inviolate. Yet, I persuade myself, there is a possibility of preserving conjugal love inviolate. It hath been preserved by many husbands and wives, who

have never suffered any thing to interrupt it. They are generally small matters about which married people differ; therefore, a moderate degree of thoughtfulness might easily prevent their differences. There is so much pleasure, sweetness and serenity of mind attending the constant exercise of love; and so much pain, bitterness and disquietude attending strife and discord betwixt such near relations, that the consideration thereof cannot fail to dispose prudent persons, and more especially such as fear God, to the exercise of much self-denial, patience and forbearance; yea, to much watchfulness and prayer, in order to secure the former, and avoid the latter. These, and such as these, I take to be the principal means of cherishing love, and without which, love can scarcely be maintained in a flourishing state. To which, give me leave, sir, to add a few more hints.

I would advise, that you be always as cautious of saying or doing any thing to displease your wife, as you were before marriage. Especially, if you see her ruffled by the ill behaviour of servants, which, I am afraid, will sometimes happen; or, if by any other accident;—then, is the time to be more than ordinarily upon your guard, that you say not any thing which would add to her vexation. So, likewise, if your own mind be at any time ruffled by the carelessness or frowardness of servants, be more than ordinarily careful that your wife may feel no share of your resentment. Even then, let a sight of her dispose you to meekness and love. Indeed, the more you frame yourself to be habitually mild and sweet to all, the less liable you will be to have your temper ruffled by sudden incidents. Above all, keep up the worship of God in your family, and in your closet. Let nothing interrupt your daily course of devotion. To that end, make it a rule never to stay late from home, especially if your wife be not with you. Let her company be always dearer to you than any other company. I doubt not, you will call some praying friends together, as soon as you conveniently can, after you are settled in your own house, solemnly to recommend you both to the Divine bles-

sing. If you will give me timely notice, I shall endeavour to 'throw my mite into the treasury,' which may on that occasion be laid up for you in heaven. That you may seek' and find 'the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof,' and that 'all other things may be added unto you,' are the cordial wishes of, dear sir, yours, &c. J.W.

THE DUTIES OF A WIFE.

*To Mrs. Dowler.*

DEAR COUSIN,

Kidderminster, January 18, 1754.

'The Lord hath done great things for you, [whereof you are glad.] I heartily congratulate you; for indeed, I am glad also. Perhaps you and I, and mine, are now inheriting the prayers of your good grandfather Williams: and without all peradventure, you are 'inheriting the promises.' 'Exceeding great and precious are the promises' made to 'the seed of the righteous' (such, I am persuaded, your parents were); and, particularly, the promise made to those who 'seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.' This promise, I trust is yours, and abundantly fulfilled in you. 'The judgments of God are a great deep:' how little did you, or any of your friends, understand his awful dispensation in removing the Rev. J. Freeland! Now, you understand a little more of it. How graciously hath he filled your 'mouth with laughter, and your tongue with singing!' He hath 'turned your mourning into joy,' he hath 'comforted you, and made you rejoice from your sorrow!' 'Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.' But, while you consider the psalmist's exhortation as belonging to you, let me caution you to rejoice only in the Lord. My dear cousin, you are now as a 'city' that is 'set on a hill.' Many eyes are upon you, and be sure of this, many will 'watch for your halting.' Expect envy to 'shoot her arrows, even bitter words,' and every little mistake in your conduct to be magnified into a crime, and some of your most innocent expressions to be perverted into, or interpreted to mean, what is most offensive. It will be your wisdom therefore, not to place too much of your

happiness in the commendation of fellow mortals ; then will you be the less sensible of their reproaches. They are memorable lines in Addison's Cato—

“ 'Tis not in mortals to command success :

But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it.”

Think it enough to have deserved commendation, though you go without it. Solomon says—‘A good man shall be satisfied from himself.’ So shall a good woman. Draw your happiness from a conscious sense of the Divine approbation. Labour to ‘commend yourself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God ;’ but, if that cannot be done, rest satisfied, that God will, in his own time, ‘bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noon-day.’ By all means always keep on good terms with your husband. ‘Submit yourself to him, as unto the Lord.’ It is the duty of every wife : it is doubly yours. It had been your duty, had your fortune been ten times superior to his. You are now bound to it by the additional ties of gratitude. Never dispute any point with him, nor go beyond a mild and gentle persuasion. It is no less your interest than duty to please him. It is the only way to secure his love, and the surest way to have your own will. Whilst he sees you make it your study to please him, he never will think he can do too much to please you. Please him, therefore, in reason, and out of reason. Every man hath his foibles, and I have mine. We are apt to run into some or other little indulgences, or gratifications, customs, modes and forms, which are not always so pleasing to our wives, as to ourselves. No doubt, you will find Mr. Dowler possessed of some of these, and tenacious of them. In such a case, be sure never to thwart him. If any thing should appear imprudent in his conduct, you will think of some gentle method to give him a view of it : but in whatever is perfectly innocent, never give him the least uneasiness, nor so much as wish he would refrain from it. I wish I could persuade you to pray with him sometimes, in your turn, as well as he with you. I know nothing you can do, which hath a more direct tendency to cherish and maintain con-

jugal love. Some other hints I might have added, but you need them not. What I have said, I must entreat you to believe, proceeds not from any suspicion that you will behave otherwise; but, from the abundant love of, dear cousin, your truly affectionate uncle, &c. J. W.

THE HISTORY OF POOR DANIEL, &c.

*To the Rev. T. Randall.*

REV. FRIEND,

Kidderminster, Feb. 25, 1754.

I communicated your scheme at large to your Rev. brother, and my very worthy friend, Mr. Darracott, who shewed it to my brother, R. Pearsall; and, last week, I had a letter from the former, in which are these words—"I read your last letter to your worthy brother, who approves of Mr. Randall's scheme, and thinks it would be well for him to print something upon the subject. I do not know whether we shall not educate Daniel on the plan. The only difficulty is his numerous, poor family, and decrepit wife."

Before I proceed, let me give you a brief history of this Daniel, whose surname I do not at present recollect. He is a poor man, who works at the anvil, but in what branch of the iron-work I know not, about one mile beyond Wellington. Twelve or fourteen years ago, he was an active young fellow, and one of John Bunyan's *captain sinners*, being a ringleader at bull-baitings, bear-baitings, and all manner of riotous practices. He feared not God, nor regarded man; and though his family was then but small, he half-starved them by his extravagances. His constant practice on the Lord's-day was to lie a-bed all the morning; and after dinner, according as the season and the weather might be, either to go and lie upon the bed, or under some hedge; but went to no church whatever. One Lord's-day, in summer, perhaps ten years ago, having filled his belly, he laid himself down on a bank in his own garden: but his couch being somewhat uneasy to him, he turned himself on his back to the other side; in doing which, taking in, though undesignedly, a glance of the bright canopy of the sky, a thought, sudden as a flash of lightning, and doubtless

as strong, darted into his mind and conscience---that God from above saw him, and saw all the wickednes of his heart and practice. This made him restless, so that by and by he turned himself back again, and took another glance, which wounded him afresh, sharpened his reflections, and made him more restless. Fain he would have smothered his convictions, but could not; neither could he rest, remain, nor lie still. Up he got, stung with horror and remorse, and knew not for a time how to dispose of himself. At that very moment, he heard the bell toll to church; and, in hopes to get a little present ease, determined to go thither. As he came out of the garden, he called to his wife---“Wife, I am going to church.” “Ay,” she replied, “what go to church for?” He made no reply, but went to church. There he was very uneasy, and found no relief. All that week, he was like poor Christian, in the beginning of the Pilgrim’s Progress, particularly when he was under mount Sinai, and his burden at the heaviest. He had heard of Mr. Darracott, the presbyterian parson, and of some extraordinary effects of his ministry upon the lives of some who had been almost as bad as himself. He, therefore, came to a resolution, next Sabbath, to go and hear him; and this gave him a little mitigation of his pain. When meeting-time came, he was ready; but, impudent as he had been in sinning, was ashamed to be seen going into a meeting-house. At last, after many a struggle, he mixed himself with a knot of poor men, who stood talking together before the house, and slipped in with them. There it pleased God to inflame the wound, and then apply the *balm of Gilead*. He attended Mr. Darracott from that time, and his profiting appeared to all. The first time I saw him was in the year 1746, when his pastor, knowing beforehand of my coming, had invited him, and three or four more lively Christians, to spend an evening with me. We spent some hours in singing and prayer, Daniel being appointed to conclude the service, which he did with all the marks of undissembled piety, distinguishing humility, and indeed, an uncommon fluency, as well as

fervency, so that I was more taken with him than with any other. As much had been forgiven him, so he loved much;\* and, after having continued constant in prayer many years, and that not only in his own family and closet, but upon every other occasion;-- as, if any neighbour or friend were sick, or under lively impressions or awakenings, or the like; at last he found himself strongly inclined to endeavour to do good to the souls of such, by giving them a word of exhortation in private houses. At this, many were offended, at the same time that numbers were pleased and edified. Mr. Darracott, at first, knowing his sincerity and good abilities, did not discourage him: but, after a while, fearing what consequences might ensue, wrote to me, scarcely a twelvemonth ago: imagining that a word from me would have considerable weight with him, he desired me to write to Daniel, and to discourage his proceeding; and, to instigate me the more thereto, inclosed me a letter from my brother Pearsall, in which he had strenuously discouraged the thing. After looking up to God, I set pen to paper, but found I could not absolutely discourage him. All I could do was, to lay down premises, or conditions, of which he himself was to be sole judge, and advise him, if he were conscious of such and such, then to go on in God's name, and fear no discouragement or opposition; but, if otherwise, then to desist. This, I inclosed to my friend Darracott, unsealed, that he might either deliver or suppress it, according as he approved or disapproved. He delivered it; and it strengthened Daniel's hands; and from time to time, Mr. Darracott has written to me, that Daniel goes on well. He owns to me, in his last of the 13th inst. that he is now a great blessing, and he hopes will be greater. I have lost or mislaid a letter Daniel sent me, in answer to mine, which pleased me much, and was highly satisfactory to me. As far as I remember, it was to this effect;---that whilst he was working hard at his trade, important texts of Scripture, were, as he imagined, clearly explained to him, and his thoughts were led with the greatest ease into their

\* Luke vii. 47.

several connections and divisions, together with the several inferences and conclusions deducible from them; so that he could not forbear asking himself---Whence and why is this? Nor, could he forbear thinking it might be profitable to others, to communicate to them such trains of reasoning and discourse as did frequently thus occur to him: Thus he was at first inclined to give a word of exhortation, but in a private way only; and he now seems averse to go out farther than he is at present engaged. So much for honest Daniel.

We had formerly, before my existing, but after Mr. Baxter was ejected by the act of uniformity, one Mr. Hieron for our vicar, a jolly, facetious man, but sound in the faith. He was going to church one Lord's-day morning, when it was extremely cold, stormy weather, and was overtaken by one of his neighbours, who shivering; said to him---"It's very cold, Sir." "Oy," replied the parson, full-mouthed---"God's as good as his word still." The other gazed on him, not apprehending his drift, or what he referred to, and asked him what he meant? "Mean?" replied he, "why, He promised, above three thousand years ago, and still he makes his word good, that 'while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat,' 'shall not cease.'" So say I. God is a prayer-hearing God still. Within these fourteen months, we have been favoured here with numerous instances thereof, two of which are very recent. Mrs. Fawcett's life (a dear, valuable woman) had been given us more than once, though we prayed and hoped against hope, for the physician had given up all hope. About a fortnight ago, she was seized with a putrid fever, and at the same time pleuritic. Her case was judged desperate. Mr. Fawcett called together a number of us, and we spent several hours in earnest intercession, yet with all submission. For my own part, I had uncommon enlargement, in begging that she might be cheered with Divine consolations, that she might know whom she had believed, and in the confidence of faith her soul might 'magnify the Lord.' This was Thursday evening, the 14th of January. Next morn-

Æt. 62.

ing, she seemed to be dying; but revived before night. Saturday, she heard my voice, talking to Mr. Fawcett in the kitchen, and sent her nurse to ask me to come up to her. I went up and sat down by her bed-side; but, how was my heart ravished to hear her tell, though in broken accents, what God had done for her soul! When nature seemed ready to expire, and she had cheerfully resigned her husband, her children, her soul into the hands of Christ she was filled 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' and it was to her the most pleasant hour she had ever known. She has been recovering ever since.

I told you before, what opposition has been made to our rebuilding a house for God, and that several of our most wealthy men withdrew their shoulders from the work; and, that we had, nevertheless, gathered among ourselves about 600*l.* besides 100*l.* more we had in the bank. The top-stone has been laid on many weeks, and the inside work is vigorously carried on; but the money being all expended, and a computation being made, it appeared that we should want 400*l.* more to finish it. We were loth to be troublesome to other churches, and determined to call together the principal subscribers, all that had subscribed more than 40*s.* and try how much more we could raise among ourselves; but, first to seek the Lord by prayer, in whose hands are the hearts of all men. Accordingly, after a number of us had spent some hours in prayer last Monday morning, about twenty or more were invited to meet in the evening. Some of our friends were out of town, and others could not come: however, near twenty met; and, after Mr. Fawcett had opened the occasion of our meeting by a short, pertinent prayer, we animated each other to the work, and in less than an hour, more than 240*l.* was subscribed; and a pleasure it was to see so many offer willingly. We are now going from house to house, and meet with no small encouragement, so that 'the wall' will probably 'be built,' though 'in troublous times.' I doubt not, it would have pleased you to hear us that morning laying our substance, as well as ourselves, at the Divine footstool, disclaiming

all propriety in them, claiming only the office and title of his stewards, and desiring him to tell us, how much of our substance we should lay out this way: I think such a spirit and temper well worth praying for; and our success herein, a gracious answer to prayer.

