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# ADMONITORY EPISTLES

FROM A

GOVERNESS TO HER LATE PUPILS;

COMPRISING

A BRIEF VIEW OF THOSE DUTIES, THE PERFORMANCE OF WHICH IS MOST  
LIKELY TO PROMOTE THEIR HAPPINESS IN THIS LIFE, AND, THROUGH  
THEIR SAVIOUR'S MERITS, ENSURE TO THEM THE JOYS OF ETERNITY.

By JANE SMITH.



---

Let not the young my precepts shun,  
Who slight good counsels are undone.

COTTON.

---

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DRAKE, BIRMINGHAM.

1842.

725.



TO THE BELOVED PUPILS  
OF THEIR SINCERELY ATTACHED GOVERNESS

THESE

ADMONITORY EPISTLES

ARE MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

IN THE HUMBLE HOPE THAT HE WHO HATH GRACIOUSLY CONDESCENDED  
TO BLESS THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION ALREADY IMPARTED, WILL  
CAUSE THESE LETTERS TO BE INSTRUMENTAL TO THEIR GROWTH IN  
GRACE. TO THIS PRECIOUS GRACE SHE MOST EARNESTLY COMMENDS  
THEM; ASSURED THAT HE WHO HATH BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN ANY  
ONE OF THEM, WILL CARRY IT ON TO THE END.





## ADVERTISEMENT.

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IT is with feelings of the deepest anxiety the author presumes to present this little work to the public. It was originally intended only for her own private pupils, but at the request of numerous friends, she has ventured to send it forth into the world; trusting that those young persons who peruse it may be induced to turn from the error of their ways, and “learn to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called.” The author having stated her motive for appearing before the public, has now only to solicit from the candid reader that indulgence, which she humbly hopes will not be denied.



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## ADMONITORY EPISTLES,

&c.

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### LETTER I.

DUTY TO GOD.

---

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.”—Eccles. xii. 1.

---

MY DEAR ELIZABETH,

It was my intention to address you long ere this, but time, not inclination, has been wanting. However, I cannot let this favourable opportunity pass, without giving you a little friendly advice—I say *friendly*, for rest assured, my dear girl, those are your best friends who candidly tell you of your faults, in order that you may seek for strength to correct them. Your enemies will laugh and secretly triumph at your failings, but Christian friends will warn you, and being your sincere friend myself, it is my earnest desire to see you excel in every grace and virtue that can adorn your sex. If, in describing your duty, and pointing out those particulars in which I have seen you err, you should feel yourself hurt, forgive the warmth of that friend's heart who dictates the reproof, and reflect that it springs from the purest motive.

I shall begin with your duty to God, as I consider *that* of the first and highest importance. The remembrance of “your Creator in the days of your youth” must be firmly engraven on your heart; you must not, however, content

yourself with barely remembering that there is a Being who formed, and still supports you, but in order to fulfil your duty towards this great Being, you must have a deep sense of what you owe him, of the innumerable comforts and blessings he has bestowed upon you from your birth to the present period, and of the inestimable ones which are treasured up in Christ Jesus for your use. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Prov. iii. 6. Whenever you feel tempted to do wrong, remember though no human eye sees you, yet God is ever present with you, and observes every action, and that the time will come when all you have done will be published before men and angels. Never think of rising, without sending up fervent thanks to the Throne of Grace for preservation through the night, and for the blessing of being allowed to see the light of another morn; implore the God of all mercy to put his protecting arm around you, to guard you from every danger, and, finally, to lead you the way in which he would have you go. Never presume to retire to rest, before you have returned thanks for the protection and assistance which you have received from your God through the day, and humbly solicit preservation through the night. I would advise you when you pray, to keep the eye of faith steadily fixed on your Mediator interceding with the Father for the fulfilment of your petitions; this will, I think, prevent all low and grovelling ideas from entering into your mind, and animate you while engaged in this important work. Never bend the knee in prayer, till you have considered it is to your Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier that you kneel; and remember, "He is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." John iv. 24. It is not the cold and formal repetition of a few words, or presenting ourselves regularly before him morning and evening, that will avail. Oh no! unless our hearts be engaged, and echo back every petition; our prayers will ever be rejected. I need

not remind you how important it is to begin *every* day with reading the Holy Scriptures, for you already do it, and, I sincerely trust, with a hearty desire to profit by what you read, for it is with bitter anguish I have witnessed the careless manner with which some young persons peruse the sacred volume. Remember, my dear girl, it is not to be read like a tale, for amusement, but for profit; it must be carefully studied, not as the production of human genius, but as a revelation of the mind and will of God concerning you—the map which is to guide you through the wilderness to the heavenly Jerusalem, and which contains directions of the highest importance for all to know. “Let us then receive it, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe.” 1 Thess. ii. 13. If you should meet with passages that your young mind cannot comprehend, either pass them over for a time, or consult your amiable parents, who will, I am sure, give you every information which is requisite for you. Let me once more intreat you, never to turn over the hallowed pages of the Gospel but with reverential respect, and a mind elated with joy for the blessing of such a revelation. When you repair to the Holy Temple of God, let no vain or idle thoughts occupy your attention, but prepare your mind for seriousness and devotion, by contemplating your conduct during the past week; think wherein you have offended him, and how you may please him better for the future. Walk over the consecrated ground with sacred awe, and let your respectful conduct shew the just sense you have of the high privilege of being allowed to present yourself before him. When seated, turn not your head to the right or to the left; let your *mind* be fixed on God, but your *eye* on the minister. You must consider him as the appointed delegate of heaven, commissioned by God to lend you a helping hand in your journey thither. In vain will *he* lecture, if *you* do not listen so as to retain it. Frequently reflect upon what



you have heard, and regulate your conduct during the ensuing week by the portion of his word which you have heard on his holy day. Ever go to the house of God with cheerful feet and a willing mind. To *me*, a Sabbath spent in that house, in prayer *to* and praises *of* my God, is a foretaste of that eternal Sabbath which remaineth for the people of God. That we may both be partakers of this blessedness, is the prayer of your

Sincere friend and well wisher,

J. S.

## LETTER II.

### DUTY TO PARENTS.

---

*“Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”—Exo. xx. 12.*

---

MY DEAR ELIZABETH,

I endeavoured in my last to open to your mind some views of what God requires of you, and as I sincerely trust my hints have not been in vain, I shall now proceed to point out your duty to your parents. It will, no doubt, cost you much care and trouble to correct your least faults, but always remember, my dear girl, that “your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Cor. xv. 58. “Honour your father and mother” is the only commandment with promise, viz., “that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” This is a proof of the importance which the divine lawgiver attaches to the performance of this duty. Indeed, next to your Maker, who has a right to demand so much attention and respect? or who has so just a claim to your gratitude and love? It is to them, next to your Creator, that you owe

every temporal blessing you enjoy. If, when a parent deprives a child of every comfort, by neglect or ill-treatment, it is still that child's duty to obey, what must be yours, when blessed with such excellent ones! Your obligations must be doubly felt, when you reflect upon what your amiable mother has done and suffered for you—her constant and unwearied attention to your every want, her nightly watchings over your infant head, her trembling anxiety for your health and comfort, and when languishing on the bed of sickness, lifting up fervent supplications for you, and hailing, with streaming tears of joy and love, the least symptoms of returning health. All these cares and attentions she bestowed upon you, when your mind, yet uninformed, could make her no return; and long before your tongue could gratify her longing ears with lisping out, "mamma," and when you did, the sound of that word acted like a spell to endear you still closer to her maternal heart; and from that moment she has not ceased to guard and protect you, to watch with anxious solicitude the expanding of your rational faculties, to wait the opening of the bud of knowledge, that she might see it blossom and bear fruit, worthy of being transplanted to a better, yea, a heavenly soil, through the effects of that gracious dew which she has prayed day and night might descend upon you. Whilst you are so much indebted to your mother for all these endearing marks of love and affection, you are equally so to your father. To the unceasing anxiety which every good parent must feel for the welfare of his offspring, he adds an unwearied application to business, in order to maintain you in the rank which you hold in society. He labours through the day to procure you every convenience and comfort, and instead of seeking amusement every evening in the vain and frivolous pleasures of this life, (as too many do) he spends them in the bosom of his family; and asks, as his only recompence, a good account of the dear pledges of his love, saying with St. John, "I have

no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth." 3 John 4. O! my dear E., disappoint not, I beseech you, the expectations of such exemplary parents. Crush not the fond hopes of such indulgent benefactors. Reflect well, and you will allow that the child who can be insensible to the least want or wish of a parent, must be incapable of any spark of friendship or affection, and is guilty of the blackest ingratitude. The command of a parent, when it does not interfere with your duty to God, must be held sacred. How repugnant soever it may be to your feelings, or inconsistent with your ideas, question not its wisdom, hesitate not to obey it, resting assured such kind friends will desire nothing but your good. Run with alacrity to perform the least of their commands, and ever listen to them with the most respectful attention. Some children imagine that it is sufficient to be attentive while the friendly reproof lasts, but how often does it all vanish almost as soon as uttered, and the same fault is again committed. This is not the attention that Solomon entreats his son to pay to him; he knew that such would not avail, therefore he says, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother; bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck." Prov. vi. 20, 21. You must remember, one sacrifice made to the wish of a parent, will outweigh whole years of selfish enjoyments; and when they are stretched upon a bed of sickness, the best earthly cordial to their drooping spirits will be the affectionate attention of a beloved child. The cup of medicine administered by your hands, will be taken with an earnest supplication on your behalf; and when upon the bed of death, the remembrance of your obedience will lessen the pang of separation, knowing that it will be but for a little season, and that soon you will realize the promise that your days shall be long in the heavenly Canaan, yea, even for ever and ever. Oh! may your own interest stimulate you to pursue that conduct

which will realize such high expectations ; but above all, may your dear Redeemer spur you on to imitate his bright example. It is said of him that his obedience to his parents was perfect: " He went down to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." Luke ii. 51. If those who have done all in their power for their parents during their lives, have yet after death felt regret at not having done more, what endless remorse must those experience who have slighted or neglected them? If you do the latter, you will in vain wish to recal them from their graves. O! then, live *so* that you may never wish an action towards them to be undone, then you will obtain that peace of mind, which nothing but obedience to God's laws can give ; and this will amply reward me for my anxiety on your behalf, as it will shew that you have attended to the admonitions of your

Most sincere friend,

J. S.

### LETTER III.

#### LOVE TO BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

---

*" Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."—Psalm cxxxiii. 1.*

---

MY DEAR LOUISA,

With feelings of the most heartfelt satisfaction did I receive the delightful intelligence, that my last letter made a deep impression on your mind. Convinced, as you must be, of the motive which has led me to this correspondence, I need not tell you how dear your interest *is*, and ever *will be*, to my heart ; and when the period of your going forth into the world, and your entering into

a new sphere of action shall arrive, it is my intention, (if it please God to spare me,) to point out to you the dangers and temptations which beset young people upon an introduction into life, and also a way to escape them; and if, in years to come, I should have the pleasing gratification of hearing of my dear friend's being an ornament to her religion, how will it rejoice my heart, to think I may have been the humble instrument of fostering those good seeds, which were first planted by an affectionate mother's hand, watered by an amiable governess, and, I sincerely hope, increased under the influence of "Admonitory Epistles." It was proposed to treat next upon love to brothers and sisters; but to address upon this point a girl of your kind and affectionate disposition, who would not, I feel convinced, intentionally injure them, might seem a waste of time, did I not know, from experience, that quarrels will arise even in the best regulated families, and anger sometimes creep in at play from the most trivial circumstances. Though the quarrels of children generally originate in silly cavils, or foolish disputes about trifles, yet how often do they produce serious consequences. In order to avoid these ill effects, never, my dear girl, enter into any dispute; but when a point is to be decided, call in the aid of a superior judgment, and submit, though it may be contrary to your own. Think not, it will be a meanness to do this, because you are the eldest; no, it will rather prove that you are possessed of that humility of spirit which is the distinguishing feature of a true Christian, for Christ says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matth. xi. 29. Whenever you have given offence to any of your brothers or sisters, be not satisfied until you have acknowledged your fault, for it is the mark of a noble mind, and the characteristic of a generous heart, to confess an error, and to endeavour to repair an injury. When you are the injured person, be the first to seek a reconciliation, and

extend to the offender the forgiving hand, always bearing in mind that excellent maxim—

“To err is human, to forgive, divine.”

But above all, let your Redeemer's answer to Peter be ever in your thoughts:—“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.” Matth. xviii. 21, 22. If you expect pardon from your heavenly Father, you must forgive even as you would be forgiven. If, when you have corrected any failing in yourself, you see the same fault committed by either your brother or sister, gently remonstrate with them when alone, and with that friendly caution which is likely to gain you attentive and willing hearers; but by no means attempt to pull the *mote* out of *their eyes* till you have plucked the *beam* out of *your own*: the true meaning of which is, never to upbraid another with the faults you yourself commit. Learn to throw a charitable veil over the trifling failings of those around you; be strict only to yourself, and think every one in the house more amiable than you are. You are the eldest girl, and much depends upon your example; as all are prone to evil, and more easily imbibe bad habits than good ones, it is almost certain if you go wrong, those who look up to you for example will follow; if, on the contrary, you do well, there is a hope they may imitate you; and if they do, happy are they, and unspeakable will be your joy, when you reflect that you have done your duty yourself, and been the humble instrument, in the hands of Providence, of showing the way of salvation to those around you. You may, by the Disposer of all events, be placed in a few years in that station of life which may lead your conduct, whether good or bad, to be imitated by friends, neighbours, and servants; think, then, how necessary it is that you should begin in early life to consider your habits with regard to

others. At present your sphere of action is very circumscribed, it can affect none but your brothers and sisters; but this consideration should make you very circumspect in every action, for anything that can affect *them*, should deeply interest *you*. You are all, by maternal wisdom, enjoying the same advantages, and are all treated alike, there is, therefore, no cause for envy or jealousy amongst you; you should have but one interest. Let the bond of love ever unite you; let not the blast of adversity, or the sunshine of prosperity, diminish your affection, but, linked together in the closest union, cemented by increasing esteem, still may you live in peace and unity, and enjoy that communion of soul and similarity of disposition, which may draw down upon you the blessing of the God of Peace, and cause the beholders to exclaim, see how these children love! You know we have this commandment, "That he who loveth God, love his brother also." 1 John iv. 21. O, my dear Louisa, that you may begin to enjoy some of that harmony here, which can only be perfected in heaven, is the fervent prayer of

Your sincere and anxious friend,

J. S.

#### LETTER IV.

ON THE NEW YEAR.

---

*"Consider your ways."*—Hag. i. 5.

---

MY DEAR CAROLINE,

You will no doubt have seen, before this reaches you, the close of one year, and the commencement of another; the ocean of oblivion has swallowed up the last, and time is rapidly bringing on another, which in a few short

months will be forgotten like the former. The careful tradesman's question at this period will be, How stand my accounts? I must carefully investigate my affairs; see what my gains and losses have been, and judge if the balance is in my favour. That man who could enter into business, and go on in a thoughtless round of dissipation from year to year, without enquiring into his concerns, would justly be branded with the imputation of madman, and would, no doubt, end his career in infamy and disgrace. What, then, shall we say of that *Christian* who can suffer so vast a portion of time to roll away, without thinking how his account stands with God? What! shall the worldly-minded man be more interested in procuring for himself temporal blessings, than the Christian in obtaining heavenly and eternal ones? Well, indeed, might Christ say, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Luke xvi. 8. For it is a lamentable fact, that whilst the man of the world leaves no stone unturned (if I may be allowed the expression,) to gain his ends, the followers of Christ neglect various opportunities of promoting those ends for which alone they profess to live. When shall we hear of the worldling allowing anything to interfere with those plans which he thinks will tend to promote his temporal interests? Does he not rise up early, and late take rest, that he may arrive at perfection in some art or science? Yet how often is the Christian slothful concerning his eternal interests. The former begins early to provide for the storms of adversity and the infirmities of age; and shall the latter forget that the scythe of time may mow him down ere he has sought a refuge from the storm of God's wrath? And shall he make no provision for that trying hour, when all his faith, and hope, and love, will be called into active exercise? Oh! my dear girl, let us profit by the untiring watchfulness of the man of business, and let us learn from him to be diligent and persevering in all



spiritual works ; to suffer no obstacles to prevent us from performing our duty, but, with careful anxiety, seek " to make our calling and election sure." 2 Peter i. 10. Believe me, we must make a business of religion, or it will be terribly neglected. We must lay down plans and rules, and keep them strictly, never neglecting them, never allowing any business or pleasure to prevent the performance of them ; still feeling, that if we do to the utmost in our power, and spend every hour in the service of our God, we shall be unprofitable servants. Though it is right at all periods to form good resolutions, yet there cannot be a more proper season than the commencement of a new year, nor one at which we are more likely to keep them. We are at this time beginning, as it were, a new era in our existence ; let us, then, this day, choose to serve the Lord our God with our whole hearts, then may we hope, that as the years which are past are now numbered with those beyond the flood, so also our past actions will be pardoned and forgotten, if, by a timely repentance and faith in the Redeemer's atonement, we strive to walk more closely with him for the remainder of our days. The last year has passed away without bringing any serious misfortune to either of us ; but, alas ! to how many has it brought sickness, sorrow, and death ? How many, who began it with the same prospect of enjoying health and prosperity as ourselves, have, ere this, been numbered with the dead, or reduced to the most abject misery ? How many parents have consigned a beloved child to the grave ? How many orphans have followed their last parent to the tomb ? How many have drained the cup of affliction to its lowest dregs ? Few, indeed, can say, " We have had no cause to mourn," for almost all have lost a relative or friend. But if such has not been our lot, how should our hearts expand in gratitude to the Author of all our happiness. Whilst we most thankfully receive his benefits, still we must not repine at

his chastisements, "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. iv. 17. Though the last year has rolled on without anything of a serious nature happening to us, yet the one that time is bringing on its wings, is fraught with events hid in the counsels of Jehovah, and whether they are to be prosperous or adverse is not for us to know. We must look up with pious confidence to the Most High, and trust in his never-failing goodness and mercy. We cannot expect all our days to pass on with the same calm and undisturbed serenity: no, misfortunes are the common lot of all in this transitory state of being, and *we* have no right to expect we shall be exempt from them; yet we must not anticipate them, for that is to tempt the Almighty to withdraw the comforts with which he has already blessed us. Let us learn to fortify our minds against every attack, that we may submit with humble resignation to the chastening hand of an indulgent father, knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. viii. 28. Nothing can be a greater help to piety than to have, (besides our every day examinations,) stated periods at which to take a view of our past conduct. Let the present season be one, your birth-day another, and let the particular days which the Church hath appointed to be kept holy, be also of the number. Cultivate, on such occasions, a serious and contemplative frame of mind. Live every day as though it were to be the last! Perform the good you resolve to do, "while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." John ix. 4. Pray that you may so learn to number your days that you may apply your heart unto wisdom. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all desirable temporal comforts shall be added unto you. Seek the favour of your future Judge in every action, that you may have a good hope, through grace, of dwelling in the mansions

prepared by your adorable Redeemer for all that love and serve him, where eternal ages roll on in uninterrupted felicity, unmarked by the lapse of time, for *time* there is swallowed up in *eternity*.

I remain ever your friend,

J. S.

## LETTER V.

### CHRISTMAS.

---

*“Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—Luke ii. 11.*

---

MY DEAR JANE,

I cannot let the present season pass by without wishing you the old fashioned compliments of a merry Christmas and a happy new year; and not only do I sincerely wish you all the enjoyments which are usually comprehended in these compliments, but that you may also begin to feel that real delight, which will arise in your breast when thoroughly acquainted, by the teaching of God's Spirit, with the blessed importance of the period you are now commemorating. Reflect seriously, my dear girl, whose birth-day it is that you and all true Christians are joining to celebrate; think with what joy you hail your own, or any of your friends' birth-days; how much more, then, should you not hail with piety, devotion, joy, and thankfulness, the dawn of that day which brought the Son of God from heaven to earth. Even the whole hierarchy of heaven on that day resounded with the joyful acclamations of “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men.” Luke ii. 14. Rejoice, rejoice, ye sons of men, “for unto

us a son is given, unto us a child is born." Isaiah ix. 6. When we think upon his appearance in this world, it should fill us with humility; when upon his pure and spotless life, with an earnest desire to imitate so glorious an example; when upon his death and sufferings, with the deepest sorrow and contrition of heart, and the greatest hatred of sin, which could occasion so much suffering to our adorable Immanuel. When we reflect upon his resurrection and ascension, we then contemplate the completion of man's redemption, for now he ever liveth to make intercession for us. The plan of this redemption must ever remain amongst the mysteries of Divine Providence. That poor fallen man should experience so much condescending grace, so much inexpressible goodness and mercy, must fill our hearts with wonder, love, and admiration. The recollection that he is ascended into heaven, there to intercede with the Father for us, and that hereafter this infant in Bethlehem will come to be our judge, ought to make us feel the greatest reverence when approaching him in prayer, taking care that our petitions are offered in sincerity of heart, and that our repentance is such as needeth not to be repented of. We should feel a dread of offending him, who in the last day will come in his glorious majesty, to be the rewarder or punisher of all mankind. Jesus Christ preaches to us through his whole life: in his infancy he gave us a lesson of humility; he, to whom all the world belonged, chose a stable for his dwelling, and a manger for his cradle; in his youth he was a pattern of obedience to all children, he went to Nazareth, and was subject unto his parents; in manhood, he displayed all those virtues which we should do well to imitate; and in his sufferings and death, he shewed the most exemplary patience and fortitude. Thus, having before us so perfect a model for imitation, rules and commandments delivered from his own mouth, and transmitted by his apostles to guide us in our conduct,

how can we err ? To follow so noble an example, and to endeavour after that perfection, which, though we can never attain in this life, yet at an humble distance we can imitate, ought to be the study of our whole lives. Can we refuse to obey the precepts of him who became poor that we might be made rich—who, for us, exchanged a mansion in the realms of bliss for an earthly habitation—who opened the gates of heaven, and pointed out a way for us to follow—who was punished for our transgressions—and who for our lives gave up his own, to make our peace with God ? Can we sufficiently adore and love so kind, so merciful, and so compassionate a God ! who, when we were sunk in despair and misery, raised up in his wisdom a mighty Redeemer, to restore us once more to favour ? Oh ! mystery of mysteries, that God should become incarnate, (that is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh,) and in that nature bleed and die. Well might the apostle say, “Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.”

Thus, my dear Jane, you see that Christmas is not to be looked upon as a season for mirth and gaiety, but as a solemn period, reminding us of that glorious work which Christ had undertaken for us. It is the nativity of our Saviour, Mediator, and future Judge. Behold and wonder, the long expected morn has dawned, the promised seed is come, the child is born, for which every Jewish mother had sighed and longed for centuries, whose praises every prophet had sung, whose birth kings and priests had desired to see, and yet died without the sight. This is the day which you are called upon to celebrate. I think reflections like these will be a check to improper mirth and amusements, and yet fill you with that rational joy which will give a zest to your innocent mirth, by teaching you none need now despair, since God, pointing to the Babe at Bethlehem, shews a way to escape perdition, even by taking him as the wise men of old did, as

our Prophet, Priest, and King. That you may enjoy, not only at this season, but throughout your life, that solid and lasting happiness which a well grounded hope in our blessed Redeemer is capable of inspiring, is the fervent wish of your

Unalterable friend,  
J. S.

## LETTER VI.

GOOD FRIDAY.

