Letters on spiritual subjects and divers occasions: sent to relations and friends (Vol 1)

by

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2009
Richard Hall
1754.

Letter 31.

I find it crushing this bitter (55)

Ps 8, Ex.

Ps 41 & on Ex.

60 I. Thomas lost

77 Promise.

7.


128. 127. Division SCB

Letter 24.

Letter 28 Ex.

Letter 29 Ex. Blasphemous thoughts.

120

171 present.

177 innumerable sins.

225. 228.
LETTER ON

Spiritual Sub

AND

DIVERS OCCASIONS;

SENT TO

RELATIONS and FRIENDS.

By One who has tasted that the LORD is Gracious.

M.T. A. W.

LONDON:
Printed; and Sold by JOHN OSWALD, at the Rose and Crown in the Poultry, near the Mansion-house; and EBENEZER GARDNER, at Milton's Head in Grace-church-street. 1740.

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THE

AUTHOR'S EPISTLE

TO

The Persons to whom the following LETTERS were wrote.

My dear Friends,

As many of you have testify'd your kind Acceptance of these Tokens of my Love, when they were wrote to you, and that the Lord was pleas'd to make them of Use to your Souls; so I doubt not your Acceptance of them, now they are presented to you in Print. Especially since, together with those which were wrote to any One of you in particular, there are several more which were wrote to other Friends, which are here presented to your View, which otherwise you might not have seen.

And as to those of my Friends, to whom I have wrote Letters, which are not inserted in this little Tract; I intreat that they will not take it as a Mark of Disrespect, that their Letters were not plac'd among the rest. For, of many of the Letters which I have wrote, I kept no Copies; and those Copies which I did preserve, which are still in my Hands, were too many to be inserted in this Book,
Book, if it had been twice as large as it is: So that as to them, God only knows whether they'll ever see publick Light.

Perhaps some may think, that if any of my Letters were Printed, it would have been more proper to have had them done after my Death; and of this Mind I had us'd to be myself. But as others have thought, that if they were publish'd now, they might be of present Use, and have therefore desir'd the same, unto which I have consented; I hope none will be offended, that they are done while I am living; since, for that reason, I have entirely conceal'd my Name. And I well know, that all that is valuable in them, is from the Lord; and that all the Imperfection that is in them, is mine. But if God will ordain Strength to any of his Children, by the Lippings of so weak a Babe; as it will be my Joy, so He shall have all the Praise.

And therefore, as to these Letters which are now extant, if God hereby may be glorify'd, and his People reap any Advantage; I shall have my End in their Publication. And for this, I intreat you all, that are my Friends, to help, by your Prayers, your Friend that loves you in the Bowels of Jesus Christ.

LET-
(5)

LETTERS
ON
Spiritual Subjects, &c.

LETTER I.
To Mr. W. and E. C.

Dear Brother and Sister,

MAY the Peace of God that passeth all Understanding, keep your Heart and Mind thro' Christ Jesus!

I am exceeding glad that you are helpt to bear your Loss patiently; believing that the Lord will do you good by it. Our dear Father, never takes any good Thing from us, but in order to give something better. He has taken away your Pebbles, to give you Pearls; Empty’d you of Riches in Shew, to fill you with True Riches, and Never-failing Substance. Bless him therefore, for Taking as well as Giving. His Love cast the Lot this Way; Believe it, and you’ll like it well. A little Grace is better than much Gold. You will be A 3 great
great Gainers by your Los\textls{9}s, if the Lord
give you submission to his sovereign Di-
pole under it, Acquiescence with his good
Pleasure in it, and a further Acquaintance
with Himself, as your everlasting ALL by
it. Mr. Rutherford calls the World,
"The Clay-portion of Bastards; not the
"Inheritance of Children." 'Tis a great
Thing for a Saint that is rich in this
World, to be thoroughly sensible of its
Nothingness; and to live beside his out-
ward Enjoyments, upon that Infinite, In-
exhaustible Fullness he has in God. The
Creatures stand as a Blind between us
and Him. And God loves his Children
so, that he calls for our Hearts; and ra-
ther than want 'em, he'll strike the Cre-
atures dead, that Himself, the Life of all
our Joys, might be exceedingly endear'd
to us. He'll dry up the Streams of Cre-
ture-comforts, that our thirsty Souls may
learn to drink their Fill at the Fountain-
Head. And so great is his Grace, that it
pleaseth him well, to see his Children
come to his Bosom for all they want,
when starv'd out of Creature-Supplies! Oh
what Fools are we to catch at Shadows,
and let go the Substance, the Sum and
Quintessence of all our Bliss! Oh how
happy should we be, if infinite Sweetnes-
did
did always ravish our Souls, and unheart us from all the Creatures! Oh, the Crystal Streams, which proceed out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, how sweet are they at the Well-Head! What a pure River of Water of Life should we swim in if we always liv’d in God! This will be our Life in Heaven, to the utmost Perfection; and happy they, who are aspiring after the rising Glory, and highest Degree of it here on Earth!

The Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort, fill you with all Joy and Peace in Believing!

I am Yours in Christ for ever, &c.

LETTER II.

To Mr. W. and E. C.

