

LETTERS
ON
SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS,

WRITTEN IN THE CONFIDENCE OF FRIENDSHIP,

BY
SAMUEL EYLES PIERCE,
LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, LONDON.

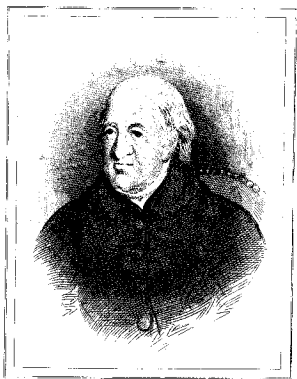
FOURTH EDITION, GREATLY ENLARGED.

“ His letters are weighty and powerful.” 2 Cor. x. 10.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
EBENEZER PALMER, 18, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1862.



H. Brown, Sc. Nicholl St. City

Samuel Eyles Paine.

London Published Oct. 1862 by F. Palmer, Paternoster Row

PREFACE.

DEAR READER,

YOU are here presented with the fourth edition of the invaluable Letters of the late SAMUEL EYLES PIERCE, as written by him to many of his beloved christian friends in their day and generation. They contain ‘a body of divinity,’ almost unparalleled. This new edition is printed in a larger type, though published at a lower price, in expectation of a more extensive sale. It is also rendered still more complete by including the Posthumous Volume which was published by Mr. Frederick Silver. The whole works of Mr. Pierce are voluminous, containing more than fifty distinct Treatises. Many of his volumes are now very rarely to be obtained, even at a high price. Dr. Hawker, who wrote a preface to the first volume, has characterised the whole. He says, ‘Mr. Pierce’s writings appear to me eminently distinguished, as being directed to set forth the Lord Jesus in his essential, personal, relative, and mediatorial glories, and can need no other commendation than their own excellencies. They carry with them the *imprimatur* of the Master, and, under this persuasion, I feel no hesitation to recommend them as the humble labours of the servant.’

After the lapse of more than thirty-three years since Mr. Pierce “entered into the joy of his Lord,” very few who had a personal acquaintance with him, and who cordially loved him for the “truth’s sake,” can be expected to be still on this side Jordan; but among those few is our venerable friend Mr. J. A. Jones, who has reached the close of his eighty-third year,

and having been more than fifty-four years in the work of the gospel ministry. Learning that Mr. Pierce's Letters were in course of republication, he kindly lent his valuable large portrait of Mr. Pierce, a noble likeness, from which the engraving which accompanies these Letters has been taken. With this was enclosed the following letter:—

MY DEAR SIR,

It has afforded me great pleasure to learn that you are re-publishing Mr. S. E. Pierce's invaluable Letters. They are a rich treasury of gospel truth. The subject-matter of the whole is, "Christ is all and in all." Several of them were addressed to Dr. Hawker, and these ought to be distinctly pointed out. Two of the Letters were written to me, viz., Vol. 4, Letters xxv. and xxvi. (in Vol. 2, pages 42 and 45 of this Edition.) I have the autographs still. Please permit a sentence or so, from one of them:—

'As the minister of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you are to preach Christ exactly as he is revealed in the written Word; as a Saviour in every sense suited to a sinner's case. You are to lay Christ as the only foundation for a sinner's hope in God. You can never exalt Christ too much. All the love of the Holy Trinity is in him; and it is, from the saints being in him, one with Christ, and united to him, that they are the objects of God's everlasting love!' I stay my pen.

On Dr. Hawker's last visit to London, he was accosted by a gentleman on his leaving St. Ann's, Blackfriars, who lamented his return home. The Doctor replied, 'My dear sir, I shall not take away the gospel with me.' 'Where,' said the person, 'would you advise me to go to hear it?' The Doctor rejoined, 'Go and hear Mr. Pierce, at Shoe Lane. Not that I mean to put myself on a level with that man of God, still I hope I am hobbling after him, though at a great distance.'

In my early ministerial days I was kindly noticed, as a father would a son, by dear Mr. Samuel Rowles, of Colnbrook. I esteemed him as a second Dr. Gill. In one of his instructive letters to me, written forty-eight years ago (April 1, 1814), he says, 'I find you approve of the writings of my old friend Mr. S. E. Pierce. It would give me the most genuine pleasure to know that both ministers and people viewed his writings in the same light I do; they then would not be ashamed or afraid to "speak with their enemies in the gate," nor afraid to undress in the grave, and lie down with God as their covenant Father. I think the Saviour's meaning in the 17th of John is best expressed in Mr. Pierce's exposition of that sublime chapter of any I ever read. I had a copy lately given me by the author, and I would not part with it for gold. If Mr. Pierce's views of Christ be realized in the heart, they must be profitable to the true christian pilgrim

and stranger upon earth; as they will afford him some conception of his rest in heaven.'

