

THE
WORKS
OF
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LOMBARD STREET, LONDON.

CONTAINING

AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE, &C., LETTERS ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS, CARDIPHONIA,
DISCOURSES INTENDED FOR THE PULPIT,

SERMONS PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF OLNEY,

A REVIEW OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, OLNEY HYMNS, POEMS,

MESSIAH, OCCASIONAL SERMONS, AND TRACTS.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, &c.

BY THE REV. R. CECIL, A. M.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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LETTERS

TO MR. B———, &c.

LETTER I.

September 28, 1774.

MY DEAREST SIR,

I SEE the necessity of having, if possible, my principles at my fingers ends, that I may apply them as occasions arise every hour. Certainly if my ability was equal to my inclination, I would remove your tumour with a word or a touch; I would exempt you instantly and constantly from every inconvenience and pain: but you are in the hands of one who could do all this and more, and who loves you infinitely better than I can do, and yet he is pleased to permit you to suffer. What is the plain inference? Certainly, that at the present juncture, he to whom all the concatenations and consequences of events are present in one view, sees it better for you to have this tumour than to be without it; for I have no more idea of a tumour rising, or any other incidental trial befalling you, without a cause, without a need-be, without a designed advantage to result from it, than I have of a mountain or pyramid rising up of its own accord in the middle of Salisbury Plain. The promise is express, and literally true, that all things, universally and without exception, shall work together for good to them that love God. But they work together; the smallest as well as the greatest events have their place and use,—like the several stones in the arch of a bridge, where no one would singly be useful, but every one in its place is necessary to the structure and support of the arch; or rather like the movement of a watch, where though there is an evident subordination of parts and some pieces have a greater comparative importance than others, yet the smallest pieces have their place and use, and are so far equally important, that the whole design of the machine would be obstructed for want of them. Some dispensations and turns of divine providence may be compared to the main spring or capital wheels which have a more visible, sensible, and determining influence upon the whole tenor of our lives: but the more ordinary occurrences of every day are at least pins and pivots, adjusted, timed, and suited with equal accuracy, by the hand of the same great Artist who planned and executes the whole; and we are sometimes surprised to see how much more depends and turns upon them than we were aware of. Then we admire his skill, and say he has done all things well. Indeed, with respect to his works of providence, as well as of creation, he well deserves the title of *Maximus in minimis*. Such thoughts as these, when I am enabled to realize them, in some measure reconcile me to what he allots for myself or my friends, and convince me of the propriety of that expostulation, which speaks the language of love as well as of authority, “Be still, and know

that I am God.” I sympathize with you in your trial, and pray and trust that your Shepherd will be your Physician; will superintend and bless the use of means; will give you in his good time health and cure, and at all times reveal unto you abundance of peace. His promises and power are necessary for our preservation in the smoother scenes he has allotted for us, and they are likewise sufficient for the roughest. We are always equally in danger in ourselves, and always equally safe under the shadow of his wings. No storms, assaults, sieges, or pestilences can hurt us, till we have filled up his appointed measure of service; and when our work is done, and he has ripened us for glory, it is no great matter by what means he is pleased to call us home to himself.

I have only room to present our joint and sincerest respects. The Lord bless you all

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

October 15, 1774.