Dear Brother and Sister,

As to my Health, Blessed be God, I am not worse than I was when Brother was here. I dwell in a crasy Tabernacle, which I think, sometimes, is near its Dissolution. But I rejoice in that House, that Building of God, Eternal in the Heavens, which I know, thro' Grace, is prepar’d for me. I in this Tabernacle groan,
groan, being burdened, by reason of that Sinfulness, and Weakness which attends, and renders me incapable either to know or serve the Lord as I would, and as perfect Spirits do: and this makes me long for the Time when Mortality shall be swallowed up of Life. We have no reason to be afraid of a separate State; for Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, Rev. xiv. 13. Nor yet should the Saints be afraid to die; as if they should be forsaken, and left to go thro' the last Trial alone. No, our God will be with us when we come to the River Death; he will divide the Water before us, and so marvellously appear in carrying us thro' it, that we shall take thence a Memorial of his Infinite Grace and Faithfulness; as the Children of Israel did when they passed thro' the literal Jordan, Josh. iv. 7. We should come up from the Wilderness, even to the last Step of it, leaning upon our Beloved; who hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, Heb. xiii. 5. This Word, Never Leave thee, reacheth thro' our whole Lives, even unto Death; yea, into Death, thro' Death, above and beyond Death, even to an endless Eternity. And unless everlasting Arms could wax weary, unchangeable Love alter, and Infinite Faithfulness fail,
fail, we have no reason to be afraid; No, not in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Psa. xxiii. 4. Our God will be our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in that Time of Trouble, Psa. xlvi. 1. And as he will be the Strength of our Heart, when Heart and Flesh fail us, so, our Portion for ever, or our eternal Lot. And oh, who can count up a thousandth part of those vast Treasures of Glory we have in his immense BEING, as he has made over his Great SELF to us in Christ! Why should we then, that are the King's Sons, be lean from Day to Day? The Lord grant us true Greatness of Mind, that with a Princely Spirit, we may behave as Heirs of Glory under all our present Trials!

Wishing all Prosperity, and begging a Share in your Prayers, I commit you to Israel's Keeper, and rest,

With dear Love, Yours in the Lord, &c.

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LETTER III.

To Mr. W. and E. C.

Dear Brother and Sister,

Grace and Peace from God our Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord, be multiply'd unto you.

A 5 I am
I am persuaded, that the Lord is doing you great Good by the great Exercises you meet with. As many as the Lord loves, he rebukes and chastens. The Lord help you to believe, that all your Trials are so many fresh Tokens of that boundless Love, which is in his Heart towards you; and to receive them from his Hand accordingly, with Submission, Patience, Cheerfulness and Thankfulness! Your light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for you a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; while you look not at the Things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the Things which are not seen, which are eternal. Patience is a perfecting Grace: and we are exhorted to let Patience have its perfect Work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing, Jam. i. 4. When the Saints, (as one well says) have learnt to bear a Cross, they shall wear a Crown. Our dear Lord Jesus, tho’ he were a Son, (such a Son!) yet he learned Obedience by the Things which he suffered. And the Members must be conform’d to their Head, in Sufferings, as well as in Glory, to meeten ’em for their Inheritance, and prepare ’em for their Crown. Let us reckon then, that all our Time-Trials, (as they flow from God’s Love, thro’ the Blood of Christ, and are
are under the sanctifying Influences of the Holy Ghost) to be greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt, or this dark World.

And now, That you both may be strengthened with all Might, according to God's glorious Power, unto all Patience, and Long-suffering with Joyfulness, is the earnest Defire of

Yours, &c.

 LETTER IV.

To Mr. H. T.

Dear Sir,

My beloved Brother in Christ,

It is upon my Heart to write a few Lines to you, to beseech you, in the Bowels of Jesus Christ, and by all that Love and Grace which has been display'd in your Salvation, that you walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith you are called. Oh, remember, That in Time past, you was a Gentile in the Flesh. And at that Time, you was a Stranger to God, and an Enemy in your Mind, by reason of wicked Works. That then, being under the Government of the Prince of Darkness, you had your Conversation among the Children of Disobedience,
dience, walking according to the Course of this World, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind; and was by Nature a Child of Wrath, even as others. And, oh, what did Free-Grace, and boundless Mercy do for you in that Day! When the Lord pass'd by you, and saw you polluted in your own Blood, dead in Sins, and said unto you, Live! Surely, your Time, That Time, was a Time of LOVE! What Sins did Free-Grace forgive! What Provocations did it pass by! How throughly did it Wash, Purify, and Beautify your Soul! What a glorious Robe of Righteousness did it cast over you! How richly did it anoint you with the Oil of Gladness, the Spirit of Grace, as a Sanctifier and Comforter! And in a Word, what a rich Crown of Loving Kindness did it set upon your Head! So that you was exceeding-beautiful, and did prosper into a Kingdom; being made by Jesus Christ, a King, and a Priest unto God and His Father!

And now, what think you do you owe to Free-Grace! Is it not worthy to be glorify'd by your whole Spirit, Soul and Body? When you was first espoused to Christ, did you not give him your whole Self? Did you not count him worthy of all Love, Duty, and Glory? Did you not
Then like his *Kingly*, as well as his *Priestly Office*? and count Obedience to his Scepter your high Privilege, as well as Forgiveness of Sins thro’ his Blood? And is your Mind alter’d now? Do you think Jesus Christ is less worthy of your Love, Duty, and Glory now, than he was Then? Is he less excellent in Himself? or in any of his, Glorious Offices? Or is all his Excellency, Love and Grace to you, of little worth? of no Force to constrain you to live to Him? Oh, my dear Brother, what an abominable, hateful Thing is Sin! What a Dishonour doth it cast upon, and how contrary is it to God, Father, Son, and Spirit! How doth it slight and thwart the Design of the Father’s Love, which was to make us perfectly holy! How doth it contemn the Grace of Christ, and contradict the End of his Death, which was to purify unto Himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works! And how doth it slight and thwart the gracious Design of the Holy Spirit, who has taken Possession of our Souls, to work us up into a full Conformity to Christ, our holy Head! and how, by Sin, do we grieve him! *Depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways,* is the Language of every Sin to each of the Three Persons in the glorious Godhead.

By
By every Act of Sin, we do as it were, renounce our Allegiance to God in Christ, and to Him, as Sion's King; and, as far as in us lies, put ourselves atrefth under the Dominion of Satan; preferring the Prince of Darkness, and his hellish Dictates, before the Prince of Light, and the glorious Teachings of his Word and Spirit! Oh, horrid!