In a word, I consider the whole of Mr. Pierce's works to be more valuable than I have words to express. I have nearly all that he has written, and most of them was given to me by the author. His treatise on 'Growth in Grace,' had I the means I would publish ten thousand copies for gratuitous distribution. I have spent very many hours in its perusal, and obtained most solid and blessed establishment in the truth therefrom. The celebrated Isaac Nicholson, President of Cheshunt College, wrote a commendatory preface to it, in which he says, 'This volume presents to the reader a table well spread, and laden with rich abundance of the choicest viands. A spiritual feast is prepared for the entertainment of the Lord's people.'

"A feast of delicacies, a feast of old wines;

Of delicacies exquisitely rich, of old wines well refined."

Isa. xxv. 6. Lowth's Trans.

The very last sermon Mr. Pierce preached in my pulpit, was from Numbers xxi. 9. "If a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." He remarked, 'It was of no use for the bitten Israelites to look on the bite; and there is no health and cure experienced for sin, but by looking to the Lord Jesus Christ.'

But I must add no more.

I am, dear Sir, yours most truly,

J. A. JONES.

October 10th, 1862, my 83rd birth day.

It was said of the apostle Paul, "His letters are weighty and powerful," (2 Cor. x. 10); and the same may be observed respecting the epistles of Mr. S. E. Pierce. May the present publication of them be an acceptable service, and the perusal thereof prove truly beneficial to "The church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. iii. 15.

THE PUBLISHER.

18, PATERNOSTER ROW,
October, 1862.

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MEMOIR.

IN presenting the reader with a brief memoir of the late Mr. SAMUEL EYLES PIERCE, it may suffice to say that it is abridged from what he himself wrote, and may therefore be depended on. His voluminous writings are now but little known, and rarely to be obtained at any price, still whoever is possessed of any of them has a treasure more valuable than rubies. He was indeed a ready scribe, instructed into the kingdom of God; one who brought forth out of the gospel treasury things new and old. Matt. xiii. 52.

Samuel Eyles Pierce was the son of Adam and Susannah Pierce, and was born at Up-Ottery in the county of Devon, June 11th, 1746. Up-Ottery is about five miles from Honiton; and, at that time, the vicar of the parish was the Rev. Joseph Chilcott, our author's maternal grandfather. Mr. Pierce was born in the vicarage house. His mother was a godly woman, and her son writes of her, that before his birth she made a vow, or promise, that if the Lord would be pleased to grant her a son, she would give him up and devote him to his service, doing her utmost to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Also, previous to his birth, she dreamed that she had a son, and that she called him Samuel Eyles Pierce. This was the reason these names were given him. His grandfather's name was Samuel Pierce, and his uncle's name was Eyles Pierce; and many of his family on his father's side sustained the name of Eyles, but he was principally so named on account of his mother's dream. Though born in the vicarage house, his mother soon returned with him to Honiton, where he was brought up. She taught him all Dr. Watts's hymns for children; so that before he could *read* them, he could *repeat* them. She also used to recite to him many of the scripture narratives, and thus she put *him* on reading them; and encouraged him to ask her questions, to which her answers were concise and plain. Being an only child, his mother did not suffer him to be long out of her sight, nor join other boys in play; and, as he grew up, he used to think, 'I will by no means vex my dear mother.' It would be well for christian mothers to learn from this, the importance of early inculcating right principles into the minds of young children. It is impos-

sible to begin too early, and no one can calculate the value of a good mother's precepts, accompanied with a mother's prayers.