MY DEAREST SIR,

I THINK the greatness of trials is to be estimated, rather by the impression they make upon our spirits, than by their outward appearance. The smallest will be too heavy for us if we are left to grapple with it in our own strength, or rather, weakness; and if the Lord is pleased to put forth his power in us, he can make the heaviest light. A lively impression of his love, or of his sufferings for us, or of the glories within the vail, accompanied with a due sense of the misery from which we are redeemed; these thoughts will enable us to be not only submissive, but even joyful in tribulations. When faith is in exercise, though the flesh will have its feelings, the spirit will triumph over them. But it is needful we should know that we have no sufficiency in ourselves, and in order to know it, we must feel it; and therefore, the Lord sometimes withdraws his sensible influence, and then the buzzing of a fly. will be an overmatch for our patience; at other times, he will show us what he can do in us and for us; then we can adopt the apostle's words, and say, I can do and suffer all things through Christ strengthening me. He has said, My grace is sufficient for thee. It is observable, that the children of God seldom disappoint our expectations under great trials; if they show a wrongness of spirit, it is usually in such little incidents, that we are ready to wonder at them: for which, two reasons may be principally assigned. When great trials are in view, we run simply and immediately to our all-sufficient friend, feel our dependence, and cry in good earnest for help; but if the occasion seems small, we are too apt secretly to lean to our own wisdom and strength, as if in such slight matters we could make shift without him. Therefore, in these we often fail. Again, the Lord deals with us as we sometimes see mothers with their children. When a child begins to walk, he is often very self-important; he thinks he needs no help, and can hardly bear to be supported by the finger of another. Now, in such a case, if there is no danger of harm from a fall, as if he is on a plain carpet, the mother will let him alone to try how he can walk. He is pleased at first, but presently down he comes; and a few experiments of this kind convince him he is not so strong and able as he thought, and make him willing to be led. But was he upon the brink of a river or a precipice, from whence a fall might be fatal, the tender mother would not trust him to himself, no not for a moment. I have not room to make the application, nor is it needful. It requires the same grace to bear with a right spirit a cross word, as a cross injury; or the breaking of a china-plate, as the death of an only son.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

November 23, 1774.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HOPE to be informed in due time, that the Lord has given you full health and cure. He has preserved me hitherto from the hands of surgeons; but I feel as if my flesh would prove, as you say, a very coward, were it needful to submit to a painful operation. Yet I observe, when such operations are necessary, if people are satisfied of a surgeon's skill and prudence, they will not only yield to be cut at his pleasure, without pretending to direct him where, or how long he shall make the incision, but will thank and pay him for putting them to pain, because they believe it for their advantage. I wish I could be more like them in my concerns. My body, as I said, is, through mercy, free from considerable ailments, but I have a soul that requires surgeon's work continually; there is some tumour to be discussed or laid open, some dislocation to be reduced, some fracture to be healed, almost daily. It is my great mercy, that one who is infallible in skill, who exercises incessant care, and boundless compassion towards all his patients, has undertaken my case; and complicated as it is, I dare not doubt his making a perfect cure. Yet, alas! I too often discover such impatience, distrust, and complaining, when under his hand, am so apt to find fault with the instruments he is pleased to make use of, so ready to think the salutary wounds he makes, unnecessary or too large; in a word, I show such a promptness to control, were I able, or to direct his operations, that, were not his patience beyond expression, he would before now have given me up. I am persuaded, no money would induce Mr. ——— to attend upon a patient who should act towards him as I have done towards my best Physician. Sometimes I indulge a hope that I am growing wiser, and think surely, after such innumerable proofs as I have had, that he does all things well, I shall now be satisfied to leave myself quietly and without reserve to his disposal. A thousand such surrenders I have made, and a thousand times I have interpretatively retracted them. Yet still he is gracious. O, how shall I praise him at last!

I thank you for your letter; I never receive one from you without pleasure, and, I believe, seldom without profit, at least for the time. I believe, with you, that there is much of the proper and defined efficacy of the gospel-mystery which I have not yet experienced. And I suppose they who are advanced far beyond me in the divine life, judge the same of their utmost present attainments. Yet I have no idea of any permanent state in this life, that shall make my experience cease to be a state of warfare and humiliation. At my first setting out, indeed, I thought to be better, and to feel myself better from year to year; I expected by degrees to attain every thing which I then comprised in my idea of a saint. I thought my grain of grace, by much diligence and careful improvement, would in time amount to a pound, that pound in a farther space of time to a talent, and then I hoped to increase from one talent to