And as for ourselves, Oh, what a Soul-destroying Thing is Sin! Every Sin is a Step taken back towards Egypt’s Land; towards that Nature-Darkness, and Bondage, from which Free-Grace, boundless Mercy, and Almighty Power set us free. 'Tis making a Captain to return into Egypt; loathing the heavenly Manna, and longing after the Flesh-pots, the Onion and Garlick, the abominable Fare we once fed on, while in the Kingdom of Satan, when we drank Iniquity like Water. It brings Death upon our Comforts, Fruitfulness, and Usefulness in the World: for if we live after the Flesh, we shall die. By Sin, we lose our Opportunities of glorifying God upon the Earth; and so, that Prate, Honour, and Glory we should otherwise receive in the Day of Christ. Yea, as by Sin we dishonour God, and abide not in Christ; so we shall be ashamed before Him at his coming.
coming. If we should be saved at last; yet how sad will it be to lose all our Works? For that fiery Day will try all the Works of God's dear Children. If any Man's Work abide, he shall receive a Reward: If any Man's Work be burnt, he shall suffer Loss: But he himself (upon the bottom of Sovereign Grace) shall be saved, yet so as by Fire; or as a Person just escapes, with his Life, the Violence of the Flames, and has all his Goods consumed. 1 Cor. iii. 13, &c. This is our Seeds-time, and every Thought, Word and Action, may fitly be compared to sowing of Seed. And be that sowed to his Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption; but he that sowed to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life Everlasting; or that incorruptible Crown of Glory, for which the Apostle says, He, and the Saints ran their Christian-Race, Gal. vi. 8. 1 Cor. ix. 25.

Upon the whole, my dear Brother, have you been joined to Idols? Oh say, What have I to do any more with them? Have you turned away from the Lord? Oh return unto Him again! For he is Merciful and Gracious, and will not cause his Anger to fall upon you. He'll have Mercy upon you, and abundantly pardon. If we confess our Sins, (over the Head of the great
great Sacrifice, looking by Faith afresh upon Christ, who once bore them in his own Body on the Tree) be is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.

And as a Means to make you hate Sin, and strengthen you against it, look upon it oft thro’ the Glass of a crucify’d Jesus. Bring it, by Faith, to the Cross of Christ, and see if there is not Virtue enough in the Blood of your crucified Saviour, to crucify the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts. And whenever you find your Heart enclined to any Evil, think thus; What did my dear Lord once bear for my Sin? Can I love that, which was so hateful, and lothfom unto Him? Can I take Pleasure in That, which fill his bitter Cup? Can I take Sin by the Hand, and thereby take up a Sword as it were to wound and pierce my Lord afresh? Have I not pierc’d him enough already? Can I not be contented without plucking the Crown from his Head, who dy’d to crown me? I intreat you to think thus; yea, I charge you in the Name of the Lord, to put these Questions to your Soul, in an Hour of Temptation. And if they will not move you; you may be sure, that your Soul is in sad Case, and greatly harden’d thro’ the Deceitfulness of
of Sin. And every fresh Act of Sin will harden your Heart more and more, and make you less capable to resist Temptations; until, perhaps, you provoke the Lord to give you up to the Power of Sin and Satan, in such a Manner, as at present you little think of; and also to bring a severe Rod upon you by his own Hand. Believe it, that sinning against God will be Bitterness in the End. And Sins against Light and Love are the most presumptuous, and of the deepest Dye. Again, as a Means to keep your Heart in a holy Bent against Sin, be frequent in secret Prayer, ejaculatory, at least; ask Help of God; try this Weapon of All-Prayer. And read and meditate on God's Word. If we were diligent in the Use of Means, to keep our Hearts in an holy Frame, we should not be so apt to fall in with Temptations as we are. If we were fill'd with the Spirit of Grace, the Life and Sap of our holy Root, we should be like green Wood, not apt to take Fire. But it is our Dryness, because we abide not in Christ by Faith, that ruins us. Once more, another Means I intreat you to make Use of, is, Watchfulness. Watch the first Motions of Sin, and kill 'em in the Bud. Beware likewise, that you go not to the String's End, as it were; that you go not
not to the utmost of that Liberty you think you may have, and yet keep from the Act of Sin. Dallying with Temptations, is entering into them. Converse with Satan is the ready Way to be overcome. If we wou’d not yield to any Act of Sin; let’s beware that we yield not to a pleasing Thought about it.

And now, That the Grace of Christ may be sufficient for you, and his Strength made perfect in your Weakness, is the earnest Desire of,

Sir, Yours in the Lord, &c.

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LETTER V.

To R. K.

Dear Sister in our Precious Jesus, 

EST you should question my Love, tho’ in Haste, I wou’d write a few Lines. We have had many sweet Feasts with our Beloved in the Wilderness: But the richest Provisions, and the best Wine are reserved till the last; and the Marriage-Supper hastens. The Lord grant you may grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Christ! Oh, how little have we seen of his transcendent Beauty! We have beheld so much of his Glory, as to make him the chiefest of Ten Thousand in our Esteem:

But
( 19 )

But there is enough in him to fill Men and Angels with new Wonder to all Eternity! Christ's Riches, are absolutely unspeakable; a Mine that we can never bottom to Eternity! We shall see more and more of his Glory, as we pass on towards Perfection; and Oh, the wonderful Grace that is to be brought unto us at our Lord's next Appearing, which, in a Way of Eminence, will be The Revelation of Jesus Christ! The Views of his Glory, which we have had here, tho' true and real, yet are so small, that if compar'd with what we shall have then, it will be as if we had never seen him; and as if he was but then reveal'd to us. We shall be so ravish'd with the Views of his Glory, that we shall never be able to look off his bright Face for ever.