You will think me a busy man, when I have assured you, that I have filled up every half hour I could rescue from more necessary business, in writing to you, ever since the date of the first page; and it is now the evening of March the 6th: if I do not finish it now, perhaps it may lie by a week longer. I have sometimes wondered to see in what a close succession persons have dropped in who have had business to transact with me, and which, in the absence of my partner, who is on a long journey, I could not commit to any other hand. It has sometimes been very burdensome to me, and the more so, because I really think I do not love the world, nor the things of the world. A sense of duty, chiefly, reconciles me to it:---‘Six days shall work be done.’ I consider it as a mercy to have profitable business to manage; and another, to have a capacity to manage it. One thing which has taken up a good deal of my time of late is a dispute, or contest, betwixt two brothers-in-law, who are partners in trade, both of them members of our church, and both good men; but not so good as they should be, nor their passions yet duly mortified. The dispute is about *meum et tuum*: each is certain that *his* claim is just; and yet, they clash not a little. They have fixed upon a kinsman of mine and myself as arbitrators in the case; one of them hath been with me a good while this afternoon, and I wished him gone a good while before he went away. At last, of his own accord, he changed the subject, and then his conversation made me amends for my time and trouble. There is something in it so uncommon, that I think it worth relating to you, for the sake of which I have thus introduced it:—

He is a jolly, well-looking man, not very acute, yet a thinking, plodding man, and, by close attention to business, has far outdone many of sharper wit, and has

gained a competent fortune. He is near fifty, and yet, though he has sat under the sound of the gospel all his days, and has been Mr. Fawcett's fast friend ever since he came among us, and well pleased with his ministrations, he seems not to have felt the power of the Word, nor to have experienced any remarkable change till last year. It was in June, as he tells me, that he was coming from Bewdley, which is but two miles; and, as he rode by himself, these questions were impressed on his mind with as much power as if he had heard a voice, saying to him—"Sinner, whither art thou going? Why wilt thou not come to the Saviour, who stands ready with open arms to receive thee?" This impressed his mind vastly beyond any thing he had ever experienced before, and swallowed up all his thoughts, so that he cried out, in a perfect rapture—"Lord, I come unto thee, and give up myself to thee with my whole heart." All the way home, his heart was hot within him, full of workings of the warmest devotion; and when he was come home, he retired into his chamber, and spent two hours in religious exercises, praying earnestly, that this begun good work might not go off. Nevertheless, his fervour gradually abated, but, at times, was again renewed, particularly one Lord's-day, whilst the Lord's Supper was administered; he, not then being a communicant, was reading "Doolittle on the Lord's Supper," at home, when 'the love of God' was 'shed abroad' in his heart, and he felt its drawing power to such a degree, that he thought none of those who were at the Lord's table could enjoy more sensible communion with God than he was favoured with. It was no less remarkable, that he had the teachings of the Spirit one whole night, which held his eyes waking, and brought to his mind many Scriptures he had been little conversant with. A remarkable change appears in the man, and he hath since been taken into the communion of our church with general satisfaction.

But now, I *must* conclude. May you and I frequently experience such gales of grace: and may they who sit under your ministry, both younger and elder, experience the like; then, will they be your 'joy and crown of

rejoicing.' A fatal spirit of slumber seems to possess the body of Dissenters and their ministers too generally, though, blessed be God, there are exceptions. My kinsman writes me from Kendal, that he heard a minister, last Lord's-day, read his prayer in the pulpit. The little remnant should cry mightily after a departing God, and not let him go. Alas! that the wise virgins should slumber, as well as the foolish. Your letters are always profitable, and therefore, acceptable to, dear sir, yours in the best bonds,

J. W.

HIS 'FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH.'

*To Mr. Joseph Green.*

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, March 2, 1754.

You are careful about our secular interest; I thank you for it. But still, my friend, still it runs in my mind, and there let it run, and that too every day of my life, that—'One thing is needful.' All other things here below are trifles in comparison therewith; and He that searcheth my heart knows they are so in my estimation and affections.

Let me tell you, that last night, agreeably to the apostle's direction—'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another,' I met an assembly of forty or fifty Christians, and after prayer, read to them an excellent sermon, preached by my brother Pearsall nearly twenty-seven years ago,\* from these words—'My beloved is mine.' I say again, it was an excellent sermon.' It warmed my heart, and I believe many others. I have not yet lost the good savour of it. I can say, in the confidence of faith, through the riches of divine grace—Christ Jesus is '*my Beloved.*' I love him more than I love my life, or any thing else. He 'is mine;' 'my Lord and my God,' my Saviour, my Friend, my All-in-all: 'And I am his;' his devoted servant and subject. I know, that at the last great day he will set me at his right hand, and reckon me among his brethren! I would not for the world be without this joyful assurance. It is more to me, and does more for

\* See page 55.

me than a thousand worlds could, were I the sovereign of them all.

Now, my friend, I would ask you—Is Christ *yours*? Is he *your* Beloved?—Can you part with all for him, rather than be separated from him? If not, he is none of yours; but answer it to your own conscience. ‘My heart’s desire and prayer to God for’ you ‘is, that’ you ‘might be saved;’ and that in the mean time you may be happy on earth in the love of God: this, I can truly say, is the worst harm wished you by, dear Sir, yours, &c. J. W.

LONGING DESIRES AFTER GOD.

*Saturday Night, March 9, 1754.*—Welcome the approaching Sabbath! Come, O come, thou Lord of the Sabbath; and take possession of a heart, which gladly empties itself of every care, of every vanity, to make room for such a glorious guest, for such a gracious Lord! What a day of cares and cumber hath this been! What days and weeks of hurry and business have I had! Thou knowest, Lord, this is not what my soul chooses. Thou knowest I do not love the world, nor the things of the world; but, thou hast made it my duty for a season to be conversant in them, and busied; and I must submit. Other employment suits my inclination better; and is far more delightful, more profitable. This soul of mine was never made for earth and earthly things; she can neither feed upon its dainties, nor wear its *thick clay*. I find “nothing” here below “that suits my large desires,” nothing that can fill them. Lord, nothing can do this but a sense of thy love. It is not enough that thou lovest me, but I must know it, and be able to say with Paul, that—‘Jesus Christ loved me, and gave himself for me’ Thou knowest, Lord, how I longed to have done with the world, before I could empty my hands of it this evening, that so I might come to thee. ‘My soul thirsted for thee,’ and was in pain. ‘My heart panted after thee, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks.’ I would not have any company so dear to me as thine, or any conversation so delightful to me as communion with thy blessed self. One smile of thine is better to me than

thousands of gold and silver, ten thousand times dearer to me than the smiles of any mortal, even of the wife of my bosom: she is not my God, is not my soul's felicity: she hath my heart, indeed, but only in subordination to thee. I trust I can say—

“ Jesus hath all my powers possess  
My hopes, my fears, my joys ;  
He, the dear Sov'reign of my breast,  
Shall still command my voice.”

I desire to be wholly thine, and to look upon all I have as thine. I am not a proprietor, and I desire to be no proprietor of any thing below the sun, no, not so much as of myself. ‘I am not my own, for I am bought with a price.’ Oh! what a price!

“ Though curious to compute,  
Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum,  
It's value, vast, ungrasp'd by finite minds,  
For ever hides and glows in the Supreme.”—YOUNG.

Thou hast given me riches, but they are not mine: Thou hast entrusted me with much, but to thee I am accountable for all. I have consecrated, and am daily consecrating, my all to thee, whose it is. ‘Though riches increase,’ let me not set my heart upon them,’ and I trust, through grace I do not. Let me ‘be rich in good works.’ Let me never withhold from thee whatever thou requirest of me. Let me believe thy word, and rely upon thy faithfulness. ‘Of thine own,’ let me be always ‘ready to give unto thee, not grudgingly,’ but cheerfully; ‘for thou lovest a cheerful giver.’ And, whatever I give to thy church, or thy poor, let me give to thee, ‘let me do it as unto the Lord.’ Thou hast a right to take away the riches thou hast entrusted me with; and, by a turn of thy hand thou canst do it. How easily canst thou turn my flowing prosperity into deep adversity! and, how, know I, whether thou wilt not do it. O my soul, how could I bear such a trial as this? What if the Lord should, for the trial of my faith, and to get himself glory, see meet to reduce me to poverty, to disgrace, to want, or shut me up in a prison! Could I trace his hand therein, and justify him in all? Could I think

such 'ways of the Lord' to be mercy and truth' to me? Could I 'humble myself under his mighty hand?' Could I 'bless the name of the Lord,' when he 'takes away,' as well as when he 'gave?' Could I enjoy adversity, and myself, therein, because 'it is the Lord,' and because his will is done? Could "I tread the world beneath my feet," and 'take joyfully the loss of all things, knowing that I have in heaven a better and more enduring substance?' Could I think it enough to be 'rich towards God,' and set myself the more to seek his presence, to cultivate his favour, to live a life of devout meditation and communion with God,' 'rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God?' No. I cannot do any of these things; yet, 'I can do' them all 'through Christ strengthening me.' Let me but hear him say—'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be;' let him but 'shed abroad his love in my heart by the Holy Ghost,' and by his witness, seal my adoption; then, in whatever state, 'my soul shall magnify the Lord, and my spirit shall rejoice in God my Saviour:' but, 'without him I can do nothing.'

PARENTAL ANXIETY FOR DEPARTED INFANTS.

*March 18, 1754.*—I took a walk in the twilight of this evening in the church-yard, to converse with the dead. As I was walking and musing, I observed a poor man, who formerly had been one of my servants, with his eyes fixed upon four short graves, all in a row, near to my walk. When I came up to him, he desired to ask me a question. His question was this—Whether I thought the children of wicked parents, dying in their infancy, suffered for the wickedness of their parents? In answer to which, I only told him, that the Scripture says---'The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy?' from whence it appears, that the piety of parents is of advantage to their children. Immediately I pursued my walk: but, when I came back to the place, he stopped me again, and told me—he had

four children buried there, and with an air of deep concern repeated the former question, applying it to himself and his children, owning, that he looked upon himself as a very wicked man, and was distressed with fears lest they should fare the worse for his wickedness. I told him, that we know very little of the state of infants dying in infancy, since the Scripture is almost silent on that head; and, asked him---Why he was not rather concerned about the salvation of his own soul, since the Scripture expressly says---‘As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?’ ‘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, for he will abundantly pardon.’ I plied him with many more texts of the same import, and again pursued my walk. He then left the place: and, when in my third walk I had passed briskly by him, I heard him running hastily after me; I therefore stopped, whilst he told me how often he had come up to look at the graves of his children, and the distressing fears he had for them, acknowledging freely, that he had been much addicted to drunkenness, and too often had been guilty of swearing; but, except these, he had not been chargeable with any gross immorality. I then laboured to convince him, how poor a pretence it was—that he had not wronged any one, when he had withheld from God his Maker what was his due in numberless instances, some of which I enumerated to him, and gave him the best advice I could, and then again was pursuing my walk. At parting he said, he was ashamed to presume to walk with me, and indeed I was not very willing to be interrupted, and so I walked alone to the farther end of the church-yard; but had many relenting thoughts towards the poor man. However, I passed by him again; and again he ran hastily after me. I then stopped, and talked to him awhile; and I encouraged him to walk with me as it was too cold to stand still

Several times he wept, or seemed to weep. We walked and talked together, till it began to be dark. He accompanied me to my own door, and then seemed loth to part with me: so I took him in, and led him up to my chamber, where I made him sit down, and asked him many close questions, to which he replied in a penitential strain. I encouraged, cautioned, warned, instructed, and exhorted him, and, at his request, prayed with him, inviting him to come to me again. He went away very thankful, and seemingly penitent: yet, I cannot but fear he will return to his drunken companions, which he owns have hitherto extinguished many good impressions and inclinations. And yet, who knows? I have the satisfaction, however, of having used, and of purposing farther to use, my poor feeble endeavours to recover and 'save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.' Help me, help me, O my God!

## THE FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN MINISTER.

*To the Rev. R. Darracott.*

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, March, 18, 1754.

In reading yours, I cannot but observe, what a pleasure it is to feel symptoms of approaching death, and yet also, a glimpse of glory. Who would not have endured your fainting sweats, for the sake of having, at the same time, the bosom of Jesus to lean upon, and 'the love of God to be shed abroad in our hearts?' I congratulate you, my dear friend, upon such a rich and renewed experience of the certainty of your title to mansions in the skies, and such a pledge of the presence of your Shepherd with you, when you shall indeed pass 'through the valley of the shadow of death.' I congratulate you upon the comfortable prospect your spiritual spouse, a 'church of the living God,' affords you. I consider under-shepherds as bridegrooms to their particular churches. I, therefore, think such should be very solicitous to discharge well the extensive duties of a good husband and parent. You do right in making personal addresses to each of your flock, and praying with each. I wonder not that you have always found such work

attended with great pleasure, which it could hardly be, without some success. I wonder how any spiritual father can content himself in the neglect of it, if he have ability and opportunity. How can he be a good husband, who does not love his spouse? and how can he love her, if he do not love her children? and how does he sufficiently show his love to those children, with whom he never converses, or into whose state he never inquires? What an awful view does this give of the work of Christ's ministers!