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*"It is finished."—John xix. 30.*

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MY DEAR JANE,

I received yours of the 25th, and was happy to find so great an improvement both in the writing and style, which I sincerely trust was the dictate of your own heart, as it would afford me no pleasure to peruse your letters, if superintended by others. It is my wish that you should, in another year or two, fix on some simple subject and address me upon it. Every person is capable, in some degree, of writing upon any subject, and when the faculties which have long lain dormant are brought forth into action, you know not, by practice, to what perfection they may rise. Believe me it is an excellent plan to cultivate your talents while young, by committing your ideas to paper as they occur; how trifling soever they may be, I shall receive them with the greatest pleasure, and give you my candid opinion upon them.

The subject upon which I last addressed you was the birth of our Saviour. The awful period of his sufferings is now commemorated by the Church; the joy with which we celebrated his nativity is now to be turned into mourn-

ing. Let us for a moment imagine ourselves present at the solemn scene which transpired on this day. Let us figure to our minds this Divine Person, in whom was no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, standing like the meanest slave in Herod's judgment-hall, waiting to receive his sentence of condemnation. When arraigned at the bar, he stood with all the majesty of his high commission portrayed in his countenance, well knowing that the malice of men could effect nothing but what was agreeable to the will of Heaven. He remained perfectly serene and patiently resigned; "though reviled, he reviled not again." 1 Pet. ii. 23. "And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Isai. liii. 7 He who with a look could have crushed his accusers into dust, attempted not in any way to convince them their accusations were false; so great was his love to man, and so firm was he in every trial he suffered for us. Let us not follow our blessed Saviour with the unthinking crowd, merely out of curiosity, to see the end of the transaction, but with the disconsolate disciples and the weeping mother, with hearts filled with gratitude and love. Let us ascend the Mount of Calvary, and there contemplate with the deepest interest the scene before us. On the right of the ponderous cross stands the agonized parent, immoveable and speechless from excess of grief. Every blow from the hammer struck a dagger into her heart. Devout old Simeon's prophetic words are now verified, "a sword shall pierce through thine own soul," and she was no doubt on the point of giving way to the utmost despair, when her heaven-descended son turned, and pointing to his beloved disciple said, "Woman, behold thy son." John xix. 26. On the left, behold his disciples, a mournful group. Sad, indeed, must have been their condition. They were about to lose him, for whom they had resigned all that was dear to them on earth, and they now saw their Friend, their Counsellor, their Divine Instructor, going to suffer an ig-

nominous death! Gloomy indeed was their prospect, left without a guide or protector, to lead them through this wilderness,—no comforter to uphold them in their faith, or to strengthen them against the malice of their enemies. All the hopes which they had fondly indulged, that he would one day become a great King on earth, were now crushed. Behold the dying Immanuel, extended on the cross, mocked and insulted by the gaping multitude, who continued to taunt him with unkind expressions:—"He saved others, himself he cannot save." Mark xv. 31. "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Matt. xxvii. 40. Those hands and feet which were never employed but in offices of mercy, were now pierced with iron. See the blood in copious streams pour from every part of his mangled body; but the keenest suffering to bear was the enormous load of guilt that was laid upon him, for "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah liii. 6. Not only in his body did he suffer the most excruciating pains, but his spirit was borne down and broken by the burden of crimes (not his own) that he was compelled to bear. We must also recollect that at this trying hour he had nothing but his human nature to support him. In the agony of his soul he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mark xv. 34. All nature seemed moved at his crucifixion, so much so that a heathen emperor, many thousand miles distant, was heard to exclaim, "Either the God of nature suffers, or he sympathises with some one who does." Darkness covered the earth, the rocks were rent asunder, the graves were opened, and the dead appeared, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, to shew that he had opened a way for us to heaven, and made an entrance into the Holy of Holies above, where he might ever live to intercede for us as our Great High Priest. All nature sympathised with him, and shall *man* be the only insensible creature? Shall



we, for whom he suffered, stand and view this scene without feeling the greatest love, the deepest sense of lasting gratitude? Shall we not exclaim with the poet—

“ Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

Let us, my dear Jane, prostrate ourselves at the foot of the cross, and implore God to pardon our past sins, through the merits of him who gave up his life as a ransom for us. The guards and centurion, when they felt the earth quaking, and saw the rocks rending, trembled and cried out, “Truly this was the Son of God.” Matth. xxvii. 54. They felt deep remorse at having been accessory to his death, and shall *we* stand with undaunted confidence, and forget that every time we sin we send another spear into his side, and crucify him afresh? Oh no! let us firmly resolve, in his strength, to lead a new life, and henceforth take up our cross and follow in the path in which he has directed us to walk. This is the most solemn event we commemorate this day; let me entreat you ever to employ it in serious meditations concerning your eternal state. Let no idle thoughts intrude to divert your attention; but every Good Friday, in imagination, be present at the scene, in which you and all mankind have so deep an interest; and if there is anything in what I have said that will furnish you with proper meditations upon it, I shall have the pleasing satisfaction of knowing that I have not written in vain.

Yours with sincerity,  
J. S.

## LETTER VII.

E A S T E R .

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*"He is risen, as he said."*—Matth. xxviii. 6.

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MY DEAR JANE,

In our last we left the disciples of their crucified Saviour returning sorrowfully to their homes, without one cheering thought to dissipate the gloom that hung upon their minds; their beloved Lord was gone down to the silent mansions of the tomb; they had just quitted the scene which had deprived them of all they held most dear upon earth. As they journeyed, however, we may well suppose, they began to call to remembrance all the heart-stirring conversations they had had with this divine friend, all the excellent advice he had given them, all that he had prophesied concerning himself. They would recollect, no doubt, that he had foretold his rejection by his own people. Every circumstance referring to his sufferings and death they now saw had been fully accomplished. As soon as their grief began to abate, they would probably remember all the consolations which the religion he had taught them was capable of inspiring. After the pious women, who had seen him interred on the Friday, had rested their Sabbath, they came at the dawn of the next day to the sepulchre, with Mary and Mary Magdalene, bringing spices to anoint the body. On their way, they recollected that the Roman guards were stationed there to keep watch, and that they had rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, therefore, they said one to another, "who shall roll us away this stone from the door of the sepulchre?" Arriving at the place, to their inexpressible joy, they saw the stone actually rolled away, and entering into it,

“ they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were afraid ; and he saith unto them, be not afraid ; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified ; he is risen, he is not here ; behold the place where they laid him ; but go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him.” Mark xvi. 5, 6, 7. They believed the angel, and departed quickly to carry the joyful tidings to the disciples, and as they went, Jesus, to cheer their hearts and to give the greater weight to what they had to relate, appeared unto them, saying, “ *All hail!*” and they held him by the feet and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, “ Be not afraid, go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.” Matt. xxviii. 9, 10. Now the disciples were still mourning, when the women announced that not only had they been informed that their Saviour was risen, but they had heard and seen him. Their words seemed like an idle tale. This reluctance of the disciples to believe the report is one of the many proofs of the resurrection, for had they listened with a willing ear to a slight report, some might have imagined it to have been a trick, contrived amongst his followers merely to deceive the multitude, and maintain a footing for the religion they had embraced. Had this, too, been asserted some years after our Lord’s death, we might then have doubted, but it transpired at the very time when the whole transaction was fresh in the memory, for St. Paul says, “ he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present.” 1 Cor. xv. 6. Therefore, they had an opportunity of denying it if it were not incontestably true. Had the disciples known this to be a cunningly devised fable, (as some pretend) is it consistent to imagine they would have constantly affirmed it before kings and magistrates, rulers and people? Would they have left their homes, and wandered into distant regions, forsaking friends and rela-

tions, submitting to persecutions, imprisonments, tortures, and death itself for one whom they knew to be an impostor? No; it was a firmly-rooted faith alone in this divine person that supported them in all their trials, and kept them constant to the last. They had been eye-witnesses of most of the astonishing proofs he had given of his divinity whilst sojourning amongst them; even *then* they were willing to acknowledge him as their Lord and Master; but when he appeared to them again, after his resurrection, and they saw him ascend into heaven, their hearts no longer felt any tie to bind them down to earth. They longed to be absent from the body and present with the Lord; therefore, in defiance of all danger, they boldly preached Christ, and walked in his commandments. Could the sceptic in his heart really doubt these truths, the rapid increase of Christ's religion must convince him of its divinity, especially when he considers it was to poor ignorant fishermen that power was given to spread the new doctrine; that most of the noble set their faces against it, and would have crushed it, had not the power of God upheld it. Well might Gamaliel say, "let these men alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." Acts v. 38, 39. We are informed, that three thousand souls were added unto the church at one time: Acts ii. 41. That the gospel is still making great progress, we well know; and that many may come in from the east, west, north and south, and sit down in the kingdom of God, is the prayer of all zealous Christians. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. Had not Christ risen, our faith would have been vain, and his death and sufferings of no avail. But thanks be to God, who hath given him the victory. Christ hath burst the bands of death, and opened for us the gates of everlasting life, if we take up our cross and follow him. I would not barter my hope of a resurrection to another life for all the richest gems

this world can boast. The idea that though worms destroy this body, still there is a part within us which can never be destroyed, but will blossom in the paradise of God through the countless ages of eternity, will smooth our passage to the tomb; and the thought that we shall again enjoy communion with those most dear to us in Christ, will take away the sting of separation. There we shall be free from all pain and sorrow, there we shall be in the presence of him who is the fountain of happiness. But these hopes belong only to the Christian; the wicked wish they may be annihilated in the grave, dreading to meet a severe judge, instead of a father and a friend. They do not like to hear of the joys of heaven, having no relish for them. May we, though filled with the delightful hope of Christians, still bear in mind that there is a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto condemnation. May God, of his infinite mercy, grant that ours may be unto life, and that at the last day we may stand before the bar of divine justice, leaning on the rock of our salvation. That Redeemer, who laid down his life for us, will support us while waiting with anxious solicitude and trembling awe, to know our final sentence. When the Sovereign Judge shall pronounce these cheering words, "Come, ye blessed, enter into the kingdom prepared for you," then will he stretch forth his arm to land us on those blissful shores, where, with the whole host of heaven, we shall spend an eternity in singing his praises who hath procured for us such unspeakable joys. Let us endeavour so to live that at the last we may be amongst the number of those who will partake of these blessings, and the society of each other, in the bosom of our God. Believe me

Unalterably yours,

J. S.

## LETTER VIII.

WHITSUNDAY.

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*"They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."—Acts ii. 4.*

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MY DEAR MARTHA,

This day is generally called Pentecost, a festival of the Jews, held fifty days after their Passover, in memory of the law delivered at Mount Sinai; and that you may the better understand the nature of what it is now intended to commemorate, I think it will be desirable to address you on this subject. The disciples, after our Lord's ascension, were anxiously looking forward to the coming of *that* Comforter which he had promised to send unto them. Left as they were, to contend alone with the adversaries of their Lord, to resist the gainsayer who would seek to divert them from the strict path of duty in which they had hitherto walked, to stem the torrent of any ungovernable passion that might yet be lurking in their hearts, to bear the scorn and ridicule of those around them, how ardently they must have looked for the arrival of that Spirit of truth, which was to guide them into all truth, to sanctify their whole hearts, and comfort them under every trial that awaited them. Though their faith in the Divine Redeemer was firmly rooted, yet when time had a little weakened the force of the impression which his resurrection and ascension had made upon their minds, there was danger that they might again fall into their former state of negligent forgetfulness, without some constant friend at hand to warn them of their danger, and to uphold them in their arduous warfare; this they were taught to expect would be the office of the Holy Ghost. How great, then,

must have been their joy when it descended upon them. The Saviour had told them to tarry in Jerusalem until the promise of the Father came upon them. In obedience to this command, they were all with one accord assembled in one place, on the day of Pentecost, (now called Whitsunday, on account of being one of the stated times for baptism in the ancient church, when those who were baptized put on white garments, as types of that spiritual purity which becometh saints,) waiting for the fulfilment of the promise, when "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts ii. 2, 3, 4. Herein is the wisdom of the Almighty observable, that the Comforter which had been so long promised, should descend, not only in so conspicuous a manner, but at a point of time when it was sure to be known to the surrounding nations: for at the time of the festival "there were Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven, come up to Jerusalem to worship." Acts ii. 5. Consequently it would soon be noised abroad that the apostles, though poor Galileans, and ignorant of every language but their mother tongue, yet instantaneously addressed them in their various tongues in the most flowing eloquence, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Though the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples was instantaneous and miraculous, yet we are not to expect that it will descend into our hearts in the same way, or have the same effect upon us that it had upon them, because it is not now necessary; but in the first ages of Christianity it was absolutely requisite it should appear in a visible and astonishing manner, that those who were gifted with this spirit in an eminent degree, might be looked upon as competent to promulgate

*that doctrine which they were anxious for the people to embrace. And as they were to be the humble instruments, in the hands of the Redeemer, to spread the glad tidings of the gospel, it became indispensably requisite they should be able to speak the language of the surrounding countries. But this spirit was not to be confined to the apostles only, for St. Peter informed the people, "that if they repented, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise was to them and to their children." Acts ii. 38, 39. Though they would not all be prophets, or able to speak in divers kinds of tongues, yet they, on their repentance and faith, would obtain a portion of that self same spirit, though it would operate in different ways, for St. Paul says, "there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 4. The Holy Ghost is a distinct person in the triune Jehovah; personal acts are ascribed to him. His offices are numerous: it was he who supported the apostles through all their trials and temptations, who upheld them when sinking under the burden of oppression and persecution, who enabled them to maintain their faith, undaunted by tortures or death; and it is he, my dear girl, who must give us power to withstand every temptation to draw us aside from Christ; it is he who must sanctify our hearts and make them temples for the living God. Without the assistance of this divine Spirit, vain will be all our attempts to live above the world, or to walk in the paths of righteousness, for we must ever bear in mind how totally incapable we are of doing any one good thing in our own unassisted strength. Our utter depravity disqualifies us from any communion with God, except as this blessed Spirit maketh intercession within us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Remember there is such a thing as grieving the Spirit of God, yea more, it is possible to quench it: hence the command, "Quench*



not the Spirit." If we do quench it, by not listening to its directions, it will take its flight back to the mansions of bliss, and there record that one unhappy soul must be abandoned to itself, and, consequently, to perdition. With rules, indeed, to guide you, but without a protector to shield you in the hour of danger, or a friend with whom to consult and advise, you would be led on by an irresistible impulse to your ruin; you would be hurried along down the worldly current, till death arrested you, and plunged you into the unfathomable abyss. Seeing, then, the necessity there is for some spiritual assistance in our Christian warfare, to help us to contend *with* and triumph *over* the adversaries of the Lord, how fervently and constantly ought we to pray that God would shower down the abundance of his Spirit upon us, assured that even our best actions, without his blessing, will be of no avail. Let us ever obey its godly motions, relying upon it, that what stimulates us to do right is that same Divine Spirit working within us. Let us not drive it from us by carelessness or rebellion. In every time of trial, in every hour of danger, let us implore its divine aid; in every study of God's word let us solicit the help of that Spirit to enlighten our understandings, to comprehend what we read; in every work and labour of love, let us seek its direction, and before entering on the work, shut up in our closets, converse with it as with our best friend; then, clad in the armour of light, we shall come forth equipped as true soldiers of Christ, to fight under his banner, and marching on regardless of every danger, fight the good fight of faith. Let us pray with the poet—

" Still may we gain superior strength,  
 And press with vigour on,  
 Till full perfection crown our hopes,  
 And fix us near thy throne."

Remember, my dear girl, it is the office of the Holy Ghost to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. The

promise of Christ is, that he shall guide us into all truth ; pray for his teaching and his holy influence upon your heart. It is in the latter days that the Spirit is to be more abundantly poured down upon the church of Christ, then living under its gracious power, the knowledge of the Lord shall so cover the earth, that "Holiness to the Lord shall be written on the bells of the horses." Glorious period ! who would not wish to witness it ? and who would not strive to do something to hasten its approach ? When we reflect upon the thorough depravity of man's heart by nature, by the entrance of sin, and how completely we have lost the image of God upon our souls, how ought we to long for the in-dwelling of that Holy Spirit, which can alone, by his renewing influences, bring back that image or likeness in which man was originally created. Christ, by his precious death, hath opened up the gates of heaven to us, and a way of access to the Father, and is gone forward to prepare mansions for us ; but it is the application of this blood of sprinkling to our hearts by the Holy Ghost shed abroad there, which can alone prepare us for those mansions. He who is justified is also sanctified, and if there are no fruits of the Spirit abounding in your life, it is vain to talk of trust in Christ. Let us, then, press forwards towards the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus, knowing that he only who endures to the end shall obtain a crown of glory. May that good Spirit guide and lead us, till the sleep of death overtake us, and then may we gently sink into the arms of the Captain of our salvation, and sweetly sleep in Jesus. May God, of his infinite mercy, grant that neither of us may prove deserters from our Captain, but always bear in mind "that our labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Believe me, my dear Martha,

Ever yours,

J. S.

## LETTER IX.

SPRING.

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*“O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.”—Ps. civ. 24.*

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MY DEAR MARY ANNE,

I this morning heard the voice of the cuckoo, and thought upon the pretty address you have to that bird, in your *Juvenile Poems*; and you, I am sure, will hail with me the sweet return of Spring. All nature is now fast emerging from that state of inactivity, in which the cold and freezing hand of Winter has so long confined it. The earth teems again with life, the trees are putting forth their tender buds, the birds are beginning to hop from spray to spray, carolling forth their song of praise. Myriads of insects, so long buried in their earthy habitations, are now venturing to put forth their heads, and begin to flutter about in the vivifying rays of the orb of day. Can we refuse to join in the general hymn of praise? No; rather let us lift up our hearts in gratitude to the bounteous Giver of all these blessings. Let us unite with the inanimate part of creation, as well as with the heavenly host, in paying adoration to that all-creating Spirit, by whose power nature again resumes her splendid livery. In some countries the transition from the bitterest winter to the hottest summer is so sudden that the vallies are green in a few days; and instead of vegetation unfolding its beauties gradually, it almost instantaneously crowds upon the sight. Such a climate might to many be considered delightful, but me it would not suit. This, (if one season can be admired more than another, where all have charms to recommend them) is what I most admire. To a real lover

of nature, and one who delights to "look from nature up to nature's God," spring must be delightful, for he cannot, during the earth's annual revolution, find a period more calculated to direct his mind to that Source. Every day, nay, every hour, he traces the finger of *that* God, who at first bid this goodly frame of things from nothing spring, and is now rousing it from its deep languor, and giving it second birth. The Christian's contemplative mind cannot review this reanimation of the vegetable kingdom without thinking of his own resurrection to a new life, for the same Almighty Power that can cause the lifeless tree to flourish again, will also revive and reanimate the mouldering clay. As verdure awakes from its deep sleep, in which for many months it has been buried, at the voice of the life-inspiring God, so shall we awake out of the sleep of death, when summoned by him. You, I know, my dear Anne, are a lover of rural enjoyments, consequently, an admirer of nature; such thoughts as these, then, will, I hope, be yours. Let not this season pass without improving it, "but, like the bee, gather honey from every flower." Our Saviour leads us to the study of the simplest works of Providence by desiring us to "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin;" and yet he assures us "that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." Matth. vi. 28, 29. This will lead you to conclude, as he describes it, that "if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven," he will assuredly clothe you. Matth. vi. 30. This reflection ought to check any undue anxiety for the things of this life, for our heavenly Father knoweth you have need of them, and will as certainly, if you are his child, provide them for you as he provides for the inanimate creation. It is right in all to have a proper thought for the future, therefore, when our Saviour tells us to take no thought for the morrow, (Matt. vi. 34) he does not mean that we must not strive to gain

an honest livelihood, and tempt the Almighty by idly trusting for a miraculous supply, without making any efforts ourselves towards obtaining it, but only that these things must not engross our thoughts, or interfere with things of more importance. We are indeed grossly mistaken, if we suppose that the all-wise Disposer of the universe takes more care of the flowers of the field than he does of his noblest production—*man*. Our Divine Master tells us that though “two sparrows are so insignificant as to be sold for a farthing, yet not one of them falls to the ground without his knowledge.” Matth. x. 29. Can we, then, for a moment suppose, if we put our trust in him, that he will forsake *us*? O, no; Christ says, “we are of more value than many sparrows; and that even the very hairs of our head are all numbered.” Matth. x. 30, 31. Let us then cast all our care upon him, for he careth for us. Let us, when we view his providential care over all creation, put our firm trust in him, relying upon his fatherly protection. Spring is indeed a delightful season; all things in nature are green and fresh and young. The trees shoot forth their leaves; the snowdrop, the violet, and the primrose begin to bloom to their Maker’s praise. The spring-time of life is like this: it is the most lovely period of man’s existence. It is now spring with you, my darling; your affections are not yet engaged; oh! seek to set them on your Maker, Redeemer, and Preserver, on the word of God, on the house of God, and on the people of God. Think of the sweet promise, “seek me *early*, and you shall find me.” May the buds of heavenly promise be seen daily expanding in your heart, and may you give your *first love* to him, who alone is worthy of it. When you have presented me with a flower from your choice collection, you have always sought for a *rose-bud*. Why? because the sweetest and the best. Remember, then, what your hymn says about the offering that you are required to give to God,

“ A flower, when offered in the bud,  
Is no vain sacrifice.”

There is not one solitary promise that he will accept your services when old. Think of that ere it be too late. Sweet spring, how I do hail thy return. “ O all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord—praise ye the Lord.” And, O all ye living beings, join in the glorious song of praise, till your souls, rising on seraphic wings, catch a strain from the angelic choir. O my dear, till death shall seal our lips, let not our tongues cease in the house, in the fields, in the meadows, wherever we are, to sound our Maker’s praise.

Believe me your sincere  
and constant friend,  
J. S.