I am Yours in Christ, &c.

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LETTER VI.

To Mrs. E. B.

Much honour'd and beloved Sister,

Grace and Peace be multiply'd unto you, thro' the Knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

Yours
Yours I received, and return you abundant Thanks for your great Kindness shewn towards us, and unto me, who am the most unworthy, and less than the least of all Christ's. And none of your Kindness shewn towards my dear Lord, in the weakest of his Members, shall be unrewarded at his next Appearing.

If you smell any Fragrancy on us, it was Christ's Sweetness cast upon us that delighted your spiritual Sense. And if Union from the holy One, a Drop of that holy Oil cast upon a Creature, be so fragrant; what must the immeasurable Fulness of the Lord's Anointed, the Christ of God, be! For God giveth not the Spirit by Measure unto Him. Oh the transcendent Fragrancy of our Beloved! The Smell of His Garments delight the Saints, both in the upper and lower Worlds. There are little Sparks of Beauty and Excellency scatter'd up and down in the Creatures; especially among the Saints, the Excellent of the Earth, as new Creatures: but all Beauties, in their flaming Glories, are summed up, and radiantly shine in the Person of Christ, as God-Man! There is in Christ, not only the Beauty of the whole Creation, but even uncreated Beauty itself. What's all the Beauty of the Creatures, of Men and Angels,
gels, in both Worlds, if compar’d to his; in whom the Fulness of the Godhead dwell-th BodiLy! None in the Heavens can be compared unto the LORD, none among the Sons of the Mighty can be likened unto the LORD; the LORD, the Mediator. No, the Heavens praise him as God’s WONDER! Psal. lxxxix. 5, 6. The glorious Hosts of Saints and Angels above, under the surprizing and increas’ng Displays of his Glory, eternally adore that un-created Beauty and Brightness which shines forth in our exalted Jesus! The crowned Saints cast down their Crowns before his Throne, and shrink to nothing, as it were, in themselves, before the Displays of his infinite Majesty, Love, and Grace! Rev. iv. 20. The whole Host of Seraphims, Angels, and Arch-angels, vail their Faces, and cover their Feet, as unworthy to stand in his Presence, or to look on the refulgent Brightness of his unsearchable Glory; as the Train of divine Perfections fills the Temple of his glorified human Nature! Isa. vi. 1, 2. And as for the Saints below, when favour’d with the least Glimpse of his Glory, he is the chiefest of ten Thousand in their Esteem, and altogether lovely! They have none in Heaven but him, nor upon the Earth that they desire besides him, or in comparison with him. Song v. 10, 16. Psal. lxxv. 25. Oh how
how happy, are those Souls who have an Interest in this great Lord Jesus! and are blest with the transforming Shine of his inconceivable Glory! Oh, what Folly are we guilty of, when we forsake this Fountain of living Waters, and hew out to ourselves broken Cisterns that can hold no Water! Jer. ii. 13. When we forsake the infinite Fulness of Christ, and seek Contentment in Creatures, and Creature-Excellencies! The Way of Life is above to the Wise: Prov. xv. 24. The Way of Faith, by which Life is possesst and enjoy’d, is, to live out of ourselves, upon the Christ of God, in all his infinite Fulness and Fitness to save Sinners, from the Depths of Misery, to the Height of Glory.

Dear Sister, you say, "That I will not " allow you to put Ifs, concerning your Interest in the Lord Jesus." But if I would not; it is not for Want of Bowels towards you, nor Sympathy with you in all your Soul-Distresses. No, I can say, thro' Grace, that, in the Bowels of my dear Lord Jesus, I have a compassionate Tenderness towards all his suffering Members; and, in an especial Manner, an inward Fellow-feeling with the Lambs of his Flock, under all their Haraslings by the rearing Lion: and glad, exceeding glad...
should I be, if by any Means, I might be made helpful to ‘em in the Combat. But having seen somewhat of that Dishonour Unbelief brings unto God, and found what Discomfort it has brought to my own Soul; I would exhort my dear Brethren and Sisters, to take God at his Word, as to their eternal Salvation, in looking unto Jesus; and to hold fast the Confidence of their eternal Security, in the Face of ten Thousand Difficulties, and seeming Contrarieties, merely upon the Word and Oath of a God that cannot lie: who has laid himself under such Engagements, on purpose that the Heirs of Promise might have strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge to lay hold upon the Hope set before ’em. Heb. vi. 18. The Lord, would not only have us to be safe, but to know our Safety, in fleeing to his dear Son for Life. And when the Saints exhort one another to hold fast the Beginning of their Confidence steadfast unto the End; their Design herein, is, that God might have the Glory, and they the Comfort of of this great Salvation. Nor are such Exhortations in vain: The Lord often blesseth them, as a Means, to encourage his dear Children in the good Fight of Faith. And I am persuaded, that God’s fearful-hearted Ones would not so often speak the Language
guage of Unbelief, if they did consider, what great Dishonour it casts upon God, in each of the three glorious Persons, as they have been, and are jointly engag'd in the Work of our Salvation; and likewise, how much they weaken their own Hands thereby. A few Thoughts, and Words of Faith, in a Time of Darkness, brings more Honour unto God, and Comfort to the Soul, than we are aware of. A Believer, by every Act of Faith, doth as it were afresh set to his Seal that God is true; and likewise enters into Rest. John iii. 33. Heb. ix. 3. Every Act of Faith brings present Honour to God, and Rest to the Soul. And, as Acts strengthen Habits; so every Act of Faith strengthens the Habit of Faith, and tends to weaken and subdue the Power of Unbelief. Whereas, by yielding to Unbelief, we give God the Lie, and weaken our own Hands: We thereby render ourselves more incapable to fight it out in Faith, against the Powers of Darkness. We are exhorted to take unto us the whole Armour of God, that so we may be able to withstand in the evil Day, and having done all to stand. Eph. vi. 13. 'Tis always an evil Day with God's Children, when they are assaulted about their Interest in the Lord Jesus: And if we have
have not then this Piece of Armour, the Helmet, on our Heads, the Hope of Salvation, (the objective Hope of Salvation, or the Ground we have of Hope of Salvation) the Enemy will wound us exceedingly.