I heard a most excellent sermon at ——, from the Rev. ———, and now I will tell you something I heard from him in conversation. The first time he was to preach as one of the prebendaries, he was well apprised that among his hearers would be the bishop and several doctors. He found carnal-self began to plead for *moderation*, at the same time that the new-man earnestly pleaded for *zeal*. The former cried---“What occasion have you to run the risk of displeasing these great men, and making them your enemies! You may preach so, as not to contradict their tenets, nor the Gospel; and, why should you not become ‘all things to all men?’ Give them a moral discourse, and it will suffice: but, if you advance the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, you will make yourself the object of their displeasure, perhaps of their contempt and ridicule. You know not what the consequence may be.” The latter pleaded thus:---“Away with these slavish fears of man. ‘One is your master, even Christ.’ If you ‘yet please men,’ how are you ‘the servant of Christ?’ Will you dare to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Will not he then be ashamed of you, when his favour and applause will be more to you than all the world? Do not consult with flesh and blood: Preach now, as if you were sure this will be the last sermon you ever shall preach. How do you know but some one precious soul, at least, may be awakened to cry out—‘What must I do to be saved?’ ‘Wo is unto you, if you preach not the gospel of Christ.’” To this, carnal-self again replied, and the new-man rejoined. The dispute lasted many days, and each of the contending

parties provided itself with a sermon, nor was he determined, when going to preach, which of them had the ascendancy. He took both sermons with him into the pulpit; and there, was earnest with God to direct him. He hoped that his prayer was heard and answered, because he felt an undaunted courage and resolution; so that after his public prayer he was enabled to 'speak boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus.' When he was drawing near the conclusion, a woman not far from the pulpit cried out—"I cannot bear it. I cannot bear it." He was at a loss, at present, what could be the meaning of such a cry; for, he was not thundering out the terrors of the law, but blowing the silver trumpet of the Gospel, and displaying the blessedness of those who 'win Christ, and' are 'found in him.' He afterward understood, that the woman had been 'labouring and heavy laden,' and had then found 'rest' in Christ, but that the overflowing of her joy in the Lord had extorted from her that outcry. On the whole, he was resolved to persevere in such a strain of preaching. He also added, that having, in that instance, obtained the victory over the slavish fear of man, the same Divine grace enabled him to maintain it ever since. How little reason have they who 'trust in the Lord' to 'be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass!' I am yours,

J. W.

DOUBTFUL WAYS COMMITTED TO GOD.

*Lord's-day Morning, March 24, 1745.*—Hail, sacred morning! Oh! that my life were one eternal Sabbath. I trust it will be so ere long: but what I am to do, and what I am to bear, in the mean time, God only knows: and, well he knows; for nothing shall befall me, but what is of his special ordering and appointing. This thought satisfies me as to all future events and contingencies. 'A sparrow falls not to the ground without him.' 'He numbers the hairs of my head.' How securely may I trust myself in his hands, whilst I keep in his way! how solicitous should I be to keep in his way, and not like Jonah, desert the way prescribed for me! Shall I keep in his way,

in the *journey* I have before me? Have I his call to undertake it? I trust I have. He knows what temptations I shall be exposed to, and how to deliver me out of them. May his glory be uppermost in my heart, my aims, and my endeavours all the way. Lord give me wisdom, give me courage, give me from time to time what I shall speak. Let me speak for thee. Whilst I have a tongue to use, let me use it for thee. By my speech, by my whole conduct, let me not disparage, but recommend thy good ways. Let my temper be cheerful, but not light and vain; grave, but not morose or churlish. What if I should [in the coach] be confined to company, among whom may be a profane swearer, or one of a filthy conversation, and impudent therein? How should I treat such a one? What if any be a scoffer at religion and religious persons? The Lord give me wisdom, 'meekness of wisdom,' that I may not exasperate such, but win them by my conversation. Sinful anger is too apt to rise in such cases; may it be totally suppressed? Pious indignation out of a respect to the glory of God, is a better temper, and even that is too apt to degenerate into sinful anger, flaming out from a regard to self. Let such corrupt conversation always excite in me a holy zeal for the glory of God, an abhorrence of the sin, and a religious care that I be not partaker therein; and therefore, let these be always mingled with tender pity for the sinner; and, with thankfulness for distinguishing grace to myself. Lord, I would be where thou wouldst have me to be, and no where else. Let me 'not go hence, if thy presence go not with me.' Lead thou the way, and I will follow where my Father leads. How shall I spend so many days and weeks, agreeably to myself and thee, where I can be so little alone;

"In secret silence of the mind,

My heaven, and there my God, I find!" WATTS.

Oh! let me not do or say any thing whereby thou mayest be dishonoured, and thy good ways discredited. 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit;' for 'thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.'

## ADVANTAGES OF PREACHING EXTEMPORE.

*To the Rev. Richard Jenkins.\**

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, July 6, 1754.

I have lately been reading as under. They are extracts from a sermon preached before the reverend presbytery of Newcastle, America; Oct. 11, 1752, by the Rev. Samuel Davis of Hanover, in Virginia;† who will, perhaps, call on us next month on his return from Scotland.

From Isaiah, lxii. 1. 'For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, &c.' he takes occasion to mention some measures which ministers should pursue for the advancement of religion; "Particularly," he saith, "we should make proper preparations for our public ministrations." Under this head he has these remarks among others:—"A barren genius, diligently cultivated, will produce more useful fruits than the wild, spontaneous productions of a luxurious genius suffered to run waste: and the best foundation laid in youth will soon become a scene of desolation, unless the structure be carried on, and the wastes of time repaired by diligent study during after-life." "Success very much depends on the clearness and affectionate solemnity of our discourses;—they must be clear to enlighten the mind, and solemn and pathetic to affect the heart." "An undue attention to the little niceties of accurate composition does often enfeeble a discourse; for excessive refinements and languid delicacies render it far less useful, and far less graceful, than the expatiating, extempore thoughts of a mind deeply impressed with eternal things." "Take care neither to degrade the majestic truths of the gospel by an indecent, slovenly dress; nor, to divest them of their awful solemnity by pert theatri-

\* More than forty years dissenting minister at Bromsgrove, where, about the year 1748, he succeeded the Rev. J. Greeland. He had no regular education, but was a sensible and studious man, of an excellent character, and so catholic "that when a minister of any note preached at the other meeting, he used to take his little congregation to hear him." See a note by the late Rev. Samuel Palmer: to p. 191, vol. ii. of Orton's Letters to Dissenting Ministers.

† Afterward, President of the College, in New Jersey.

cal levities, and beauish gauderies." "Affect not to extemporize to such an excess as to utter a chaos of embryo-thoughts, maimed arguments and rude expressions; or, a huddle of passionate reveries without matter or method; and do not so scrupulously adhere to any previous plan as to admit no extempore amplifications, or occasional excursions: for, it is attested by the experience of all who have made the trial, that in the fervour of public addresses a variety of emphatic and pertinent thoughts will occur, which might be in vain sought for in the coolness of private studies." "A warm heart has always a fruitful invention, and will spontaneously suggest sentiments more striking to the populace, and even to hearers of taste, than premeditated and laboured expressions." "It deprives an auditory of much pleasure, to suppress the devout sallies of a transported heart, lest there should be any deviation from the preconceived plan of a discourse." "When a thought flashes on the mind it affects us more than those which are familiarized by meditation: and hence, sudden irruptions of ideas in the midst of a discourse not only animate the speaker at the moment but diffuse a vigour and pathos through the remainder of his discourse: therefore, such a rigid confinement to notes, on ordinary occasions, as denies the advantageous and oratorical licence of expressing such ideas, is an ungrateful imposition to an heart that would indulge its ardour; a great obstruction to the fervour and pathos of delivery, and consequently to the success of preaching." "It is very doubtful whether the languid accuracy and effeminate nicety of some discourses can afford so much pleasure even to a polite auditory, as all ranks, except those of a squeamish delicacy, would find in discourses less correct, but animated by extempore irruptions of an affectionate zeal." "We may have occasion to preach so frequently, or so unexpectedly, that we cannot make due preparations: in this case, it is a duty, with an humble dependance on the aids of Divine grace, to preach, though at the risk of a reputation for accuracy." "In ordinary cases, the assistance of the Holy Spirit does not

supersede, but suppose, the exertion of our powers in proper preparations; yet at times we may, without presumption, humbly pray for and expect it, though we have made little or no preparation; and we shall not be disappointed:" "And, at those times, if we should not conciliate to ourselves so much applause, we may do more service to the souls of men than at other times by the most elaborate discourses." "Indeed, it is no impossible task\* for one to whom the great truths of the gospel are familiarized by reading, meditation, and experience, to deliver an extempore discourse which may be very profitable to the populace, and not justly offensive to persons of superior attainments." Again—"Let us generally insist on those subjects which are purely evangelical, or peculiar to the religion of Jesus."

Why need I go on transcribing, when you will probably see the sermon. I do not grudge the pains I have been at, for I think the sentiments weighty and well expressed; and I could not but wish every minister would practise agreeably. The author certainly states his own experience when he seems to appeal to that of all who have made the trial he alludes to: and I really think it has, in some instances, been mine, when I have been repeating the sermons of different ministers. Mr. Spilsbury used frequently before sermon to make this request—"Lord, help us rightly to conceive:" and I remember Dr. Watts, in his "Humble Attempt," &c. earnestly presses on ministers not to read all they deliver—"Dare," says he, "sometimes to deliver a sentiment warm from the heart;" or to that purpose. Dr. Doddridge told me seventeen years ago, that he inculcated the rule on his pupils after this manner:—"There are few tradesmen of any note, but can talk pertinently, and in a proper style, for a length of time, on any branch of their business which they thoroughly understand. How much more may a minister, when he has well studied and digested his subject, and ranged his thoughts under proper heads, be supposed capable of uttering many things with propriety of expression, while his people are before him, which he could not think of when alone!"—Give me leave, sir, to add

this is agreeable to my way of thinking for these forty years; for a longer period than which, having a most awful sense of eternal things, I often wondered at some of our most serious Christians, and even ministers, that they could talk so coolly about things of everlasting weight. I wondered ministers did not talk more feelingly in the pulpit;—

“Preaching as if they ne'er should preach again;  
And as a dying man, to dying men.”—BAXTER.

I still think that a deeper sense of the infinite weight of eternal things would help any minister, at the present day, to preach better; and would contribute much to the fruitfulness of his invention and the fluency of his tongue when engaged in the solemn service: but how shall he acquire this deeper sense? Certainly, ‘every good gift’ ‘cometh down from the Father of lights;’ therefore, prayer must be the means; earnest, importunate prayer, joined with frequent devotional meditation. Let a minister preach, with the greatest seriousness, every sermon to himself before he preaches it to his people: first get his own heart warmed, and then he will be more likely to warm others;—‘For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ Here it may not be improper to take notice of a passage or two in the sermon, which is wrought into the body of what I have transcribed, but which I then passed over:—“While our minds are intensely engaged in the abstracted speculative contemplation of a subject, we are too ready to forget its awful reference to ourselves, and its influence on our eternal state; hence, study sometimes deadens us into senseless stoics, instead of firing our hearts with those tender passions which are so graceful in Christian orators.”—“The best way to remedy this evil, and to reap the advantage of preparation for the public, is to diffuse a spirit of devotion through our studies; to direct them to proper objects; and to avoid extremes!” Somewhat to the same purpose I remember to have read in a work of Mr. Baxter’s, that when in his studies he found his heart dull and out of frame, he found the best course was to read awhile, in some such author as Sibbs, Hildersham, Dodd,

Perkins, Bolton, &c. and when by mixing prayer with his reading, his heart was warmed with their devout sentiments, he found that he could go on with renewed alacrity in his studies, and to much better purpose.

Now, sir, what do you think I have in view by all this? Not to make you preach worse, but better: not more to your people's heads, but to their hearts! And yet, I assure you, I do esteem you a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, diligent and laborious beyond most: but, 'who is sufficient for these things?' Not even the apostles of themselves; and they bade as fair for it as any that ever preached! The longer I live, the more I am convinced what an arduous undertaking the work of a minister is; and by far the more so, because whatever he does faithfully in his office, must run counter to the corrupt nature of the human mind; and likewise, because he is himself 'a man subject to like' imperfections 'as we are;' therefore, if there be no 'savour,' which is in too great a measure the case, in those who should be 'the salt of the earth,' 'wherewith shall it be salted?' It will grieve me, dear sir, if any thing I have written should grieve you, which I am far from intending: but the most lively need quickening; and I shall greatly rejoice if I might contribute any thing, though but at second hand, to render your work more easy to you, and thereby you more successful in your work. Surely, the hints I have borrowed, if reduced to practice, would not fail to save you much writing; and if also, the practice of them should prove the means of animating as well as exercising your faith, your love, and holy zeal, you will undoubtedly have greater satisfaction and probably greater success in your ministrations. I ask pardon for taking so much liberty; yet I think you will more than forgive me. May a double portion of the Spirit of Elijah's God be poured down on you, is the ardent prayer of, dear sir, your faithful friend, &c.

J. W.

A RECITAL OF HIS EXPERIENCE MADE USEFUL.

November —, 1754.—I spent Lord's-day, September 15, at Whitworth, under the ministry of my friend Mr.

Burgess.\* In the evening, the house he boards at was filled with people, who came, as usual, to hear him repeat the substance of what he had delivered that day. Happening to have the substance of two sermons by Mr. Darracott, in my pocket-book, on the words---‘ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink :’ it fell to my lot to read them ; after which, many stayed for the sake of religious conversation, several of whom were men of knowledge and experience, and talked pertinently of the deep things of God, while many persons sat as listeners. Something that was said gave me occasion to relate my experience of April 23, 1721, and likewise, how I obtained a satisfying, prevailing hope, as to my spiritual state, in the summer of the year 1725. Among those who were listening was, unknown to me, a pious young woman to whom my recital was blessed. I had said that, I was fully persuaded fears of hypocrisy in the renewed soul are good evidence that such fears are groundless, for a hypocrite goes on confidently, with a lie in his right hand, entertaining no fear about his state ; this might help to comfort the mind of the young woman. However, I have lately had a letter from Mr. Burgess, in which, after thanking me for my late visit, he adds, that he thanks me in particular on account of that delight it afforded to his people in general ; and some special relief it pleased the Lord to convey, by a clause in our Lord’s-day evening’s conversation, to a poor, drooping, tempted soul. “ The happy receiver,” he continues, “ of the good done, is a young woman, the brightest in my whole flock for parts and elocution, and for an extraordinary gift in prayer ; eminently zealous in reproving sin in others ; and drawing them to consideration, not only by a good example, but good advice. She had been religious from a child, and had laid up a large fund of knowledge ; and yet she was tempted to conclude herself a hy-

\* In a letter, dated May 19, 1749, Mr. Williams mentions Mr. Burgess as “ a young dissenting minister, educated under Mr. Killpatrick, at Bedworth, and fixed two years ago at Whitworth, near Rochdale.”

pocrite; yea, horrid consideration! to question the very being of a God. Not indeed, always, but in the night: for, as she told me, in the day she saw with her eyes such glaring demonstrations of a Deity, as partly forced a belief of his existence. Now, when you were telling of your being once sorely tempted to suspect yourself a hypocrite, and afterward resolutely took hold of that promise—‘Thou art my portion, O Lord,’ she reasoned thus:—If such a Christian as Mr. Williams might be so tempted, *she* might, possibly, be a real Christian, notwithstanding her hard thoughts of herself; therefore, she resolved to apply the very same remedy that you did, and say—‘Thou art *my* portion, O Lord.’ She did so, and the temptation was vanquished, and for many days she has enjoyed such extraordinary, Divine comfort, and such a clear view of God’s love to her soul, as she never before experienced, particularly in prayer; a duty she was once ready to abandon. She told me, she has cause to remember Mr. Williams as long as she lives.” Blessed be God!