## LETTER X.

### SUMMER.

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*“ In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth.”—Psalm xc. 6.*

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MY DEAR CAROLINE,

I began to day, for the first time this year, to take my morning rambles before breakfast, and I already feel the benefit of it in more respects than one. By pursuing a plan of this sort, I not only find my health improved, but my heart amended, by serious contemplation. Rising early, and employing the morning hours well, is of essential service to all. To the man of business, it is almost the certain way to attain prosperity; to the scientific man, it is the road to fame; and to the active and benevolent Christian, it will give the opportunity of buck-

ling on his armour before he sets about his daily labour for his beloved Master. Spring is retiring, and summer is advancing with all its varied sweets, to finish what the former began. The grain, the fruit, and indeed all vegetation is ripening under the warm and genial influence of the summer sun. To the serious and thinking part of mankind, I should think it must be delightful to rise with the sun, to take their walks abroad, before he has attained his meridian height, or before his sultry beams have had power to penetrate into the earth, and while the mind is unfettered by the cares and troubles of the coming day, to think upon futurity. This is certainly the best time for meditation; the heart is light, the mind free, the faculties, which have for some hours been buried in a deep sleep, begin to expand themselves, and if our hearts be in a spiritual frame, we shall rise in gratitude to that unseen Power, which has protected us through the dangers of the past night, and brought us to see the light of a new day. Let us, then, in imagination, walk together, though at the distance of a hundred miles, and I will endeavour to point out those objects which ought more particularly to arrest your attention. Never behold the wonderful works of God with a careless, indifferent eye, but look intently till you discover the hand of an Almighty Power in the formation of the lowest weed, as well as in the tall and stately oak. When you walk in the Botanic Garden, and take a view of this earth, clad in its richest and gayest attire, you cannot avoid reflecting that there was a period when these things did not exist. Ere time began, all was a chaos in the place where this earth now stands, till God, brooding over it, brought forth this stupendous fabric. Your mind will also be insensibly led to think that this state of things will not endure for ever, but will all perish; and then time shall be no more. Look at that group of flowers on yonder bed; how lovely their colours, how bright their hue, how fresh and gay they appear; but, alas! when you return

to pay your evening sacrifice, you will find some dying, and most of them withered by the scorching beams of the meridian sun. The sight ought to give you a valuable lesson. If you should grow up, beautiful as the fairest flower, it will teach you not to pride yourself upon it, since it blooms but for a season. It will also teach you the frailty of life, since "Man grows up as grass; in the morning he shall flourish, and in the evening he shall fall and wither." Ps. xc. 5, 6. Yonder rose knew not, poor senseless flower! that it was your intention to pluck it from its native soil to languish and wither in your breast. That is, however, but an emblem of yourself. You know not when death shall be commissioned to snatch you from this world; but it will be as certain to come, though you know not the day nor hour, as that you have broken from its stem that lovely flower. O, then, let this teach you to be prepared! How frequently do we see the tender flower of youth nipped in the bud, consumed and withered ere his faculties had time to expand themselves. But this is almost an inexhaustible theme; that *one* reflection alone will afford you an ample field for meditation. I dare not trust myself to pursue it any farther, lest I should fill my letter with a subject it was not my intention to treat upon here, I shall, therefore, leave you to draw your own reflections from it. Should your survey of nature lead you to make salutary ones, you will, indeed, have derived infinite benefit from your morning walks. When you look around, and view this earth in all its glory, and see the harmony there is in every part of the Divine work, do you not wish that men's minds harmonised as well? If this were the case, if there were not such continual discords in the human breast, such jarring and interfering interests, if the heart were such as it was when fresh from its Maker's hands, then, indeed, this world might be deemed a paradise. However, notwithstanding the discord that reigns abroad in the world, it is in every man's power, by seek-



ing the grace of God, to cultivate all the social virtues in the bosom of his own family, to make *his home*, at least, the seat of harmony. Oh, summer! how bright thy season! the buds and blossoms are exchanged for the ripening fruit, the farmers are hastening to "make hay while the sun shines," and all nature smiles under the cheering rays of the meridian sun. Thus is it with you, my dear Caroline; it is now the summer of your life-time, it is your growing season, when the heart is buoyant with hope; anxious care is a stranger to your breast, and all things wear a smiling aspect. Oh! may the bud of promise be now expanding into a blossom and ripening into fruit, under the genial rays of the Sun of Righteousness! Seek to dedicate your youth to his service—give him the best of your days: the world will, at this period of your life especially, be laying out before your eager gaze its captivating snares, but pray earnestly that God would "turn away your eyes from beholding vanity." Remember, whilst contemplating the works of nature at this season in all their cheering beauties, that the Maker of them all is the great and glorious God, and presume not to gaze upon them as you would upon the works of man; but, filled with wonder, delight, and reverence, exclaim with the Psalmist—"Oh! Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches!" Psalm civ. 24.

Yours sincerely,  
J. S.

## LETTER XI.

## AUTUMN.

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*“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”—John xii. 24.*

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MY DEAR CECILIA,

Autumn is now entering with her cornucopia; the reapers are beginning to bring in their golden harvest. I passed over the fields a few days since, all hands were busy, joy was painted on every countenance, and the hymn of gratitude ascended from every heart towards the throne of unbounded goodness. *My* heart, I assure you, did not refuse a response; but, elated with the scene before me, I involuntarily exclaimed—

“To God above, from all below,  
 Let hymns of praise ascend;  
 Whose blessings inexhausted flow,  
 Whose mercy knows no end.”

At this season, the ancients used to offer sacrifices to Ceres; but now the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is heard to ascend only to the fount from whence these blessings spring. The falling leaves, as I passed along the lanes, rather retarded my progress, but they led me to reflect upon the time when I should drop like a leaf in Autumn. One leaf, torn from its parent stem, still clung to it by a slender thread: I watched it—the next breeze cut it asunder, and down it fell; so man often clings to life to the latest moment, till at last, death severs it for ever. Afterwards, extending my walk into the village, I saw some men winnowing the corn; this led to a train of thought:—as the husbandman suffereth the wheat and tares to grow together until the harvest, and then bindeth the tares in bundles to burn them, but gathereth the

wheat into his barn ; so God suffereth the good and bad to grow up together until the end of the world : then, as the former separateth the chaff from the wheat, so will he also separate the sheep from the goats. He will send forth his angels to burn up the wicked with unquenchable fire, but will gather the good into his heavenly kingdom. We know, from common observation, that the seed actually dieth before it is quickened to produce the necessary grain ; how, then, can we doubt the Almighty's power to quicken again our corrupted bodies ? He who can raise a blade of corn from an insignificant seed, which is first suffered to decay in the ground, can, with the same ease, command our decayed flesh to assume a brighter form. Accustom yourself thus to muse on what is passing around you in the works of God. I heard some one exclaim, to-day, " I am going to take a solitary walk ; oh ! how miserable, do come with me, pray, I do not like to go alone, it is so dull, particularly in the country, where there is scarcely any human being to be seen." How I pity such creatures ! I trust *you* are incapable of harbouring a thought like this. What, then, shall the book of nature, which lies open to every view, be considered a trifling companion ? Shall a meditation upon the Divine works contained there, be thought a theme not sufficiently interesting ? Why should the conversation which we are about to hold with ourselves, be so much dreaded, unless we are afraid to ask, for a moment, from whence we came, for what we are designed, and whither we are hastening ? Are we afraid of examining our hearts ? If they will not bear our own scrutiny, how do we suppose they will bear that of the all-perfect Judge ? These are, certainly, most important questions, and can only be properly inquired into when alone. Surely, then, a solitary walk, when all nature is wearing a sombre aspect, might be profitable, and give our minds full scope to dwell upon such topics. But do not think me austere

or morose, imagine not that I wish you to lead a monastic life, excluded from all society: far be it from me; none can be fonder of rational conversation than myself, and you may enter into it, as a relaxation to unbend your mind from more serious considerations, but never dread being alone. I would wish your mind to be so well cultivated, that you may learn to value your leisure hours, and employ them so well, that you may be enabled to exclaim, with the philosopher of old, "I am never less alone than when alone." But, perhaps, my dear girl, you may say, if I could but find a friend, a companion, to whom I might whisper all my thoughts, to whom I could tell all my faults, who would lend me a willing ear, pity me, and direct me for the future—into whose bosom I could pour all my little griefs and pains, and one who had not only the will, but power to relieve me; one who, delighting in seeing others happy, would not check my mirth, but increase it, provided it sprung from a pure source, how delightful it would be. How I should love such a companion, my whole heart and soul would be intent upon pleasing such a friend; no task would be too arduous to perform, no restraint would be too irksome to impose upon myself, in order to keep so valuable a treasure always at hand. Happy tidings for my dear Cecilia! such a friend is to be found. It is the man Christ Jesus, to whom you may confess your faults, who will not only listen to your cry, but answer and forgive. It is he who will give the assistance of his Holy Spirit to guide you; it is into his bosom that you may pour all your cares, assured he careth for you, and hath infinite power to relieve you. It is he, (who being the fountain of happiness himself,) is the being from whence all your happiness must flow. *This*, then, is the companion whom you have been desiring. He hath assured you "his yoke is easy, and his burden is light;" you will, therefore, endeavour to please him, since you have promised to love

him with all your heart and soul. He is also a friend who will never leave you, he will be constantly on your right hand, and when you walk alone, hold sweet converse with him in prayer. This is the highest privilege of man, to be admitted to an audience with his Maker, though the curtain of the skies at present hides him from their view. Seek him, then, earnestly, and he will assuredly be found. Endeavour to please him always, and then you may exclaim, "The Author of all these divine works is my father and my friend!" O that you, with myself, may be permitted to aspire to the glorious title of the children of God, is the most fervent prayer of,

Yours unalterably,  
J. S.

## LETTER XII.

W I N T E R.

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*"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.—Ps. xix. 1.*

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MY DEAR ELIZABETH,

The autumnal breezes have long since ceased to blow, and rude boreas has already announced that he is beginning his ravages and devastations upon all the beautiful works of nature. The scene which I lately painted so fair, is now become a dreary void; there, where stood a short time since, the gaudy tulip, the hyacinths, the lovely carnations, and the sweet blushing roses, are now seen nought but decayed stalks and withered leaves; the stately trees of the forest are shorn of their foliage; they stretch their naked branches to the sky, and present indeed a sad and dreary prospect. The warbling tenants of the grove have forsaken the leafless spray, and, guided by unerring instinct, have winged their way to milder climates, to seek

that food which they find no longer here. The fields have lost their verdure ; and nature, stripped of her ornaments, now wears a sombre aspect, and seems to have lost for a time all her charms. It is true, indeed, that decked in all her gay variety of colours, she looks most fascinating ; but then it is owing to this great change that we hail with so much delight the first appearance of her rising beauties in spring, and knowing that they will soon decay, we gaze upon them intently while they last—we wonder and admire. I recollect that I stated before all the seasons have charms to recommend them, therefore this most commonly despised one I will now endeavour to prove has some too. Winter is by most people deemed dull and dreary ; but *that* person can neither be fond of social pleasure, nor of the grand and sublime in nature, who cannot find in it many charms. I will not lead my Elizabeth to the gay and brilliant assembly room, “ where they trip it on light fantastic toe,” to the card table, or to the theatre, to find amusements to pass away what are commonly styled the long and tedious hours of a winter’s evening. All these you know that I condemn ; and, indeed, I do trust that your own taste will lead you to seek more rational amusements. The superiority of the pleasure derived from intellectual conversation, to the momentary gratification you experience whilst listening to the frivolous prattle too common in a mixed company, you are able to appreciate. I am amongst the number of those who hail the return of the winter evenings, not for the gay festivities which usually invite abroad at this season of the year, but for home-born happiness, for the joys of one’s own fire-side, where the domestic circle, formed round the blazing hearth, strive in mutual harmony which shall best employ the passing hours, and afford entertainment to each other ; and should conversation grow dull or insipid, books may be called to lend their aid, and if well chosen, will not only afford entertainment, but improvement. Here I would

wish to recommend histories and travels, but the latter should be carefully examined before they are put into your hands, as there are many false and erroneous notions and contradictory statements in some of them ; but when they are properly selected, study them attentively ; and while sitting peaceably at home, you may reap the benefit of travellers' researches, without sharing in their toils and dangers, and may enjoy repose, while (as Cowper admirably expresses it)

“ Fancy, like the finger of a clock,  
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.”

Religious publications are eagerly sought after in this day of loud profession, and many valuable ones indeed there are ; but you know that I prefer these being read through alone first, and taking the opinion of either your parents or teachers upon the work, before you hear the varied remarks which pass around the reading party. This, my dear Elizabeth, is the season best adapted for studying astronomy ; the sun so soon withdrawing its light, leaves us a longer period in the evening to contemplate the firmament of heaven, studded with sparkling gems. Can we stand and view the azure vault of heaven, glittering as it were with spangles, the handy-work of Omnipotence, without lifting up our hearts, and exclaiming “ My Father made them all ? ” Upheld by the finger of an ever-watchful Providence, each planet pursues its track in the boundless region of space, without once deviating through thousands of ages from its destined course. Yesterday, after a deep fall of snow, the evening proved to be clear and frosty. I threw open my window and looked out upon a complete sheet of ice : beyond, the earth seemed to be wrapt in a shroud of the most delicate whiteness. The leafless branches of the trees were hung with icicles, and the silver beams of the moon played sportively between them, and shaped them into the most fantastic forms. By and bye, the milky way appeared in various parts of the heaven ; the

stars and planets shone most brilliantly. It was upon a scene such as this I stood gazing in raptures, lost in thought, till I almost fancied myself treading on celestial ground, and conversing with angels. I brought myself back to earth by exclaiming aloud, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Ps. xix. 1, 2. And then, for the first time, feeling the chillness of the atmosphere, I shut the window, and went, full of my own insignificance, to prostrate myself before him who was the Builder of this stupendous canopy, and who hangeth the earth upon nothing. (Job xxvi. 7.) Shall we, when retiring from dwelling on a scene like this, say that winter has no charms? And can evenings spent in the study of this sublime science, be said to be long and tedious? You see, then, that all seasons have charms for those contented minds who are determined to find them out and enjoy them. Even the Laplander, though buried two-thirds of the year in his hut under ground, and only venturing forth in his sledge, drawn by his petted rein deer, to carry his goods to market, finds charms in his native land, which he would not exchange for all the boasted luxuries of England's envied land. Providence has wisely placed a certain magnet, as it were, in every one's home, that secretly attracts him, and makes him long to linger there. Shall we, then, murmur, to endure, only for three months, a more chilly atmosphere than usual, while the patient Northern endures it for eight or nine in the extremest rigour? I hope my dear girl will be able to acknowledge, that however unlovely winter seemed to her before, she now finds, that it is lovely; and, that through the ever-varying year, she can trace the finger of that God, who is ever providing for the happiness of ungrateful *man*.

Your ever sincere and affectionate Friend,

J. S.



LETTER XIII.  
THE BIRTH-DAY.

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*“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”—Psalm xc. 12.*

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THIS is the birth-day of my dear Cecilia, and I cannot think of letting it pass without notice. In the first place, then, I sincerely wish you many happy returns of it; and as I shall not have the delightful pleasure of spending it with you, I must content myself with holding a conversation through the medium of the pen, while the smiling finger of Hope points to the next, and leads me to anticipate a meeting then. You are just arrived at an age, when some young people generally begin to feel their own importance in the scale of human beings; they begin impatiently to look forward to the time, when, arrived at the, improperly termed, glorious age of twenty-one, they shall be emancipated from the trammels of scholastic rules, and drink freely, as it were, from the fountain of pleasure. Having thrown off what they call the cruel bondage in which parental authority has hitherto held them, they fancy themselves at liberty to rove wherever they please, and that they have nothing to do, but to go daily in quest of new amusements; and, that in a life of indolence and ease, they shall find that happiness, they have so long sought for in vain. Alas! they dream not, that they will soon satiate of those pleasures which they seek so earnestly. It has justly been said, that pleasure, carried beyond a certain point, is pain. You, no doubt, as well as most others, look with impatience towards this grand period; but, still, I will presume to hope, with far different ideas. It is *natural* to wish ourselves free from the rules of dis-

cipline, and to enter, as it were, into a new scene of existence. But believe me, as I speak from experience, that however you may wish your school-days shortened, you will, at the close of life, have to number them amongst your happiest; because you are now more free from trials than you will be all your life after. When you enter into the active scenes of life, temptations will assail you under every form, and from every quarter. You are now happy, because you can know little of care or sorrow, since your parents think and provide for you. Nevertheless, trifling as your sorrows are in themselves, they are great, I know, to you. The learning a difficult task, the denial of any expected gratification, or the deprivation of its accustomed hours of relaxation, is, to a young person who has never experienced greater, as serious a calamity as any that can befall mankind in a more advanced state. This being the case, it would be contrary to the feelings of almost all young persons, did you not wish for a change. Knowing, therefore, that you cannot avoid it, I shall only state for what purposes I should wish you to anticipate its arrival; not, I hope, my dear girl, merely that you may be freed from scholastic rules, because you must never think the performance of them irksome, since they are imposed now for your future welfare, but that you may have ascended, when that time arrives, so far up the steep and thorny path of learning, that the rest of the journey will be delightful. Do not wish to attain that age, in order that you may pursue the ideal pleasures of the world; I say ideal, for do not imagine that *real* happiness is to be found in those amusements of which you hear so many boast. Believe me, it is to be found only in a life of active benevolence for Christ's sake, therefore you may ardently wish for the period when your sphere of action will be more extensive. From the income which you will then be allowed, you must learn to save sufficient to enable you to pour balm into the wounded mind, to snatch

the child of poverty from the ravening jaws of hunger, to cheer the drooping and desponding heart with the cheering consolations of religion, and "to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction." James i. 27. These are pleasures of which you will never tire, they will afford you real satisfaction. You are not one of those giddy volatile creatures who think that the restraint which parental authority exercises over them is a cruel slavery, and long to shake off the bondage. No, I look for better things from you; your exemplary parents exercise that power, which God and nature have given them over you, only for your good. Were they to be careless and indifferent to what concerns you, and suffer you to pursue the bent of your inclinations without any check, you could not fail to be miserable here, and lost to all eternity. How good soever your disposition may be, you need a salutary check. Rather, then, than wish to throw off this yoke, pray to your Heavenly Father to preserve, to the latest period of life, such kind benefactors, and to render you submissive to their will in every thing. You can never have it in your power to pay them the debt of gratitude you owe; the only way in which you can, in any measure, cancel it, is to pay implicit obedience to their commands. Rely upon it, when you come out into an alluring flattering world, you will stand more in need of their fostering care, protection, and assistance, than at any other period of your life. Your birth-day, as I before stated, is one of the periods that I wish you to set apart for a serious review of your past life. You are now suffered to add another year to the list since you first saw the light; but how many more you are to number, is known only to him in whose hands are the issues of life and death. Examine and see whether you are grown wiser and better, as well as taller and older. Never forget that every birth-day brings you nearer to your grave. Resolve, every time you add another year to your age, to strike out into

a new and more difficult path of learning, that so you may, in time, attain the summit of the hill. When you arrive at that golden era for which you pant, may you be all a fondest parent can imagine. This, I sincerely hope, will be the case; and that you may answer all their high-raised expectations, shall be the daily prayer of your ever  
Sincere friend,

J. S.

#### LETTER XIV.

##### ON THE SABBATH.

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*“Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.—Ex. xx. 8.*

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MY DEAR SELINA,

You have read Raffle's Tour I know, and, no doubt, remember the description he gives of a continental Sabbath. I took up the book last night, and happened to open it at that part. I admire the warmth with which he treats the subject, as such conduct, in my opinion, cannot be too highly censured. I felt my heart heave with indignation, and soon turned with disgust from the appalling picture. I think I hear you exclaim, *indignation!* should you not rather have said, *pity?* No, my dear girl, pity for them I cannot feel. The light of the Gospel has reached them, they have the commands of God to guide them, in which, as Raffles justly observes, a wayfaring man cannot err, without a wilful misconstruction. The poor and ignorant African, bound for life to the service of an oppressive master, without one moment's ease or cessation from his daily toil, hourly praying to his wooden idol for death, yet without a ray of hope to gild his passage to the tomb; he has the horrid thought, that there annihilation awaits

him, which, however repugnant it may be to our feelings as Christians, is yet pleasing to him, since, then at least, he will not feel the tyrant's rod. This is the man that claims my pity. Hard, indeed, is his lot. The sweet accents of love and affection never soothe or mitigate his anguish, through the tedious toilsome day. The glad tidings of salvation have never reached his ear. The idea of an all-merciful God, governing the world, watching his patient sufferings, and, through the merits of a Redeemer, reserving for him a seat in that kingdom

“Where pain and sorrow will be known no more,”

never cheers his desponding heart. There are, I am happy to say, but few in this condition, compared with what there were some years ago; would to God there were none! then, indeed, we might hope the millenium of the Lord to be nigh. Every event in the religious world bespeaks it nigh at hand. The mountains that once resounded with the lamentations of the superstitious Brahmin, torturing himself at the shrine of his inanimate deity, now echo praises to Immanuel's name. Where we once saw the self-devoted victim of superstition sacrificing herself in the flames that consumed her husband, we now see them linked together during life in the closest bonds of affection, blessing, daily and hourly, the light of that Gospel which has opened better prospects to their view; and when death makes her a widow, we see her attending his loved remains to the grave, sorrowing indeed, but yet not as one without hope, resolving to wait for death till the wise Disposer of all events shall think fit to call her to join her beloved partner in his heavenly mansion. *Your* heart, when reading accounts such as these, has, no doubt, glowed with gratitude to the Father of mercies for placing you in a Christian country. In England's happy land, it is a man's own fault (how poor soever his condition,) if he has not a Bible to read, and also if he does not understand it, for every Sabbath, at least, he may be

plentifully fed with the bread of life ; and whatever his lot may be, this consideration should keep him from murmuring, since it must be infinitely happier than that of the poor benighted heathen. Our forefathers, when flying from religious persecution, were glad to assemble on the Sabbath in barns or caves to feast upon the heavenly word ; and even from these secret places they were sometimes unexpectedly dragged, and led to execution. This is happily not our case. We can assemble in the temple of the living God, and unite, without fear of interruption, in his service, which, to the poor Christian, always affords an indescribable satisfaction. Indeed, for blessings such as these, we cannot, my dear Selina, be too grateful. As I have already treated upon the conduct I wish you to pursue when you enter into the house of God, I shall now merely state how the other part of this holy day ought to be employed. Think not that going to church and repeating your prayers (even if they are fervently repeated) is what constitutes devoting the day to the Lord. No ; something more is required. How frequently do we hear persons say, To-day I will indulge myself in repose. I have risen every morning early during the week to attend to my concerns ; but as I have nothing very particular to do till it is time for public service, I will now take my rest a little longer. What ! is then the business which we have to perform on this day of less importance than that in which we have been engaged through the week ? Is there no *private* devotion to be attended to before the *public* one begins ? Shall we grudge to devote one day out of the seven to *that* Being from whom we derive all we have ? Let not this be your case, my love. Rise at your usual time ; or, if there be any change, let it be earlier. After your regular morning devotions, I wish you to employ the time there is to spare before breakfast in reading a few select chapters from the Gospels. After this meal, retire to your own room, there, in secret, unseen by every

human eye, pray to your heavenly Father for the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to enable you to understand what you shall hear this day ; that he will condescend to accept your praises, and listen with a gracious ear to the supplications which you are going to offer up. Then, with a mind filled with a just sense of the importance of the service in which you are about to join, and with a desire to “ receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your soul,” (Jas. i. 21) repair to his house. Many persons, on their return, make it an invariable rule to descant upon the merits or demerits of the preacher, instead of the subject of his discourse. But this is a shocking custom ; it is completely subverting the purpose for which they attended church. Ever treat your minister with marked respect, considering him as the appointed servant of the Most High God to teach you your duty. Yet remember that he is but a fallible man ; and expect not perfection on this side the grave. Follow his advice, if you cannot his example. On your *return*, instead of commenting upon what you have seen, think and talk about what you have heard. Prostrate yourself again before God, and pray that the enemy may not have sown tares with the good seed of instruction which has been planted in your breast. Endeavour to select the choicest parts of the discourse—those which are most suitable to your then state of mind, note them in a book, and keep them as guides to regulate your conduct during the ensuing week. Think it not too much to wait twice upon God, who waits upon you every hour in every day. The eastern magi thought it not too much to undertake a tedious and perilous journey through distant countries to come and pay adoration to the infant Jesus, and shall we think it irksome to walk the length of a street to worship our exalted Saviour ? After having returned thanks for the blessings which you have this day received, you may relax a little from your devotional service in religious conversation with

your friends. I need not exhort you to close the Sunday with religious worship, for in the well-regulated family of which you are a member I know you always do it. I have therefore pointed out only what I wish you to do in private, and having done this, with a hearty desire to please your Maker, you may calmly repose with the consciousness that your prayers and praises will be accepted through the merits and mediation of your Redeemer. You know, my love, that the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, on account of the resurrection of Christ. The early Christians used to salute each other on the morning of the Lord's day with, "The Lord is risen indeed." Glorious salutation! How calculated to animate their faith and hope and love. As you have frequently expressed a great wish to have a little poetry from me, I will herewith send you a few verses, which have just occurred to me on this subject, and though I know them to be trifling, (for the Muses never condescend to visit me) yet they shall go, as I know Selina will like them, simply because they come from her

Sincere friend,

J. S.

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#### VERSES ON THE SABBATH.