As to the various Temptations, Darkness, and the Power of Unbelief, you are exercised with; the same Afflictions are accomplished in your Brethren that are in the World. The Children of God are all tried in these respects, more or less. And 'tis well for us, that we have a sympathizing high Priest, who can have Compassion according to the Measure of our Distresses; who has been tempted in all Points like unto us, that from an experimental Feeling of the Power of Temptation, he might know how, in the tenderest Bowels, to succour us when tempted. Not a Sorrow pierceth our Hearts, but our dear compassionate Head feels it: And he lives in Heaven, on purpose to save us out of all our Distresses, by his Advocacy and Intercession with His and Our Father, in the Virtue of his Great Sacrifice, and in the Interest of his Great Person. So that we are exceeding safe, who have trusted our Souls in the Hands of this Jesus, with whom the Father is well pleased, and in whom his Soul delighteth;
so that he can deny him nothing that he asks. Yea, it shall certainly be well with us; since the Father himself loveth us; and from thence called his own Son to this Office of High-Priest for us upon the Throne, on purpose that the glorious Fruits of his Love, in our complete Salvation, might be communicated to us, in a Way of Honour to all the divine Perfections. And as we are safe, and it is, and shall be well with us, so we have great reason to be exceeding joyful in all our Tribulations; while we fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ in our Flesh. Col. i. 24. For even now, while we are Combatants, we are more than Conquerors, thro' him that hath loved us, Rom. viii. 37. And if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together. Ver. xvii. Our glorious Captain will cover our Heads in the Day of Battle; and as he has overcome For us, so he will certainly overcome In, and By us: He'll give the Victory on our Side, either actively, or passively. For tho', like Gad, a Troop may overcome us, yet we shall overcome at the last. If Sin and Satan should give us a Foil, then our dear Lord Jesus will lead us afresh to his Death; and so we shall overcome, passively, by the Blood of the Lamb. And then, having renewed Peace,
under the Sprinklings of the Blood of Jesus, our Faith shall be rais'd up again, to bear a fresh Testimony for God, against the Prince of Darkness, and all the Powers of Sin; and so we shall overcome Actively. Rev. xii. 11. All the Weakness and Sin that attend us in the Conflict, forgiving Love will bury in the Depths of the Sea; and every Act of our tried Graces, shall be found unto Praise, Honour, and Glory at the Appearing of Jesus Christ.

And when once we get to the City of Habitation, the Rest that remains for us, we shall blest God for all his Dealings with us, and admire the Conduct of wife Love, in all the Way it led us thro' the Wilderness; while we see every weary Step wisely over-ruled to make our Rest so much the more glorious. We shall then see, that we could not have been without any, the least of all our Trials, whatsoever they be; but God would have had less Glory, and we less Happiness. If we are in Heaviness thro' manifold Temptations, there's an absolute Need of it; that God might have his manifestative Glory, in our Deliverance, in all those various Rays which infinite Wisdom ordain'd; and that We might have that full and comprehensive Salvation, unto which we were appointed. Our suffering
State will be quickly over; our reigning State hastens. And mean while, our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. Let us then be Followers of them, who thro' Faith and Patience, do now inherit the Promises; reckoning the Sufferings of this present Time not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Heb. vi. 12. Rom. viii. 18.

I am glad, my dear Sister, that at Times, you are favour’d with Soul-amazing Prospects of your near and high Relation unto God in Christ; which humbles you in the Dust, before the Majesty of that Grace which shines forth herein. This is no less than Heaven begun in your Soul, a Sweet Fore-taste of that inconceivable Glory, you shall e’re long have the full Possession of. A Cluster of Canaan’s Grapes is brought you in the Wilderness; that so you might know, by spiritual Sense, as well as by Faith, that the Land whither you are going, is an exceeding good Land. And what tho’, at other Seasons, thro’ the Power of Unbelief, you may be kept low in your Soul; yet this makes no Change in your High Relation to God in Christ, nor in those high Privileges you have in Him.
If we believe not, and so want the Joy of God's Salvation; yet He abideth faithful, and cannot deny Himself, in the unalterable Word and Oath which is gone out of his Mouth concerning it; and so the Salvation itself is eternally secur'd to us. When Darkness covers us; The Darkness and the Light are both alike to Him: and at such Times, we are especially call'd to live by Faith; to tru'th in the LORD, and stay ourselves upon our God, Isa. I. 10. He is Our God still, even when we have no Light of inward Comfort to walk by; and are ready to be driven away with Temptations: and it is the Excellency of Faith, to tru'th in Jehovah, and stay itself upon him, as its own God, at such Seasons.