PROMOTING PIETY IN A YOUNG CLERGYMAN.

*Lord’s-day, December 29, 1754.*---Quite unexpectedly it hath fallen to my lot to ride the south circuit. What a journey of mercies hath this been! I saw nothing but ‘goodness and mercy following,’ and going before me, all the way. The Lord was pleased to engage me in a remarkable piece of service at Bradford, Wilts, which indeed, was the most memorable event this journey hath produced. On Monday, Nov. the 18th, I visited my friend, Mr. Chapman, the vicar, who introduced me to the company of his genteel and pious visitors, among whom was Mr. Hart, a pious curate from Warminster, and we had almost an hour’s very agreeable conversation. Just as the company was breaking up, came in a young man, Mr. Brown, the vicar’s curate. My friend whispered me in the ear—“Go, speak to him.” I was at first backward, but, at his repeated instigation, I saluted him, and asked with an air of solemnity and confidence—*Sir, how does your soul prosper?* This, it pleased God to make the

arrow of his conviction. He seemed a little disconcerted, and replied in a languid manner. I saw him no more that night. Next morning he sent for me, just as I was going to take horse, and told me—that our conversation the preceding evening had given him a great deal of concern; that it had put him upon considering the state of his soul more than ever before, that he feared it was bad; and therefore, desired my company for a few minutes. My spirits hereby were elevated, especially when on my blessing God, and rejoicing in hope this was the ‘beginning of a good work’ in his soul. I saw the tears immediately start from his eyes. I talked with him a good while as the Lord enabled me, and then said—Come, do not let us part without prayer. Mr. Hart having happened to come in, and being of an excellent character, I would have put the office of prayer on him, but he declined it, and they both desired me to pray: so we kneeled down all three together, and the Lord ‘poured out the spirit of grace and supplications.’ I could hear the young clergyman sigh and sob frequently, which did not at all abate the fervour, or blunt the edge of my devotion. When we rose, he appeared bathed in tears, thanked me most heartily, begged the continuation of my prayers, and that I would write to him. Mr. Hart took notice, by what a particular providence he had been brought thither that day, which had detained Mr. Brown at home, who otherwise had intended to go abroad the preceding day: and, I could not but remark how I had been pressed in spirit to ride seven miles in a stormy evening, by a feeble moonlight, to reach Bradford when I did. I took the first opportunity to write to this gentleman, as he desired, and gave him the best instructions I could, and particularly persuaded him to bind himself by covenant to be the Lord’s, to write down his resolution and self-dedication, and sign it with his hand; and, begged of him to write to me at London on a given day, and freely to open his heart to me. Accordingly, I received from him an epistle, dated the 11th instant, which revived my soul. The arrow seems to stick fast, and he had done (but not before that morning)

as I had advised and persuaded him. It should seem, indeed, that nothing but the 'balm of Gilead' will heal the wound. It was an arrow from 'a bow drawn at a venture,' but an unerring, all-powerful hand carried it to the mark: 'The arm of the Lord was revealed.' Glorious grace! which could make so feeble an effort effectual to so glorious a purpose. To His name be all the praise. Let me not dare to ascribe the least part of the praise to the intention or endeavours of a worthless worm: yet, I may, I must rejoice. Heaven rejoices, and so will I. Hallelujah!—Surely, here is satisfying evidence of the workings of the Spirit of adoption. What joy hath it afforded me! and the more, because it seems an answer to prayer, when I called together some praying friends a few days before I set out on that journey. I remember my heart was drawn out in this particular request—that God would bless my conversation in that journey, and enable me to speak for him, and make it effectual to some valuable purposes. I was reading the other morning, an abstract of the life of the Rev. — Stock, in Gillies' Collections, where I noted with joy this passage—"It is no small honour for a man to win, if it were but one soul. For, to *win souls*, is to win more than the whole world is worth. What an honour is it then, to be not only a winner of souls, but a winner of such as prove winners!" I esteem this important event an instance of the greatest honour the Lord ever did me, or perhaps ever will, in this life: but, as an excellent preacher observed in my hearing, after enumerating a variety of methods the Lord ordinarily useth in bringing home souls to himself—"Any thing will do when the Lord works." To his infinite power and grace alone be all the praise. Let me not dare to arrogate to myself the least share thereof: but, as at first it was the gladness of my heart, when I saw this gentleman's tears, so his letters since have contributed to fulfil my joy. This was well worth all the expence and fatigue of the whole journey, had I no success in my secular affairs: but the Lord prospered me in these also, far beyond my expectation, and

indeed beyond what I have experienced in any one instance before: to his great name be all the praise, and at his service be all the fruits thereof.\*

THE SPIRITUAL MERCHANT.

*To the Rev. Samuel Walker, A. B.†*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Kidderminster, ———, 1754.

Mr. Darracott having kindly imparted to me what he hath heard concerning you, and will needs engage me to write to you. I am an old man: in man's account, a dissembler; in God's, I trust, a Christian. I am, also, a tradesman of no small account in this town and neighbourhood: but I trust my more beloved, because most gainful trade or traffic, lies in a far country. Grace unknown, though not unfelt, put me into this way forty-four or forty-five years ago. I was then inclined to 'seek goodly pearls;' and having, in the bloom of youth, 'found one pearl of great price,' I was willing to sell all and buy it. Finding the trade as delightful as gainful; and so copious that there was room for as many as would, to get an immense estate, without in the least rivalling, but rather benefiting each other by joint contracts; I thought to have engaged all the youth of my then acquaintance in the same, and set myself both by word and writing, to persuade them thereto, but all to little purpose. The traffic I proposed to them was, that of merchant-venturers, in things future and invisible; to which they generally preferred a poor, low retail trade in things present and visible. This no whit discouraged me.

\* The epistolary correspondence between Mr. Williams and this clergyman was kept up during the little remainder of Mr. Williams's life: and had such a valuable life been protracted to a much longer date, their correspondence would no doubt have been continued. For ever since Mr. Williams's death, this worthy clergyman retains the highest esteem for his memory, as the happy instrument of his new and divine life. And in the several parishes where Providence hath since called him to exercise his ministry, particularly in his present vicarage, he hath given abundant evidences of persevering piety, and of great faithfulness to the souls committed to him. 1778. [See *ut seq.* Jan. 11, 1756.]

† See in Middleton's *Evangelica Biographia*, vol. iv. an interesting and copious account of this pious clergyman, who was born December 16, 1714: entered on the curacy of Truro, Cornwall, in 1746; and died July 19, 1761.

My traffic is to the country beyond Jordan, and my chief correspondence with the King of Zion, a good friend to merchantmen; he first condescended to traffic with me, furnished me with the stock, made me many valuable remittances, and hath firmly assured me of an infinitely great and good inheritance, richer than both Indies, to which I am to sail and take possession, as soon as I shall be ready for it, and our mutual interest will be thereby best promoted. And I have so high an opinion of Zion's King, and can so firmly rely on his promises, that I look upon my said possession as a done thing; for, indeed, he hath confirmed his promises by many undeniable, precious pledges: therefore, although I must own my heart hath been sometimes drawn away quite too much to the foresaid pitiful, beggarly trade in things present and visible, my principal traffic, I trust, hath been, and still is, with the King of Zion. Indeed, I have a vast veneration for Him, though unseen; and, sure, I am, I have a most endeared affection for all the merchants, of whatever name, who traffic the same way.

I have been informed, Sir, that you are a great trafficker, though not of many years' standing, with my Prince; and have engaged many, and are studious of engaging all you can, to cast in their lot with you: to you, therefore, dear Sir, I heartily say—*God speed!* Have you met with no Algerine rovers! They very much infest the high seas, but fear them not: Zion's King is Sovereign of the seas, and you are under his protection, who will not fail to protect and reward you.

Now, dear Sir, I think the allegory hath run its length. What shall I say to you in plain English, without a figure? You are engaged in the best of causes, but you have thereby enraged the worst of enemies. Does not Satan roar, since you have stricken his kingdom? He certainly will roar: therefore 'take to you the whole armour of God.' Christ's gospel hath in all ages made its way with greater success by means of reproaches and persecutions. God will cause 'the wrath of men' to praise him, and will

‘restrain’ ‘the remainder’ thereof; and thus he defeats the old serpent. I doubt not but you have counted the cost: count it again, and you will certainly see reason to ‘count it all joy’ to ‘fall into divers temptations.’ Some little experience I have had of being reviled and persecuted, and of having ‘all manner of evil’ said of me ‘falsely for Christ’s sake;’ and never before that, did I so well understand the import of these promises—‘Great is your reward in heaven’—‘The trial of your faith worketh patience’—‘The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.’ May the Lord abundantly strengthen you for your work and sufferings, and all your fellow-helpers in the Lord. May ‘the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing;’ and may thousands be your ‘joy’ and ‘crown of rejoicing’ in the day of the Lord Jesus, that you have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. Excuse this freedom from a stranger; and when you can snatch an hour from more important service, favour me with a long epistle. Here are many wrestling Jacobs, to whom I shall impart what you write, who will thereby be encouraged to hold up their heads against the power of Amalek more frequently and more fixedly. In the mean time, assure yourself of the frequent but feeble intercession of your hearty well wisher for Jesus’ sake,

J. W

## HAPPY TEMPER AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

*Lord's-day Evening, January 5, 1755.*—Oh! what sweet moments have I had at the table of the Lord this day. Of a truth Jesus was there, and made me to know it. How did it warm my heart! How did my ‘heart burn within’ me! Such a season I have not enjoyed, I think, since the memorable August 26, 1744, and November 3, 1745. Adored be the glorious Master of the feast, for this token of love. To him mine eye was directed through the whole administration. ‘His name is as ointment poured forth.’ ‘He shall be to me as a bundle of myrrh:—

“For ever his dear sacred name

Shall dwell upon *my* tongue,

And Jesus and salvation be

The close of every song.”—WATTS.

## MEDITATION AMONG THE TOMBS.

*Tuesday Morning, March 4, 1755.*—Walking this morning in the church-yard, I have been considering the days of my youth ; and, particularly, reflecting on the generation which hath ever since been gathering to the generation of their fathers. This I observe, that the remembrance of one and another who were eminently humble and holy, whether rich or poor, ‘is as a precious ointment,’ it spreads a sweetness on my mind, and impresses it with a veneration for the memory of such : *they* are high in my esteem. Not so *they* who were distinguished only by their greatness, their riches, their worldly wisdom, or their sparkling wit. When I recollect my ideas of such, or read their epitaphs, I am ready to shake my head, and think---Ah! but where are they now? what is become of all their greatness and grandeur? ‘where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?’ And when I think of men of the most shining parts, but who with all their knowledge knew not the Lord, they move my pity. Some of these have left behind them writings, which excite admiration in their readers, and will do so for ages yet to come ; but, of what use is their fame for wit or learning? What a pitiable case is it, to be honoured where they are not, and despised insulted, tormented where they are? I find neither riches nor poverty, beauty nor deformity, make any difference in my estimation of the dead. Their works of piety and charity, their humbleness of mind, meekness and shining holiness, or the want of these, are the things which make the main difference in the sensations I feel, when reflecting on them. I have been considering also, why it is thus? And the chief reason I can think of is this---because the good effects of these things are abiding, when the others are vanished. These, ‘follow them,’ and are gone with them to their present state in the unseen world, and attend them in a glorious eternity. Well said the wise man, therefore,-- ‘Wisdom is the principal thing, get wisdom, and with all thy getting get under standing.’

## THE LANGUAGE OF CANAAN, &amp;c.

*To Mr. Archibald Wallace.\**

DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, May 6, 1755.

I think worldly expectations do not so much please me, or so much exhilarate my spirits, as the prospect of receiving and imparting, alternately, communications of a more interesting and important nature than any of the concerns of this short, transitory life, which I am frequently looking to the end of, not without some agreeable, and even joyful, expectation. Hearts I know are deceitful things; yet surely, I would hope I am not deceived in this—that no interest in the world lies so near my heart, as the interest of Christ Jesus our Lord; no enjoyment is so sweet, as communion with him: nor any employment so delightful as meditating, reading, hearing, writing, communing with my own heart, and conversing with our Lord's disciples, about the things relating to that world and state whither we are going which is our home and rest—the end of our faith—the salvation of our souls. Well said the wise man—'As in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man;' and, in a peculiar sense, it is true of those, who, in the apostle's sense, have been made to drink into 'one spirit.' I remember fifty years ago, when I was a school-boy, my dear father brought home with him a stranger, with whom he sat and conversed freely about the things of God; things I then knew very little of; however, I listened to their conversation; found they agreed very well, and seemed hugely pleased with each other: when he was gone, my mother asked my father who the other was, from whence he came, and whether he had any business with him? and, finding he had none, how he became acquainted with him? I shall never forget his answer—"He spoke the language of Canaan." Dear, thought I, what is that? I did not understand it then, but have thought of it a hundred times since. Souls bound for the heavenly Canaan, as they receive a new nature, and a new heart, so by degrees they acquire a new language, and, ere long, shall learn a new song.

\* Merchant, Edinburgh. He died November 20, 1769.