HENCE, all profane and idle thoughts,  
That dare intrude this day,  
Leave unmolested every heart  
To learn the heavenly way.

How solemn is the stillness round;  
E'en nature seems to share  
In that command from God to man,  
Be free this day from care.

But India's sons are not yet free;  
They work from morn to night,  
Without one cheering thought of God,  
Or ray of heavenly light,



To gild their passage to the tomb,  
 Or point to heaven above ;  
 No accents sweet can reach their ears,  
 Nor note of joy or love.

For them no holy day of rest,—  
 For them no Sabbaths rise ;  
 Their lives are spent in useless tears,  
 And unavailing sighs.

Think, Britons ! think ; slaves never know  
 A moment's ease, like you ;  
 They labour, while they pray for death,  
 Without one hope in view.

But you are freed this day from toil,  
 From labour and from woe ;  
 Then bow before God's awful throne,  
 In adoration low.

And bend your steps to hear his word,  
 And bless the hand that gave  
 A law, by which you hear of Christ,  
 Who died your souls to save.

O may you never slight that law,  
 By your Creator giv'n,  
 Who deigns to shew his will to us,  
 And points the way to heav'n.

O never waste this sacred day  
 In vain and idle talk ;  
 But free your mind from grov'ling cares,  
 When with your God you walk.

And ever prize this precious gift,  
 In mercy sent to man ;  
 'Twas God, the everlasting Lord,  
 Who laid the blessed plan.

Six days he gave to labour hard,  
 And all your work complete ;  
 The seventh to his house repair,  
 To take with saints your seat.

And may the Sabbath be to you  
 A foretaste of that rest  
 Which all that love their God enjoy,  
 In mansions of the blest.

## LETTER XV.

### ON TRUTH.

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*“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.”—  
 Psalm xxxiv. 13.*

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I HAVE had great pleasure, my dear Catherine, in perusing your letter, and as I see a prospect of improvement, shall continue the plan I have adopted, of writing upon every subject which can facilitate it. The one I have now chosen is truth. I am led to this, from the natural propensity which generally prevails amongst young persons for the marvellous. They are too apt, when relating a tale or anecdote, to embellish it with some additions of their own, which they consider as agreeable fiction and perfectly innocent; but it is by such beginnings as these that falsehood steals upon us, and *that* which once wore the hideous form of vice, by degrees assumes, if not the smiling aspect of virtue, at least the appearance of a necessary evil, to give a zest to our conversation; but how erroneous is this notion, for truth in its simplest garb is valuable. Some persons, when speaking of their ancestors, ascribe to them rank, fame, virtue, and other endowments which they really never possessed, in order to raise themselves in the estimation of the world, and to obtain that respect which, in this vain and foolish world, is ever paid to the descendants of illustrious persons. Even though they should be of noble pedigree, to boast of it shews a weak mind; but if it be false, it shews a depraved one,

and when it is known, renders them contemptible in the eyes of men, and wicked in the sight of God, for recollect, my dear girl, "God hateth a lying tongue:" he is the Fountain of Truth, and abhors everything contrary to it. When children commit a fault, they commonly endeavour to palliate it by making some paltry excuse, or, by prevarication, depart from truth, in order to ward off the expected punishment. Should this disposition be discovered in you, be assured it will be more severely punished than even the fault which you are endeavouring to conceal; and you will feel that you can never gain anything by falsehood. Lying, whatever form it assumes, even in its most seemingly innocent one, is the worst of all vices; it shews *that* deceit and artifice which is familiar only to the meanest mind. A child that is in the habit of speaking untruths, (even in jest,) is, by the wiser part of mankind, looked upon as having the seeds of that detestable character, a liar. The life of a liar is a very difficult and disagreeable one; he is obliged to be continually studying what he said last, for fear of being detected; never at peace, he is constantly dissatisfied with himself and all around him. Remember, it makes a person suspected, even when they speak the truth; it affects their reputation in future life. How often have I heard it said of young persons, when beginning to relate anything, "You must not credit all she says, for she has accustomed herself to the marvellous from her earliest years, and never relates the least trifle without a thousand embellishments." Such a character is truly contemptible, and is often treated with such marked disrespect, that it has been a stain upon them through life. More than this, it makes us hateful in the sight of our Creator, for they that are not the children of truth can never be the children of God. Remember, too, that God hath said, "every liar shall have his portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Some, who have this

dreadful propensity, have, by misrepresentations, wounded their neighbour's fame, and, without being of a malicious disposition, have, by false tales, been the ruin of many families. Never suffer yourself to add to a true tale, under the erroneous idea that it will be more agreeable; never represent your ancestors as having those qualifications which never belonged to them, with the flattering notion that it will raise you in the world; but trust to your own conduct to gain the esteem and love of all. Never prevaricate when you are in the wrong, but quietly submit to correction, dreading most the vengeance of God, if you deny the fault. Never forge a slander to disturb your neighbour's peace. Think before you speak, then you will never have the mortification of wishing your words unsaid. Let it be said of you, "Your word is your bond." When you properly reflect that for every idle word, our Saviour says we must give account, it will make you keep a strict guard over your tongue, and never allow it to speak at random. Satan is the father of lies, therefore, when you are tempted to tell one, reflect who it is that tempts. You may frequently have heard it said, "Truth is not to be spoken at all times;" but do not imagine from this that you are, on some occasions, to tell a falsehood, (for on *no* account can truth be dispensed with,) but only that there are some things which it is best to keep secret. My dear girl, ever keep the strict path of integrity, and never let any motive tempt you to depart from it. Let it be your earnest prayer that you may spend an eternity with *that* God who is the Fountain of Truth.

I remain,

Yours affectionately,

J. S.

LETTER XVI.  
ON CONTENTMENT.

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*“Godliness, with contentment, is great gain.”—1 Tim. vi. 6.*

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MY DEAR ANN

Will say, I fear, that my subjects are unconnected; but you must recollect, I promised to write upon anything which occurred, without respect to order; and as I have lately been visiting a family, where the discontented mind of one of its branches embittered whole days, which would have passed pleasantly away without her, I am induced to instil early into your mind, the importance of cultivating a contented disposition. If, through a long course of years, you suffer yourself to be dissatisfied with all around you, contentment, so long a stranger to your breast, will scarcely know how to fix her residence there, and before you can be habituated to her, decrepid old age will lead you to turn with disgust from what few enjoyments you may have left. Think not, then, this is the time to invite her. No, she must be sought in early life; instead of which, some young persons let their tempers be soured by every trifling disappointment, and afterwards, they are led to murmur at the dispensations of Providence, instead of thinking “whatever is, is right.” Were they seriously to reflect, how little they deserve, and yet how many blessings they enjoy, contentment would take up her abode with them. A child should always give itself up to the guidance of its parents, and when they think fit to refuse the gratification of its wishes, should acquiesce without a murmur, being convinced, they would not do it without sufficient motives. To hear young persons complain, and pass the day in fruitless lamentations, when a

shower prevents them from taking a delightful walk, sickness hinders them from going to a party of pleasure, or a trifling request is denied, is a characteristic of a bad temper, and a certain criterion, that if small misfortunes affect them so much, greater ones will drive them to despair. It is by suffering these trivial circumstances to affect them in childhood, that so many people lose all their fortitude, and sink under calamity. Never, my dear girl, allow yourself to grumble at any little incident that may thwart your designs, or be of a fretful, teasing disposition, for it will not only make others uncomfortable, but yourself wretched. When any of these little incidents, which I have before pointed out, happen to you, say within yourself, "It is of no consequence, I can go another time;" or, "My request would have been granted, had it been for my good;" and when, in future life, *real* misfortunes assail you, as undoubtedly they will in this state of trial, endeavour to remedy them, but if they are unavoidable, let it be your constant study to bear them with *that* fortitude and magnanimity which becomes a Christian. Learn to be satisfied with whatever is done for you, and receive with a contented, grateful heart the least favour, remembering, that to be pleased and grateful, is all the return you can at present make. When summoned to your meals, do not accustom yourself to be dissatisfied with what is provided for you, as it is not only ungrateful to your kind benefactors, but an insult to your Almighty Father, who, if you continue to be one of his fold, will always feed you with a Shepherd's care. Contentment will give the keenest relish to your appetite even when at the plainest meals, without it the most dainty dishes will not satisfy. It will convert the cottage into a palace, and the want of it will make a dungeon of the latter. It is a continual feast to the possessor, and not only smooths the rugged path of life, but gives a cheerful tone to all around. It will prevent those passions which

will undermine your constitution, and make you a prey to every disease. It will particularly prevent envy, because, happy in your own possessions, you will neither envy others, nor wish for more than you are already blest with. Being satisfied with all around you, your days will roll on in peaceful serenity. Cultivate, then, from your earliest years, a virtue which has in it so many charms; seeing that it will not only conduce to your *own* happiness, but also to the comfort of all connected with you. Then will you glide down the vale of life, unruffled by the storms and tempests you may meet with; and even in extreme old age, your happy temper will make you discover enjoyments where others would find none. Then, when in company with the young, instead of being a disturber of the general peace, you will recollect that you once were young, and if you cannot join in their sports, at least you will be happy in seeing others so. By such conduct as this, you will become the delight of all who know you. In the hope that this may be *your* case, as well as all your sisters, I am, and shall always remain,

Your most attached friend,

J. S.

## LETTER XVII.

### ON THE COMMANDMENTS.

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*"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love."*—John xv. 10.

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MY DEAR SARAH,

I recollect that one day, after having repeated the commandments, you asserted that you had never broken any of them, and at the time I gave a promise that at some future period I would convince you, if you

had not actually disobeyed them, in the literal meaning of the words, yet, when taken in a more comprehensive sense, you had broken them all. I wish to convince you that man may unconsciously commit a thousand sins in the sight of the all-pure Jehovah. The Psalmist, being fully aware of this important truth, exclaimed, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from my secret faults." Psalm xix. 12. First, then, the Lord says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Ex. xx. 3. Knowing that you profess to worship one Almighty being, and having already treated upon the subject, I stop not now to comment upon how far you have performed your duty to him, or whether you have given "the Lord the glory due unto his name," 1 Chron. xvi. 29., but shall leave you to compare your life and actions candidly with what I have directed you to do, and to draw your own conclusions how far you have succeeded in keeping this first and great commandment. "If we have forgotten the name of our God, and holden up our hands to any strange god, shall not God search it out? for he knoweth the very secrets of the heart." Psalm xlv. 21. The second, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth, thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them." Ex. xx. 4. How free soever you may think yourself from the imputation of idolatry, you have, no doubt, in many ways committed it, though you may not, indeed, have fallen prostrate before images of wood and stone, yet, when engaged in the service of that God whom you are commanded to worship, you have, sometime or other, suffered temporal objects to attract your attention; and while in his Temple, instead of joining devoutly in the service, you have allowed your mind to dwell upon terrestrial scenes. Most people have set up some idol in their hearts, which they are ever more ready to obey than their great Creator, and



which is almost imperceptibly drawing them aside. In some, the love of pleasure and the love of riches ; in others, the love of outside show and ornament, and an insatiable desire for the admiration of the world. These may justly be termed idols, for in time they supplant the worship of the true God, and receive the homage of their votaries. St. Paul calls covetousness idolatry : whether either of these has been your idol, you are the best judge. That person or thing that we delight to think about or talk about more than God, is our idol, whatever it may be. Remember, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." God, in order to insure our obedience to this command, further adds, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments," Ex. xx. 5, 6. ; thereby stimulating men, if not for their own sakes, at least for the sake of their posterity, to persevere in their obedience, that they may obtain a blessing, not only for themselves, but also for their descendants. The third : "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Ex. xx. 7. I will readily believe, my dear, that you have not accustomed yourself to blasphemy and swearing ; but can you as confidently affirm that you have never, on any occasion, used lightly or irreverently *that* name which is above every name ? Can you not call to mind periods when improper expressions have unconsciously escaped from your lips on trifling subjects, unaccompanied with any awe of the dread name you are pronouncing ? If you have not this to tax yourself with, (which I fondly trust you have not) can you say that at all times when addressing him in prayer, by his awful titles, you have felt the full force of that reverence, which, when duly attended to, they are calculated to inspire ? Will you not rather humbly acknowledge that

times innumerable you have been too drowsy or too unconcerned to attend to them, and have uttered them irreverently ; that you have taken his holy name in vain, unheeded and unregarded, for who can tell how oft he offendeth ? Are you not sometimes lost in admiration at the unspeakable condescension of Almighty God, in allowing us, sinful dust and ashes, to take his holy name into our polluted lips ? “ The Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain ;” meaning, that he shall not go unpunished. A man who lightly uses a beloved sovereign’s name would justly be banished from his presence, deemed guilty of treason, and condemned to die. And shall he who insults the Majesty of Heaven escape condemnation ? Would every sovereign throughout the world guard the honour of their Maker’s name by a strict scrutiny, swearing and blasphemy would soon cease from the land. The fourth : “ Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work ; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, and hallowed it.” Ex. xx. 8, 9, 10, 11. There exists not a person who has not violated this command. How few are there who devote the *whole day* to the Lord their God, though he expressly says, “ keep holy the Sabbath *day*,” not a part, but the whole. How great a portion of it do people waste in useless employments, or in vain or trifling conversation, instead of employing their thoughts on the first institution of the Sabbath, and leading their minds back to the period, when, this goodly frame of things completed, the Lord is said to have rested, and proclaimed a jubilee, by a total cessation from his glorious work. Shall man, then, refuse to celebrate it ? Besides, we have another

reason to induce us to revere the Sabbath, namely, our Saviour's resurrection. Shall we, then, think a day too long a period to dwell upon so delightful and animating a theme? There is no commandment so often repeated in God's word as this, and I know of none so openly and so extensively violated as this, in our day; and I believe it is the crying sin of the nation, for which God is taking away our national prosperity little by little. Having treated upon this subject in a former letter, you will be able to judge, from the duty there laid down, in what instance you have most frequently trespassed against this precept. The fifth: "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Ex. xx. 12. God having given us commandments relating to our duty to himself, leads us to understand, that next in importance is that which we owe to our natural parents. I think I somewhere stated before that this is the only commandment with promise. Though you have not wilfully dishonoured them, or treated them with open scorn or contempt, yet you have, in various instances, violated their commands. You have, (though perhaps unintentionally) given them cause to doubt what your future character will be, and by that have filled their breasts with trembling apprehension and dread. "None but a parent can tell a parent's feelings," therefore, you cannot know in how many thousand ways you have inflicted pain. It is needless to say more here, but read over attentively what I have written before upon your duty to parents, and see whether you have, in every respect, obeyed the precepts which are contained therein. The sixth: "Thou shalt not kill." Ex. xx. 13. I fancy you will exclaim, Well, I acknowledge all that you have said concerning the others, but I think you cannot prove the crime of murder can be laid to my charge. It certainly is fact, that in the common acceptance of the word, you are free from this; your hands have not, nor

are they likely to be stained with the blood of your fellow-creatures. But what if I prove that you have been guilty of murder in three different ways! You will say, perhaps, I may have killed an insect, but nothing more; but I answer, to destroy those creatures which are likely to be obnoxious to the human race is quite justifiable; therefore, this is no crime. But have you never wantonly sported with their sufferings, and killed those inoffensive ones, which could do harm to none, not reflecting that they have feelings as well as yourself? You do not think when you needlessly deprive a harmless fly of its existence, you are presuming to destroy what God, in his infinite wisdom, thought proper to create. This is no trifle. I think Cowper has some excellent ideas on this subject; he justly observes, that,

“ If man’s convenience, health,  
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims  
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs;  
Else they are all, the meanest things that are,  
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,  
As God was free to form them at the first,  
Who, in his sov’reign wisdom, made them all.”

But if any hatred lurks in your heart to any human being, though you are not amenable to the law of man, you are to the law of God, and stand convicted in his sight of having broken this commandment, for remember the words of scripture, “ He that hateth his brother is a murderer.” 1 John iii. 15. Recollect that every time you commit sin, you crucify your Saviour afresh, and send another spear into his side; you are verily guilty of his death. If you do not take up your cross and follow him, you plainly shew that his doctrines are too pure for you, and that had you lived in those days, you would have been accessory to his death. There is yet one more sense in which you violate this command. Supposing a man who had travelled through a wilderness and just escaped a den of murderers were to see a fellow-traveller wandering on,

regardless of danger, to the same fatal spot, and refuse to warn him of the coming evil, would he not, in some measure, be accessory to his death? So, if you see a fellow-pilgrim, in his journey to heaven, wandering from the right path, and in danger of being lost for want of friendly advice and caution, and refuse to lend him a helping hand, by gently reproof and admonishing him, the everlasting ruin of that individual will, in some measure, be attributed to you. The seventh: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Ex. xx. 14. This commandment, in the true sense of the word, as a child, you cannot break; but remember the time *may* come when your ghostly enemy, who is ever upon the watch, will, unless you guard constantly against him, endeavour to make you break it. However, in your baptism, you promised to give your heart entirely to God; be careful, then, how you suffer any other object to occupy it. How frequently have I heard young people, when returning from devoting themselves to God, exclaim, Oh! did you see that lady at church to-day? How elegantly she was dressed; she was so beautiful too. I hope she will be there next Sunday, that I may have another stare at her. Now, though these may be nothing but unthinking expressions, yet it discovers a wandering of thought whilst engaged in the most important work in which man *can* be engaged, and shews that there is not only danger that such ideas will take possession of the youthful heart in preference to the Deity, but also a wish that it should be so. Instead of desiring their presence again, they should pray to God to remove from their sight every object which would be likely to draw their attention from himself. Those who suffer themselves to be led away in youth by every charm they see, will, in after life, find it a very difficult task to keep this commandment. The eighth: "Thou shalt not steal." Ex. xx. 15. I know you to be so scrupulously exact, that I believe you would not, knowingly, take the value of a pin from any person.

But can you say that you have, in every instance, rendered to every one their due? Have you delighted in doing justice to all? Have you not, by some arts of chicanery, endeavoured to defraud those with whom you have had to deal? Have you never taken advantage of the inexperience of your brothers and sisters, to wrong them? If you can cheerfully assert you never have, happy are you. Yet you are, indeed, a robber in the sight of God, for you have robbed him of his time on his own day. You have not been faithful, either, in your stewardship; you have withheld from God more than you ought. He says, "the gold and the silver are mine," and you have not rendered it to him. The ninth: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Ex. xx. 16. You have not been called upon to appear at a public trial, consequently can never have taken a false oath; but people may daily and hourly sin against this Divine command, without this. "Never to do to others what we would not wish them to do to us," is the golden rule that our Saviour has laid down for us; and he who strictly adheres to it, would, indeed, keep this precept (of the old law) in the true sense of the words: for he would never slander others, because he knows he should not like it himself; on no occasion would he whisper even a true tale to the injury of his neighbour, much less invent a malicious one. He would charitably listen to their failings, and bury them in his own breast, instead of publishing them abroad. Is my dear Sarah of this noble character? Time alone can prove whether you will be so or not when you enter into the world; but it depends entirely upon how you accustom yourself to act in youth towards your young companions. The tenth: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's." Ex. xx. 17. Having proved that you have in

some way broken all the other commandments, it will be no difficult task, I apprehend, to shew that you have also transgressed against this. Your own words will condemn you, for how often, when walking with me, have you said, Oh! what a beautiful house; I wish we lived there. What a handsome carriage, I wish it was our's. These are the thoughts of one half the world, though they do not express them so ingenuously, yet they do not, on that account, desire it the less. These were uttered only in thoughtlessness, for, possessing the good things of this life in abundance, you have little to desire; but let me entreat you ever to remember, that to envy others what they possess, and always to be wishing for it, betrays a discontented, dissatisfied, and ungrateful disposition. Remember it was this envious and ambitious frame of mind that caused the angels to fall from their first estate. "To rejoice with those that do rejoice, and to weep with those that weep," is an apostolic precept. But can those be said to do this, that grieve at their neighbours' prosperity, and secretly triumph over them in their misfortunes? Conscience will discover whether you do such things. Finally, my dear girl, having, I trust, satisfactorily convinced you that you have broken all the commandments of your God, you will no longer presume upon your own righteousness. These are the sentiments of three parts of the world, who view these laws in the light you did; but they extend to the thoughts and desires of the heart, as well as to the actions. Man, in ten thousand unseen and unknown ways, may offend that God "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." Hab. i. 13. I know your disposition to be excellent, but there is not a human being living, who does not daily, nay, hourly, sin unintentionally against his great Creator. The idea of this so filled the Psalmist's mind, that he cried out, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand." Psalm cxxx. 3. Therefore you see the necessity, not only of pray-

ing for the pardon of your *presumptuous* sins, but also for your *secret* ones. Worship God in spirit and in truth, bow not down your heart to any idol, use not irreverently the great Jehovah's name, strictly devote every hour in his holy day to his service, pay implicit obedience to your parent's will, and become a blessing to them in their declining years. Whenever you see your brothers or sisters, friends or companions, going in the way of error and darkness, look not on with supineness, but actively exert yourself to reclaim them, that you may not have their everlasting death to answer for. Set up no object in your heart which will be likely to supplant God in your affections. Defraud not, but do justice to all; render to every one their right, and take no undue advantage of any. Support your neighbour's reputation with as scrupulous attention as you would your own. Envy not, covet not. "Learn, in whatsoever state you are, therewith to be content." Phi. iv. 11. You must take these divine precepts to the full extent, in which we have been considering them, as the guide of your life. You must use them as a schoolmaster to bring you to Christ; and oh! may this view of them lead you to see how much we all need the righteousness which is wrought out for us by our adorable Redeemer. He fulfilled them to the utmost, and his obedience is placed to the account of all his believing people. That you and I may be found clothed in that robe at the last great day, is the fervent prayer of

Your sincere friend,

J. S.



## LETTER XVIII.

## ON PRAYER.

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*"All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."*—Matth. xxi. 22.