many; so that supposing the Lord should spare me a competent number of years, I pleased myself with the thoughts of dying rich. But, alas! these my golden expectations have been like South Sea dreams; I have lived hitherto a poor sinner, and I believe I shall die one. Have I then gained nothing by waiting upon the Lord? Yes, I have gained that, which I once would rather have been without, such accumulated proofs of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of my heart, as I hope, by the Lord's blessing, has in some measure taught me to know what I mean, when I say, Behold, I am vile! And in connection with this, I have gained such experience of the wisdom, power, and compassion of my Redeemer, the need, the worth of his blood, righteousness, attention, and intercession—the glory that he displays in pardoning iniquity and sin, and passing by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, that my soul cannot but cry out, Who is a God like unto thee! Thus, if I have any meaner thoughts of myself (Ezek. xvi. 63), and any higher thoughts of him than I had twenty years ago, I have reason to be thankful; every grain of this experience is worth mountains of gold. And if, by his mercy, I shall yet sink more in my own esteem, and he will be pleased to rise still more glorious to my eyes, and more precious to my heart; I expect it will be much in the same way. I was ashamed when I began to seek him, I am more ashamed now; and I expect to be most of all ashamed when he shall appear to destroy my last enemy. But, O! I may rejoice in him, to think that he will not be ashamed of me.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

May 19, 1775.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HOPE you will find the Lord present at all times, and in all places. When it is so, we are at home everywhere; when it is otherwise, home is a prison, and abroad a wilderness. I know what I ought to desire, and what I do desire. I point him out to others as the all in all; I esteem him as such in my own judgment; but, alas! my experience abounds with complaints. He is my sun; but clouds, and sometimes walls, intercept him from my view. He is my strength; yet I am prone to lean upon reeds. He is my friend; but on my part there is such coldness and ingratitude as no other friend could bear. But still he is gracious, and shames me with his repeated multiplied goodness. O for a warmer heart, a more simple dependence, a more active zeal, a more sensible deliverance from the effects of this body of sin and death! He helps me in my endeavours to keep the vineyards of others; but, alas! my own does not seem to flourish as some do around me. However, though I cannot say I labour more abundantly than they all, I have reason to say with thankfulness, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." My poor story would soon be much worse, did not he support, restrain, and watch over me every minute. Let me intreat your praises and prayers on the behalf of me and mine, and may the Lord bless you and yours with an increase in every good.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

September 2, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE YOUNG woman I spoke of is still living, and not much weaker than when I left her. The Lord was pleased to relieve her on Tuesday evening, and she was comfortable the remainder of the week. But yesterday her conflicts returned, and she was in great distress. The enemy who always fights against the peace of the Lord's children, finds great advantage against them when their spirits are weakened and worn down by long illness, and is often permitted to assault them. The reasons are hidden from us, but they are doubtless worthy of his wisdom and love, and they terminate in victory, to the praise of his glorious grace, which is more signally manifested by his leading them safely through fire and water, than if their path was always smooth. He is sovereign in his dispensations, and appoints some of his people to trials and exercises to which others, perhaps, are strangers all their days. Believers are soldiers: all soldiers, by their profession, are engaged to fight, if called upon, but who shall be called to sustain the hottest service, and be most frequently exposed upon the field of battle, depends upon the will of the general or king. Some of our soldiers are now upon hard service in America, while others are stationed round the palace, see the King's face daily, and have no dangers or hardships to encounter. These, however, are as liable to a call as the others; but, if not called upon, they may enjoy with thankfulness the more easy post assigned them. Thus, the Captain of our salvation allots to his soldiers such stations as he thinks proper. He has a right to employ whom he will, and where he will. Some are comparatively at ease; they are not exposed to the fiercest onsets, but live near his presence: others are, to appearance, pressed above measure, beyond strength, so that they despair even of life; yet they are supported, and in the end made more than conquerors, through him that hath loved them. Long observation convinces me, that the temptations which some endure are not chastisements brought upon them by unfaithfulness, or for anything remarkably wrong in their spirit or walk; I often rather consider that in this warfare, as in worldly wars, the post of danger and difficulty is the post of honour, and as such assigned to those whom he has favoured with a peculiar measure of his grace. This young woman, in particular, was always from her first awakening remarkably humble and spiritual, and possessed of a broken and contrite spirit. I never saw her in a wrong spirit, or heard her speak an unadvised word; yet I believe it is impossible to express the agonies she has endured. The effect of them is visible. Her animal frame was unable to sustain the burden. I believe they were the immediate cause of that illness which is now bringing her down to the grave. I doubt not but these cases depend in a great measure upon constitution; but then the temperament of our bodies depends upon his pleasure, for, if the very hairs of our head are numbered, it is impossible that those circumstances of our frame which, by