The first account of what you have seen of the remarkable work of grace in Cornwall, was transmitted to me by Mr. Darracott, a man who has excited a distinguished zeal, and whose labours in the Gospel have been crowned with a distinguished success above all the dissenting ministers I know in England. It came to my hand on the evening of November 6, and I was to set out next morning on the very same circuit I am going now. Whilst I was reading it, and felt my heart glow with a sacred transport, I could not but admire the kind providence which had detained me three days longer than the time I had fixed for setting out, and did not suffer me to take such a tedious journey in the depth of winter, without such a reviving cordial; I cannot tell you how much good it did both to myself and others in the process of that journey, as it furnished a topic for sweet conversation in all my interviews with pious friends, and never failed to warm my heart with love and gratitude to our glorious, compassionate Lord, and joy for the increase of his kingdom. We had been talking of it just before I was called to speak a word to the young curate, Mr. Brown; of whom I learn from Mr. Randall you have heard. That was a remarkable instance of Almighty sovereignty. The arrow sticks fast; every letter I have had from him, discovers a humble, broken, contrite heart, mourning for sin, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness. In the last, which is scarcely a fortnight ago, amidst all his complaints and longing for 'the day-spring from on high' to visit his soul, he cannot but own he is sometimes cheered with rays of light, is hoping, awaiting, for brighter manifestations of Divine love; and seems 'determined' to know and preach nothing but 'Jesus Christ and him crucified.' What an honour to be not only a winner of souls, but a winner of such as may prove winners, and indeed I am not without great hopes Mr. B. will prove a winner of souls! He mentions in his last, the great opposition the preaching of the gospel meets with at Bradford; but at the same time tells me many souls are touched, and some are crying out—'What shall we do to be saved?' Mr. Hart, a pious curate,

from Warminster, being in company when Mr. Brown and I had our first and second interviews, he begged me to call on Mr. Johnson, at Cirencester, who had been his associate at college, and endured with him cruel mockings there; and now meets with great opposition for preaching a pure gospel. I was prevented from going to Cirencester, by great floods, but out of the fulness of my heart I wrote to Mr. J. and have had a charming letter in return. His predecessor had been the incumbent sixty years; "all that time," he tells me, "none other doctrine had been heard by that numerous people, but justification by works, and *that* merely by going to church, taking the sacrament, and giving alms: That when *he* first appeared among them, preaching 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,' they stared, they stood amazed, and, as many of them have owned to him since, knew not what to make of it; but that, blessed be God! all is not lost, many are pricked to the heart, and some adopting the jailer's question:" shall we not then hope and pray, that as he is breaking up fallow ground, he will reap a glorious harvest? I hope to see the dear man before I am a week elder, and, together with him, be comforted by the mutual faith of both. I hope also to see Mr. Brown, the son of my old age. Thus you see, dear sir, I use an unreserved freedom in writing to you, and should be more glad to converse with you face to face. Mr. Randall, I thank him, invited me some time ago to Edinburgh; and who knows what may be in the womb of Providence? but I am an old man in my <sup>i</sup>grand climacteric; yet, through the goodness of God I can say, as Caleb does, *mutatis mutandis*, Joshua xiv. 10, and indeed the joy of the Lord is 'my strength,' he hath poured on me such a profusion of goodness, that he hath almost left me nothing to ask, but an humble, thankful heart, and a fruitful old age; hitherto, I enjoy a sound, vigorous constitution, and flowing prosperity; I have the joy to see my three children walking in the truth, and all happily married. More than that, never was there an old man more esteemed and loved by a more pious, and a more dutiful

wife. Above all, oh! the matchless grace, there hath scarcely been a day these thirty years, in which I could not 'in the confidence of faith say---My God! my Jesus! my Beloved; my Friend, my All in all! The good Lord keep me always humble, always lying at the feet of the adorable Jesus,---at the foot of his cross! I know I am safe no where else. I know I am safe there. Lying there, I humbly dare, in his name and strength, to defy all the legions of the prince of darkness. Blessed be his name, he enables me daily to consecrate all I have and am to him. I have no prosperity but in him; he is my God; but, I am not my own; my wife, my children, my substance, are not mine; he may do what he pleases with them. Oh! may this be written for ever in the imagination, on the living table of my heart, in indelible characters. I greatly rejoice, dear sir, to see such indications of the same temper and spirit in you also. May the Lord abundantly multiply blessings on you and yours. I am, &c. J. W.

## OF BELIEF AND UNBELIEF.

*To his Daughter Penn (late Mrs. Hanbury.)*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Garstang, August 3, 1755.

You have always been very dear, and always very dutiful to me: may you be rewarded in the dutifulness of your own children. It hath afforded me much satisfaction and pleasure that you have been and are, dutiful and dear both to the husband of whom you have been bereaved, and whom you are now in the enjoyment of.\*

\* Mr. Henry Penn was a respectable tradesman of Kidderminster, and died October 10, 1808, at a very advanced age.—May the Editor hope for the Reader's indulgence while he now pays his tribute to the memory of her for whom, though he was then in early youth, he imbibed feelings of veneration and lasting regard. The sentiments contained in the following extract from a letter by an only daughter, in reply to the Editor's inquiries, are strictly accordant with the judgment of all who recollect the person alluded to:—"September 24, 1814."—"Respecting my beloved mother I could write volumes, but permit me, though in the language of strong affection, to say—that I have never met with any one who had so few defects, and so much real excellence. Being continually with her, and honoured with her entire confidence, I certainly had many opportunities of observing her motives to action: but I could not fully appreciate her superior attainments, until I have since been enabled to compare her character with others, by a larger intercourse with society. Oh! what a 'crown of glory' awaited her. She possessed consummate wisdom and prudence. The blessings of 'the poor in spirit,'—of 'the meek,'—'the pure in heart,'—'the peace-maker,'—'the patient in

The apostle John assigns sundry reasons, in his first Epistle, for his writing to ‘children,’ ‘fathers,’ and ‘young men;’ the reasons of my writing to you are because I love you, because I have many things to commend you for, and because I wish you increasing happiness both in time and to eternity.—I hope you have ‘the faith of God’s elect;’ but if an apostle thought it proper to caution or excite Christians to ‘look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God;’ and if another apostle said ‘these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God;’ it may not be improper, considering its infinite importance, if I put you on examining the truth and evidences of your faith: for what can be plainer and more important than this—‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.’ They who read their Bibles, and assent to the truth of what they find there; who make a profession of religion; and who are diligent in their business, and blameless in their lives, no doubt, are forward to entertain a good hope that they, ‘believe, on the name of the Son of God;’ but such may be undone for ever, for want of at any time, seriously admitting a doubt thereof, and bringing their faith to the touch-stone of God’s Word! Hence, *believing* or *not believing* are the certain, distinguishing qualifications for eternal life or eternal death. Is it then a small thing to believe? Is the gate *wide*, and the way *broad*, that leadeth unto *life*; and do the *many* find it; or, is not the reverse of this the truth? But why do they not find it? Is the gate so *strait* that no entrance can be obtained, and the way too *narrow* to be trod? No; thousands have gained admittance; millions, no doubt, have trod the path! Why do not more? It is for want of *seeking*; or for want of seeking aright: many indeed seek to enter in, and are not able; that is, they are not willing! They have not tribulation,—will all be hers!—But I must check my pen: your father will confirm that my testimony is true.”—She died August 7, 1789, aged 68.

parted with their idols; they have not mortified their darling lusts; they love 'darkness rather than light,' which would shew them that they are 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' They will not be convinced that they are sinners by nature as well as by practice, 'and come short of the glory of God:' and for want of this, they do not come humbly to Christ, labouring and heavy laden with the guilt and burden of sin. The promise is—'Seek and ye shall find:' that cannot fail; it is we who fail of the condition of the promise!—Commend me kindly to your husband. I wish you both all happiness. Be persuaded to search and try your hearts and ways: the reward thereof will more than countervail all the pains. Always think of me as your faithful and affectionate father,

J. W.

## FAITH INCREASED BY ITS EXERCISE.

*To Mr. A. Wallace.*

VERY DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, September 22, 1755.

I know not how to express my grateful sense of the obligations you have laid me under, to love you as long as I live, and to serve you to the utmost of my power. How then can I be thankful enough to Him in whose hands all hearts are, who raised me up such a friend! Much of his goodness he caused to pass before me in the course of my last journey; and made the whole a scene of great kindness. He girded me with strength, so that I was scarcely weary in all my journey, and though I rode a high trotting horse I had not been accustomed to, no evil befel me or the beast; whereas my dear friend, Mr. Randall, had a fall, and was hurt in a journey of a few hours, and my companion, Mr. S——t, was obliged to leave his horse behind him at Darlington. Blessed be God, I came home safe, and found my dear Mrs. Williams and all friends well. At my return, I found yours, for which I heartily thank you, as also for the present it brought for two worthy ministers, which I intend to divide between them before I am many days elder.

I think I see by the contents of your letter in part, what

the temper and turn of your mind is. You have built upon a solid foundation, which cannot be moved; and yet, according to your own account, your superstructure sometimes totters. How happens this? The fault must lie in the cement. It is faith unites us to Christ; your faith is of the right kind, but it is like ill-tempered, or untempered mortar, mixed with doubting; doubting is not believing; yet, I confess, it is consistent with believing, and I am glad it is. 'O thou of little faith,' saith our Lord, 'wherefore didst thou doubt?' Strong faith excludes doubting, as perfect love casts out fear: I would have you strong in the faith; I would have you a confident believer, who dare take the kingdom of heaven by a holy violence. I will tell you how, as the Lord shall enable me:—You take great pleasure in the increase of Christ's kingdom; you rejoice to hear the Lord is carrying on his own work in various corners of the land; that one mark, is evidence sufficient to prove, that Christ loves you; yea, that he hath saved you, and called you with a holy calling; as thus: If you rejoice in the increase of the kingdom, it is plain you love the King, and, if you love him, it is because he first loved you, St. John being witness; and, whereas he argues, what whoso 'loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him,' it will hold equally true, if you turn the argument the other way---he that loveth those that are begotten, loveth him that begat; for, saith the same apostle---'we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.' What hinders then, but that in the confidence of faith, you put in your claim, as poor unbelieving Thomas did, when he was ashamed to doubt any longer? Say with him---'My Lord, and My God;' say it, though you speak tremblingly; that is, exerting a direct act of faith; then say with the Spouse---'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' Some degree of doubting may mingle with such exercises at first, but you will soon find the advantage of them. My dear father hath oft instigated me with---Have limbs and use them. Take my word for it, use faith, and your stock will in-

crease. By and by will be whispered to your heart---‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore, with loving kindness, have I drawn thee;’ when you hear such language as this, and know it is the Lord’s, you will find your heart glow with such a genial warmth of love, of gratitude, and of joy unspeakable, that you will not know how to love him enough, or praise him enough, or rejoice enough in such a Friend: at the same time, you will be humbled before him to the very dust, and perhaps lower than ever you were before, under a sense of your vileness and unworthiness. Do venture to put forth an appropriating act of faith; what can you lose by it? Are you afraid of presuming? God forbid I should encourage presumption: but, is it presumption in any child of yours to come, and in a humble, tender manner, say to you---*my father*? Would you not thereupon feel workings of paternal affection towards such a child? Might not such a child expect some mark of approbation at least? ‘If you then, being evil, know how to’ speak kindly to an humble child, who wants to obtain some mark of your love, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?’ But then, you must be sure, ever after, to lie at the foot of the cross, in the lowliest prostration: for we are no where safe but there. You do already see much love, wisdom, and faithfulness in all the trials wherewith our heavenly Father is trying you; but, believe me, when you can in the confidence of faith, call him yours, and say---‘This God is my God for ever and ever, he will be my guide unto death;’ then, nothing can come amiss to you? you will dare to trust him with every thing; you will acquiesce in all his dispensations, as well and wisely ordered; and in every case it will be enough that he has made with you ‘an everlasting covenant.’

Both the sabbaths I spent on the road after I left you, I sat under very poor advantages. I think the most remarkable event on my return was an interview with Mr. C——, curate of H——, within a mile of L——; I heard of him from a pious exhorter; I then inquired his character; I was

told he had been converted many years ago, perhaps sixteen or seventeen; that, he thereupon began to preach salvation, by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, but was soon surrounded with an opposition so violent and general, that he could not then sustain the shock; that, for peace sake, he had thenceforward so shaped his discourses, as not on the one hand to deny the truth, nor, on the other, to provoke his neighbours; but durst not speak out, till some time ago, when he fell into company with the worthy Archdeacon of L——, concerning whom I have had the pleasure to hear that he hath grace enough to fear nothing; that, this conversation was so blessed to Mr. C——, that ever since, he hath dared to speak out, whereby he hath raised up against him enemies enough; that, he gave great offence by two sermons he had preached, one last year at the parish church of L——, from Isaiah xxix. 11, 12; the other very lately from Jeremiah vi. 16; they are both published. Having heard this account, I could not deny myself the pleasure of making him a visit. It was perhaps four o'clock, and he was gone out; his sister and daughter immediately sent for him, and he came. I told him what I had to say was *private*; he therefore took me aside; we were well acquainted soon, and could talk together with the freedom of intimate friends; and why not, for we had been 'made to drink into one spirit.' Alas! alas! among the multitudes who roundly recite their creed, how few do really believe "the communion of saints," or know what it is! Let us not be high-minded, but pity rather than despise such, and bless God with our whole hearts, that we know in part what it is. He quickly let me know that both his sister and daughter were in Christ; and that I might talk freely before them; so we returned, drank tea, and conversed till it was time for me to mount, having eight Yorkshire miles to ride to my lodging. I animated him all I could, and he told me the Lord had sent me; I could not but think so too, for my spirit was drawn out in earnest prayer, all the way from L——. Our time together being but short, I wrote to him soon after, to which I had a secret

answer; in which among other things, he earnestly requests prayers; not mine only, but, that I would recommend him to the prayers of all Christians here. Accordingly, Tuesday being our weekly meeting for social prayer, I gave in a note, importing that—"The Rev. Mr. C—— desires our prayers that his corruptions may be done away," these being his own words, "that his faith fail not; that his diligence in the ministry be not slack; and that a blessing be upon his poor weak endeavours." This was spread before the Lord, and Mr. Fawcett was much enlarged in pleading on his behalf. I am, &c. J. W.

## HIS SUPERIORITY TO THE WORLD.

*To the Rev. R. Darracott.\**

VERY DEAR SIR,

Kidderminster, October 4, 1755.