You can with Comfort remember the Time past, when you was enabled to crowd thro' all your own Unworthiness, and inward Corruptions, to Touch the Hem of Christ's Garment; which you found to be Healing to your Soul. And as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, to walk in him, Col. ii. 6. As we came to Christ at first, as undone Sinners in ourselves, to receive that free and full Salvation of God, prepar'd for us in Him; even so let us come unto him all our Days under a deep, and increasing Sense of our own Emptines,
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to be continually supply'd out of his inexhaustible Fulness. Faith is a Grace ordain'd of God, to take possession of Christ, and of Eternal Life in him: And let us be assured of our Eternal Safety, having run into Christ, the City of Refuge. How much Sin ever there may be in such a Soul, there is no Condemnation to it. No, blessed be God, our State in Christ, alters not a jot, with our Frames. The Discoveries of God's Favour towards us in his Son, may vary; but his Love, in itself, is as unchangeable as his Being. 'Tis an everlasting Round, that gloriously encloseth us from Eternity to Eternity. We are enclos'd in Grace by Father, Son, and Spirit; set in Grace in our Enclosings, as the precious Stones in Aaron's Breast-plate were set in pure Gold, Exod. xxviii. 20. So we are set, and have an eternal Fixation, an unchangeable Standing in Grace, Rom. v. 2. God's Love, like the Sun in the Firmament, always keeps a steady Course, whether we behold it, or Clouds hide its Glory from our View. And so various are its Emanations, that our Sight is much too weak to take in the full Glory of its Rays. Love walks in such various Ways, such unthought-of Paths, that we are often at a loss to trace its wondrous Steps in the mighty Race
Race it runs. It will take up Eternity to admire its mysterious Circuits, in all its rich Aboundings according to the manifold Wisdom of God.

Grace be with you. Amen.

I am Yours in Christ, &c.

LETTER VII.

To Mrs. M.

Dear Sister, whom I love and honour in the Lord,

I rejoice with you, for the exceeding Riches of boundless Grace extended towards you, not only in the Salvation of your Soul; but also in that Assurance of Faith you are favour'd with: and likewise, that your longing Soul, under the ripening Influences of the Sun of Righteousness, hath a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

But yet, my dear Sister, I beseech you, suffer that Word of Exhortation, Jam. i. 4: Let Patience have her perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Be willing to stay the Lord's Time; and fear not your losing any thing thereby. Christ comes into his Garden to gather Lilies, as soon as ever they are fully ripe for his
his own Bozom. He will gather you in,
as a Shock of Corn in its Season; and not
let you lay in the Field too long, to your
Damage. No, your stay in the World
is to prepare you for Glory; that Glory,
which is laid up for you, and shall shortly
be put upon you.

But it may be, you will say, ‘If I saw
that Work go on, I should be willing to
lay; but instead of being more prepar’d
for Glory, I think, I am more unmeet.’

But as to this, God is the best Judge of
our Meetness for Glory; as also, of the
Ways, Means, and Time to meeten us.
Perhaps, you may not feel such a vehement
Flame of Love, Joy, and Zeal as you was
wont; and yet your Faith, Humility, and
Patience may be greater. There’s a Variety
of Graces, in the Souls of the Saints;
and each must have its Exercise, and pro-
per Time of Trial.

If you have not now such Manifesta-
tions of Divine Favour, to the inflaming of
your Love; yet it may be you may glo-
lify God more, by believing in the Dark,
by trusting in him when he seems to
lay you, by cleaving to him when he seems to
cast you off; as counting him both able and
faithful, that hath promised, even in the
Face
Face of ten thousand Deaths and Difficulties, with which you are surrounded.

If, thro' the Lord’s withdrawing his sensible Presence, and an increasing Sight of your own Corruptions, you do not shoot upwards in Spiritual Joy, as you was wont; yet you may grow more downwards in Humility, and Self-abasement.

And tho’ your Zeal, in a way of active Obedience, may want that vehement Flame it once had; yet your Patience in passive Obedience, or your Fitness to endure a Variety of Trials, may by greater. And so you are still upon the Increase, even when you seem to decline.

And as to those very Graces, which seem to wither; there may not be such a Decay in them as you think of. They may decay in some Respects, and yet increase in others. For tho’ the Edge of your spiritual Affections, may not be so keen; yet your Love may be more solid, and keep a more steady Course in all the Paths of Obedience; even in the Want of those sweet Allurements, which first inticed you into the Wilderness. Your Joy may be more pure; more in the Lord, and in what you are in him; tho’ less in Self, and spiritual Enjoyments from him. And your Zeal likewise may abound more and more.
in Knowledge, and in all Judgment; tho' the first flashes of it may be over, which, ordinarily, are not so well regulated. And thus your personal Meetness or Preparation for Glory increaseth continually, even at those very Times, and by those very Means which seem to lessen it.

Therefore, let Patience have its perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If you was to be taken to Glory, before you had pass'd thro' the whole Course of Trials appointed for you, there would be something wanting in your Preparation for it. The Measure of your Stature in Christ, as a Member of his Body, and of that proportionable Glory which shall be put upon you, is appointed by God the Father: And the Holy Ghost, keeping this Pattern in his Eye, is now working you up into that Conformity to Christ, to which you was predestinated, by all the Changes and Trials which pass over you, both inward and outward, in order to bring you up to that full Glory referred for you. Every Act of our tried Graces shall be found unto Praise, Honour, and Glory at the Appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 7. And were they to have no Trial, how could they have an Opportunity of acting?

And
And as the Holy Ghost has taken Possession of us, to Work us up into a full Conformity to Christ, both in Holiness and Glory; so in carrying it on, he oft works, as it were, under-ground, out of our Sight: For in infinite Depths of Wisdom, we are curiously wrought in secret; so that our spiritual Growth, and increasing Meetness for Glory, are rather to be judged of in general, by Faith, taking in the Declaration of God in the Promise, *Psa.* xciii. 12, &c. than by Sense, or the present felt Exercise of this or that single Grace.

And since our Lord first suffered, and then entred into his Glory, let us be willing to follow his Steps, and run with Patience the Race that is set before us; looking unto that Eternal Weight of Glory, which our light Affliction now worketh for us. And in all our Sufferings according to the Will of God, let us commit the keeping of our Souls to him in Well-doing, as unto a Faithful Creator, who will perfect what concerns us, and not forsake the Work of his own Hands. Yea, let us value Life, with all its Trials, while it is continu’d, as a great Blessing; and labour to improve it, as an Opportunity put into our Hands to glorify God on the Earth: And when all the Work is done upon us, and by us, that was
was design'd, and we, in all respects, fully
meetned for Glory, we shall not stay here
a Moment longer, but be immediately
loved home unto Christ, to be glorified
with him for ever.