the near connection between body and soul, have a powerful influence upon the state of our minds, can escape his notice. He could cure such bodily disorders as affect the peace of his people in a moment, yet he does not, though he loves them. There must be therefore wise reasons why he does not; and, though we know them not now, we shall know them hereafter. Possibly some suffer for the instruction of the rest, that we may learn to be more thankful to him for the peace we enjoy, and to be more humbly dependent upon him for the continuance of it. The Lord's way is in the deep, and his path in the great waters, untraceable by our feeble reasonings, but faith brings in a good report. We need not doubt but he does all things well, and in due time we shall see it. In the meanwhile he checks our vain inquiries, and calls upon us to be still, and know that he is God.

I brought home with me a thankful sense of the kindness and friendship I am favoured with from you and all yours. I account this connection one of the great comforts of my life, and I hope it has been, and will be, not only pleasant but profitable to me. Though I am but an unapt scholar, I hope I am not unwilling to learn, and the Lord, in his merciful providence, appoints me many teachers. There is little praise due to us, if we either communicate or receive benefit in our intercourse with our fellow-disciples. In both we are but instruments under the influence of a higher hand. Were Christians to meet together without their Lord, they would either trifle or quarrel their time away. But as he has said, where two or three are met, there am I in the midst of them, we may well be glad of opportunities of coming together. And though, for my own part, I am so poor an improver of such seasons, that the recollection of them, when past, is generally accompanied with shame and regret, yet he is gracious and merciful, and seldom leaves me to complain that they were wholly in vain.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

July 22, 1777

MY DEAR SIR,

THE COMPLAINTS you make of what passes within, encourage me under what I feel myself. Indeed, if those whom I have reason to believe are more spiritual and humble than I am, did not give some testimony that they find their hearts made of the same materials as mine is, I should be sometimes hard put to it to believe that I have any part or lot in the matter, or any real knowledge of the life of faith. But this concurrent testimony of many witnesses confirms me in what I think the scriptures plainly teach, that the soil of human nature, though many spots are certainly better weeded, planted, and manured than others, is everywhere the same, universally bad; so bad that it cannot be worse, and of itself is only capable of producing noxious weeds and nourishing venomous creatures. We often see the effects of culture, skill, and expense will make a garden where all was desert before. When Jesus, the good husbandman, encloses a soil, and separates it from the waste of the world, to make it a residence for himself, a change presently takes place; it is planted and watered from above, and visited with beams infinitely more cheering and fertilizing than those of the material sun. But its natural propensity to bring forth weeds still continues, and one half of his dispensations may be compared to a company of weeders, whom he sends forth into his garden to pluck up all which he has not planted with his own hand, and which, if left to grow, would quickly overpower and overtop the rest. But, alas! the ground is so impregnated with evil seeds, and they shoot in such quick succession, that, if this weeding work were not constantly repeated, all former labour would be lost. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* hence arises the necessity of daily crosses and disappointments, daily changes of frame, and such multiplied convictions that we are nothing and can do nothing of ourselves; all are needful, and barely sufficient to prevent our hearts from being over-run with pride, self-dependence, and security. Yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

November 6, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOU SAY you are more disposed to cry *miserere* than *hallelujah*. Why not both together? When the treble is praise, and heart-humiliation for the bass, the melody is pleasant, and the harmony good. However, if not both together, we must have them alternately; not all singing, not all sighing, but an interchange and balance, that we may be neither lifted too high, nor cast down too low, which would be the case if we were very comfortable or very sorrowful for a long continuance. But though we change, the Saviour changes not. All our concerns are in his hands, and therefore safe. His path is in the deep waters, his thoughts and methods of conduct are as high above ours as the heavens are high above the earth; and he often takes a course for accomplishing his purposes directly contrary to what our narrow views would prescribe. He wounds in order to heal, kills that he may make alive, casts down when he designs to raise, brings a death upon our feelings, wishes, and prospects, when he is about to give us the desire of our hearts. These things he does to prove us; but he himself knows, and has determined beforehand, what he will do. The proof indeed usually turns out to our shame. Impatience and unbelief show their heads, and prompt us to suppose this and the other thing, yea perhaps all things are against us, to question whether he be with us and for us, or not. But it issues likewise in the praise of his goodness, when we find that, maugre all our unkind complaints and suspicions, he is still working wonderfully for us, causing light to shine out of darkness, and doing us good in defiance of ourselves.