It is far from being the least of the mercies our bountiful Lord is pouring out upon me, that I have such a friend as you, now and then to warm my heart with a literary communication. Indeed, I have many such friends, and not a few among the established clergy. Strange revolution! May the Lord make them a thousand times as many! Blessed be his name, he hath, I trust, given me to sit loose to the world, so that I cannot love it, and do not care how little I have to do in the concerns of it; nor does any thing but a sense of duty, for aught I know, engage me to spend the hours I do spend therein; and yet he is filling my cup, and making it to run over more than ever. I am sometimes ready to think, he is heaping worldly favours upon me, as if these were to be all my portion, and I were to have all my 'good things here:' but, "I am resolved by his grace," as Luther said, when offered a cardinal's hat, "the Lord Jesus Christ shall not put me off with such trifles." I am resolved, his grace enabling me, how much soever he gives me of the good things of this life, to give him all again. They will very well serve the purposes for which he bestows them; but they will not serve me for a *portion*. The Lord, I praise him, hath given me a constitution, that will not be satisfied with such husks; I must have

\* He died March 14, 1759, aged 42.

more substantial meat, such as the saints in glory love; yea, such as angels eat. Dead be my heart to all below. These things, well laid out, will 'make me friends;' even friends that 'will receive me into everlasting habitations;' but, if they be held fast, and grasped hard, they will but delude my hopes, fail my expectation, and wound the hand that holds them. It cheers and delights my heart that the Lord hath made me one of his almoners: oh! may I obtain grace of him to be faithful in that office; that when I am called to 'give' up my 'account,' I 'may do it with joy, and not with grief' or shame.

You may think part of the sum I now send you, to help toward Daniel's\* education for the ministry comes out of my own purse. No; but when more is wanting, I will send you part of what my Lord has committed to my trust. Nor did I ask any one to contribute; but came by it thus: When I was at Bath with my first wife, a little before she died, I contracted an intimacy with a pious Scots minister, Mr. Randall; who, having a pious friend, Mr. Wallace of Edinburgh, recommended me to his acquaintance. "Write to him," said Mr. R. "for some of his goods, he is a manufacturer, you are a merchant, and then take the opportunity to say any thing to him you please: He will answer you." Accordingly, an order came in May last for some goods, and Mr. Wallace told me, that having seen Mr. Fawcett's Breviate, which he had sent to Mr. Gillies of Glasgow, of all the accounts he had received out of Cornwall; he was desirous Mr. Walker's† converts should be established and built up in their most holy faith; for that end, with the assistance of friends, he had made a collection of good practical books for their use, and desired me to tell him to whose care in London he should consign them, to be forwarded to Mr. Walker. At the same time he inquired, by what other means he might contribute to the promotion of the interests of Christ. A sweet unction ran through all his letter. I found he was a right man for my purpose, and on an occasion I ventured to lay

\* See page 383.

† See page 408.

down a guinea for him, and wrote him word of it; adding, that if he did not approve of the freedom I had used, *that* guinea should be my own. Soon after, he sent me a guinea, with four and a half more, the contribution of several friends, to be disposed of as I would, for the interests of Christ, which is what is contained in the above sum. When Mr. Randall recommended Mr. Wallace to me, last May, as he before had me to him, Mr. R. sent me a pressing invitation to come to Edinburgh the next circuit, urging the probability of my succeeding in trade, and promising to meet me there, on previous notice. In my last July journey I took in both Edinburgh and Glasgow.—The success confirmed Mr. Randall's opinion; nor should it be overlooked, that he had made me one fast friend in each city a few months before. Thus, what have we to do but follow where our Father leads, keep in his way, and “keep ourselves in his love,” devoting all to him, from whom we receive all? I am, dear sir, yours, &c. J.W.

HIS PATIENCE UNDER SEVERE PAINS.

*To Robert Cruttenden, Esq. London,*

DEAR SIR,

Bath, November 5, 1755.

Here I am the Lord's prisoner, but 'a prisoner of hope.' It will be a fortnight to-morrow since I left home. My Divine Master arrested me on his own day, whilst sitting under a sermon at Chalford Bottom. There I got cold and was seized with a pain across the reins. It was tolerable a day or two, but increased till my patience had full exercise. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday I spent at Bristol, full of pain day and night, but not without some merciful intermissions. Perhaps some of the lively Israelitish women, and possibly some of our own country, have brought forth their first-born with throes less excruciating, less sinking of their spirits, than those which oppressed mine in numerous instances: yet, I still believed all was mercy, and could bless the hand that smote me, resigning myself entirely to his disposal. It

was a vast satisfaction to me, whilst 'he chastened me with pain upon my bed, and the multitude of my bones with strong pains,' to believe, as Dr. Watts sings—

"He knows the pain his servants feel,  
He hears his children cry,  
And their best wishes to fulfil  
His grace is ever nigh."

Particularly on Thursday night, when my pains were a full trial to my patience, he gave me a sensible, surprising, cheering proof that he was awake as well as I: for, when my pains grew almost insupportable, and I lay mingling with my groans such cries as these—Lord Jesus, is it not enough? Lord Jesus, are not thy compassions infinite? Lord Jesus, I have none to fly to, none to pity, none to help me but thyself. How easily canst thou succour me; Lord, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, how thou wilt. Glorify thyself in me, by me, upon me; but, 'remember that I am dust.' 'Crush' me not as 'the moth.' &c.—Presently my pains abated. As the Doctor sings—

"With pitying eyes, the Prince of grace  
Beheld *my* helpless grief;  
He saw, and O amazing love!  
He ran to *my* relief."

He commanded ease to return in a few minutes. But, oh! how was I ravished with his condescending kindness. How did my soul praise him, and resolve to praise him as long as I live! nor, have I been tried with such exquisite pains since. Friday evening I rode hither in pain. Next morning I consulted my friend Dr. Davies. By following his directions in bathing and pumping, I now have only a sensibility where the pains were. I cannot tell you how much mercy I see in this visitation. '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 not only 'forgiveth all thine iniquities,' but 'who healeth all thy diseases.' Believe me to be, with great respect, your much obliged, cordial friend, and humble servant for Jesus' sake,

J. W.

## HIS BENEFIT FROM BATH WATERS.

*To the Rev. — Johnson, Cirencester.\**

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Bath, November 7, 1755.

The Lord hath dealt very graciously with me. These two last mornings I continue well, and to-morrow, with the Doctor's leave, I prosecute my journey. ' Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.' Shall he not have the praise? Shall tribes of diseased mortals, who are repairing hither from all parts, all the year round, drinking health, and washing away their pains and weaknesses, in this choice, this redundant preparation, this fountain which, like its glorious Author, is ever flowing and overflowing, go away, like ' nine of the ten lepers,' and never acknowledge the great Physician; the most sublime Chymist? Shall scarcely one in ten ' turn back and glorify God?' Instead of that, shall they, at least numbers of them, spend their days in luxury, and much of the night ' in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness,' in gaming and sinful pastimes? And still are the virtues of the water continued! Oh! the boundless patience of our God! unwearied forbearance! goodness immense! and grace inexhaustible! Shall we be of the number of these blind, ungrateful mortals? Forbid it, mighty God! Shall we not trace him, and see him, in all his works of wonder and grace? Yes, and our souls shall bless him, and love him, and fear him, and trust in him, and be wholly devoted and resigned to his wise, his good, his sovereign will and pleasure. I am, dear sir, very respectfully yours,

J. W.

## HIS INCREASING BODILY WEAKNESS.

*To his daughter Winter.†*

MY DEAR SALLY,

Maidenhead, December 6, 1755.

Very glad I should be to see you, Mr. Winter, and ' the children the Lord hath graciously given you,' if it were his gracious will. I think he hath not said—Go into London this journey, No; if I at all understand his voice, it

\* See p. 414.

† She died in 1778, aged 49.

is—Make haste, and get home, lest ‘thy strength,’ which is already much ‘weakened in the way,’ should fail thee in the way, and thou fall into the hands of thou knowest not whom. Indeed, I dare not enter into London: yet, I think I should not fear that, or any thing else, could I see Providence calling me to undertake it. At present I sensibly feel that he forbids me. Indeed, I have had a sickly stomach some weeks, ‘and the strong men’ begin to ‘bow themselves,’ and that not only when going up stairs or up hill, but even upon the plain. I am not able to walk London streets; but am desirous, if it be the will of God, to ride home. I think *I* have told you enough, when I have added—‘Through the grace of God, none of these things move me:’ for, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth:’ and, ‘I know whom I have believed.’ Perhaps he will strengthen me again: if not—‘Father, not my will, but thine be done.’ ‘The Lord be with you all.’ Pray and praise for, my dear, your affectionate father, whilst

J. W.

HIS DYING COMFORTS.

*To his Wife.\**

MY DEAREST,

Windsor, Lord's-day, December 7, 1755.

‘If the Lord will,’ *I* shall be at Kidderminster soon after this reaches your hands: but, if it be his will I should never reach that dear place of my nativity, his ‘will be done.’ It hath long been my earnest desire and prayer—That I may have no other will but my Father’s; but that, he alone can give: I trust he hath given it me in part, and I trust he will, give it me more entirely, and that ‘as my day, so shall my strength be’ also. If it be his will, I would gladly return from whence I came, either to recover strength, or to die, as pleaseth my dear ‘Father which is in heaven.’ But, if it please him who said---‘Take Aaron up to mount Hor, and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there,’ to say---Let Joseph Williams die on the road, or at Windsor, or Beaconsfield, or Wycombe, or Oxford, or wheresoever;

\* This is the last letter Mr. W. was able to write.

who dare say against it? I desire to say still, and in every case--- ‘Father, not my will, but thine be done.’ I am glad my *Will* is made, touching the disposal of my earthly goods; if I should not return alive, you know that it is in my daughter Penn’s possession; and there is a letter *I* have addressed to you, my dear, which is in the right-hand drawer of my desk, which I would have no one to see but yourself. Should it please God to weaken my strength the next four days, as he hath done the last four days, I think I shall not be able to hold out unto the end. Who knows, however, but on this day of rest I may receive fresh supplies of strength? Nothing is too hard for the Lord: but, indeed, at present I am scarce able to rise out of my chair. ‘The keepers of the house’ do not ‘tremble;’ but, truly, ‘the strong men bow themselves,’ especially when walking up stairs, and up hill.

The great apostle saith---‘But we had the sentence’ (or as it is in the margin, *the answer*) ‘of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.’ I cannot say absolutely, that I have the sentence of death in myself in the sense in which I there understand the apostle: for he had just before said---‘We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.’ I cannot say, that my views of the symptoms of my present disorder amount to a despair of life, or of recovery; and yet, I cannot think it wholly improbable, that I have the symptoms of an approaching *diabetes*, which may prove incurable, and bring on an *atrophy* (which I think to be already begun, for my body and limbs are considerably shrunk) and so this animal frame may, in a few months, or weeks, or days, pine away, be dissolved and die. At least, I think I have ground enough to suppose this may be the case, and upon such a supposition, to consider what I have to do, whilst life and breath remain. Indeed, my dearest, my heart is sensibly touched in respect of you: and yet, you need not much wonder, if my thoughts appear to be much engrossed about my own self, my future self, my eternal self. Es-

pecially, as this is the Lord's-day, and I cannot go to church, partly through weakness, and partly as I am continually spitting up phlegm. Let me, therefore, talk to myself.

Most certainly, this animal frame is frail and mortal, though my soul is immortal. Why? because my Father, 'the Father of spirits,' hath said---Let it be immortal. But, he hath 'appointed unto men once to die : ' and, what if 'the time of my departure draweth nigh?' What if I am to be exercised, as I have been for many days past, with loss of appetite, frequent defluxions, fits of sickness even unto vomiting, and growing weakness; till this body, lately so active and sprightly, be quite emaciated and enfeebled, and become no longer tenantable for my immortal spirit? This could not be my case, had not my Father appointed it should be so. 'My days are determined, the number of my months is with him, he hath appointed my bounds, which I cannot pass : ' and, why should I desire to pass them! No, I do not, would not, will not desire it. Under whatever exercises of sickness and pain, it becomes me to say, and let me say it with my whole heart, and with the full consent of my will---'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'---Certainly, it is my interest to 'trust, not in myself, but in God who raiseth the dead.' How else shall I bear with patience and with becoming resignation, the painful, tedious unwinding of the thread of life! How shall I 'kiss the rod' but by 'hearing it, and him who doth appoint it!' 'Lord, increase my faith.' 'Lord, help my unbelief.' But, in this view of my case, how shall I be thankful enough to 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!' How shall I bless him enough, 'who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead : ' unto a lively hope 'of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven' for me : and to a lively hope, that I am 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ; ' and, that herein I can 'greatly re-

joice, though now for a season,' 'as need' is, I am 'in heaviness through manifold' trials. What should I do, or what could support my spirits, 'if in this life only I had hope?' What though a bountiful Providence hath blessed me with more than enough to fulfil all my engagements? what though I have seen all my children comfortably settled: what though no man can be happier than I, in a dear, tender, dutiful wife; what can all these things do for a dying man? I ask again---What can all these temporary comforts do for a dying man, were they ten times as many and comforting as they are?