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MY DEAR ELIZA,

I scarcely know what apology to offer for my long silence ; but I must endeavour to make up for it by writing upon a subject which, I trust, will not be uninteresting. During my absence from home, I understand there has been a most melancholy catastrophe in the town : a man murdered his wife, and his own son became his witness ! It appeared, upon his trial, that the unhappy man was fully aware who it was that tempted him, for his only plea was, that "he was tempted of the devil," and seemed to understand how he ought to have acted, in order to have been able, in that trying hour, to withstand his temptation, for he acknowledged that all his misery was to be attributed to his having neglected prayer for strength to resist his spiritual enemy, thus affording an awful lesson to all, upon the necessity of watchfulness and prayer. It is upon this I propose to dwell ; for where I have lately been visiting, though the family bear the appellation of a true Christian family, yet, however the heads of it may deserve this title, the younger branches certainly do not. They, indeed, present themselves each morning and evening before their Maker, and would not presume to break through the custom of kneeling in private, before they descend to breakfast, or enter their beds. I think it will not be going too far to say that they never pray. How frequently have I heard them exclaim, "O dear, I have my prayers to say, I wish

I had done, it is so cold, I want to be in bed." Then, rushing precipitately and unprepared before their tremendous Judge, repeat, in a careless and hurried manner, a few sentences, which, by being often said, are now repeated without any thought or care; and yet, when they rise, they think the duty of prayer has been performed. Can this be called praying? Is this holding an intercourse with the King of heaven and earth? Is this worshipping their God in spirit and in truth? Can they imagine that he will condescend to listen to the homage of the lips without that of the heart? Were they to be introduced into the presence of their earthly king, what dread would take possession of their minds, what daily and hourly preparation would there be to fit them to meet their sovereign's eye; and should they have a petition to present, how would they con over, again and again, all the sentences, to see that there was nothing in it but what they intended to ask; what trembling anxiety would fill their breast, when they began to contemplate the reception they should meet with. Shall they think it nothing to intrude themselves into the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, without one moment's preparation? And shall they present a petition, without thinking what they ask, and without any anxiety whether he will deign to answer it or not? Their thoughts, instead of being fixed upon the importance of the service in which they are engaged, are wandering upon the most trifling subjects; their minds, in fact, are intent upon how much they have said, how much there is to say, and how soon they shall have ended. We know God will hear the prayer of the humble penitent in any place, in any attitude, or however he may be employed; yet we also know that the heart must be engaged in the service, before a blessing will come down. These are no trifles, for while the thoughts are thus busy, the heart cannot be anxious for the welfare of the soul. I think that I am,

then, justified in saying that those who do such things never pray. Indeed, such people had better never attempt it; it is only mocking *that* God whom they profess to honour. Never allow yourself, my dear girl, to act such a part; but, when you are on your knees at the footstool of the Throne of Mercy, never forget the dread Sovereign who is seated there. Remember that it is the pardon of sins committed against your future Judge that you are there to solicit. Ever bear in mind the awful difference there is between yourself and the Spirit whom you are addressing, and approach with reverential awe, though with humble confidence and hope. Let your behaviour be free from the least appearance of levity; and shew, by your conduct, that you are fully sensible of your wants and infirmities, and the purpose for which you have placed yourself in that attitude. Pause and reflect before you kneel, weigh well the purport of every petition before you utter it. Think that the God to whom you pray will not only hear, but answer your requests; for your blessed Saviour has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive." John xvi. 24; meaning, he that asketh in sincerity, nothing wavering. And when you have sent up a petition to the Throne of Grace, *look out* for an answer as eagerly and anxiously as you would for an answer to a letter from a beloved friend. Pray that the Holy Ghost would plead *in* you, as Christ does *for* you. Finally, let the terrible example of neglecting this duty, mentioned at the beginning of this letter, be deeply impressed on your mind. You will now see the importance of our Saviour's admonition, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matth xxvi. 41. Had this man been on the watch against the attack of his spiritual enemy, he would not have fallen in an unsuspecting hour. He had been a *professedly* godly man, but his besetting sin was a passionate unruly temper, and though much subdued by the influence of religious principle, he was still in the bond of

iniquity, and in the gall of bitterness. His armour had long lain by neglected, his vigilant enemy, knowing this, attacked him in his weak point and he fell. Though you may imagine yourself secure from committing a deed so heinous as this, yet if you begin to slumber, and forget to pray constantly for aid in the hour of trial, you know not how far you may be tempted, nor how little strength you may have to resist. Never forget the apostle's advice, to "pray without ceasing." 1 Thess. v. 17. St. Paul does not mean by this, that you are every hour, or every minute, to run from your employment to present yourself in form before your Maker; but whenever you feel yourself tempted to do anything wrong, pray immediately for divine grace to withstand it; when you feel any want, look to your heavenly Father for a supply; when you have committed any fault, pray to your offended Judge for pardon; when you have received any blessing, send up a pious ejaculation of thanksgiving to *that* God, "who is always more ready to hear than we to pray." It will be to no purpose to bend the knee without the homage of the heart. May God, of his infinite mercy, answer all your petitions, for the sake of him who alone is worthy to be heard, and, perfumed with the incense of a Saviour's merits, may they mount up as incense to the skies, and go up as a memorial of your piety before him.

Ever yours,

J. S.

P.S. I shall now send you a copy of that excellent Morning Hymn, by Miss Esther Milnes,\* given me by one of her intimate friends, and which I think you will like.

\* This Lady afterwards married Mr. Day, the author of Sandford and Merton.

## A MORNING HYMN.

THOU everlasting Lord of heaven and earth,  
 Who gav'st the beauteous form of nature birth !  
 At whose command, this globe from chaos sprung,  
 When all the morning stars together sung ;  
 Whose pow'r divine composed the human frame,  
 And breath'd therein the soul's celestial flame ;  
 On whom the feeble race of men depend,  
 Before thy dread majestic Throne I bend.  
 Benign, celestial Parent, deign to hear  
 My supplication with a gracious ear.  
 Oh ! in the days of giddy, wand'ring youth,  
 May I remember thee, great God of truth !  
 Beware of pleasure's vain deceitful wiles,  
 When dress'd in all her captivating smiles,  
 She tries to alienate my heart from thee,  
 And make my feet from paths of wisdom flee.  
 In vain the utmost joys that earth can boast,  
 If thy soul-gladdening approbation's lost !  
 Without thy favour, what is all below ?  
 Wealth is but poverty, and grandeur, woe.  
 Ne'er may I do thy will from servile fear,  
 But genuine love, and gratitude sincere ;  
 May their more gentle ties my service bind,  
 Their nobler motives influence my mind.  
 Since too exalted thy unblemished ways,  
 Too much bewildered in a seeming maze,  
 To be, in this dark region, understood ;  
 May I, great Sovereign, ever wise and good,  
 Not blindly censure what I can't explore,  
 But with a pious confidence adore.  
 May that enlarg'd benevolence be mine,  
 That boundless love, that charity divine !  
 Which, from celestial mansions, Jesus brought,  
 By spotless precept, fair example taught ;  
 That partial vain distinctions cast away,  
 And all diffusive as the orb of day.

Oh! may my breast with sweet compassion glow,  
 May I delight to soften human woe!  
 Relieve pale want's dejected, pining race,  
 And wipe the tears that cloud the mourner's face.  
 If doom'd myself to bear affliction's smart,  
 And grief's keen arrows in my bleeding heart,  
 Still may I bless the author of my pains,  
 Convinced, in all his dealings, mercy reigns.  
 Direct my views, by Faith's enlightening ray,  
 To those bright realms of everlasting day!  
 Where fleeting, transient sorrows are repaid  
 With crowns immortal—joys that never fade.  
 May reason e'er her sacred rule maintain,  
 And bind my passions with her golden chain,  
 Each wild desire, each erring wish controul,  
 Nor suffer fancy to delude my soul.  
 May she, from slavish prejudice defend,  
 And give me Candour, Truth's impartial friend.  
 O guard, dread Power, thy erring creature's breast,  
 From wretched pride, absurd, pernicious guest!  
 Yet may I duly reverence my mind,  
 Form'd in thy awful image, and design'd  
 For endless life—a spark of heavenly fire,  
 Which never can, triumphant thought, expire.  
 May I, when this frail mortal state is o'er,  
 And earth's revolving periods are no more,  
 In thy celestial courts obtain a place,  
 And gaze for ever on thy glorious face.

MILNES.

## LETTER XIX.

ON TIME.

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“*Redeeming the time.*”—Col. iv. 5.

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MY DEAR MARY,

I fear my long silence will make you imagine absence has produced forgetfulness, and that I am no longer the friend I professed myself to be; but banish, I entreat you, such an idea from your mind, and believe me, nothing but the want of opportunity should have made you wait so long for this. A great portion of *time*, (that important subject upon which I propose to write,) has elapsed since I last addressed you. It was in the beginning of autumn, and now winter is fast approaching to close another year over our heads. The sun has gone on his way rejoicing; the moon has three times performed her periodical revolutions; the earth has proceeded on her annual and diurnal course, the varying seasons, morning and evening, have succeeded each other; the fruits have ripened, withered, and decayed; and the blasts of winter have followed the mild autumnal breezes; so that we see all nature has been busily employed, in obedience to its great Creator's command. Oh! that my dear Mary might be enabled to say, without a blush, that every one of her hours, from *that* period to *this*, have been usefully employed. Would people seriously impress this truth upon their minds, that there will be a day of reckoning, in which every man must give an account of the manner in which he has spent every moment of his existence, I am convinced they would not even dare to squander away an hour, no, nor a moment; but would rather make

a just estimate of the greatest blessing man can enjoy. They would portion it out with the strictest economy, and take the same care that none was wasted, as they would of the choicest treasure. How frequently do we hear persons complain that time hangs heavily on their hands, that it does not fly swiftly enough; yet, almost in the same breath, exclaim that their lives are so short, that death comes and puts an end to all their deep-laid schemes, before they have had leisure to bring them to maturity. Strange inconsistency! This can be accounted for only by man's strong propensity to procrastination, which makes him loiter away the best of his days, and neglect putting his plans into execution, till at length he finds *time* for him is ending, and *eternity* beginning: then, and not till then, does the foolish man behold the folly of trifling away those days which were lent him, by a merciful Creator, to improve and fit him for a higher state of existence. What a just idea of the importance attached to his being must that Emperor have had, who, finding he had not done a noble deed throughout the day, exclaimed, "I have lost a day." O that my dear girl would not only form, but keep the virtuous resolution of letting

"The rays of every setting sun  
See some new work of duty done."

The regulation of most of your time is, at present, in abler hands than your own, therefore it is needless for me to lay down any plan, except for those hours which are lent you as relaxations from nobler pursuits. Think not that, after having done your duty during school hours, it is all that is required of you. Rest assured, if you do not know how to employ a few short hours now, which are left to your own disposal, you will, hereafter, find it a difficult task to employ whole days. Begin, therefore, to use order and method in the disposal of your time. For this purpose, instead of loitering about, or employing yourself in useless trifles, let every hour have its work marked out. If,



when your school hours are over, you walk, let it serve two great ends, contributing to your health by exercise, and to improvement by useful and instructive conversation. In your walks, the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, and the flowers of the field will afford you ample subjects for improving and agreeable conversation, and will lift your mind from the contemplation of the creature to that of the Creator. Make it a rule never to pass over anything you do not perfectly understand, for it is only by dint of study and enquiry that we can any of us attain knowledge. Do not imagine that I mean to prohibit all enjoyments and amusements, far from it; but let them be innocent, and under certain restrictions. Nay, even your plays and games may be rendered instructive, as well as entertaining; and I am convinced, that were they always so, you would reap more lasting pleasure from them, than from any childish amusements. Never forget that "idleness is the root of all evil." Thus, having every part of the day usefully employed, it will glide on smoothly and rapidly, and leave behind it no traces of regret. Thus the day, instead of being tiresomely long, will pass away unconsciously, and night will drop its sable curtain around you before you are aware of its close; and life itself will seem too short to fulfil your destined work. Yet, by adopting regularity, you will find sufficient time for all things. It always shews a want of order, when a young person exclaims, "I have not time to do this thing or the other," unless it is known they have a profession that takes up the greatest part of it. I cannot conclude this subject better than in the words of Fitzgerald:—

" Each night, ere needful slumber seals thine eyes,  
Home to thy thoughts let these reflections rise:  
How has this day my duty seen express'd?  
What have I done, omitted, or transgress'd?  
Then grieve the moments thou has idly spent,  
The rest will yield thee comfort and content."

Should you, upon examination, find that the whole of the day has been devoted to the improvement of the talents committed to your care, then you may, with a quiet conscience, compose yourself to rest, under the assurance that your heavenly Father is pleased with your endeavours; and with the same composure you may resign yourself into the arms of death, relying upon the divine mercy to give you, for Christ's sake, eternal life in that kingdom where time shall be known no more. With the sincerest attachment,

Believe me ever yours,  
J. S.

## LETTER XX.

### ON GOING TO SCHOOL.

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*"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding.—Prov. iv. 7.*

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MY DEAR CAROLINE,

The time is at length arrived when we must part, and much do I regret it. The separation is, however softened by two very powerful considerations; the one is, that it will be only for a time, the other, that perhaps we shall have cause to bless God through eternity for our meeting on earth. You are young at present, but by and bye I shall expect much more from you in the way of learning, for, though I cease to instruct you, I shall make constant enquiries after your improvements. Your general amiability of conduct, my dear girl, has gained my love, and I trust that nothing will weaken it, but that it will increase in time, and ripen in eternity. Were you for the future to be under the watchful eye of your prudent and exemplary

parents, to be fostered by a father's care, and cherished by a mother's tenderness, I should have nothing to fear for you ; but when I know that you are to be for a time from under their guardian care, and mix in a large public school, with various tempers and characters, I trust it will not be deemed unnecessary to give you a few hints to regulate your conduct, but be taken in the spirit of kindness in which it is offered, as a small memento of my affectionate anxiety for your welfare. The lady under whose guardianship your dear mother will place you, will, I know, be in every respect qualified for the task, but, alas ! her pupils will not all be like herself, and it is with them I would place you on your guard. You ought to be linked in the bonds of Christian charity with all your companions, but there may be some amongst them whom you may esteem, and a few that you may ardently love. I would, however, warn you against placing your warmest affections on objects which may yield you disappointment. Perhaps your love may not be returned ; sickness, or a thousand accidents, may prevent your friendly intercourse ; and if time does not separate you, death is sure to do so. Then, if you would reserve your ardent gratitude, your fervent love, your best affections for an object worthy of them all, oh ! let me entreat you to place them on your gracious Redeemer. *Here* you will experience no disappointment. He who first loved you, will love you unto the end. No accident can interrupt your delightful communion ; neither time nor eternity can separate you from Him. Love Him, then, with all that intensity of love which you are able to feel, and which a believing view of Calvary's mount is capable of inspiring. It is natural for young persons, separated from home and all its endearing ties, to wish for a confidential, or what is commonly called a bosom-friend, who will participate in all their little joys and sorrows. Choose yours, then, discreetly. Take care that she is of industrious habits, with a well-regulated and a well-culti-

vated mind, strict principles, and of a cheerful, even temper; and having found such an one, fear not to advise with her on all occasions, or to enter into the closest union of friendship with each other. Some of your companions will be so idle, and yet at the same time so jealous of all before them, that they will endeavour to persuade you to follow their example, and wishing to reduce you to their level, will try to check your exertions, and perhaps will tell you that with all your ardour you can never attain perfection. Now, a little learning is a dangerous thing, but the farther you go, the more you will see your own insufficiency, and be humbled; and although you will admit the principle, that during this short and transitory state of existence no one can attain perfection, still at the same time, you will tell them, that your views extend beyond this scene of things, and that having cultivated your mind here, you trust that it will expand and ripen into perfection in eternity. Remember, you will also by your perseverance gratify your parents and friends, and above all, you will be obeying the command of your Saviour, to cultivate the talents committed to your care, for the abuse of which you must give an awful account: therefore, listen not to them. Some, on the contrary, will be so eager to obtain what they call showy accomplishments, that they will neglect more important things for this end, and filled with the idea of receiving the praise of men, will be too apt to forget the praise of God. They do not believe that one thing alone is truly needful. When the hour of sickness comes, what comfort will their favourite accomplishment afford them, if, besides this, their minds are not cultivated, and stored with heavenly wisdom? *Imitate them not.* Some will perhaps have ungovernable tempers, immoral principles; they may be quarrelsome, capricious and unjust. These you must avoid, for remember "evil communications corrupt good manners;" but if you should unavoidably be brought into contact with them, show them

a bright example of the Christian virtues. "Let your light so shine before *them*, that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven;" and having seen the graces which adorn your character, they may be led to seek the same. Some may be of so tattling a disposition, that they will love nothing like having a tale to relate, and will tell one against their dearest friend, or even against their kind instructress, rather than have no secret to tell. Listen not to a report to the prejudice of any one in their absence, and above all, never countenance one against your preceptress. She has an arduous task to perform. Her patience is sometimes severely tried, and if she should be found not quite blameless, remember she is but a frail human being, subject to the same passions and temptations with yourself. Criticise her not. Love and imitate her virtues; pity her failings. Treat her ever with marked respect; listen to her advice with the greatest deference. Love her with unfeigned affection for her maternal care of you, and remember that the debt of gratitude you owe her, can never be repaid but by the most implicit obedience to her commands. Vindicate both her character and conduct whenever they are unjustly aspersed. She may be called cross, passionate, censorious, and many other disgraceful epithets, merely for having reproved a foolish girl for some favourite fault, some darling sin; but it is the paramount and imperative duty of your instructress to do it, and it is at the risk of the anger of her God if she do it not. If you should find any of your companions before you in any or every branch of your education, feel no envy or jealousy towards them; you may feel a desire to imitate them without being envious. There is a wide difference between envy and emulation; the one seeks to lower the merits of her rival, and to detract from her good qualities, the other only seeks to raise herself to the same elevated standard. It is possible to praise your companions with sincerity, and at the same time have an ardent wish to obtain the

same encomiums, without the slightest spark of envy. If, on the contrary, you should excel them, let it not make you vain or presumptuous, but remember the advantages you have enjoyed, and ask yourself if much more might not have been expected from you, and whether they do not really excel you, by making the progress which they have made with inferior advantages. If any should shew a proud, haughty, and yet at the same time a mean spirit, (for contradictory as such a character seems, still there are such,) let them see in you the dignified humility of a Christian. Let the recollection that you are only dust and ashes, make you humble, while the assurance that you are an immortal being elevate your mind, and keep you above being proud at the trifling distinctions of time. Remember that you are a child of God, a joint heir with Christ, to all the invaluable riches of your covenanted Father's kingdom, and disgrace not your high and heavenly rank. If any of them should be extravagant, and ridicule you for your economy, let them see it is not as a miser you hoard up your little savings, but to purchase to yourself the pure and unalloyed pleasure of ministering to the necessities of saints whenever opportunity shall present itself. Endeavour to make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, to lay up *your treasure* in heaven. I would wish to remind you, that how liberally soever you may give to the poor, it will amount to nothing in the sight of him who knows the secrets of all hearts, unless given from love to Christ, and unless you have to practise some self denial for it. If, when others are spending their pocket money in selfish indulgences, you prefer the higher and nobler pleasure of relieving the poorer members of Christ's mystical body, remember, for your encouragement, the Redeemer tells you he views the deed as done to himself, accepts the sacrifice, and will, hereafter, restore it four-fold into your bosom. Study, my dear girl, with unabating assiduity, every branch of literature which

it is requisite for you to learn, that neither your own time nor your parents' money may be thrown away ; the recompense for your labour will be the approving smile of your anxious parents, and the gratifying approbation of your friends. But at the same time let me caution you against devoting all your energies towards one favourite point ; if you have a decided taste for any one branch of the numerous fashionable accomplishments, cultivate it with steady, undeviating perseverance, but not to the neglect of more important studies. It is my opinion that public seminaries might be made, (and I trust they are in many cases made,) not only a place to fit the young for shining in earthly courts, but in the heavenly courts ; *nurseries for heaven*, where every good seed is sown which is congenial with a heavenly soil, and where every plant is fostered by proper management, till it is ready to be transplanted, at a moment's warning, to the blooming gardens of paradise, where it will flourish and ripen through the countless ages of eternity. It is in your own power to make it a nursery for time, where you will be trained to endure the winter's storm. Here you will meet with the same characters and dispositions that you will have to encounter in your journey through this world, and by learning how to combat with them during this season of trial, you will be more upon your guard against them in the wider range of trial which awaits you upon your introduction to the world. Bring, then, with you every Christian grace, and every quality requisite to enable you to sustain the combat, looking unto him who has said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And now, as to your religious principles, I fear nothing, they are firmly fixed ; and if you should meet with others widely differing from you in sentiments, even so far as to deny the divinity of Christ, still you will remain firm. Hold no arguments with them, but rather seek to win them to the truth by displaying the charms of Christian morality, the beauty

of holiness, and the god-like actions which a heart united to Christ is alone capable of performing. But with those whose views are the same as your own, and who practise what they profess, and really feel the power of religion on their souls, hold sweet communion, and in the full assurance that their sympathy will be sincere, unbosom to them all your secret griefs; their advice will be valued by you, their experience will be profitable to you, and their example will encourage you to persevere unto the end. Having attended to these rules, you will come forth armed for your journey through life, you will bring with you tempers and dispositions fitted to use the world, without abusing it, and, as much as in you lies, to live peaceably with all men. I will now, for the present, bid you farewell, and, in conclusion, exhort you to a constant, diligent, and prayerful perusal of your Bible. Read it in the morning, that you may learn precepts to regulate your conduct through the day; and read it at night, that you may have some sweet promise to nourish you on your first awaking. Study it in private—anything like a parade in your religious duties, and seeking the eye of man instead of the eye of God, is hypocrisy. Prove your faith by its doctrines, try your morality by its divine precepts, weigh the motive of every action by its pure and undeviating rules, and remember it is by this standard you must be judged at the last. A traveller, when he is assured that he is in the right path to his journey's end, turns not to the right nor to the left, although he sees many turnings and windings leading to paths, in appearance, much pleasanter than the one he is treading, and sees numerous companions branching off into them and himself left a solitary pilgrim in this narrow way, still he feels no desire to wander, he steadily pursues his way, knowing that, though it is rugged, it will eventually lead him to his home. Profiting, then, by this example, may you find the narrow way which leadeth unto life, and hav-



ing found it, may you walk therein with persevering industry; though it should be strewed with briars and thorns for a time, remember that it will finally conduct you to your heavenly home, where never-ending bliss awaits you. That this may be the happy termination of both our journeyings, shall be the constant prayer of

Your faithful friend,

J. S.

## LETTER XXI.

ON THE CHURCH SERVICE.

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*"One Lord, one faith, one baptism."*—Ephes. iv. 5.