Brought up in the worship of the Church of England, and outwardly moral, he says, 'I would *prepare* myself, and go to the Lord's table.' This was about the time of the great earthquake at Lisbon. The minister at Honiton preached several awful and alarming sermons on the occasion; and throughout the kingdom, and on the continent, there were such awakenings as had not been evidenced for a long time. These, however, in many instances passed away, leaving the mind wholly unrenewed, and destitute of the true knowledge of Jesus Christ. 'I am sure,' writes Mr. Pierce, 'that it was thus with *me*. I lived a very *devotional* life, but, it was an *animal* life, a *rational* life, without the least supernatural knowledge of Christ. I went to *church* constantly, I attended the *sacrament* frequently, I observed prayer and fasting; and *this*, I *then* thought, was to be *heavenly minded*. It was under these views I chose the trade I would learn, and the person whom I would serve, thinking of nothing so much as *being very good*. I was by my parents accordingly settled, yet I was by no means calculated for the same. My mind was weak, and my spirits low, so that I made but little progress; not out of obstinacy, but through timidity. I was so engaged in *devotional* exercises, that with my master constantly finding fault, and expecting me to do more than I knew, I was continually perplexed.'

Thus outwardly moral, and preserved by his mother's instructions from outward sin, he began to experience what he was previously ignorant of. His mother had borrowed a book entitled, 'The Crucified Jesus,' by Dr. Anthony Horneck, which he read. He writes, 'Before I had got half through it, I experienced what I never felt before, so that I was dead to all but Christ, the scriptures flowed in upon my mind, and the Holy Spirit by this means led me into contemplations of the love of God. The change thus produced in my mind was so different from all I was the subject of before, that I most solemnly ascribe it to the Spirit of the living God, and to what the scriptures speak of, when the divine writers in them set forth and speak of the *new birth*. I was now a new creature, a regenerated man, born from above, an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ. Not that I then *perceived* this, or understood the same. As it respects the *evidences* of my regeneration, it consisted in the following *effects*. I had an inward experimental relish of the love of God. I was not contented to be so often on my *knees*, and exercising myself in a formal devotional way, but my mind was often spiritually engaged with God, and I was under

sacred and gracious impressions. Yet, with all this, I was a stranger to Christ. I knew not his person, blood, and righteousness; yet there was wrought in my soul that work which will exist in it throughout all eternity. The acknowledgment of Christ's *Godhead* was inlaid within me by the Holy Spirit as an ingrafted truth, so that I was never after permitted to call it into question, or admit any doubt concerning it. I do not mention Dr. Horneck's treatise as a gospel book; I was only declaring how I was *influenced* by it. I was brought to esteem what I read, here and there, in it, so as to be spiritually minded. And this I will say, as regards the writings of many whose works I should be for casting aside, there may be found *some* very precious and choice sentences. I could not read Dr. Horneck's book *now*, nor would I recommend it; but in setting out the account of my life I am stating how the Lord dealt with *me*.'

About this time he heard a sermon at East Buckland church by the Rev. Mr. Jesse, who said, 'a good deal of the precious bloodshedding of Jesus Christ,' yet said he, 'I knew nothing at all of this, but I had a conception it was very sweet. I thought, however, within myself, that I would have both *faith* and *good works*, and between them *both*, I should be saved. The reader may thus plainly see that it was not owing to anything *in* me, or done or obtained *by* me, that I was brought *off myself* to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. I now began, by little and little, to drop my *forms of prayer*, to pray ejaculatory; and sometimes I found God in the same. I began to believe that the Lord's people were loved by him before the world began, and that *I* was an elect person: and that though this would again and again be damped and removed, yet the satisfaction arising from it I found to be spiritual.'

The providence of God soon after led him under the ministry of the Rev. Augustus Toplady, by which he was brought into much blessed apprehension of Jesus Christ as *all in all* in the sinner's salvation; and had opened up to his spiritual understanding many glorious discoveries of the fulness, the completeness, and the certainty of the redemption that is in Christ.

His mother died in 1770, and in the same year he left Devonshire and removed to Gosport in Hampshire; and hearing of a Mr. Topping, who preached on Portsmouth Common as an extraordinary preacher, he became benefitted under two discourses which he delivered.