I suppose myself a dying man; and, upon such a supposition, what can possibly stand me instead? I read in St. John's Revelation---'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them:' and, that this he 'heard' by a 'a voice from heaven.' Should I not hereupon inquire---What is all this to me? What is it to 'die in the Lord?' It is to die, united to Christ by faith, firmly believing on him, and that both as 'able to save to the uttermost,' and as equally willing to save. Shall I thus 'die in the Lord?' Do I 'live in the Lord,' and 'to the Lord?' 'The life that I now live in the flesh,' do 'I live by the faith of the Son of God?' Do I 'do all' that I do, 'whether in word or in deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?' Do I by lively actings of faith receive all my supplies, in the religious life, out of his 'fulness,' and from him as the eyer-flowing, over-flowing Fountain of all grace? Do I 'do all' with an eye 'to his glory,' daily and continually devoting, resigning, and consecrating all he doth or shall bestow on me, to his service and disposal? If not, what or where are those 'works' which shall 'follow' me? or, of what avail shall any works of mine, that shall follow me, be to my eternal salvation? I apprehend that none of those works of mine, that shall follow me, can avail me any thing, otherwise than as evidences of my sincere love to Christ, and unfeigned faith in him: and so I understand the sovereign Judge, when foretelling the

process of the last judgment—‘ Come ye blessed, &c. for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, &c.’ that is, you evidenced your love to me, and faith in me, by relieving, for my sake, those who loved me, and stood in need of your help. If this be a right sense of those important words, I humbly trust many works shall follow me, of which I shall ‘ not be ashamed ’ at that glorious, glorifying day,—that great day of retribution; even then, when ‘ the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and rocks—Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.’ I have a cheerful, soul-reviving hope, that even then, the glorious Lamb, whose coming I joyfully expect, whose ‘ name is ’ now ‘ as ointment poured forth,’ and who is my sure refuge in every time of need, ‘ my Lord and my God,’ my Saviour and my Friend, my Jesus and my All, will shew me a pleased, smiling countenance:

“ Then, will he own my worthless name  
 Before his Father’s face,  
 And in the New Jerusalem  
 Appoint my soul a place.” —WATTS.

Certainly, ‘ my conscience beareth me witness,’ before the Lord, that I have relieved many, ‘ in the name of disciples,’ and upon no other consideration than a charitable hope, that they were lovers of Christ, and interested in his love. Certainly, ‘ my conscience beareth me witness,’ that I have long since absolutely and entirely devoted to the Lord Christ, and to his interest, all that he hath entrusted me with; yea, every day have I endeavoured and designed afresh to consecrate to him and his service, all I am, and all I have; resolving, by his grace, to render to him whatever his providence may ask for, be it more or less. Long since, he hath clearly shewed me, that I came ‘ naked ’ into this world; and, that consequently, all I am possessed of is the free gift of his bounty and kind providence; therefore, all I have is his own, and sacred to him and to his

sovereign will and pleasure: and his promises assure me, I shall not, I cannot be a loser by whatever I do for him. Not that my Lord forbids me, or restrains me, from freely using whatever may contribute to my own present comfort; 'for he giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.' Nor doth he restrain me from providing for my own, but commands me to 'provide,' according to my ability, 'specially for those,' 'who are 'of' my 'own house.' Yet he expects I should eye and observe the calls of his providence, and obey them; 'not grudging' to give whatever he seems to demand of me, either to the relief of his people's wants, or for the fartherance and prosperity of his gospel. How far I have acted by this rule, the last great day will in the best manner declare. Undoubtedly, in many things, I 'have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:' yet, in the main, and believing him to be 'the Lord God, merciful and gracious,' &c. I dare lodge my appeal with him 'who searcheth the reins and hearts,' that he doth know it hath been my desire and design to 'honour the Lord with my substance,' &c. Nevertheless, I freely own, that I draw my brightest evidences, and derive my liveliest hopes, not so much from what I have done for him, as from what he hath done for me, and in me, and by me. Certainly, I experienced the mighty power of his grace, changing and renewing my heart, in the days of my youth, when aged about seventeen or eighteen; drawing me to hate what I naturally loved, and to love what I naturally hated. Certainly, 'he turned me, and I was turned,' in a great measure, from those vanities and lusts in which my heart had long delighted. In numberless instances, he hath cheered my heart with the smiles of his reconciled face, and hath 'shed abroad that love' of his, 'which is better than wine.' Certainly, in very numerous instances, he hath enabled me to 'rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory,' and many times on account of immediate answers to prayer: and, the brighter and fuller the discoveries of his love have been, he, and he alone, doth know, the more deeply have I been made to humble myself at his feet; yea, to 'abhor

myself and repent,' as it were, 'in dust and ashes.' And there is not any thing I have been more desirous, or even ambitious of, these many years, than to lie, and always lie, at the foot of the cross of Christ, in the lowliest submission and prostration of soul, sensible that I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing; and, at the same time, to see myself 'complete in him.' Surely, nothing have I desired more, or more fervently, than that he would make me humble, and keep me always humble. Nor hath any consideration tended more to reconcile my spirit to this afflictive dispensation, than this hope—that the Lord is hearing my prayers, and granting me the thing I wished for. Indeed, I scarce know what method could be more effectual, than that he hath taken, to humble me to the dust, and make me sensible I am nothing in his hands, but what he makes me to be. Let him, therefore, humble me, and spare not. Only, dearest Lord, give me submission, give me patience, give me always to see thy hand in every affliction; give me always to lie at thy feet, without a murmuring word, or a repining thought. Oh! give me to accept of the punishment of my sins.

Do not imagine, my dearest, I write these things to grieve you; but to glorify God. Oh! how dear is Christ now to my soul. I hope my Christian friends pray for me. I can do but little of that work myself: but, blessed be his name, I can cast myself at his feet, and say (I think, with my whole heart) as holy Baxter did---“ Lord, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, how thou wilt.” ‘The Spirit,’ I hope, ‘beareth witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God;’ and the same Spirit, in many of my fellow Christians, beareth the same witness. Nor am I ashamed to own, that I take pleasure and comfort in the good opinion of the godly. To stand so high in their esteem, as their many letters witness, contributes not a little to the clearing of my evidences, the brightening of my hopes, and elevating of my joy in the Lord.

Now then, O my soul, what remains for me to do all the residue of my days, but, first of all to extol and praise HIM,

‘ who hath saved me, and called me with a holy calling ; ’ and not only so, but hath given me to eat of the hidden manna ; and not only so, but hath ‘ given me a white stone, and in the stone a new name written ; which no man knows but myself. Oh ! what is Hell, to be delivered from, and to know that I am delivered. Oh ! what is Heaven, to be the place and state of our advancement, and to know that we are denizens of the New Jerusalem. In the next place, should I not speak of HIM, and recommend his good ways to all around me ; and that, even whilst he is ‘ weakening my strength in the way, and shortening my days ? ’ What though he crush my feeble frame ! What though ‘ my days be spent with grief and my hours with sighing ! ’ What though ‘ I chatter like a crane, or a swallow, and mourn like a dove ’—that ‘ my age is departed and is removed from me like a shepherd’s tent ; ’ that, ‘ I have cut off like a weaver my life ; ’ that ‘ He will cut me off with pining sickness, ’ and ‘ from day even to night will make an end of me ! ’ Is it not enough that in Christ Jesus the Lord, ‘ he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure ? ’ ‘ This is all my salvation. ’ Be this ‘ all my desire. ’ Is it not matter of abounding joy that I can sing, with appropriating faith, Dr. Doddridge’s twenty-second hymn ?

“ ’Tis MINE, the cov’nant of his grace ;  
 And every promise mine !  
 All sprung from everlasting love,  
 And sealed by blood divine.

On my unworthy favour’d head  
 Its blessings all unite ;  
 Blessings more num’rous than the stars,  
 More lasting, and more bright.

Death, thou may’st tear this rag of flesh,  
 And sink my fainting head,  
 And lay my ruins in the grave.  
 Among my kindred-dead :

But death and hell in vain shall strive  
 To break that sacred rest,  
 Which God’s expiring children feel,  
 When leaning on his breast.

The enlarged soul thou canst not reach,  
 Nor rend from Christ away ;  
 Though o'er my mould'ring dust thou boast,  
 The triumphs of a day.

The night is past, my morning dawns,  
 My Cov'nant-God descends,  
 And wakes that dust to join my soul,  
 In bliss that never ends,

That cov'nant the last accent claims  
 Of this poor fault'ring tongue ;  
 And that shall the first notes employ  
 Of my celestial song."

Farewell, my dearest. I hope to see you again : but, if not, all is well. We shall spend a long, a joyful eternity at our Father's house together. If separate spirits may have the honour of 'ministering spirits,' how gladly would I be a witness to your secret devotions, and, if possible, an assistant! And how gladly would I receive your expiring spirit, in order to convoy and present it at the foot of the eternal throne! But how little do I yet know of these things! Yet 'a little while,' and we shall know ten million times more than is yet known by your poor, loving, rejoicing,

JOSEPH WILLIAMS.\*

\* Mr. Williams was in perfect health, when he left home, October 22, 1755. His illness began in less than a week after; which induced him to use the Bath waters, under the direction of an eminent physician there of his intimate acquaintance; and he appeared to be so well recovered, that he left Bath, November 10, to prosecute his journey. But after the gradual advance of every threatening symptom, he wrote the above letter to his wife, which she received, December 11; about an hour before he himself was brought home in a chaise. His complaints terminated in a lethargy, of which he died on the Lord's-day morning, December 21, about a month after he had completed his grand climacteric.

To the above note the *present* Editor adds, that Mr. Watson often mentioned an observation of the Rev. G. Whitefield to Mr. Williams:—That "frequently he who had glorified God by a life peculiarly active in his service, was not permitted to say much for him at death. You and I, friend Williams," said he, "may probably be mute at this season. It is usually the mourning Christian, whose mouth is opened at that period, in order to evidence his own sincerity, and the faithfulness of God." Mr. Whitefield's death, it is well known, was sudden; and Mr. Williams having fallen into a lethargic state was incapable of opening his mouth for God. It may be proper to notice, that though the prediction of Mr. Whitefield, recorded at page 353, did not literally occur, the decline of Mr. Williams was rapid, and his own apprehension coincided with the prediction as a little before the time of its being uttered, he had intimated the probability of such an event to one of his sisters.

# LETTERS

OCCASIONED BY

## THE DEATH OF MR. WILLIAMS.

FROM THE REV. R. PEARSALL.

*To Mr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick.*

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Taunton, December 31, 1755.

I *would* write, and know I *must*, yet how *shall* I write in a becoming manner on the awful stroke we are now feeling! The death of our dear, good friend, will be heard of with a more sincere and a deeper groan than that of most mortals. How extensive his acquaintance; how manifest his excellencies; how cordially respected; how useful; how affectionate, was he! How much concerned for the glory of God; the Redeemer's kingdom; the progress of holiness; and, how ready to engage in every good work! You may well expect me to condole with you on this occasion. You have lost as much as can be well conceived by the removal of one person: and yet, shall not joy be mingled with sorrow? If we may ever rejoice at the death of a fellow-mortal, shall it not be when a saint has been long ripening for glory, and is at length received! When his wishes are realized, his graces perfected, his enemies subdued, his race run, and the prize conferred! His harvest is now gathered in, for which he was ploughing and sowing here below: an everlasting jubilee is begun, and so 'everlasting joy shall be upon his head.' Could we *now* hear how he echoes forth the high praises of his God and Redeemer, how enlarged should we find those strains. If his hallelujahs be as much in proportion, as in this world he was above the common rate of Christians, surely he may be distinguished by the vigour of his praise in the heavenly choir! I have been acquainted with him somewhat intimately, for thirty-six years, therefore, must be allowed to know a good deal of him; and I do say, that take him altogether, he was one of the most extraordinary persons I was ever acquainted

with. I compare him to a valuable ring, where grace, of the divine nature, is placed like a large, refulgent brilliant in the centre; while good temper, lively spirits, a constant cheerfulness, a tenacious memory, a ready utterance, and a pleasant wit, as so many gems, surround it; and all together made as complete a jewel as ever I knew. Such, my dear niece, was your *father*, who loved you tenderly, and prayed for you fervently. You have reason to bless God who favoured you with such, I may say, *high* descent; for, let the heralds of this world say what they will, in the *celestial* court of honour and according to *its* rules, you are descended from the excellent of the earth, from one who was a 'king and priest unto God;' one who, 'as a prince,' had 'power with God;' and so 'wrestled' as often to 'prevail.' Only see to it, that you walk worthy of all; that you live up to your signal privileges as descended from many ancestors that were ennobled by Him who is the fountain of honour. Your *grandfather* Williams was a man, famous in his day and place, for holy gravity, and a most strict, serious walk; and special solemnity in prayer. You have, indeed, numerous relatives gone before you to the glorious mansions above, both on your father's and mother's side. See to it, that you and yours be 'followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises:' and oh! that religion, in its purity and power, may be transmitted through you to future generations. It is matter of sad reflection, that such holy, prayerful, lively Christians as your dear father Williams was, are removed, when there are so few survivors like minded; especially as public affairs are so situated: but, blessed be God, there are yet a few like Moses, to stand in the gap. May he with whom is 'the residue of the Spirit,' raise up and animate many more! It is to me a sweet recollection that I met my late dear brother on his last journey, at South Petherton; and that he went with me to Crewkern, and spent his sabbath, so that we were together part of four days; but, could I have foreseen a final separation would take place so soon, how should I have dwelled on his lips, and lodged myself,

as it were, in his arms! We are not, however, to foreknow future events; and how kind Providence is to keep us in the dark, the case before me evinces: for the interview would have been grievous and not pleasant, had I known what I now do. I am, my dear friends, your affectionate uncle,

R. PEARSALL.

FROM MRS. CRANE.

*To Mrs. Bunnell.*

MY VERY DEAR NIECE, Bromsgrove, January —, 1756.

What shall I now say to you? Alas! I must write, as the Psalmist said he would 'sing'---'of mercy and judgment.' You, as well as others, find the ways of Providence to be mysterious; and so they always will appear while we are in this mutable state: to improve by them ought to be our great concern. I doubt not you bear a part with us in the loss of my brother Williams. We may well apply the words from which Mr. Jenkins preached on Lord's day---'A great one is fallen in Israel.' He gave him an exalted character, but I believe not more so than he deserved. The loss is so extensive it will not be easily summed up. As my brother Pearsall wrote in a letter to me, after he had parted with your uncle Williams, while on his last journey ---"Whenever he is removed, it will be like the falling of a large tree; make a wide gap, and many will want the shade and shelter it afforded." He was not very conversable after the first day or two. He said several times---"I think I shall not recover from this illness." At other times he said---"I am glad I am come to die at home." "If I die, I know my Redeemer lives." "My worldly affairs are settled; and why not die, and go to Jesus?" The next day, on being asked---How he did, he answered ---"Well, in my soul; I wish you all in as happy a state." After this, he was not capable of saying much, and when a friend desired him to be free as usual, he only replied, ---"Remember what I have said." For some days after, he could only utter, "Yes," and "No." One of the last questions his dear wife put to him, was---"Is Christ precious now?" to which he answered---"Yes!" with all the

emotion of which he was capable. Now he is where he oft longed to be, and has received his 'Well done!' from his great Lord and Master. As I believe he was more than ordinarily useful in life, I heartily pray the providence of his removal may be more than commonly improved, through the sanctifying influences of the Divine Spirit. It looks dark, when praying persons are removed at a time when we are in more than usual need of such, to avert impending judgments. None but God can make up so wide a breach in the family, in the church, and in the world. That we may imitate him in Christian diligence, and at last overtake him and others, who are arrived above, is the desire, both for myself and you, of, my dear niece, yours in the bonds of love and friendship,

SARAH CRANE.