I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

TO MR. B——, JUN.

August 24, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

THE LOWNESS of your voice, and a blameable absence of mind on my part, prevented me from understanding what you said when you took your leave of me; nor did I just at that instant recollect that you were so soon going away. I could not otherwise have parted with you, without a particular expression of my warmest wishes for your welfare, and commending you with an emotion which my heart always feels for you to our God and the word of his grace. Permit me therefore, by writing, to assure you, so far as I can answer for myself, that the request you were pleased to make for my remembrance will not be forgotten by me.

You are going abroad: you will carry with you, I doubt not, the best advice, strengthened by the authority and affection of parents, whom you greatly love and greatly reverence. This may seem to make anything a stranger can offer unnecessary, if not impertinent; yet, confiding in your candour and in your good opinion of my intention, I shall venture to let my pen run on a little longer. Not only my wishes, but my hopes are strong in your behalf. Perhaps there is hardly a young man in the kingdom, born to a fortune, who is setting out in life upon equal advantages with yourself. How many, at your years, who have been brought up in affluence, are unprincipled, uninstructed, and have already entered upon a course of dissipation and folly, in which it is impossible they themselves can find satisfaction, and which, unless they are reclaimed from it by an almighty arm, will infallibly preclude them from usefulness and esteem; whereas your early years have been successfully employed in the pursuit of knowledge, and your education formed under the most animating and endearing influence; and the Lord has furnished you with every natural ability of body and mind, which may qualify you to serve him in that situation of life which his providence has allotted you.

What may I not, then, further hope from these beginnings, especially as it is easy to observe, that he has given you an amiable and promising disposition of spirit, and has not only preserved you from being hurried down the stream of a giddy world, but enabled you to account the tender restraint under which you have been educated, not a yoke, but a privilege. .

I sympathize with you at what you will feel when you are first separated from your happy family. But the Lord God, who is the sun and shield of those who fear him, will be always near you! His favour is the one thing needful, which no outward advantages can compensate the want of; and the right knowledge of him is the one thing needful, which no human teaching can communicate.

Were I more intimate with you, I could have asked the question, and perhaps received the satisfaction to know, that you have already begun to consider him in this light; that you feel a vanity in science, an emptiness in creatures, and find that you have desires, which only He who gave them can satisfy. I trust it either is, or will be thus. As to learning, though it is useful when we know how to make a right use of it, yet, considered as in our own power, and to those who trust to it, without seeking a superior guidance, it is usually the source of perplexity, strife, scepticism, and infidelity. It is indeed like a sword in a madman's hands, which gives him the more opportunity of hurting himself and others. As to what the world calls pleasure, there is so little in it, that even the philosophers of old, or many of them, though they had little of value to substitute in its room, could despise it. You will perhaps meet with some, who will talk another language, who will pretend to be too wise to submit to the Bible, and too happy in worldly things, to expect or desire any happiness besides; but I trust you have seen enough to enable you to treat such persons with the pity, and such pretensions with the contempt, they deserve.