Returning for a short time to Honiton he again heard Mr. Toplady. But unexpectedly his cousin Mr. Chilcott coming to Honiton and offering to take him to London, he consented,

principally, he said, as he wanted to hear Mr. Romaine. In the first sermon he heard Mr. Romaine preach, he said, in his discourse, 'Sirs, if you had all the holiness and all the righteousness of all the angels in heaven, it would profit you nothing. There is no righteousness will pass current in the high court of heaven, but the righteousness of Jehovah Jesus.' 'I was overcome,' says our author, 'with holy admiration; and thought with myself, should I continue in London, I would most certainly be a hearer of him.' In a subsequent sermon Mr. Romaine said, 'Believers, you that are believers, God looks upon you as he doth on Christ; and loves you with the same love he doth him.' 'I looked up,' says Mr. Pierce, 'with amazement! Oh, thought I, if I can find this in the word of God, it is the greatest truth I ever heard. I will go home and search the Bible. I conceive the 17th of John is the most likely place to find it. I constantly went every Lord's day, and I was so swallowed up in hearing that I always stood; nor did I lose one single sentence; I received it into my very heart. Mr. Romaine often expressed himself thus, 'It was so and so contrived by the counsel and covenant of the Eternal Three.' I had never been used to such expressions; there was a sublimity and greatness in them which reflected their glory and majesty on my mind. I heard from him what I never heard; no, not from Mr. Toplady. I loved him, for his preaching, above and beyond all others; yet I never spoke to him in all my life. I once wrote to him, but he never noticed it at all.'

At this period of his life, he had very many trials and removals; sometimes out of London, sometimes in it. But, in the providence of God, a door was opened for him, in which for a season he was comfortably settled, so that he could enjoy Mr. Romaine's ministry without interruption. He was frequently laughed at for saying that 'If St. Paul was to come down from heaven, and was going to preach at the Tabernacle, and Mr. Romaine was to preach at St. Dunstan's, he would not leave Mr. Romaine for the apostle Paul.' He explained this however, by saying, that Paul had been so long in the state of glory, he had forgot all about sin and sinfulness; whereas Mr. Romaine was still in the body, and though so blessedly acquainted with Christ, and enjoying personal communion with him, yet he had a body of sin and death, and could not therefore but feel the same; consequently he must preach the love, mercy, and salvation of Jesus suited to such as were sinners and sinful. A sinner does not so much want to hear of the glory of Christ in heaven, as of the love and compassion of Christ to such a sinner as he felt himself to be.'

Mr. Pierce left London in August 1775, and returned to Honiton to his father and aunt, by whom he was affectionately received; but his relation to them of the Lord's dealings with him, met with little sympathy by them. Shortly afterwards he returned again to London by way of Chard, in Somersetshire, at which place, in conversation with some friends, he first disclosed his inclination to the work of the ministry. He was advised by them to apply to the Countess of Huntingdon for admission as a student to her Ladyship's College, at Trevecca. He did so, and obtaining her approval, he left London, and travelling partly by coach, and partly on foot, he reached Trevecca in the month of December, 1775. He was then in the 31st year of his age. On the following Friday he was called upon to preach to the students. He had no fear upon him, so he mounted the rostrum, and read for his text, "His work is honourable and glorious, and his righteousness endureth for ever." Psa. cxi. 3. He says, 'I had only been engaged five minutes, before I said, I can say no more.' A senior student cried out, 'You had better then come down.' He did so, hoping never to go there any more. Notwithstanding this abrupt termination of his *first* essay, he was sent out to preach. He began his ministerial itineracy January, 1776, at Hay, in Brecknockshire. He was all for preaching a *finished salvation*. But this was not acceptable even to the students. And having the same task to go over again in the rostrum at Trevecca, he grew sick of it, and wrote to London to prepare the way for his return. In the meantime he was afflicted with a severe ague, and at the point of death. One morning a fellow-student, the late Mr. John Clayton, afterwards the well-known pastor of the Weigh House Chapel, in London, came to his room, and asked him the state of his mind? Mr. Pierce replied, 'I have nothing to do with *that*. This I know, if I die at the present time, I have nothing to trust in but the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus; and, if I live a hundred years longer, I shall have no other foundation to die on.' Mr. Clayton replied, 'Blessed be God, he is "able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."' And upon this, Mr. Pierce says, 'The glories of the world to come broke in upon my view, that I thought it was too good news to die.' Unable to leave the College by reason of his illness, he was there when Lady Huntingdon visited it, and he had several interviews with her, in one of which she addressed him thus, 'Pierce, how is your heart?' I was, he writes, quite out of temper, and replied in a very short way, 'I have nothing to do with my heart. I have never had any peace but when I am looking at the Atonement.' Upon this she said,

‘This is very right. God the Father allows us no other object to look at but Christ. If I was a preacher, I would preach no other subject but Christ and salvation. I must be saved just as the thief was on the cross.’ This suited Mr. Pierce well. But he must preach again in the study. He says, ‘I stood so as to face her Ladyship and Lady Anne Erskine, with my back to the students. I thought to myself, I have now those before me who *understand* the subject. Her Ladyship was well pleased. *The students were silent.* She gave us most excellent advice, and prayed for us.’