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MY DEAR ELIZABETH,

Our correspondence seems, with mutual consent, to have been suspended for a long time. During your stay in Bath, your varied studies must necessarily have occupied a great portion of your time, and these, together with your devotional exercises, which, I trust, were not neglected, doubtless left you little leisure to address your friends. But if your time was profitably spent in studying the works of authors who enlightened the age in which they lived, and did credit to the nation where they were born—in pondering over the records of the rise and downfall of nations,—in imitating the works of art—and, above all, in storing your mind with those divine precepts which ought to regulate your conduct, and those divine promises which alone can sustain you in your trials, whilst passing through this wilderness to "fairer worlds on high,"—the end of your journey is answered, and I am quite reconciled to your seeming neglect of *living* friends, whilst occupied with the illustrious

*dead.* You are now arrived at an age when you must be addressed on subjects of more vital importance than those upon which we have hitherto spoken. I propose now, therefore, to open your mind to the beauty and propriety of the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, of which we are members. As a member of that Church, you ought rightly to understand and love them, yea, to venerate them from your inmost soul, and to consider the Established Church as the bulwark of Christianity. This feeling you may cherish in its fullest extent, without entertaining any uncharitable feeling towards others who differ from you ; for, whilst we deeply venerate our own, let us allow to others the privilege of loving their forms, and at all times, if they bear the name of our beloved Master, be ready to extend to them the right hand of fellowship. But alas ! if ever there was a time in which the members of the Church of England were called upon to stand firm, and declare their unbending attachment to its truly apostolic government, it is the present. In these troublous times, when anarchy, infidelity, and insubordination seem making such rapid strides, that they threaten to destroy all established forms in Church and State, we know not how soon we may be called upon to make an open profession of our attachment, and to defend what we profess to love. I hesitate not to declare to you my firm conviction, that the moment the Government of England ceases to provide for the service of the Church, and the Queen to be the "Defender of the Faith," from that hour England loses the favour of the God of the Church. We shall send out our armies, without the God of armies to protect them ; and we shall enter into all our commercial affairs without the blessing of the Almighty. When Religion, with all her train of blessings, is dismissed from the Senate, as a thing with which they ought not to interfere, then will she wing her flight from this highly-favoured land, in which she has so long dwelt, the admiration of surrounding mul-

titudes, to some happier clime, where she will be cherished and fostered by the hand of royalty, and where she will be held as the choicest treasure ; for we know that " kings shall become her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers," Isaiah xlix. 23 ; and in return, she will bestow upon *that nation* her highest blessings. We know that the kings under the Jewish dispensation were all prosperous who took care *first* to provide for the honour and service of God ; and those who neglected it, were severely reprimanded by the prophets, and sorely punished for the omission of this duty. " This I would wish deeply impressed on your dear brother's mind, as his influence may by and bye be great over those with whom he mixes. And now, my dear girl, when any of your friends agree in essential points, consent to differ in non-essentials, and embrace all true believers of whatever name as a sister and a brother. Still, as a member of the Established Church, I love its forms, its doctrines, and its discipline, and must ever consider it as the safeguard both of *Churchman and Dissenter*, indeed as the only bulwark against infidelity, and the effectual preservative of Christianity amongst us. Now then let us contemplate it ; and in the first place, I shall observe, it is truly scriptural and apostolic in its institutions, in spite of what our dissenting brethren may assert. What shall we find in any of their churches that is excellent, which we shall not find in our own ? Is it anything unscriptural to have different degrees in His ministering servants *here*, when we know that there are different degrees in His ministering servants above ? Do we not read of cherubim and seraphim, of angels and archangels ? And do we not know that amongst the Jews there were inferior priests, and high priests ? And do we not read in the first ages of the Gospel Churches, of apostles, bishops, deacons, elders, and presbytery, in which offices some had more power than others ? Is it objectionable to have a form of prayer ? Surely not, when that form embraces

within itself all the wants, the wishes, and the desires of a Christian. Do not the Dissenters' prayers (excellent as some of them are) Sabbath after Sabbath express the same desires for their people, and thereby become a form? Knowing, as we do, that the Jews had a form of prayer in their public services, and believing that in the earliest churches they regularly used them, we see no impropriety in it, and thinking the service of our Church truly sublime, since all its prayers are offered up in scriptural language, we shall at once proceed to consider its beauties, and to offer a few remarks upon its forms. First, then, how beautiful are the introductory sentences, and how calculated to arrest our attention, and fix our wandering thoughts. When the minister of the Lord ascends the reading desk, let us not follow him with our eyes only, but with our hearts, (and oh! that all our hearts were as pure as the white garment which is worn by him, as a symbol of inward holiness!) How appropriate to be clothed in a long robe of white when ministering in the sanctuary; and blessed, yea, thrice blessed, are the people who can contemplate their faithful pastor, and upon sure grounds believe him to have holiness to the Lord engraven upon his heart. How consolatory to hear from the lips of one we believe to be a *man of God* this declaration:—"When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." We have also in these ejaculatory sentences confessions, supplications, encouragements, consolations; then follows the Exhortation, setting forth the chief ends for which we have assembled together, and intreating us to lift up our hearts and voices with him, in deep humility, in the following confession of sin: and oh! how adapted is its language to suit every one present. We have all, indeed, erred and strayed from his ways like lost sheep. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not

to have done. Is there any one in the world who could not join in this confession, and say, there was sin confessed in it which he had not committed? Oh no! It may well be called a *general* confession, for it suits all alike, of every rank and station, and every degree of Christian, as well as the vilest sinner. We should endeavour never to be too late for this confession, and we must make it not only with the heart, but with the *lips*—we must make it our own. We should remember that the Clerk is only the *leader* of the people in the responses, that one may not be before another; he is not ordained, and is not to offer up our prayers, nor to stand in our stead. The minister, at the end of the exhortation, beseeches every one present (*mind, not the clerk alone,*) to accompany him, not only with a pure heart, (that is with a heart sincere, and free from distracting thoughts,) but with a humble *voice*. Oh! then, shall we refuse to express with our lips, what we ought to feel in our hearts? I think the want of the people's voices in many places makes the service of our Church appear very lifeless; but, on the contrary, I know that in some congregations the responses are so badly uttered by the children, that it is quite annoying to the minister: but this might be very easily obviated by a little attention in private on the part of superintendents and teachers. One of the saints of old, (I think it is St. Jerome,) says that the loud "Amen" from the people was like the sound of rushing mighty waters. How solemn and how grand! Oh! that with one heart and one voice, we might thus reply. After having made this confession, still devoutly kneeling, we receive absolution, or the remission of those sins we have confessed, not, indeed, from the priest, who has no power to forgive sins, (this is the prerogative of the Almighty alone,) but as his *ambassador* he comes to his people with the offers of peace, and has power given unto him to declare and pronounce to the people, *being penitent*, that *God pardoneth* and absolveth all them that

truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. And how proper that he should *stand* to pronounce this absolution. It is to the people alone that he is now speaking, and we should remember that it is he *alone* that should speak here : we should not follow him even in a whisper ; 'tis his part to pronounce it, ours to receive it meekly. But when he has finished, let us, with one universal burst, pronounce a loud amen. The minister having now *pronounced* the absolution, (not absolved the people, mind,) and shared in the benefit of it himself, *he* can now as well as the people, address God as a Father reconciled by the blood of Christ. This is rightly called the Lord's Prayer, as it is not only the prayer which he himself taught us, but it was he, and he only, that had a right to teach us first to call God our Father, since it was himself that procured us the privilege of approaching God in that character. The cavillers of our Church sometimes urge this against her, that we repeat this prayer too often in our service, and thereby incur our Lord's censure for using vain repetitions ; but can we repeat his own words too often in the ear of his Father and our Father ? Or, it might be asked, can we have that which is sublimely excellent too often brought before us ? Surely these petitions will not be called *vain* repetitions, since it is the Saviour's own command that we pray for the spiritual blessings which are contained in this prayer, and *faint not* ; and an apostolic injunction that we pray for these things without ceasing. And now let us utter the responses that follow, with a hearty desire for their speedy fulfilment. The 95th Psalm is an invitation to the congregation to lift up their voices, to sing and *rejoice* in the strength of their salvation. In some of our Churches they sing this Psalm, and in others, repeat it alternately with the minister, in the same manner as the Psalms for the day ; but this is quite at the discretion of the minister : I think it is generally thought best to chaunt it. A

doxology is sung at the end of each Psalm, thereby glorifying God for this rich treasury of devotion, which is considered as the richest gift that was ever cast into the lap of Christianity. Then follows a portion of Scripture out of the Old Testament. How beautiful and how appropriate either to repeat or chaunt a *Te Deum* after the privilege of hearing the word of God; and in this hymn of praise, in the truly scriptural doctrines of our Church, we ascribe equal adoration to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and in the following canticle, which is occasionally sung, we call upon all created beings to join in this ascription of praise. We again return to the Bible, and read a portion from the New Testament. Oh! how much of the Word of God we have in our service, and that which has much of this in it, must be excellent. In this, as in all other respects, she stands unrivalled, for there is no Church where so much scripture is embodied. Afterwards follows the Jubilate, a Psalm composed by David for a form of public thanksgiving, when the peace-offerings were presented; and oh! may it not well be used by us when we have just heard the glad tidings of the Gospel of peace. Then follow all the articles of our Christian faith, briefly summed up in the Apostles' Creed, so called because it was written in or near the time of the Apostles, and because of the apostolical doctrine which it contains. And if this be *our* creed, shall we be ashamed publicly to declare it? Oh! no. Let all the congregation confess that in this faith they wish to live, and in this faith they hope to die. The minister then with a loud voice prays that the Lord may be with the people whilst they further wait upon him, and the people ought, with heart and tongue, to respond, "And with thy Spirit." He then says, "Let us pray." After the reading of the Scriptures, the Psalms of thanksgiving, the confession of our faith, this is very suitable; and after pious ejaculations for mercy, we again call upon God as our Father. In the

petitions which follow, let us join with heart and voice. Then comes the Collect for the day, one for peace, and another grace. In some churches they rise and sing a hymn of praise here ; our Saviour has taught us to unite prayer and praise. Some people object to it, as being an interruption to our devotion ; but this is a very weak objection, as the adoration of our God is a most important part of our devotion. Is not praise as solemn a part of worship as prayer ? Shall we be more intent upon supplying our present necessities, than in thanking God for past mercies ? Oh ! no ; let us render unto him the homage of a grateful heart. It is certainly optional whether we do it in this part of the service or not, therefore it is not done in all our churches ; but I think it is a relief to our frail bodies, and to our feeble minds, before we commence the Litany. The word Litany itself means earnest supplication ; and oh ! how sublime it is, how sweet the strain of piety which runs through the whole. How comprehensive it is. There is not a spiritual want we can have, but what is met in this incomparable form of prayer. First of all we pray to the Triune Jehovah to have mercy upon us ; and oh ! what an humbling effect ought the reiterated confession, that we are miserable sinners, to have upon us. We then supplicate for pardon, not only for our *own* sins, but for the sins of all the redeemed ; let us make the response our own, " Spare us good Lord." We beseech the Lord our God to be pleased to rule and govern his Holy Church, to strengthen the Queen in righteousness and holiness, to bless all the royal family, to enlighten all our spiritual advisers, to endue all our temporal rulers with grace and wisdom, to bless and keep all his people, to give peace to all nations, to give us who are assembled in his house a heart to love and serve him, to bring back to his fold all wanderers, to help such as are still standing upright, to comfort all that are in trouble, to preserve all that are in danger, to provide for the dis-



tressed, to have mercy upon all, to forgive all our enemies, to give us the fruits of the earth, and to fill us with his Holy Spirit. We then cry mightily unto the Lamb of God to hear us, to grant us his peace, and to have mercy upon us. Oh! my dear Elizabeth, what temporal or spiritual want can we have that is not here met? Let us fervently join in the response, "We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord," that these blessings may be ours. We then again approach God as our Father, in the Lord's Prayer. The minister then prays that we may not be dealt with after our sins, nor rewarded *after* our iniquities. And here I would wish one word altered: it, instead of *after*, the words *according to* were supplied, I think it would be better. *We* know that it means that, but I have met with instances amongst the thinking poor, and sometimes even in the higher walks of life, with persons who refuse to join in this prayer on this very account. They say that they dare not pray that God would have nothing to do with them *after* their sins, as they know that they sin every hour; they imagine that it is asking God to cast them off. Now this is an absurd notion, but you cannot drive it into the heads of these *would-be-wise* objectors, that they are simply praying that they may not be dealt with according to the measure of their iniquity. "Let us pray." This sentence is not addressed to God, but it is an exhortation to the people to listen to the voice of the minister, to join him in heart, and to be ready with the responses which follow. In the prayer of St. Chrysostom we repeat our Saviour's gracious promise, as our ground of hope for the acceptance of our petitions; and at the conclusion of this incomparable Litany, the minister pronounces upon the people the apostolic benediction; and, oh! may every sincere worshipper richly enjoy it. The occasional prayers, which are added after, are intended for particular circumstances; in times of famine, plague or war, for the Parliament during their ses-

sion, for the sick and dying. There are also thanksgivings for particular occasions, and for individual cases. In whatever situation of life we may be placed, we shall find in this comprehensive Liturgy, that provision has been made for it. We may confidently assert, that there is not in any Church, so sublime, truly *scriptural*, and I had almost said, *heavenly* a form of devotion, as our own. What other blessings can the dissenting ministers pray for, extemporary, for their flocks, which we have not implored. I have had much enjoyment and much edification in joining in the devotions at the respective meeting houses, when I have visited their members; but still, after the most impartial and unprejudiced examination of the whole, I love my own. *Our Church* has long slumbered, but now the voice of her beloved has awaked her. Shall we desert her? Oh! no; we stood by her during her sleep, and we will now use all our influence to assist her in those works which she has so long neglected. And oh! that God may give us his grace and strength, to devote ourselves to his service; may the Spirit of our God rest upon us; may our ministers be more and more blest in their labours; and may the Lord God of Hosts be a wall of fire round about us, to guard us from enemies *without*, and may the Spirit of Holiness rest upon every member, that we may be protected from enemies *within*. That the Lord may lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace, prays

Your affectionate friend,

J. S.

## LETTER XXII.

## ON BAPTISM

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“ *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*—Matt. xix. 14.

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MY DEAR LOUISA,

How I do love to address persons by their Christian name, it is so endearing. I love my own Christian name, which will remain with me through time, and perhaps through eternity. We are told that the angels have names; at least, we know of Gabriel and Michael; and is it not delightful to think, that Jesus knows his own sheep by *name*. Now then, I propose in this letter, to treat upon Baptism, or the Christian Covenant. I am not going, my dear girl, to enter into anything like a discussion upon the difference of opinion which obtains in the world, concerning the time to be baptized, or the mode of administering that rite; but I hope, in accordance with the sentiments of the church of which you profess to be a member, you feel assured that we are justified in saying, that we can gather it most clearly from Scripture, that *infants* are to be admitted by that appointed means, into the visible church on earth. The Jews neglected not the rite of circumcision upon their infants; and this was the type of Baptism. Our Saviour blessed children, and bestowed upon them that, of which Baptism is only the sign. The cleansing and regenerating influences of the Spirit, must have accompanied his rich blessing on their souls. The Apostles baptized whole households, and of course children were included, since they were not commanded to be excluded. Besides, it is never said that the children of the first Christians came up to be baptized when they were

grown up. No; this was done in their infancy. It is a matter of mere speculation whether they were immersed or merely sprinkled with water. Sprinkling is just as efficacious as the other, since they are both alike unprofitable unless the Spirit descend to bless the ordinance, for "except we are born of the water, and of the *Spirit*, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." How solemn and how important is this initiatory rite into the Church of Christ: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." Now, my dear Louisa, let me proceed to speak of the solemn covenant which was entered into between God and your soul at the time of your Baptism, which was registered in heaven to appear at the judgment day, either for your endless comfort, or for your condemnation. A covenant is an agreement between two parties. God, in baptism, agrees, on his part, "to adopt you into his family, to make you a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" and of this covenant, baptism is a seal. By nature, you are of the family of sinful Adam; you are born under the wrath of God, and have no connection whatever with a Saviour; and, as a child of fallen Adam, you are the heir, not only of temporal, but also of spiritual and eternal death. But God has appointed a way of admission into his family, whereby you may become a partaker of spiritual life; and, in baptism, he becomes a covenant Father in Christ Jesus. The Saviour, seeing our lost, undone condition, our total alienation from his Father, and moved by his own eternal love, came down from heaven to open up a way by which we might return to God. Having accomplished the work he came to do, he left it to his ministering servants to build up his Church upon himself, as the sure foundation stone; and gave it as his last command that they were to go into all the world, and not only teach and preach the way of salvation, but *baptize all* in the name of the triune God; and there is no other way of admission into his Church.

I think I hear you say, Then, when baptized, we are sure of heaven. Oh, no; Baptism only puts us into a *condition* to receive all spiritual blessings; it does not give them; therefore, in itself, it is not salvation, but a means towards it. It does for us what our Catechism teaches us it does do; it puts us into a position to become members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. But, oh! let us never forget that all these blessings may be forfeited by our after conduct. How many prodigal sons and daughters are there in the family of God who leave their Father's house; and, Esau-like, sell their birth-right for far less than a mess of pottage? How many, who no longer wish for an interest in the Saviour; who deny him, like Peter; who betray him, like Judas, for less than thirty pieces of silver; who crucify him again, like the Jews of old, yea, pierce him afresh by their sins, although living under the full blaze of the meridian splendour of gospel days. Oh! my dear girl, you and I have reason to believe that we were baptized with the Holy Ghost in our infancy, because it is promised to those Christian parents who seek it for their children by earnest supplication, when they dedicate their offspring to God. Yet how much, notwithstanding this, you and I need the preventing grace of God to guide us, the all-atoning blood of Christ to cleanse us from the pollutions which we have contracted during our intercourse with the world, and the daily renovating influences of the Holy Spirit, to carry on the work of grace in our souls. We have forfeited our privileges over and over again, and without this all-sufficient working of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost upon our hearts, we shall be lost for ever. If those, then, who have been admitted into the visible Church of Christ, in God's own appointed way, and really believe they have received every spiritual blessing connected with it, still feel their need of all this, what must those do who have entered into this solemn ceremony with feelings of levity,

and merely conformed to it as a matter of custom for their children. We have spoken only of what the Lord agrees to do for us in Baptism, but we enter into an agreement *with him* also. Although it is a covenant of grace, it requires two parties—God and man. Some may say Christ has done all for us, therefore there remains nothing for us to do. Yes there does—much, very much ; and although it is true that all our obedience, all our works, all our doings, without the blood-shedding of Christ Jesus for the remission of sins, could never have saved us, so entirely impure is our nature, yet, without a due improvement of every talent committed to our stewardship, the death of Christ will not avail *us*. We have as awful threatenings denounced against the breaking of Christ's commands under the New Testament, as we have under the old ; and we have encouragements and promises to excite us to obedience. Adam, in a state of innocence, was yet in a probationary state ; the Christian, under grace, is still but a probationer. He is to be tried here, and judged and rewarded hereafter. " Good works can never save us ; but we shall never be saved without them." However, I shall reserve the vow which is made for us at Baptism, until I write upon Confirmation, as I wish to explain its nature to you, when you are about to take it upon yourself before the other members of the Church. You have long since done it in private, but it becomes us openly to profess our assent to vows made in our name, and recorded in heaven, and which we hope to abide by as long as we live. May you and I not only be members of the Church militant here on earth, but be prepared, by the grace of God, to be true members of the Church triumphant. May this be our blessed lot, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Yours affectionately,

J. S.

LETTER XXIII.  
ON CONFIRMATION.

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*"Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."—Acts viii. 17.*

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MY DEAR ELIZABETH,

Your part of the covenant which was entered into at your baptism, remains now to be considered. A vow was made for you, in your name, by your sponsors, who have bound themselves, by solemn engagement in the presence of God, to have you fully instructed in the nature of that vow, and to see that you confirm it in your own person, when arrived at an age to comprehend its full meaning. How few think at all of this solemn pledge, and of those who do think of it, how few redeem it? If, in after life, you should be solicited to undertake so serious a charge, weigh it well before you enter into it. Ascertain clearly whether you are likely to be opposed by the child's parents or friends, in doing for its eternal welfare what you are exhorted to do. If so, on no consideration pledge yourself to do what will be next to impossible for you to accomplish. Always stipulate, that as you are surety for the training of the child, you will henceforth consider it your duty to see that it takes upon itself the responsibility at a proper age, and you must insist upon performing it. Hearing that you are now about to give your assent to those vows, and in the presence of the congregation to acknowledge that it is not only your bounden duty, but your hearty desire, to keep them steadily to the end of your life, I will now endeavour to explain to you the nature of the covenant entered into in your name at baptism. In congregations where they do not baptize until mature years, confirmation is un-

necessary ; but in churches where they baptize infants, it is absolutely necessary, when at a proper age, not only for their own confirmation in the good ways of the Lord, but for the edification and satisfaction of the elder members, that they should *publicly* ratify their covenant engagements. But if, from the neglect of parents or of sponsors, or from want of opportunity, or because the nature of the ordinance is not understood, confirmation has not been attended to, never advise any advanced person to stay away from other ordinances because they have not partaken of this, but tell them it will be quite as efficacious to *themselves* if they in private join themselves unto the Lord. Where it can be done, it is *decidedly* better to do it *publicly*. First, then, it is necessary that you should thoroughly understand the nature of the vow which you are going now to take upon yourself. It was then, *first*, “that you should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh ; secondly, that you should believe all the articles of the Christian faith ; and thirdly, that you should keep God’s holy will and commandments all the days of your life.” You are not only not to hold any fellowship with Belial, but you are to forsake all his works, that is, sin of every kind ; sins of heart and tongue ; sins of thought, word, and deed ; sins of omission and sins of commission ; in short, you must abstain from the very appearance of evil, by steadfastly refusing to join in any of his deceitful works. Think, my dear girl, how great the enemy is whom you have promised to renounce. He was once an angel of light, and is still possessed of immortal powers. He is very subtle in cheating the people of God into sin ; he has had the experience of nearly six thousand years. During that lengthened period he has been studying the character of man, learning the art of suiting his temptations exactly to the temper and disposition of each. When he finds that the temptation he applies is no bait to the one to whom



he offers it, like a skilful general he manœuvres, till he is satisfied that the weapon will just suit the party attacked. He knows the child of God would shrink from him if he presented himself as an evil spirit, he then assumes the appearance of an angel of light, and sometimes tries to make one believe the sin is too trifling for God to notice it, or at least palliates it by examples around us, and by assuring us, that it was absolutely expedient for us to fall into it. Oh! how powerful is the language of Scripture, when speaking of this our great enemy! Well indeed may he be called our *great adversary*. He has many titles in the Word of God, all shewing strength, cunning, and activity. He is called "a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" the "dragon;" "the old serpent;" "the god of this world;" a *tempter*, a *deceiver*, a *liar*. He tempts us to sin, and then accuses us to our Father; so he is called "the accuser of the brethren." Well might the Apostle say "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities." Eph. vi. 12. How much then do we need an armour? and, thanks be unto God! it is provided; and in the same chapter, from the 13th verse to the 18th, we shall see what it is. Christians do not generally think enough of the powerful enemy they have to contend with in the Devil, or they would be more constant and earnest in their supplications at the Throne of Grace for that *strength*, without which they cannot contend with him for a moment. He has all the intelligence and activity of an angel of light, for he once was one; he has all the malignity and hatred of a fallen spirit; he has all the experience and cunning of the most skilful general. It is such an enemy that you have promised to renounce. Oh! think how unequal the contest. We are weak, ignorant, helpless mortals, with hearts naturally inclined to admit this bitter enemy to a participation in our best affections; we know very little of his artful wiles, therefore are unprepared for his attacks. We must have the enlightening

influence of the Spirit of God to discern his approach, and then, clad in the armour of God, go forth in the strength of the Redeemer, and he shall bring us off more than conquerors. You next promised to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. St John says of the world, that it lieth in wickedness, that is, in the wicked one. Satan is called the "God of this world," surely then it must be sinful even to *desire* the pomps of a world at enmity with our God; how much more to pursue them eagerly, as too many professing Christians do. The world is said to be fast sinking to decay; the time is hastening on when it shall be burnt up, with all the works which are therein. How vain, then, must every pursuit be here, unless it have a tendency towards heaven. Truly vanity, and less than vanity, may be stamped upon all which has no bearing upon eternity. These you have solemnly promised to forsake, and remember, "the love of the world is enmity against God." There is a city above, its name is Zion, and the Lord is the King thereof. Set all your affections on that, and aspire to be a noble citizen there. Covet not the riches, the honours, the pleasures of this vain and transitory world, but covet ardently the best gifts from your Saviour, that you may be qualified to enjoy all the honours, the inexhaustible riches, and the pleasures which are at God's right hand for ever. The Christian, in one sense, is most ambitious: he scorns to build his happiness on the applause of a giddy multitude, but seeks it in the approving smile of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. "He uses the world as not abusing it;" and passes through it as a stranger and a pilgrim, with his eye intently fixed upon the heavenly Jerusalem, whither he is journeying, alike indifferent to the sneers of an unbelieving world, and the still more dangerous snare, the commendations of false professors. He compares not himself even with his beloved companions, but, measuring himself by the standard of Jehovah's word, he presses forward

towards the mark for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. If a merchant were called to the sea shore to prevent the sinking of the vessel which contained all his hopes of future prosperity, think you he would stop to pick up shells? We should pronounce him mad if he did. Yet such is the Christian who dares to trifle with the baubles of this world. Secondly, you promised to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and these are briefly summed up for you in your creed, which you repeat each Sunday. To *repeat* these words is one thing, to *believe* them is another. It implies a firm and unshaken confidence in God, not only as your Maker, but as your Father, therefore at all times claiming from you reverence and obedience; a deep-rooted conviction of the glorious work of redemption, wrought out for you by Jesus Christ, and therefore demanding the dedication of body, soul, and spirit to him who has redeemed you, as a test of your love and dependence upon him alone for your salvation; a full persuasion that, without the gracious influence of God the Holy Ghost, the work of grace cannot be carried on in your heart, therefore requiring you to seek more earnestly for this in-dwelling of the Spirit, to nourish up your soul unto everlasting life, than for your daily food; a belief in one universal Church of Christ, of which you must desire to be a living member, a lively stone, built up a spiritual temple for the habitation of God; a belief in the communion of saints; and oh! what a comforting belief, as it regards you and me, that we may enjoy communion at a throne of grace, though many miles distant. How sweet to think the family of God, the saints in Christ, are like one army; part of the host have obtained possession of the heavenly Canaan, whilst the other part are coming on, fighting under the banners of the same Captain, and holding, by means of the in-dwelling of the same Spirit, communion with all that have gone before, and all that are travelling the same way. Pray that you

may enjoy this communion. A belief in the forgiveness of sins, in the resurrection of the body, and in life everlasting. Remember what is implied in all this. You have promised to *believe* it all, and unless you have faith you know you cannot be saved. "Whosoever believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." A firm conviction in the understanding is one thing, and a living acting principle of faith in the soul is another, and without this you cannot be saved. Earnestly pray, then, for this faith, which your Saviour is exalted up on high to bestow upon all who seek it. Thirdly, you promised to "keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life." This of course is your bounden duty, but your catechism teaches you that you cannot do this without his especial grace, therefore learn at all times to seek for it diligently by prayer. The law of God is the rule by which you are to guide your steps and regulate your conduct; and the will of God is to be done in you and by you. This, my dear girl, is briefly, and but briefly, the vow which you are now solemnly, in the presence of the church on earth and the church in heaven, to take upon yourself. "Wherefore seeing, then, that you are encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset you, and run with patience the race which is set before you." Heb. xii. 1. That you and I may so run that we may obtain, is the earnest prayer of