Should we set our concerns with an eternal world aside for a moment, it would be easy to demonstrate that religion is necessary, in order to make the most of this life, and to enjoy temporal good with the highest relish. In such a world as this, where we are every moment liable to so many unforeseen and unavoidable contingencies, a man without religion may be compared to a ship in a storm, without either rudder, anchor, or pilot. But then, the religion which only deserves the name, must come from above: it must be suited to the state and wants of a sinner, it must be capable of comforting the heart, it must take away the sting and dread of death, and fix our confidence upon one who is always able to help us. Such is the religion of Jesus, such are its effects, and such are the criteria whereby we are to judge of the various forms and schemes under which it is proposed to us. But I forbear; I am only reminding you of what you know, and what you have known to be verified by living and dying examples. This happiness, my dear Sir, is open to you, to all who seek. He is enthroned in heaven, but prayer will bring him down to the heart. Indeed, he is always beforehand with us; and if we feel one desire towards him, we may accept it as a token that he gave it us to encourage us to ask for more.

May he be your guide and guard, be with you at all times, and in all places, and bring you back to your father's house in peace. Should I live to see that day, you have few friends whose congratulations would be warmer or more sincere than mine; and if, when you are settled and at leisure, you will afford me a letter, it will be both a pleasure and a favour to, dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

TO MISS M—— B——.

November 11, 1775.

MY DEAR MISS M——,

OUR LATE visit to —— was very pleasant to myself; if any thing passed that was of service to you, we know to whom the thanks are due; for we can neither communicate nor receive any thing, but so far as he is pleased to enable us. One reason why he often disappoints us is, that we may learn to depend on him alone. We are prone, as you observe, to rest too much upon sensible comforts, yet they are very desirable; only as to the measure and seasons, it is well to be submissive to his will, to be thankful for them when we have them, and humbly waiting for them when we have them not. They are not, however, the proper ground of our hope; a good hope springs from such a sense of our wants, and such a persuasion of his power and grace, as engages the heart to venture, upon the warrant of his promises, to trust in him for salvation. In a sense, we are often hindering him by our impatience and unbelief; but, strictly speaking, when he really begins the good work, and gives us a desire which will be satisfied with nothing short of himself, he will not be hindered from carrying it on; for he has said, I will work, and none shall let it. Ah! had it depended upon myself, upon my wisdom or faithfulness, I should have hindered him to purpose, and ruined myself long ago. How often have I grieved and resisted his Spirit! but hereby I have learned more of his patience and tenderness than I could otherwise have known. He knows our frame, and what effects our evil nature, fomented by the artifices of Satan, will have; he sees us from first to last. A thousand evils arise in our hearts. A thousand wrongnesses in our conduct, which, as they do arise, are new to ourselves, and perhaps, at some times, we were ready to think we were incapable of such things; but none of them are new to him, to whom past, present, and future are the same. The foresight of them did not prevent his calling us by his grace. Though he knew we were vile, and should prove ungrateful and unfaithful, yet he would be found of us; he would knock at the door of our hearts, and gain himself an entrance. Nor shall they prevent his accomplishing his gracious purpose. It is our part to be abased before him, and quietly to hope and wait for his salvation, in the use of his appointed means. The power, success, and blessing, are wholly from himself. To make us more sensible of this, he often withdraws from our perceptions; and as, in the absence of the sun, the wild beasts of the forest roam abroad; so, when Jesus hides himself, we presently perceive what is in our hearts, and what a poor shift we can make without him; when he returns, his light chases the evils away, and we are well again. However, they are not dead when most controlled by his presence.

It is your great and singular mercy, my dear Miss, that he has taught you to seek him so early in life. You are entered in the way of salvation, but you must not expect all at once. The work of grace is compared to the corn, and to a building; the growth of the one, and the carrying forward of the other, are gradual. In a building, for instance, if it be large, there is much to be done in preparing and laying the foundation, before the walls appear above ground; much is doing within, when the work does not seem, perhaps, to advance without; and when it is considerably forward, yet being encumbered with scaffolds and rubbish, a bystander sees it at a great disadvantage, and can form but an imperfect judgment of it. But all this while the architect himself, even from the laying of the first stone, conceives of it according to the plan and design he has formed; he prepares and adjusts the materials, disposing each in its proper time and place, and views it in idea as already finished. In due season it is completed, but not in a day. The topstone is fixed, and then, the scaffolds and rubbish being removed, it appears to others as he intended it should be. Men indeed often plan what, for want of skill or ability, or from unforeseen disappointments, they are unable to execute. But nothing can disappoint the heavenly Builder; nor will he ever be reproached with forsaking the work of his own hands, or beginning that which he could not or would not accomplish, Phil. i. 6. Let us therefore be thankful for beginnings, and patiently wait the event. His enemies strive to retard the work, as they did when the Jews, by his order, set about rebuilding the temple, yet it was finished in defiance of them all.