He now went into Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby, and other places, generally preaching three times on the Lord’s-day, and once in the week. Many professed satisfaction, others did not. He had to exchange with the minister supplying at Lincoln. ‘I preached,’ said Mr. Pierce, ‘in the morning from these words, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” As I sat at dinner, I perceived that what I had delivered was acceptable. I said, ‘The people at Gainsborough don’t understand me.’ The mistress of the house replied, ‘I should wonder if they did; they have not been used to it. You are better suited to *us* than to *them*. I wish we could have a little more of it.’

Mr. Pierce then returned to college, and after a short stay he went on another visit into Cornwall. This was in the year 1777. By this visit he was brought into the notice and friendship of James Paynter, Esq., of Boskenna. In his house he first saw and read the works of Dr. Thomas Goodwin, also Stephen Charnock, Dr. Gill and others, from whom he derived much profit. At his request he was sent into Sussex, that he might be near the Rev. Mr. Wills, for whom he entertained great affection. But in Sussex his ministry was not well received, except at Oathall. In 1779, he left Oathall; and his four years’ engagement with the College being expired, several invitations were given him from Devonshire, Somersetshire, and Kent. He stayed some time with the people at Maidstone, and ultimately accepted the call of the Independent Church at Truro in Cornwall to become their pastor, in August, 1783.

Mr. Pierce’s ordination to the pastorate over the Church at Truro, was rather a curious affair. It was, in brief, thus: Mr. Isaiah Birt was about to be ordained as co-pastor with Mr. Philip Gibbs over the Baptist Church, holding mixed communion, at Plymouth, and an arrangement was made by one of the deacons at Truro, with Mr. Gibbs, that Mr. Pierce should be ordained at the same time. Two deacons and another member, were appointed by the Truro Church to accompany Mr. Pierce on the occasion. The ordination took

place at Plymouth, September 15th, 1784. Mr. Pierce informs us that, 'the service was begun, carried on, and closed with a great deal of devotion and solemnity. Mr. Birt and myself were ordered to kneel on chairs, brought for that purpose. Mr. Gibbs prayed the ordination prayer, and laid his hands on both Mr. Birt and me, so did Mr. Evans and Mr. Penn. This being finished, we rose from our knees; these ministers took us by the hand, and wished us good luck in the name of the Lord. Then Mr. Caleb Evans gave the charge from 2 Tim. ii. 15, and Mr. Thomas preached the sermon, and after singing and prayer, the whole was closed with the benediction.' On the next day himself, and his three friends, returned to Truro, and reported to the Church that their minister was now in full ministerial orders.

On the 28th of October, the same year, Mr. Pierce was married to Mrs. Sarah Randall, the widow of Mr. Joseph Randall, of Truro, and a member of the Church.

He had not been long settled at Truro, before it became necessary to build a larger Meeting-house. On the 20th August, 1785, his Father died at Honiton.

During Mr. Pierce's ministry at Truro, he visited other parts in Cornwall and Devonshire; but on his return home, he observed a growing spirit of dissention, and dislike was spreading among the people. It would be uninteresting to enter into a detail, but it rendered Truro an unpleasant residence to him, and resulted in his removal. But while there he published his first work, containing 'Discourses on the Lord's Supper, with other Sermons.' The Rev. Thomas Wills appended a commendatory preface to the same. The publishing of this work brought him the friendship of many friends in London and elsewhere; and visiting the Metropolis, he preached there for the first time at Stockwell, and became acquainted with Mr. Bailey, who continued to be firmly attached to him the remainder of his life.

While noticing his 'Sermons on the Lord's Supper,' it may be stated that about this time he became convinced of the 'Ordinance of Believer's Baptism,' and was accordingly baptised by his friend, Mr. Pitts, of Chard. That he was very decided on the subject, appears from a charge delivered by him at the ordination of Mr. Burnet, at Woolwich, May 15, 1811, and also a 'Sermon on Baptism,' printed by him, which we have seen in the possession of our aged friend, Mr. J. A. Jones. They are rarely now to be obtained.