Your friend and well-wisher,

J. S.

**LETTER XXIV.**  
**ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.**

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“*This do in remembrance of me.*”—Luke xxii. 19.  
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MY DEAR SARAH,

It is with feelings of increased interest for your everlasting welfare that I now address you. You have requested me to write to you concerning the Sacrament, and most cheerfully do I comply with that request. But as some preparation of mind, and close examination of the heart and conduct is requisite previous to your becoming a communicant, I should wish it deferred a little. Whitsunday will soon arrive, and then, perhaps, we may enjoy a pentecostal feast together. You will, perhaps, be told by some that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is nothing more than a mere form and ceremony, and that it is totally indifferent whether you partake of it or not, provided you feed on him by faith. This is a dangerous as well as a false doctrine. Would these very persons, who tell us it is a matter of indifference, say that it is a matter of indifference whether you perform the dying request of your best friend? No; they would call you ungrateful, and brand your name with every disgraceful epithet, if you did not attend to every minutæ of it. How much more then do they deserve reproach who neglect the *dying* request of one who is not only their best friend through life, but even in death, and who has left us these pledges of his unbounded and never-changing love, and who has commanded us to keep up the remembrance of his precious death. He hath said, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” “I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. Whoso

eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last." " Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Take the bread and take the cup, as emblems of my body and my blood, and " this do in remembrance of me." Can any Christian who really believes that these are the words of his Redeemer, for one moment hesitate upon the propriety of obeying such a plain and simple command, which is as binding upon us, and indeed more so, than any one of the precepts of the Gospel? You will hear some say that they dare not become communicants for fear they should eat and drink their own damnation; but this is an erroneous idea, a groundless fear. At the time the Apostle wrote to the Corinthians, they were making a riotous feast of this sacred ceremony, and totally perverting the object for which it was instituted. They all ate and drank as much as they could, and were anxious to be served first, not discerning the Lord's body, not lifting up one pious ejaculation to their Saviour, and, perhaps, forgetting altogether for what they were assembled. In the present state of discipline in the Church of Christ, such a scene can never occur; therefore, as it regards the apostolic expression, it is a groundless fear. Nevertheless, that some may take it to their own destruction is very evident. You will, perhaps, be told that if you come to the Lord's table, you must become very serious. By this they mean melancholy and dull; and therefore they will advise you to wait until you are older, and able to renounce the world, and all its amusements. Your profession of attachment to Christ is intended to make you happy, not miserable; and as to renouncing the world, and seeking your pleasure in religion, it is as much required of you as a Christian before you come to the table as after. It is not intended that you should lead a monastic life, when you become a communicant. Christ sent not his disciples into convents, but into the world, to

use it, as not abusing it, in order that the world might see the beauty of holiness, and be led by their example to walk in that narrow way which can give real happiness here, and which can alone lead to the heavenly city. The Christian is not to live a life of passive faith, but to be willing to spend and to be spent for Christ, and this can only be done by living in the world, and sharing in its duties. The sincere Christian is the only person who has no cause for sorrow, (except on account of sin,) as he knows that though the gates of Paradise were once shut against him, they are now opened by his Saviour, and that after a life spent in his service, he will, through his all-atoning merits, be admitted to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Many people complain that they are not prepared to receive the Sacrament. But if they do not think themselves prepared to eat of that bread, and to drink of that cup, how can they be prepared to die, and partake of the heavenly feast above? If we stay until we are fit to partake of these sacred elements, we shall never obey the command, as we shall never be fit in ourselves. The only fitness the Saviour requires is to feel that our sinfulness is so wrought into our very nature that nothing short of his precious blood can possibly wash it out; to feel that without his all-prevailing intercession our best services will be rejected; to feel that without the influence of his blessed Spirit, even this our bounden duty will be a mere lifeless ceremony; and that unless he take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us, our best affections will be but cold and languid. It is, in short, to come as miserable sinners, for pardon; as weak and ignorant, for strength and wisdom; as lost and undone, to be justified and saved; as empty and having nothing, to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, and to receive out of his fulness all needful grace. We do not believe that we eat the *real* body and blood of Christ, but yet we believe that Christ blessing these his creatures for the nourishment of our souls, can make them

as efficacious to us as if we really partook of his flesh. It is the Spirit and not the flesh that quickeneth. Come, then, my dear girl, to the table of your Lord, not only grateful to commemorate what he has done and suffered for you, but to obtain fresh strength from his body and blood, to walk in newness of life; for they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up as eagles, they shall run and not be weary." It is a strengthening ordinance, and is intended, by bringing powerfully to our recollection the dying love of a dying Saviour, to kindle an ardent love to him for his unbounded love to us, to raise our languid affections, to renew the dedication of ourselves to his service, to remember our baptismal covenant engagements to him; in short, for his members to obtain grace from their living Head, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Oh! that you may, with lively gratitude, feed on him and look unto him as the author and finisher of your faith, and be made a partaker of all the inestimable benefits which he died to procure for you; and oh! that you and I, with all his living members, may be sharers in that gracious promise, that "whosoever eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood, shall be raised up at the last day," is the earnest prayer of

Your unaltered friend

J. S.

## LETTER XXV.

TO ONE ON HER MARRIAGE.

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*"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."*—2 Cor. vi. 14.

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MY DEAR CECILIA,

You are now entering upon a new scene of existence, where new duties will be required of you. The only



relative duties you have hitherto had to perform, have been those of child, sister, friend; but those of wife and mistress, and perhaps, ere long, of mother, will burst upon you. Now, as you know we can perform no duty acceptably without divine assistance and direction, I exhort you daily to consult your map, in which is described the country to which you are hastening, the compass that is to guide you on your way, 'and the chart by which you are to steer your course to your heavenly inheritance. There the bye-paths which lead you out of the way are pointed out to you; there land-marks are set up, by which you may avoid the shoals which cause so many to make shipwreck of faith. And oh! my dear girl, may God of his infinite mercy, open the eyes of your understanding, that you may see wondrous things out of his law, and by it be enabled to guide your little bark to the haven where you would be. May the Holy Spirit be the rudder to steer you, Jesus the captain to direct you, your Father at the helm, to supply your every necessity in your heaven-bound voyage. May that Spirit so influence you, that you may receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to make you wise unto salvation. The Apostle Paul has given you full directions how to act in the several relations of life; he has, in his Epistles, dictated by the Spirit of God, pointed out the duty of husband and wife, master and mistress, parent and child, and a strict adherence to these precepts will promote your own happiness, and evidence a faith working by love. Remember that, as you and your dear — are now become one flesh, you should endeavour to have but one mind and one interest, yet, acknowledging him to be the head, pay him the obedience and respect due to him in all disputed points, except where principle is concerned. If his commands interfere with your duty to your Maker, be firm in your resistance; but in all other cases give in to his opinion. **Make the sacrifice of your own temporal ease and comfort**

if required. I trust your partner will never require this, but, knowing that you are the weaker vessel, may he shew all tenderness and compassion towards you. I do not doubt, from the natural amiability of your disposition, that you will strive, by all the means in your power, to make his fire-side comfortable, by those thousand little nameless attentions which a wife alone can pay; and I am quite sure it is in every one's power to make their home happy, by the cultivation of every Christian grace and virtue. Be content with being mistress, never aim at being master. Woe be to those silly women, who unite themselves in such close bonds to a man of whom they are ashamed, and over whom they must exercise controul. Ever treat your dear — with marked respect, and your household will do the same. Never let unimportant matters produce a contest, but check the first beginnings of unnecessary interference with his plans. When consulted, give your opinion modestly and firmly. You, of course, as a follower of Christ in sincerity, are fully satisfied of the Christian principles of your beloved one. I feel assured you would not give your affections to one, who did not love Him whom your soul desires, as the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. You have known too many instances of the fatal and deceitful hope, entertained by some misguided females, that their husbands will be converted by their pious examples. Alas! it too often proves the contrary. The fond and yielding wife is soon laughed out of the little show of religion she had before; I say show, for she has proved by her conduct she was not sincere. No, if persuasive eloquence is lost upon them before they have obtained the object of their wishes, assuredly afterwards they will turn a deaf ear. If the *lover* will not yield to earnest entreaties, most certainly the *husband* will not; but perhaps may even expect submission to his authority even in religious matters. The Apostolic injunctions on this head are very

clear, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers;" and then the pointed question is put, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" These are solemn questions to a believer who shall dare to unite herself with an unrighteous son of Belial. When two are united who are both worldly, if one of the party afterwards become a Christian, there is a perhaps, not a *promise*, that the believing one may, by consistent conduct, win over the unbelieving partner. There is not even such a perhaps as this to the Christian, but an express command to marry in the Lord, and be assured, none other will be blest. No prospect of enjoyment of connubial affection during time, must make us forget eternity; no scheme of worldly aggrandizement, must make us lose sight of our heavenly inheritance. What folly, to set our affections on one we have reason to believe we must part from at death. How awful the thought, to be parted for ever from him with whom our very heart-strings seem bound up; and yet, what better prospect have they who marry only for time? You, my dear friend, may love each other with an intensity which none but Christians are warranted to do, because all other attachments, except those made in Christ, partake of the fleshly nature, and will with it decay; yours will not only strengthen through time, but will rise higher and higher through the countless ages of eternity, as you exultingly admire in each other the growing reflection of the glorious image of your Lord and Master. Happy, thrice happy, my dear girl, are you in making such a choice. You can be help-meets to each other in carrying on any Christian work; and my ardent wishes and my fervent prayers shall ascend to the God of all grace that he will give you *both* an abundant blessing, and pour down on your part of the vineyard of the dew of Her-

mon. May every hymeneal blessing attend you, and oh! dear Cecilia, may you and your beloved one have the joyful prospect of spending an eternity together, around the throne of glory; and may you at last be enabled to present the children whom God shall graciously give you, saying, "Lord here we are, and the children whom thou hast given unto us." To this end, you will need divine strength, to enable you to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Pray, therefore, for God the Holy Ghost to descend into your heart, and give you strength to subdue every evil inclination and temper, and enable you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, and make your heart a temple worthy of the living God. Should God in his infinite wisdom see fit to afflict you with misfortunes, may you look with a steady eye upon the garden of Gethsemane, and the cross of Calvary, and remembering what your beloved Lord suffered there for you, may you think lightly of your afflictions, which are but for a moment, and bow with pious resignation and adoring love. Look through His merits and sufferings to that inheritance which he has purchased for you. Should he bless you with prosperity, remember you are only a steward, and must render a faithful account at the day of judgment for every talent committed to you. Live in daily anticipation of the time when seated with your husband and family round the throne of mercy, you will worship together with unspeakable joy, without any interruption from sorrow, and without a fear of separation. And now may God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost continually abide with you; may you be blest with all temporal and spiritual blessings; may your husband be to you a cheerful and beloved companion, a devoted and faithful friend, a kind and tender protector, and may you be to him a real help-meet on his way to heaven; may your children spring up like olive-branches around your table, a blessing to themselves and others;

may you be blest in your basket and in your store, in your going out and your coming in ; and oh ! may the God of ordinances bless every stream to you which flows through his temple on earth, until you come to that glorious temple above, where ordinances will not be needed, for you will then drink at the pure fountain which is at God's right hand for evermore.

Yours in sincerity,

J. S.

COMPANIONS through this wilderness,  
 With Jesus at your side,  
 To him you'll look at every step,  
 And take him for your guide.

Companions o'er life's boisterous sea,  
 You'll bear each other's woes,  
 And sheltered by united love,  
 From every wind that blows.

Companions in domestic scenes,  
 May each with other bear ;  
 May children crown your happy lot,  
 And sweeten all your care.

Companions o'er life's thorny path,  
 May Jesus still be nigh,  
 And draw you with the cords of love,  
 And fix your thoughts on high.

Companions through the night of time,  
 You'll journey on your way ;  
 You're reaching forth to Canaan's land,  
 In hopes of endless day.

Companions, thus, in weal and woe,  
 Till all your journey's o'er,  
 Together will you sing and mourn,  
 Till griefs are known no more.

Companions to the house of God,  
 With willing feet you'll go;  
 And worship with united hearts,  
 Whilst you remain below.

Companions through the shades of death,  
 United even there,  
 May nothing even then divide  
 Your mutual hope and fear.

Companions at the judgment seat,  
 You'll put your Saviour on;  
 And, safe beneath his sheltring wings,  
 Receive the crown he won.

Companions then through endless years,  
 You'll view your Maker's face;  
 And, drinking at the fount of life,  
 Your heav'nly way you'll trace.

Companions then through endless years,  
 You'll tune your harps to praise,  
 And with the whole angelic host,  
 A mighty song you'll raise.

Companions then through endless years,  
 You'll count your mercies o'er,  
 And bless the hand that brought you safe,  
 Where joys are evermore. J. S.

## LETTER XXVI.

### ON DEATH.

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*"For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living."—Job xxx. 23.*

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MY DEAR ELIZABETH,

This is, indeed, a solemn subject upon which you have requested me to write. You know that death,

temporal, spiritual and eternal, passed upon all mankind in consequence of Adam's sin, who was the head of all the human race. This was pronounced as a curse, and truly it is an awful one, and were there no remedy, we should at once sink down in despair ; but, thanks be unto our adorable Immanuel, if we inherit nothing but sin and death from the first Adam, we are made partakers of righteousness and life from our second Adam. Temporal death *will* come upon all, spiritual death is the portion of all, and eternal death must be the doom of all who are not united by a living faith unto our second head. We will speak first of temporal death, and in order to think seriously upon this subject, let us reflect upon the number that have been mingled with their kindred dust since we can remember, and think with gratitude upon the goodness of our Maker, in preserving us through so many years, when destruction encompassed us on every side ; but let not this make us presumptuous, for even this moment may be our last. How many, who were as young and healthy as ourselves, were here yesterday and gone to-day. How awful to depart this life so suddenly, and to some so unprepared. And may not we be called when we least expect it. Oh ! let us then be always ready : like the wise virgins, let us have our lamps trimmed, that whether our summons come in the morning, or in the evening, or at midnight, we may be ready to answer it with joy. Never allow your temporal to interrupt your spiritual concerns, but give yourself time to reflect upon your past life, and to consider your state for futurity. Picture to your imagination the difference between the death-bed of the sinner and of the righteous man. The death-bed of the sinner is a most awful subject : follow him to his bed, where he is racking his brain to find out the least hope of his salvation ; he sees, too late, that he has fixed his mind upon worldly pleasures, that they are all vanished, and that he has nothing left to console him. His friends see

with despair that his soul is lost. To such a man, death indeed is fraught with everything that can serve to heighten the gloom of that solemn hour. He looks back upon a life devoted to the enjoyment of those sensual gratifications which are now forsaking him for ever; he reflects, that having lived without God in the world, he has no friend beyond the grave—that having refused to look up to Christ as his Saviour, he has none to plead his cause. No hand will be stretched out to snatch him from the devouring mouth of hell: he looks with agonizing fear towards the future; and oh! could we view him in another region—see him, with all the horrors of a guilty conscience, pouring out his soul in bitter lamentations against himself and his God, we should shrink from the appalling sight, and tremble at our own state. How great a contrast is the death of the Christian! Follow him to his bed: there we see calm resignation and religious fortitude painted on his countenance; already he sees his God; he sees angels hovering around his bed, waiting to convey his soul to his heavenly mansion; he feels that there is a place prepared for him in heaven; he feels the power of his Saviour's grace upon his soul, he knows that he is one of his chosen people. With a humble confidence in his merits, and a lively faith in God's mercy, he hopes to attain to that everlasting felicity which is prepared for all them that love and fear the Lord. Death, to him, has no terrors, the sting was lost in his Saviour's side; he knows it is only a passage from this troublesome world to a state of endless rest and happiness. When the soul is about to quit for ever this tenement of clay, which it has inhabited so long, to bid a final adieu to all the delightful connections it has formed here below, and begins to look forward with trembling awe and inexpressible apprehension towards its future destiny, then it is that those pleasures which have been sought with so much avidity, will vanish from the view. The rank to which it so ardently aspired, the wealth which



it coveted so earnestly, will then appear as aërial nothings ; they will not avail in that land to which he is journeying. There there will be no respect of persons ; there the lowest menial, who performs his duty in the station which Providence has allotted him, will be received with higher honours, by the merciful Judge of all mankind, than even a king who abuses his authority. It is, indeed, a fearful thing to die, even to the good : what, then, must it be to the wicked ? Rely upon it, my dear girl, nothing but a well-grounded hope in the merits of your Redeemer, and the love of your heavenly Father, can soften the terrors of that awful moment. May you so live and regulate your life, that you may avoid the danger into which the wicked must inevitably fall, and enjoy the happiness that awaits the Christian. May you form good resolutions, and by the grace of God working in your heart, be enabled to keep them to the end. Let us say with the Psalmist, "so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Psalm xc. 12. That we may have nothing to do when our messenger arrives, but say "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," is the earnest wish and prayer of  
 Your affectionate friend,

J. S.

#### LETTER XXVII.

ON THE EVER-TO-BE-LAMENTED DEATH OF THE BE-  
 LOVED FRIEND AND PASTOR OF HIS FLOCK, THE  
 REV. J. G. BREAY.

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*"He being dead, yet speaketh."*—Heb. xi. 4.

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MY DEAR ELIZABETH,

You have heard of our fiery trial, our heart-  
 rending affliction, in the loss of our dear and ever-to-be-

lamented friend and pastor, Mr. Breay. I can scarcely, even at this distant period, trust myself to speak of it; the feelings of intense anxiety which preceded the tremendous blow are just as keen and fresh as ever in my mind. It is impossible to describe the gloom which hung over our beloved town during that awful week, in which he lay on a bed of sickness. All business in the flock seemed suspended; yea, every thought turned on the all-engrossing subject. Every usual salutation was forgotten, and friend met friend without any enquiry, save, "Well, have you heard how he is within the last half hour?" Every face gathered blackness as the tidings flew,—"No better." When the least ray of hope could be given, streaming tears, and bursts of gratitude to the favoured messenger of the welcome news, shewed what was going on in every breast. Some amongst us forgot our accustomed meal; nay, sleep departed from our eyes, and any thing that might divert our attention but for a moment from the still deepening suspense, seemed quite an intrusion upon something sacred. Well do I remember one ecstatic moment. We had almost sat down in despair, when one came in suddenly and gave us hope. I ran to communicate the joyful news; I could only pronounce the word "better," and fainted. A bulletin was at length issued every half hour, to satisfy the numerous enquirers, and long and wearisome did the time seem when the last was known before the next arrived; never surely did the illness of any individual, not even of a sovereign, cause greater excitement in any town. The welfare of our Zion was the theme of every tongue, and we indeed felt that judgment was beginning at the House of God. The saint, the false professor, the worldling, the dissenter, the churchman, the old, the young, the rich, the poor, the learned and the unlearned, all united their sympathies upon one common object, and bodies of men congregated together to beseech the God of heaven to restore him. The clergy met in his own vestry, to besiege,

as it were, the Throne of Grace on his behalf. The decree of Heaven had, however, gone forth, and none could stay its progress. At length the stunning blow came; it was, I have no doubt, a relief to many; the reality was more bearable than the agonizing suspense. Joy is much harder to bear than sorrow, and I do think that the overflowings of gratitude to the Redeemer would have been of such an overwhelming character, that the people would scarcely have been able to bear up under it. But oh! how shall I speak of the beloved flock! If the anxiety was so deep amongst those who knew him only by report, what pen can at all do justice to their feelings? Can you imagine children hearing of their father doing some strange deed, which seems to them so out of his usual way of acting, that they are totally unable to account for it? They see no need for it, and no wisdom in it; yet, accustomed to acquiesce in all his dealings, they sit in mute astonishment, waiting the developement of the seeming mystery in breathless anxiety. Thus sat the flock during that ever memorable week. We went to the Sunday school, but could not speak; we were watching the chastening hand of our Father! We went to the house of God, but every subject seemed unsuited to our feelings, except "Clouds and darkness are round about him." We knew not whether he was correcting in love or in judgment, and every tongue confessed "His ways are past finding out." Why our beloved minister should not be able to go in and out among us, we knew not; and the dread that he had ministered to us for the last time absorbed every other feeling. Alas! when this was realized, and the tolling of the bell announced to the flock, in every part of the town, that their earthly shepherd was no more, the panic was truly appalling; it seemed as if some mighty convulsion of nature had swept away all that was dear to them. One of our beloved teachers said, "We have been on a most delightful voyage for the last seven years, and dreamt not

of danger, but now we have suffered shipwreck, and oh ! what a wreck !” Ah ! my dear Elizabeth, if those who knew him only in the pulpit esteemed him so highly, how dear, think you, must he have been to those labourers who saw so much more of the loveliness of his character ? It is always a privilege to be able to do anything for our Master in any part of his vineyard, but oh ! how the privilege was enhanced by being allowed to labour with our beloved Mrs. Breay as our superintendant, and that *perfect* man of God as our overseer and ruler. When you have read the memoir, you will agree that the term perfect is not too strong. How often have I wished that you could take a peep at our schools, with our thousand children and our hundred teachers. The sweet encouragement that awaited the pilgrim when ready to faint, made him run on again with fresh alacrity ; the languid inefficient labourer felt the spur so effectually, and yet so gently applied, that resistance was vain, and he must yield himself a willing servant to his Master ; the over-zealous, injudicious workman felt the bridle, and so powerfully was he held in, with such consummate wisdom and prudence, that never were a band of labourers so orderly and so sober-minded. They were so filled with love to Christ, as to make them delight in their labours of love, yet without any enthusiastic feelings. They sought first to bring every thought into sweet captivity to the obedience of Christ, and then they willingly obeyed those who had the rule over them ; and oh ! how worthy were they of all our obedience and all our love ! But in *all places* was *he welcomed* as a minister from the courts of Heaven, because the image of his Master shone so brightly in him. To see him and hear his voice, to have his hearty shake of the hand, and above all, if he pronounced his usual benediction, “ God bless you,” was recompense enough for even a day of intense anxiety. What, think you, then must have been the joy of those who had him sometimes as a guest in their houses,—who heard his cheerful, animating, spi-