FROM THE REV. R. JENKINS.

*To Mr. Bunnell.*

DEAR SIR,

Bromsgrove, January 6, 1756.

You have heard of the awful dealings of God at Kidderminster, in removing the great and good Mr. Williams. I deem this the greatest and most public loss that has happened in this country since I came into it; which is now almost eight years. The cause of Christ here below has lost an able, vigorous, and exemplary advocate and promoter; the church to which, in particular, he belonged has lost one of its brightest and strongest pillars; his wife has lost one of the best of husbands; his children, a most tender, affectionate father; and his sisters have lost a loving and beloved brother, greatly respected and desired; his more distant relations have lost a very valuable relative, of which, I doubt not, they are very sensible; the poor, a generous and bountiful benefactor; and the world and the church have lost one of their most faithful and fervent friends at 'the throne of grace.' As to myself, I have lost in *him*, the best private friend and benefactor that ever I had, or expect to have. Blessed be God! his gain doth overbalance all these losses; and the God that kindled and so eminently fitted him for usefulness in every relation of

life 'has the residue of the Spirit,' and can make up this breach, either by one or many. I do not expect to see any one man while I live, fill up his place in every respect. I must say of him as Bishop Wilkins did of Mr. Baxter—"It is a great thing to find such a man in one nation every hundred years." May we be sincere followers of him in those articles of faith and practice, wherein he was an eminent follower of Christ; and we shall, through grace, see him again, and be with him for ever. I make no question but the death of this dear and venerable man has made a very deep impression on the tender spirits of your pious and affectionate help-meet. I most heartily wish you the best of all blessings, and am your obliged humble servant,

RICHARD JENKINS.

FROM THE REV. J. BROWN.

*To the Rev. R. Darracott.*

VERY DEAR SIR,

Chewton, January 11, 1756.

I received your kind letter, and am greatly obliged to you for those overtures you are pleased to make me of your friendship and correspondence; I embrace them, dear Sir, with the utmost pleasure. Your letter, indeed, brought me melancholy tidings. The death of dear Williams affected me very nearly, and many tears of deep concern have I shed on that account, for he was my dearest *friend*; nay, *father*! He was related to me in the nearest manner, and I trust our hearts were united in the indissoluble bonds of Christian love. He is no more to instruct me in person, yet though 'dead' he 'speaketh,' and his words come to me attended with a peculiar power; for since the receipt of yours, I have read over some of his valuable letters to me, and every thing he says comes home to my heart; the awfulness of that reflection—of his being now with God, adds weight to his words. Oh! what reason have I to be thankful to the Almighty for my acquaintance with that dear man: oh! that I may retain a grateful sense of it, and feel my heart glow with love to God for his immense favours to so worthless and insensible a creature. O Lord, who can fathom the depth of thy mercy to a wretch

who has merited thine everlasting indignation; and, had not thy grace been abundant, whose crimes would have called down, before now, thine avenging hand to have destroyed such a daring worm from off the face of the earth! but thou, O merciful Lord, hast delivered, and, I trust, wilt yet deliver me.

I beg, dear Sir, as I have lost the prayers of one wrestling Jacob, you would be so good as to supply his place, and remember me when you approach 'the throne of grace,' particularly that I may 'walk in the light of God's countenance,' and my corruptions which darken my sight may be destroyed. I have indeed a wicked heart, may God cleanse it, and break down every idol that pretends to rival his reign there. It is my constant prayer, that the Redeemer's kingdom may be established in my soul. If I know myself, I think that I desire above all things to live to God only, and to be dead to self, to the world, to its censures, to its applauses; but, oh! 'who is sufficient for these things;' yet we have this comfort, that we 'can do all things through Christ' strengthening us.—You know not the extensive benefit your kind services may be of, in assisting a mere novice with supplies to feed many hungering and thirsting souls; for I can say of my congregations, they hear with the utmost attention, and seem to be conscious it is for their souls; and, thank God! they have no prejudice against me, but, on the contrary, a tender love for me, and honour me for my work's sake: I hope I shall be kept faithful, and deliver them 'the whole counsel of God.'—I had the pleasure of breakfasting with Lady Huntingdon last Wednesday, and took the liberty of shewing her your account of Mr. Williams's death. With thanks for prayers and kind wishes on my behalf, I beg leave to subscribe myself, dear and reverend Sir, your affectionate friend and unworthy brother,

J. BROWN.\*

From "The Star of the West" Vol. 1, p. 100.

FROM THE REV. G. WILDE.

*To Mrs. Williams.\**

MADAM,

Birmingham, March 2, 1756.

I acknowledge myself culpable in not writing to you before now, to condole with you on account of the death of dear Mr. Williams. Indeed I purposed to take a ride to Kidderminster, and by word of mouth to tell you how sensible I am of your affliction, and how sincerely I sympathise with you in your loss; but my wife's constant bad health has hitherto prevented me putting my designs into practice. The tidings of Mr. Williams's dangerous sickness, which did not reach us till the Saturday before his death, greatly shocked us; and this was soon followed with the sorrowful tidings of his death. Oh! how unspeakable is the loss of that dear man to the churches of Christ in general; to the church at Kidderminster, and to you, madam, in a special manner! The interests of Zion lay near his heart. How tenderly did he sympathise with it in all its troubles; how sincerely did he rejoice in its welfare and prosperity! Zion's prosperity was his chief joy; and it may be justly said of him---that there are few like-minded, who naturally care for its state: but, Zion has lost a praying friend; one that pleaded both with God and man; one that wept, and mourned, and sighed for it in all its calamities. All who had the happiness of his friendship, and I reflect with pleasure that I was one of the number, have lost a most faithful, wise, affectionate friend. The poor church at Kidderminster has lost a wise counsellor, a pleading, praying member; a cordial well-wisher to its best interests; and one that laid himself out to the utmost to preserve its peace and welfare. Now it is stripped of one of its brightest ornaments; and I cannot forbear deeply and tenderly sympathising with it, as I am strongly apprehensive that it will be every day more and more sensible of the greatness of the loss it has sustained. How ready was he to lift up the hands of drooping, doubting

\* She died triumphantly, June 17, 1759, aged 53.

souls, and to 'confirm the feeble knees' of poor trembling Christians! *You*, however, madam, sustain the largest share in the loss of this great and good man. The Church of God has lost a friend; but *you* have lost a faithful guide, a dear companion, a most affectionate husband: but what do I say? Why should I set those wounds bleeding afresh which are not yet staunched! It is true, Mr. Williams, in regard of this world of sin, affliction, and temptation, is gone: the places in the church, in his family, in his useful visits, that knew him once, shall know him no more; yet, 'he is not dead, but sleepeth;' sweetly sleepeth in Jesus. His weary body is at rest. The angels, those heavenly convoys, have carried his soul to heaven; and he now seeth eye to eye, and 'face to face' him, 'whom having not seen,' he loved. He is taken off the field of battle, and is a conqueror, and more than a conqueror; while you have committed his dear remains to the dust, in hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life. Behold his glorified spirit standing amidst thousands and myriads of 'spirits of just men made perfect;' bowing, and laying his crown at the feet of 'the Redeemer, and crying--- 'Blessing, honour, glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' Behold, how he exults in his happy exchange from a state of conflict to a state of triumph. Hear him crying to you, his mourning widow---Weep not for me. Methinks his very dust cries aloud to you---Weep not for me, my pains, my fatigues, are at a perpetual end; here I sweetly rest, waiting for the glorious day when I shall be reunited to that active spirit which oft directed my feet to the sanctuary of God, and bowed my knees in humble prostrations at 'the throne of grace.' Under the guardianship of his Father and your Father, of his God and your God, he has left you. It is true, he has taken possession of the heavenly inheritance a few days before you; but, 'yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' That 'rest' which remains 'for the people of God,' is as sure to you in the promise, as it is certain to dear Mr.

Williams in possession, for God 'who has 'promised,' 'cannot lie:' but, I must check my pen, lest I weary you. Dear madam, may the God of all consolation abundantly comfort and support you under all your tribulations, till he shall bring you to that better world, where he 'will wipe away tears from off all faces:' and that the widow's God may at all times manifest himself as your God, is the prayer of your sympathizing friend, and humble servant,

GERVAS WILDE.\*

EXTRACTS FROM "RELIQUÆ SACRÆ :

OR, SACRED DIALOGUES BETWEEN A FATHER AND HIS CHILDREN.

By the Rev. Richard Pearsall, 1765.†

*The Character of Mr. Williams sketched.*

Page 190.---"On the *other hand*, we all know in a worthy friend of ours; the power of a contrary virtue under Providence, and the blessing which sometimes attends the *frugal*. I need not mention his name. I do not remember, indeed it is impossible I should, the beginning of his prosperity; but have heard many wise persons remark what a mixture of *saving* and *giving* ran through his conduct. According to his little ability, he was ready to entertain his friends, yet more ready to give to the poor, and to every pious use; but to himself he allowed little beyond necessaries. As Providence prospered him, he was very cautious how he improved the provision of his table, or the clothes he wore, or the furniture of his house. Here he was like a person ascending a steep hill. But neither the sounding of his bowels, nor the relief of his hands were restrained from the poor. Gradually he shone out, but it was like the sun, with the veil of a modest cloud over it; and as he received plentifully, so he gave plentifully. Thus, his advanced age is peculiarly honourable; he has every thing to make life comfortable: the

\* This truly pious, judicious, and faithful minister, was sixteen years pastor of the church in Carr's lane, Birmingham. He died November 17, 1766, aged 52.

† In *contrasting* characters apparently fictitious, Mr. P. on two occasions describes a character, the resemblance of which to his brother-in-law Williams, is remarkable for its accuracy, and highly honourable to his friendship.

glare of greatness, and the pomp which commonly attends the increase of riches, he always avoided; and the saving of this expence was a fund for his extensive charity. Few that are proper objects go from him empty-handed. He had met with losses, but by his frugal management he was prepared for them, and before-hand with them, so that they did not hurt or disturb him. His children, too, are educated upon the same judicious plan, though their circumstances are more easy and affluent."

*His Death deplored.*

Page 218.---"Here, with a *melancholy pleasure*, I can exhibit a contrast. The *good* man buried in *yonder* grave, under the wall of the church, to which, methinks, I am borne along by a certain magnetic influence, was my good friend living, and I was one of many that pathetically lamented his decease; yea, many a time since the day that I held up the fatal pall, my thoughts have hovered around the spot where he sleeps. In his own cause, he was gentle as a lamb, and never lost the smile from his brow, which seemed its native seat, unless the cause of God and religion summoned a frown thither; but, if the honour of his Creator or Redeemer were insulted, if virtue oppressed, or goodness persecuted, demanded resentment, it was ready at their call, and theirs alone. He was a patron to whom even the unknown widow and orphan fled; he gave them his counsel, lent them his friendly arm, and often relieved their necessities. How often was he chosen an arbitrator by one or the other, and sometimes by both the contending parties!\* He was a real friend to human nature, and thought himself happy if he could prevent ruinous law-suits; and yet more so, if he could also cement divided hearts, and pour in the reconciling, healing balm upon minds fretted by corroding passion. Withal, he was a truly pious man; he was a Christian in his closet, in his family, in the world, and at the house of God; and recommended religion by his uniform conduct. By this means,

\* See February 25, 1754.

he lived and died under the power of that 'Peace of God, which passeth all understanding.' Oh! what a gloom hung upon the countenances of many, when his case appeared dangerous; but what a general groan was heard, when the mournful tidings pronounced him *dead!* None could be too full of his praises! How many did I hear lament over themselves, as having lost their best and only friend! And they that could see thousands of a common character dead and buried, and make no observation, made honourable mention of him. My children, this man was *your father's friend*; it was my honour that others thought him, and himself called himself by that title. Did a great man\* esteem so highly of Sir Philip Sidney, as to have it inscribed upon his grave-stone, that he was---Sir Philip Sidney's friend! I am sure it will redound to my reputation to be called *his friend*, as long as he is remembered to be what he was. But I restrain myself, and only add, with reference to *him*---Imitate such wherever you see them, and esteem intimacy with them your honour and privilege; they are more valuable than jewels, and more rare; which puts me in mind of a proverb among the Jews, that ---*Did the world know the worth of the godly, rather than part with them, it would hedge them about with pearls.*"

\* Sir Fulke Greville.

**THE EPITAPH**  
**COMPOSED BY THE REV. B. FAWCETT,**  
**IN KIDDERMINSTER CHURCH-YARD,**  
**NEAR THE CHURCH, AND ON THE NORTH SIDE OF IT.**

---

**JOSEPH WILLIAMS**  
**Died December 21st, 1755, Aged 63.**

Thy life, dear man, through every scene  
Has active, useful, lovely been ;  
Who e'er devised more liberal things !  
Who higher stretched Devotion's wings !  
Could friendship, trade, at home, abroad,  
Be sacred more to Christ thy God !  
How far from fear, to heaven how nigh !  
Thus WILLIAMS lived, and learn'd to die.

**PHEBE, his first Wife, Died Nov. 28, 1750, Aged 61.**

**Five Children Died in Infancy.**

**JANE, his second Wife, Died June 17, 1759, Aged 53.**

*Recut 1825, B. H.*

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