Renewed invitations coming to him from his friends in London, he was induced to remove there, and a place was engaged in Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, for a Tuesday evening lecture, and on a

Lord's-day morning. For a time he preached in the Baptist Chapel, in Redcross Street, and ultimately he became the settled minister in the aforesaid chapel, in Printer's Court, Shoe Lane, this was in the year 1805.

While preaching in London he continued a visitor to the West of England, always taking three months in the summer for that purpose. Mrs. Pierce died March 12, 1808, at Truro. He preached her funeral sermon. On his return to London, when near Reading, he broke the small bone of his arm and dislocated his wrist, by which accident he was detained there six weeks.

The congregation which he had gathered at Shoe Lane was formed into a Church, September 17, 1809. Mr. Pierce, continuing to be their minister; and in addition to this he preached at Bethel Chapel, built by his friend, Mr. Thomas Bailey, contiguous to his own house at Brixton. Usually preaching one part of the Lord's-day at Shoe-lane, and the other part at Brixton; besides frequently supplying other places in the country.

After remaining a widower upwards of eleven years, Mr. Pierce again entered the marriage state, November 15, 1819. His second wife was Miss Elizabeth Turquand; she was some years younger than himself, but was every way suited for him—a kind wife, and when needful, a tender sympathising nurse, and altogether attached to his ministry. Mr. Bailey fitted up for them rooms in Bethel House, where he resided till his death.

Mr. Pierce, near the close of his memoir, says, 'I am almost come to the period of 76 years. I have given some general account of the gospel I have preached, and of that which I conceive as contained in the Ordinances of Baptism and the Supper; and so to express myself that the people of the most high God may be best instructed in right views of the same. The testimony of the Holy Ghost to the truth of the gospel, stamps the whole Bible with grace, glory, majesty, and dignity, altogether divine.'

But the time drew nigh when this eminent man of God must enter into his rest. Heb. iv. 9. His dear wife has printed an account of his last days, from which the following is selected:

She says, 'My late revered husband, Mr. S. E. Pierce, by reason of his great bodily infirmities, lived in the constant expectation of death; for during the nine years and six months that I was honoured in being united to him, it was but seldom that many days passed without his being so ill as to give reason to apprehend that the Lord was about to take him to himself. But he was blessed with great patience and resignation. He invariably expressed himself as firmly *fixed on the rock*, and that he should die in the

full belief of what he preached for so many years. He would express himself as follows: 'I have a blessed prospect before me; I am full of the hope of a glorious immortality. The Lord be magnified. Amen!'

'During his last illness he said, 'I am very bad, and I cannot be far off from the stroke of death; but I live and shall die in the full belief of Christ as God-man, God manifest in the flesh; God over all blessed for evermore. Amen! I die in the belief of the perfection of the work of Christ for salvation. In it *alone* I trust. And I die in the belief of God the Spirit's testimony concerning the same; and that to the glory of Three in One be ascribed everlasting praise.' Thus did the Lord in his love and faithfulness draw near to him, grant him his presence, and support him, when passing through the valley of the shadow of death.

'He remained apparently insensible to anything in this life for about a day and a half, and then fell asleep in Jesus, on May 10th, 1829, aged eighty-three years, after having been an honoured minister of Christ upwards of fifty years. His mortal remains lie interred in Lambeth new burying ground, in Mr. Arnott's family vault.'

Dear reader, permit just a word or two more. Mr. Pierce, in his precious treatise on 'Death and Dying,' in chap. 6th, has the following, 'On our actual entrance into heaven, and how we shall be received there.' He says, 'It is conceivable that the moment we expire in the body, the *soul* of the believer enters into glory. An eternal change passes on the mind; it is clothed with immortality and eternal glory; it goes to the Father, is received by Christ, and admitted into heaven. In a moment they are delivered from the whole inbeing of sin, and presented faultless before the presence of his glory; and this he will do with exceeding great joy.' Jude, verse 24.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACES TO THE SEVERAL VOLUMES,
AS SEPARATELY PUBLISHED.

PREFACE TO VOL. I.

THE first Edition being sold off, the following is sent forth at the request of many friends: may the blessing of the Holy Three in the One incomprehensible Jehovah, accompany the reading of it, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Amen.

SAMUEL EYLES PIERCE.

London, Sept. 18, 1810.

PREFACE TO VOL. II.