ritual and heavenly conversation? Above all, happy, thrice happy was that person who was privileged to attend the meetings in his own house. *Never, no never* can those delightful moments be forgotten, nor is it probable that they will ever be realized again on earth; we do not expect it. We do not, indeed, limit the power of the Almighty to raise up another as richly endowed with the graces of the Spirit as he was; but it is not likely, in *our* day, that *we* shall again meet one in whom *decision* and *love* were so happily and so sweetly blended. Such an one only crosses our path now and then, to shew us, in every generation, the beauty of that holiness which God requires in every one of us, that we may be excited to strive after it. The private interviews which I have had with him, oh! how fresh some of them are in my memory. His sainted image now comes before me in all his loveliness, and I can fancy myself listening to his gentle admonitions. Before it was decided that he should take upon him the charge of Christ Church, he came to reside in Birmingham three months, and during that time you know some little of our anxiety that it would please God to call him to settle amongst us. We perceived that he had in all things a single eye to the glory of God. He had been speaking one day of the deep trial it would be to him to leave Haddenham: when he went to prayer, we were struck with the entire submission to the will of God which breathed throughout it; he implored most fervently to be guided aright, and to have grace given him to sacrifice every *personal feeling* on the *altar of duty*. I am convinced that nothing but a prospect of a larger field of usefulness in his Master's service, could have induced him to take Christ Church. It pleased, you know, the Great Head of the Church to give us this faithful pastor, and nothing could exceed our joy the first Sabbath he settled amongst us. In the afternoon he came to the Sunday School, with our beloved Mrs. Breay, saying, "Here we

are, your father and mother, come to take the charge of you." We ran to welcome them with such enthusiastic joy as showed too much dependance on the creature, and, with the kindness of a father and the dignity of a minister, he repulsed us, saying, "We, your servants, for Jesu's sake." Well do we remember this meeting, and in the same spot, at the expiration of seven years, have we now heard from his hallowed lips the parting assurance that "he had found *him a blessed master to serve!*" Of this you will find an account in the Memoir. You know, from many cases which I have stated to you, how skilfully he administered to a diseased mind. Kind and tender physician! when I come to a sick-bed again, who shall expatiate on redeeming love, until the soothing accents of the blessed Gospel bring in a hope which is full of glory and full of immortality? Who shall point the disordered, sin-sick soul to the cross on Calvary in such animating strains, with such consummate wisdom, and such unerring judgment? He had the exact word suited to every case: the remedy was applied in prayer, and it never failed. How well did he understand the human heart, and how sweetly did he apply the word in season. I think you will be much pleased with a few anecdotes to prove how apt, how ready were his replies to all you stated. Once complaining that I had not time to digest what I heard, he answered, "Take care that you do not keep the vineyard of others and neglect your own; do not be a finger-post on the road to heaven, pointing the way to others and standing still yourself." Another time, being wearied because I saw no fruit in my class, he answered, "This is *distrusting* your Master, who hath said that 'your labour shall *not* be in vain.' Success does not depend on you, it is a work of faith. You shall see just as much fruit as is good for you; more would do you harm. Your part is to labour, and God will give the increase *when* and *how* he pleases." When I wanted rest,

he would say, "Sometimes when I feel faint and long for quiet in my study, I hear a voice behind me saying, 'Touch me not *now*, now is the time to work for me. Go tell the brethren the glad tidings, and communicate to others the blessings of salvation; *by and bye* you shall enter into that *rest* that remaineth for the people of God.'" You know my ardent love of music, and nothing could have afforded me more pleasure at one time than a musical festival; but oh! how sweetly, how affectionately, and powerfully did he convince me of the inconsistency of a professing Christian attending such places, and when I promised, upon principle, not to go, I am sure it rejoiced his holy heart, for every member of his flock was watched with a shepherd's eye, and nothing was so great a source of comfort to him as to reclaim them from their wanderings. I cannot repeat all the apt things he said on this subject, but there is a striking one in the note at the end of the Sermons. Once, a friend mentioning something which she thought would be a great loss to him, he immediately replied, "Well, there have been such sweet streams flowing around Christ Church, supplying my *every want*, that I will not think of *that*, great as it may seem." He had an advantageous offer, but his love to dear Christ Church was so great, that he wished at once to decline it; he laid it, however, before the Lord, and he said to a friend of mine, that his *answer* was, "You do *my* work, and I will take care of your children;" and the wisdom of this decision is now evident, although his friends urged him to a contrary course, on account of its temporal advantage. He was, indeed, guided in all things by Infinite Wisdom itself. You know he used to call myself and sister, Martha and Mary: on one occasion I was very ill from excitement and over-anxiety, and when he came to see me, he said, "Ah! Martha, Martha, anxious again." I said, "I am quite content to be called Martha." "Why?" he said. "Because Jesus loved

Martha." He immediately answered, "So he did, but he *rebuked* her." I will tell you a few other anecdotes, in order to illustrate how eminently he possessed the happy art of making the most unpropitious events wear a smiling aspect; his heavenly mind generally extracted from them some spiritual lesson. The first Sunday the new school rooms were opened, the weather was most unfavourable; at the time for assembling, it poured a torrent, and nothing was to be seen but melancholy faces, nothing heard but *peevish fretfulness* at the change: some saying, "Should we not have been better in the old place?" others asking, "How will it be possible to get these children across the road during the storm? Oh! surely it was more comfortable when the children were already in church, without any more trouble." The countenances of the children even were quite woeful. His entrance into the schools at all times was like a sudden burst of sunshine; and the electric rise of the teachers, exclaiming, "Here's dear Mr. Breay," echoed by the children, "Oh! here's Mr. Breay," sent joy to every heart and smiles to every face; but *this day*, every eye, as it caught *his sunny face*, seemed to say, "Do not *you* think it most unfortunate?" He ascended the platform, exclaiming, in his usual happy way, "See, dear children, here's a lovely shower, do you not wish that God would this day pour his grace into your hearts, just as he is pouring down the rain? Pray that he may do so, and then what a blessed day this will be." Then turning to the teachers, he said, "Let us, my friends, instead of viewing the day as unfavourable, take this torrent as a *happy omen* that our adorable Master is about to crown your efforts in these rooms with his divine blessing; that the word of life which is dispensed here, shall not return unto you void, but shall come down in showers of fruitfulness on the hearts of the children, like dew upon the mown grass. Then, if we get God's blessing, all shall be well.



Cheer up, then, and view this as an earnest of the coming blessing." The scene was immediately changed, it is impossible to describe it; his attractive cheerfulness was communicated to all around him, and the heavy rain was from that time considered as the most *fortunate event*. This is only one instance; but how many times, when harassed by perplexing cares, I have said, "Is it not distressing?" his delightful cheering conversation has put them all to flight, and I have returned, wondering how my trouble had sunk into such a trifle, and astonished how I could, for a moment, have suffered any uneasiness about it. An eclipse of the sun happened one Sunday, just as the children were beginning school: the younger ones were much alarmed at the increasing darkness. He assembled boys and girls together in the church, and oh! what a sweet spiritual lesson did he draw from the passing event. He asked the elder ones the cause of the eclipse: they replied that it was the moon passing between the sun and the earth, and hiding the sun from us. "Right, my children, and instead of going out, as you desired to do, to look at this eclipse in the kingdom of nature, I would much rather that you should look to-day at something in the kingdom of grace, very much like this. What is the dark thing which comes between your souls and the Saviour?" "Sin, Sir," was the reply. "Ah! my children, sin is the hateful thing which prevents the beams of the Sun of Righteousness from shining into the soul, and then we suffer an eclipse, and all is dark within. Pray, then, that the dear Redeemer would take away all your sins and shine into your hearts, and then all will be light. You may now return to your lessons, you see it is becoming lighter, because the dark body which hid the sun is passing over. How sad it would have been had it stayed there; but still more dreadful will it be if unpardoned sin remains on your hearts." Once I had grieved him much, lest the cause of religion should suffer on my account,

and never, no never, will the wisdom displayed on that occasion, be forgotten by me. Although I know that I have been very wayward, and have often given him trouble, yet passing sweet have some of the hours been which we have spent together. Who will ever forget the teachers' meetings? and who shall describe them? They were anticipated for weeks, and the time was almost counted until they came round again. The last at which I was privileged to be present, seemed to surpass all the others. Whilst we were working, he read "Old Humphrey's Willow Pattern," and in order to make it more interesting, dishes were sent for, that we might have the representation before us; but oh! his own spiritual remarks, upon it, how valuable! I tell you this to account for my "Reversing the Pattern," of which I have sent you a copy. I took the idea from his more elevated views, and from a hint thrown out by our beloved Mrs. Breay, that she did not like the pilgrims turning their backs on Zion. Who that was present can forget that evening? Many other things were read. At the time for putting by the work he exclaimed, "Well, this has been a delightful evening, and I hope we have all got good from it; but now for the most delightful part of it, now for the reading of God's blessed book, all other reading sinks into nothing before it." Oh! could the scoffer, the infidel, the formalist, have seen the bright beam which lighted up his heavenly face, and the hallowed yet cheerful solemnity that pervaded that circle where love reigned, and knit heart to heart, surely they would have exclaimed, "True religion is here; all her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Happy by-gone days! They were too sunny to last: frailty is written on every earthly good. But whilst they lasted, did we rightly esteem them, and did we profit by them? Alas! how true is it, that we know not the true value of any blessing, until we have lost it. You have wished to have some account of the day of

the funeral. Ah! who that witnessed *that*, can let it escape from their memory? Truly might it be said, "The priests of Zion sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and are in bitterness, and the comforter that should have relieved their souls was far away." The Lamentations of Jeremiah seemed, indeed, the only part of the Word of God suitable for us at that moment, "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel!" "The virgins of Jerusalem hung down their heads to the ground, for their breach was great like the sea. Who can heal thee?" We felt at that moment, that we were the people that had "seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." The recollection of our crying in earnest supplications came across us, and every mind seemed enquiring, Why are we witnessing such a scene as this? Why? because "He shutteth out our prayer; he has covered himself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through." "Oh! how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! The stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street." They assembled to witness the mournful procession from every congregation, and exclaimed as it passed, "The precious son of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how is he now esteemed as an earthen pitcher, the work of the hands of the potter." Oh! deep, humiliating lesson! surely, if any had escaped crumbling to pieces, he had done so. Lovely vessel, how richly wast thou adorned! "They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets, the elders have ceased from the gates, the young men from their music, the joy of our heart is ceased, our joy is turned into mourning, the crown is fallen from our heads; woe unto us, for we have sinned!" Yes, there it comes; we have *indeed* sinned, and this heart-rending scene confirms the truth that God is angry—the shepherd is smitten, and the flock are scattered. The exclamation over his grave, by the clergy, "Alas, my brother!" will never be forgotten;

it seemed to say, "The flock are accountable for this." Dear Mrs. Breay had said to me a few Sundays previous, upon some warm expressions of attachment, "Hold us looser, or you will lose us." Our very existence seemed bound up in them; notwithstanding, I cannot see the sin in this which some would have us see, as I am convinced we loved them both only for the image of the Redeemer that shone so brightly in them; and just in proportion to the strength of our attachment would have been our dislike, had they done anything inconsistent with their profession. Dear man of God! I loved thee much for thine own sake, but oh! how much more for thy Master's sake! They who obeyed not his doctrine are the guilty party. How I trembled for them, and for myself, who obeyed it not as I ought, when he preached the ever-memorable sermon, "Take heed how ye hear!" The next morning, speaking to our beloved Mrs. Breay on the fidelity of that heart-stirring sermon, I remember saying, "Rather let the *candlestick go*, than that we should sit hardened under such preaching." How little did I think what I was saying in the ears of Him who knows the secret desires of every heart. A presentiment that we *one* and *all* deserved to lose the candlestick made me tremble, and gladly would I have recalled the words; but deep conviction at the moment, of the awful responsibility of sitting unmoved, extorted them from me. The solemn, affectionate, and earnest warnings of our faithful pastor will assuredly rise up in judgment against many at the last great day. Pray for *me*, my dear Elizabeth! that they may not *condemn me*. Never for a moment would he lower his standard, or come down to the worldly opinions of any, however near or dear. "I have a great work to do, and I cannot come down," seemed constantly on his mind. Oh! may I have grace given me to follow him, as he followed Christ. You have often heard me speak of his preaching, but much do I regret that you never had an opportunity of hearing

him, as nothing can give you an adequate idea of it, not even the slight sketches of his sermons which are published. The sum and substance of it was Christ and him crucified. He was the Alpha and Omega, and the centre of all he said and did. There was sweetly blended in his manner and style, all the holy boldness of an Elijah, all the seriousness of a John the Baptist, all the eloquence of a Paul, and all the persuasion, zeal and love, that ever dwelt in all or any of the first preachers of the Gospel. Why, oh why! in the midst of his usefulness was he cut down? again and again, asks the beating heart. The only answer is, "What thou knowest not *now*, thou shalt know hereafter." Gracious promise! In child-like submission will we wait thine own time, Heavenly Father, for the development of thy mysterious dealings with us. We are indeed quite unable to fathom this mystery of mysteries; and therefore we can only with streaming eyes lift up our aching hearts to heaven, and cry, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." We now bow in humble resignation, assured that as it regards himself, all *is well*, and as it regards the flock, all *shall be well* with those who loved him for his Master's sake, who heard his message and obeyed it. But woe unto those who rejected his doctrine; who attended on that *perfection of ministry*, and yet remained "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." They sat hardened and unmoved, and in mercy to them, the candlestick has been removed, to arouse them lest they sleep the sleep of death. God, perhaps, was angry, too, with *some few*, who thought more of the minister than the master; for it is difficult to enjoy a privilege and not abuse it. He had no share in the blame attached to this, for none could caution us more against it. How often has he said, "Look through me as you would through a window, to a beautiful prospect beyond: care not about the man, but contemplate the master." How did he strive to hide himself behind the Saviour, and con-

sider himself only a servant for Jesu's sake. Once, praising a splendid sermon he had preached, and telling him how much one of the flock had been struck by it, he immediately replied, "Ah! if it is only my arrow it will come back again, but if it is the Lord's, it will remain." How numerous were the conversions under his ministry; and to all would he say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, O Lord, be all the glory." The *beloved flock generally* glorified the giver, whilst they enjoyed the gift; and God in his mercy will assuredly send them another faithful pastor, who will abundantly reap the seed sown, that both "he that soweth, and he that reapeth may rejoice together." Often have I wished that you could have been amongst us, to witness the undisturbed devotion and breathless attention of that beloved flock. Many persons have said it was a sight worth coming a hundred miles to see, and it has attracted many a wandering heart by its loveliness. We can easily imagine our great adversary filled with envy at such a sight, and longing for its overthrow. Well, how know we, but he has gone, as the accuser of the brethren, before the Lord, and said, "This is all done for man, take away thy chosen servant, the people's idol, and then see what fruit they will yield thee." We repel the accusation, and oh! pray for us, that our future conduct may prove, that it came from the father of lies. God took him away, perhaps, that our sincerity might be made manifest to principalities and powers, and that it might redound to his glory. He *lived* and he *died* for his Master's glory. As it regards himself, we know that he is taken from the evil to come. Yet when we look at our irreparable loss, and the void made in our *happy circle*, and think the sweet counsellor, the affectionate friend, the faithful and tenderly-beloved pastor is gone, we weep. But we will now dry up the fountain of our tears, and lifting up the eye of faith, behold him a pillar in the Church triumphant, no more to go out, wearing a crown

of glory, carrying a palm of victory, with the name of his adorable Redeemer stamped on his forehead. Could we for a moment wish to bring our beloved one back from that fulness of joy, or rob him of that crown, for which he has been fighting, and striving, and wrestling so many years? Oh no! we would not do it by a wish, if it were possible. We may go to him, and if we are savingly united unto the same living Head, we shall soon hear the joyful summons, "Come up hither." We live in fearful times, and happy, thrice happy! are they who are landed safe on Canaan's shore. Sometimes I take my station on Pisgah's mount, and directing my eye through the telescope of faith, take a survey of the promised land;—behold the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the glorious army of martyrs, the spirits of just men made perfect, and amidst this holy, this happy company, my beloved pastor, a citizen of the New Jerusalem, free from every temptation, and far out of the reach of danger. Our loss is indeed his eternal gain. Oh! pray for us, my dear friend, that we may live, and act, and speak as that man of God would have us do;—that we may walk through this wilderness with our Bibles in our hands, faith in our hearts, our eyes upon our Master, and with love to the souls of our fellow-sinners; and then we shall be amongst the number of those of whom he shall say at the last, "Lord, here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me."

Yours affectionately,

J. S.

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"OLD HUMPHREY'S WILLOW-PATTERN  
REVERSED."

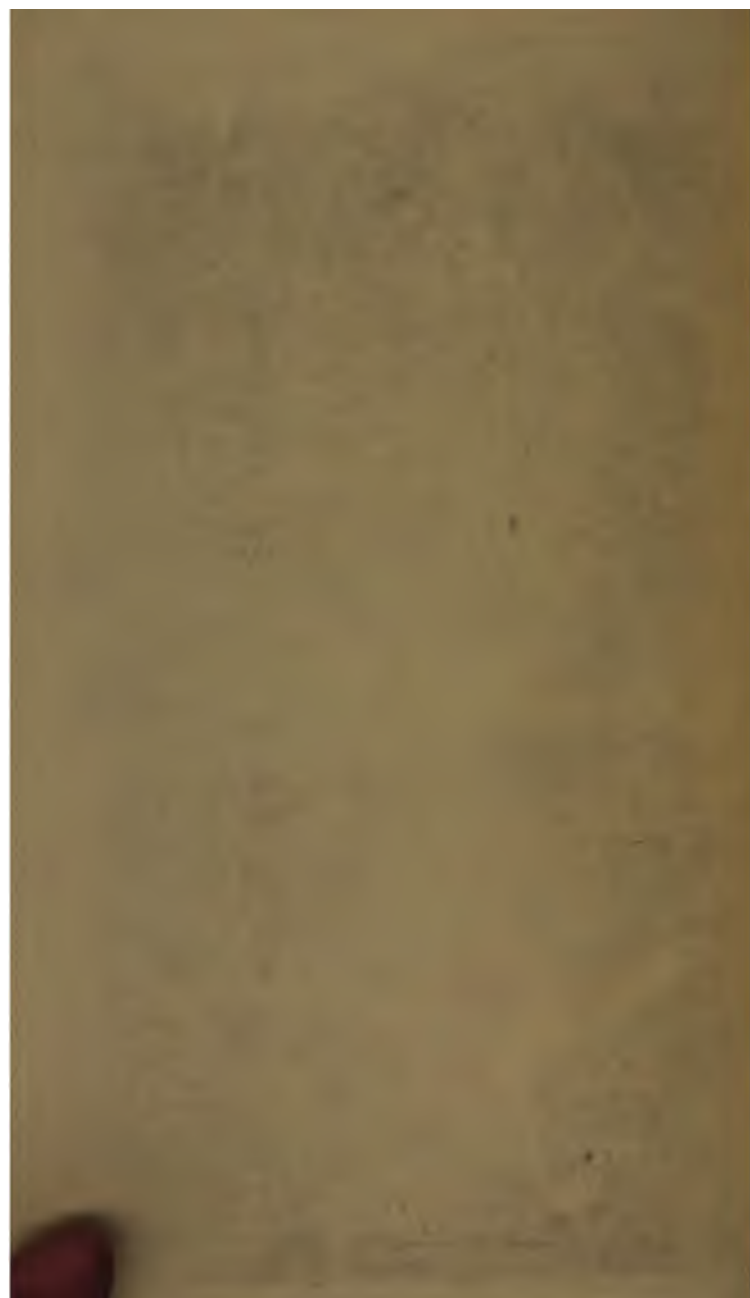
MY dear Elizabeth has, perhaps, read the original, and may think it great presumption in me to alter it, however you know that I love to exercise my fertile imagination in

this way, and the *reading* of it will, no doubt, call to *your* recollection some of *our* happy hours spent together ; as the writing of it awakens up the remembrance of the hallowed and profitable evenings spent with my beloved pastor. We may imagine the stately building in the centre to represent the world, where the evil effects of the tree of knowledge of good and evil are felt ; the tree is behind the largest building, apparently bearing apples, and shedding its baneful influence there. The zig-zag railway may point out the crooked paths of sin with which the world is surrounded, and the willow at the end of the path may remind us "that the wages of sin is death." The water that flows beyond it may bring to our recollection the water of life, whose streams make glad the temple of our God, which is the little city on the side separated from the world ; the bridge over it, the narrow path which leads to the heavenly Jerusalem. The three pilgrims on the bridge are treading in that path. The one has just turned his back on the world, and being yet only a babe in Christ, it has yet some attractions for *him* ; he is, therefore, represented as holding it before him, suspended by the cord of love to the staff of faith in his hand, which serves to hold it in its right place, and round it may be written, "Using the world, but not abusing it." The second is farther advanced in the Christian life, and may represent him who is grown up to a full stature in Christ Jesus, and is bearing his cross. He has heard a voice behind him saying, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world ;" "take up your cross and follow me." The last is come to the end of his journey, and is about to descend to cross the Jordan, which lies beyond : he has "fought the good fight of faith," and even that staff which has supported him on the bridge, is about to fall from his hand, as it will be no longer needed. The vessel with the church of the living God in it, and which is cruising up and down the river Jordan, which separates the Temple



below from the Temple above, may serve to call to remembrance the Ark of the Covenant carrying the Church of Christ over the river Jordan, piloted by the great Captain of our salvation, until it lands us safe in the Temple above, which is represented by the building at the top of the dish, with the Tree of Life in the midst of it. And, truly, it will be needful for you, my dear, to have a dish before you, in order to understand this, for I do not think the figures on the plates can be distinctly seen. Old Humphrey, I think, says nothing about what they hold in their hands, but a very useful lesson may be learnt from that. I do not know if your dinner service has the willow-pattern on it, but if not, you can easily get one dish. There now remains only the birds to be considered. They may readily remind us of the guardian angels, "who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation," and who are joyfully waiting until the ark shall bring up one of those heirs, that they may convey him into glory. Was it not singular, Elizabeth, that dear Mr. Breay was going through a course of lectures on the angels, and had he been able to preach on the last Sunday of his life, his subject would have been the angels conveying the soul of the believer to glory. He told dear Miss Lamb that he had enjoyed the study of that subject much; but, dear holy man! he was not to *preach it*, but to realise it in his own happy experience; and do you not think that God put his seal upon the perfection of his ministry, by making it extend just to the seven years, which number, you know, is often put for perfection in the Word of God?







the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 13.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased from 4.5 million to 6.5 million (Office for National Statistics 2000). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 16.5 million by 2020, and the number of people aged 75 and over to 8.5 million (Office for National Statistics 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of older people, and the need to ensure that they are able to live independently and actively in their own homes. This has led to a number of initiatives, including the development of the concept of 'active ageing' (World Health Organization 1999), and the development of the concept of 'age-friendly communities' (World Health Organization 2002).

The concept of 'age-friendly communities' is based on the idea that older people should be able to live in communities that are safe, accessible, and supportive. This means that older people should be able to live in their own homes, and be able to participate in social and community activities. It also means that older people should be able to access the services and support that they need to live independently and actively.

The concept of 'age-friendly communities' is being implemented in a number of countries, including the UK. In the UK, the concept is being implemented through a number of initiatives, including the development of 'age-friendly communities' (Age-Friendly Communities 2002), and the development of 'age-friendly environments' (Age-Friendly Environments 2002).

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