And now, that you may be strengthened
with all Might, according to his glorious
Power, unto all Patience, and Long-Suffering
with Joyfulness, until you are fully made
meet for, and taken up into the Possession
of your Inheritance with the Saints in
Light, is the earnest Desire of

Yours in the Lord, &c.

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LETTER VIII:

To a little handful of Christ Lambs at:

C---n E---d.

Grace and Peace be multiplied unto
you, from God our Father, and our
Lord Jesus Christ, by the Blessed Comforter.

Dear Friends, I long after you all in the
Bowels of Jesus Christ, that your Hearts
might be comforted, your Hope increased,
and your Faith establish'd upon Him, the
Rock of Ages. And having but little Time
to speak with you Face to Face, when I

was
was left with you, I was desirous to have a little Converse with you by Writing. I find Sin is your great Burden, which fills you with Fears, lest you should one Day perish. But as to this, remember that Sin, all the Sins of all that shall be saved, were once laid by God the Father upon his own dear Son. All we, like Sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own Way, and the LORD hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all, Isa. liii. 6. And as God the Father made all our iniquities at once to meet upon Him, the spotless Lamb of his own providing, and wounded Him for our Transgressions; so Christ bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, and gave up himself a Sacrifice in our Room and Stead; by which he has put away Sin, and for ever made an End of it, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Heb. ix. 26. And as he has destroy'd Sin in himself, and given us a compleat Victory over it in Him; so he will e'er long destroy it in us perfectly, by the Power of his Holy Spirit, in the Virtue of his God-like Blood. Our Old Man was crucified with Christ, that the Body of Sin might be destroy'd, Rom. vi. 6. Sin is condemn'd to die, by the dying of the Lord Jesus, and therefore shall never condemn us. No; tho' Sin, Original and Actual, has a-
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Bounded in such an amazing Manner, in it Guilt, Filth and Power; yet, blessed be God, where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound; That as Sin has reigned unto Death, even so Grace might reign thro’ Righteousness unto Eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. v. 20, 21.

How did Sin [abound,] even our Sin, in Adam’s first Transgression? How has it abounded in that universal Corruption of Nature, which has overspread the Elect of God, as well as others, as Descendants from fallen Adam? And how has it abounded in all those filthy Streams which this filthy Fountain has been sending forth in all Ages, in Thoughts, Words, and Ways, even in the Chosen of God themselves? How far are the Aboundings of Sin, in those respects, beyond the Comprehension of any Creature!

And yet, Where Sin abounded, Grace did [much more] abound: When the LORD, the Father, took our Sins, the Sins of the whole Elect, and bundled ’em up, as it were, into one Iniquity, which he laid upon his dear Son; who being an infinite Person, was well able to bear all that inconceivable Wrath, which a Sin-revenging God pour’d out upon him, as the due Desert thereof. By which he made a full Satisfaction.
Satisfaction to injur'd Justice, and an everlasting Peace between God and us; reconciling all the Divine Perfections, which gloriously harmonize in the Salvation of Sinners by the Blood of his Cross; and reconciling us too, in the Body of his Flesh thro' Death, when he gave himself a Sacrifice in our Stead. Whereupon God, as the God of Peace, did bring him again from the Dead, or raise him up from under all that Guilt, Curse, Wrath and Death he bore for us; and thereby, at once, did openly acquit and discharge him, as a publick Person in our room; and also freely, fully, and eternally forgive us all our Trespasses, and raise us up to endless Life and Glory in him, our great Representative. Thus Grace did much more abound. Grace was not only a Match for Sin, and so could not be overcome by it; but it was stronger, infinitely stronger than Sin, and so overcame it, even to a compleat and eternal Victory. Yea, Grace did much more abound, not only to an utter Destruction of Sin, in its Reign unto Death; but further also, in bestowing upon us such Life and Glory in Christ, as the Fruit of his Death, which is far superior unto that we had in Adam. Oh, the Super-aboundings of Grace! This
And Grace [did] much more abound: 'Tis put in the past Sense, to shew both the Earliness of it, and also the Foundation of its After-display in Christ, and glorious Reign thro' him. Oh the Earliness of this Grace! How did it super-abound in the everlasting Purposes, Counsels, and Covenant of the Three-One God, over all the Aboundings of Sin, fore-view'd even before Time commenc'd! And this was the Foundation of that bright Display which was made of it in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. And how did Grace, the Grace of all the Three Persons in God, super-abound, when Jesus died for our Sins, and was rais'd again for our Justification, and set down at God's right Hand, as our Representative and Forerunner! For Father, Son, and Spirit, had an equal Hand in these Wonders of super-abounding Grace. The Father laid Sin upon his own Son, and pour'd out upon him all his Wrath; the Son bare and endur'd the same; and the Holy Spirit, by his Almighty Influence, enabled Christ, as Man, to endure the Cross, and despise the Shame, for the Joy he set before him. And all the Three, in boundless Grace to us, were jointly
jointly concern'd in Christ's Resurrection, and Ascension to Glory, as our Head and Representative. And thus Grace [did] much more abound, [in] Christ, as the Foundation of its glorious Reign by him.

Grace did much more abound; that as Sin has reigned unto Death, even so Grace [might] reign thro' Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Sin has reigned in its Guilt, Filth and Power: It has reigned unto Death, unto bodily Death, unto Soul-Death, unto Time-Death, and Eternal Death, which, as the Wages of Sin, is the due Desert of every Sinner. But Grace reigns unto [Life], thro' [Righteousness]; the Righteousness of Christ, or his compleat Obedience, both active and passive; and so, according to the Righteousness of Jehovah's pure Nature, and his holy Law: And it reigns [by] Jesus Christ, the Anointed Saviour, as our Lord. Thus Grace reigns unto Life; Life of Justification, Sanctification, Consolation, and Glorification, and in all, unto Eternal Life; partial and initial in this World, and compleat and total in the World to come.