Believe me to be, &c.

LETTER X.

April 29, 1776.

MY DEAR MISS M——,

I THANK you for your last; and I rejoice in the Lord's goodness to you. To be drawn by love, exempted from those distressing terrors and temptations which some are beset with; to be favoured with the ordinances and means of grace, and connected with those, and with those only, who are disposed and qualified to assist and encourage you in seeking the Saviour; these are peculiar privileges, which all concur in your case; he loves you, he deals gently with you, he provides well for you, and accompanies every outward privilege with his special blessing; and I trust he will lead you on from strength to strength, and show you still greater things than you have yet seen. They whom he teaches are always increasing in knowledge, both of themselves and of him. The heart is deep, and, like Ezekiel's vision, presents so many chambers of imagery, one within another, that it requires time to get a considerable acquaintance with it, and we shall never know it thoroughly. It is now more than twenty-eight years since the Lord began to open mine to my own view; and from that time to this, almost every day has discovered to me something which till then was unobserved; and the farther I go, the more I seem convinced that I have entered but a little way. A person that travels in some parts of Derbyshire may easily be satisfied that the country is cavernous; but how large, how deep, how numerous, the caverns may be, which are hidden from us by the surface of the ground, and what is contained in them, are questions which our nicest inquiries cannot fully answer. Thus I judge of my heart, that it is very deep and dark, and full of evil; but as to particulars, I know not one of a thousand.

And if our own hearts are beyond our comprehension, how much more incomprehensible is the heart of Jesus! If sin abounds in us, grace and love superabound in him; his ways and thoughts are higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth; his love has a height, and depth, and length, and breadth, that passeth all knowledge; and his riches of grace are unsearchable riches, Eph. iii. 8, 18, 19. All that we have received or can receive from him, or know of him in this life, compared with what he is in himself, or what he has done for us, is but as the drop of a bucket compared with the ocean, or a single ray of light in respect of the sun. The waters of the sanctuary flow to us at first almost upon a level, ankle deep, so graciously does the Lord condescend to our weakness: but they rise as we advance, and constrain us to cry out with the apostle, O the depth! We find before us, as Dr. Watts beautifully expresses it,

A sea of love and grace unknown,
Without a bottom or a shore.

O the excellency of the knowledge of Christ! It will be growing upon us through time, yea, I believe through eternity. What an astonishing and what a cheering thought, that this high and lofty One should unite himself to our nature, that so, in a way worthy of his adorable perfections, he might by his Spirit, unite us to himself! Could such a thought have arisen in our hearts, without the warrant of his word (but it is a thought which no created mind was capable of conceiving till he revealed it), it would have been presumption and blasphemy; but now he has made it known, it is the foundation of our hope, and an exhaustible spring of life and joy. Well may we say, Lord, what is man that thou shouldst thus visit him!

I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

September 3, 1776.

MY DEAR MISS M——,

WE SAW no danger upon the road homeward: but my judgment tells me we are always upon the brink of danger, though we see it not; and that, without the immediate protection and care of him who preserveth the stars in their courses, there could be no travelling safely a few miles, nor even sitting in safety by the fire-side. But with him we are safe in all places and circumstances, till our race is done, and his gracious purposes concerning us, in the present life, are completely answered; then he will call us home, that we may see his face, and be with him for ever, and then it will not much signify what messenger he shall be pleased to send for us.