Well then, dear Souls, what's become of Sin? Oh, look to Christ, once crucify'd, and there see Sin compleatly finish'd.
nils'd in him, with all its woeful Effects, and for ever made an end of. Yea, see in a risen and glorified Jesus, what full, transcendent, unchangeable and eternal Life and Glory, God's super-abounding Grace has bestowed upon you in him! Here's a Foundation laid, that is every way large enough to bear all that vast Superstructure of our personal Salvation, from all Misery, unto all Glory, which one Day shall be laid upon it, when the whole Elect, being compleatly fav'd, both mystically and personally, in, and thro' Christ, shall for ever, with shoutings, cry, Grace, Grace unto it! Lift up your Heads therefore, and be not afraid of the Condemnation of Sin: It once reigned unto Death in Christ for you, when he died in your Stead; and even so, Grace shall reign, by him, unto Eternal Life, in your compleat Salvation. Sin, in its Guilt, shall not destroy you: for there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1. Sin, in its Filth, shall not make you loathsome in the Sight of God: for the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all Sin, 1 John i. 7. Sin, in its Power, shall not have Dominion over you; for you're not under the Law, but under Grace, Rom. vi. 14. And Sin, in its Being, shall not always abide in you neither;
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ther; your Heaven-born Souls shall not be always vexed with the Being of this hateful Thing, Sin: For your Spirits, at the Moment of Death, shall be made perfect in Holiness, Heb. xii. 23. And there shall be no Defilement, no unclean Thing, either in your Bodies or Souls, when you enter into the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 27. You shall then be unblameable in Holiness, before God in Love, Eph. i. 4. Thus gloriously will Grace reign unto [Life], over all that Sin and Death that works in you. And be not cast down, because you have no Worthines: For it is [Grace] that reigns, free Grace, that seeks none of the Creature’s Goodness to be a Motive of its Reign. Be not discouraged by the Strength of your Soul-Enemies; for it is [reigning] Grace, all-conquering Grace, that is infinitely able to subdue all the Opposition it meets with. And let not your own Unrighteousnes hinder your Faith and Joy in this Grace: For it reigns thro’ the Righteousnes of another; thro’ Christ’s [Righteousnes], not your own. And tho’ you have no Strength of yourselves to do any thing for your own Defence and Safety, or for God’s Glory; yet this Grace will do all for you, as it reigns by Jesus Christ our Lord. By [Christ], not.
not yourselves: The whole of your Salvation is committed into Christ's Hand, not your own. And Grace reigns by Christ, as [Jesus], a Saviour, that is infinitely able to save to the uttermost; and by him also, as [Christ], the Anointed of the Father, a Saviour in Office, that is authoriz'd and appointed of God to work out all that Salvation for his People, which Free-Grace bestows. And it reigns also by Jesus Christ, as [LORD] over all Creatures, and Things in Heaven, Earth and Hell; and by him also, as [Our] Lord, our Head, our Husband; one in the nearest Relation to us: Whose Love engageth his Power, as well as his Faithfulness; who exerciseth his Kingly Authority over all Things, in an especial manner for the Good of his Church; breaking his Enemies with his Rod of Iron; and defending, and governing his People by the sweet and powerful Scepter of his Grace, whereby he is able to subdue even all Things unto himself. What are all our Enemies? Men, Sin, Satan, Death and the Grave? Tho' like mighty Mountains, before our Zerubbabel they shall become a Plain: And he shall bring forth the Head-Stone of our Salvation, by the same Free-Grace that laid its Foundation, to the endless Wonder of Men.
and Angels, and the eternal Glory of the Three-one God; the exceeding Riches of whose Grace will shine forth herein, to the innumerable Ages of a glorious Eternity!

But after all, it may be, you will say, "These are glorious Privileges for those who are interested in 'em; but how shall we know that they belong to us?"

In answer to this, consider, that the Persons, over whom Sin shall not have Dominion, either in its Guilt, Filth, Power, or Being, are such, all such, and none but such, that are, not under the Law, but under Grace. All that ever shall be saved, have been, are, or shall be brought from under the Law, to submit to the Reign of Grace.

And those Persons are under the Law, (in the Sense I here intend it) who like and approve of the Old Covenant, as it makes Doing the Condition of Life; and accordingly, they cleave to the Works of their own Hands, and endeavour to establish their own Righteousness, as the Matter of their Justification before God. Tell such Souls of Jesus Christ, his Blood and Righteousness, and Free-Grace in him, is the alone Way of Salvation; and that Faith in him, is the Means appointed of God for a poor Sinner's Enjoyment of all that
that Life and Glory which is bestow'd by God's Free-Grace, without the least Work, Worth, or Worthiness in the Creature; and it is very unfavor to them. They don't like to hear of Christ's Righteousness, and God's Free-Grace in him, in the Point of Justification, to the utter Exclusion of their own Works. No, they seek Life, as it were, by the Works of the Law: They can't think, that what Christ has done and suffer'd, is sufficient to save them, without they do something themselves, to add unto it, or rather to be found in without it. For they like not the Obedience of the Son of God: They see no Beauty in this glorious Robe, and so reject it; and seek to dress themselves up in the filthy Rags of their own Righteousness. And as they see no Need of Christ's Righteousness, so, nor of his Strength neither; they think, that they have Power in themselves, to do what God requires, whenever they please to exert it; and so they like not, but reject Christ as a Root of Influence; and bring forth all their wild Fruit, from, in, and to themselves, under the Influence, and for the End of the Old Covenant. Thus, rejecting the Saviour of God's providing, they would fain, in the Pride of their Hearts, save themselves. And as for God's free