While he took care of us abroad, he watched over our concerns at home likewise; so that we found all well upon our return, and met with nothing to grieve us. Many go out and return home no more, and many find distressing things have happened in their absence; but we have to set up our Ebenezer, and to say, Hitherto he has helped us. Assist me to praise him. The Lord is leading you in the good old way, in which you may perceive the footsteps of his flock who have gone before you. They had in their day the same difficulties, fears, and complaints, as we have, and through mercy we partake of the same consolation which supported and refreshed them; and the promises which they trusted and found faithful, are equally sure to us. It is still true, that they who believe shall never be confounded. If left to ourselves, we should have built upon sand: but he has provided and revealed a sure foundation, removed our natural prejudices against it; and now, though rains, and floods, and storms assault our building, it cannot fall, for it is founded upon a rock. The suspicions and fears which arise in an awakened mind, proceed, in a good measure, from remaining unbelief; but not wholly so, for there is a jealousy and diffidence of ourselves, a wariness owing to a sense of the deceitfulness of our hearts, which is a grace and a gift of the Lord. Some people who have much zeal, but are destitute of this jealous fear may be compared to a ship that spreads a great deal of sail, but is not properly ballasted, and is therefore in danger of being upset whenever a storm comes. A sincere person has many reasons for distrusting his own judgment; is sensible of the vast importance of the case, and afraid of too hastily concluding in his own favour, and therefore not easily satisfied. However, this fear, though useful especially to young beginners, is not comfortable; and they who simply wait upon Jesus, are gradually freed from it, in proportion as their knowledge of him, and their experience of his goodness, increases. He has a time for settling and establishing them in himself, and his time is best. We are hasty, and would be satisfied at once, but his word is, Tarry thou the Lord's leisure. The work of grace is not like Jonah's gourd, which sprang up and flourished in a night, and as quickly withered, but rather like the oak, which, from a little

acorn and a tender plant, advances with an almost imperceptible growth from year to year, till it becomes a broad spreading and deep-rooted tree, and then it stands for ages. The Christian oak shall grow and flourish for ever. When I see any soon after they appear to be awakened, making a speedy profession of great joy, before they have a due acquaintance with their own hearts, I am in pain for them. I am not sorry to hear them afterwards complain that their joys are gone, and they are almost at their wits end; for without some such check, to make them feel their weakness and dependence, I seldom find them turn out well; either their fervour insensibly abates till they become quite cold, and sink into the world again, (of which I have seen many instances), or if they do not give up all, their walk is uneven, and their spirit has not that savour of brokenness and true humility which is a chief ornament of our holy profession. If they do not feel the plague of their hearts at first, they find it out afterwards, and too often manifest it to others. Therefore though I know the Spirit of the Lord is free, and will not be confined to our rules, and there may be excepted cases; yet, in general, I believe the old proverb, "Soft and fair goes far," will hold good in Christian experience. Let us be thankful for the beginnings of grace, and wait upon our Saviour patiently for the increase. And as we have chosen him for our physician, let us commit ourselves to his management, and not prescribe to him what he shall prescribe for us. He knows us and he loves us better than we do ourselves, and will do all things well.

You say, "It never came with power and life to my soul, that he died for me." If you mean, you never had any extraordinary sudden manifestation, something like a vision or a voice from heaven, confirming it to you, I can say the same. But I know he died for sinners; I know I am a sinner: I know he invites them that are ready to perish; I am such a one: I know, upon his own invitation, I have committed myself to him; and I know, by the effects, that he has been with me hitherto, otherwise I should have been an apostate long ago; and therefore I know that he died for me; for had he been pleased to kill me (as he justly might have done), he would not have shown me such things as these.

If I must perish, would the Lord
Have taught my heart to love his word?
Would he have given me eyes to see
My danger and my remedy?
Reveal'd his name, and bid me pray,
Had he resolv'd to say me nay?

I know that I am a child, because he teaches me to say, Abba, Father. I know that I am his, because he has enabled me to choose him for mine. For such a choice and desire could never have taken place in my heart, if he had not placed it there himself. By nature I was too blind to know him, too proud

to trust him, too obstinate to serve him, too base-minded to love him; the enmity I was filled with against his government, righteousness, and grace, was too strong to be subdued by any power but his own. The love I bear to him is but a faint and feeble spark, but it is an emanation from himself. He kindled it, and he keeps it alive; and because it is his work, I trust many waters shall not quench it.

I have only room to assure you, that I am, &c.