READER,

THE former volume of Letters having been chiefly sold off, the money arising from them is put to bring out this second volume.

MAY the reading them be a means of perfuming thy mind with the savour and fragrance of Christ Jesus, of whom the Psalmist says, in an address to Him, "all thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." I can only add my prayers, that it may be even thus. Amen. And my soul shall rejoice, if thine be refreshed, and if Jesus is thereby exalted.

SAMUEL EYLES PIERCE.

Clapham, April 17, 1809.

PREFACE TO VOL. III.

READER,

IT is in compliance with the request of those I regard, that this third volume of Letters is printed.

It was my alone design in writing them, to encourage believers in Jesus, in the exercise of their faith, hope and love towards Him.

To answer the same important end, if the Lord the Spirit will be pleased most graciously to bless, they are printed.

I cannot but most cordially recommend the consideration of the person, the love, mercy and salvation of Christ, as the subject worthy, and which demands the utmost intensity of thy mind, thoughts, and study. If thou art a believer in him, then thou wilt freely acknowledge Him; thy life, thy salvation, thy foundation, thy centre, thy circumference, thy all ; may he be so more and more unto thee, until thou art admitted into his immediate presence in glory, when thou wilt enjoy him as thy everlasting "all."

May thy real communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Three in the infinite Godhead, daily increase. May it be thy real blessedness to live and die in actual communion with them. Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen.

SAMUEL EYLES PIERCE.

London, May 24, 1813.

PREFACE TO VOL. IV.

BELoved READER,

IT hath been proposed to me, that three volumes of Letters, written by me in the simplicity and confidence of spiritual friendship, having been published, and having met with a favourable reception, it would not be amiss to send out a fresh

collection, which was never printed before. I have complied with this: and as these Letters contain the very same doctrine and testimony with the former, it will be most easily perceived, that Christ is to me my all in all. May the truths of the everlasting gospel contained in them, be accompanied with the light and unction of the Holy Spirit to thy mind, and be a mean of increasing thy communion with the Father and the Son. This can only be, as the Holy Ghost accompanies the reading of them with his own most gracious presence and blessing to thy mind. This is my prayer, reader, on thy behalf, being thy well-wisher in Christ Jesus,

SAMUEL EYLES PIERCE.

Shoe Lane, Oct. 17, 1818.

MR. SILVER'S ADVERTISEMENT TO HIS POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATION.

THE favourable reception with which the former volumes of Mr. Pierce's Letters have been received; and the positive fact that the Lord has in many instances blessed the reading of them to the spiritual advantage of the Lord's family, has occasioned the publication of the present volume.

Most of the Letters contained herein were addressed to a highly esteemed friend of the Author, residing in the West of England; and though written in a very familiar style, and in the open confidence of christian friendship, will, it is not doubted, be rendered a blessing to those who "desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby."

That this may be the result, and that the unction of the Eternal Spirit may attend the perusal, is the Compiler's earnest prayer.

Dec. 22, 1837.

LETTERS

ON SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS.

(Originally published as Vol. 1.)

LETTER I.

London, Feb. 6, 1781.

DEAR FRIEND,

UNDER the care and protection of Jehovah-Jesus, I arrived safe in town; thanks be unto the Lord our God for the same.

I hope Jesus Christ, in his person, and in his work, is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely in your view and esteem. It is life eternal to know Jesus, to know him to be Lord and God, and to know him to be the Lord our God, by the Holy Ghost.

I had the pleasure of hearing holy Romaine, on Thursday evening, expound the second, the third, and fourth chapters of Isaiah. He observed, that the Prophet began with the gospel, and ended with the gospel. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th verses of the second chapter, he said, had respect to the calling of the Gentiles, to Christ's convincing them of sin, and of their want of him.

I have, says he, seen very great conviction, which has never ended in conversion. No conviction, says he, is of the Holy Spirit, but what leads the soul to see its utter ruined state and leads it to Christ for pardon and salvation. He observed, that sin was the cause of all our national distress; that as luxury did abound, God would cut the sinews of it, by taking away our wealth, and employing it in expensive wars; and now people must, if they would live at all, live by faith. He observed, that Christ was the perfection of beauty and glory, and that he made his people beautiful and glorious,

by the robe of his righteousness which he puts upon them. That God calls his people holy, and makes them so. There is no holiness, says he, but in Christ; and those that are in Christ, are holy. Christ gives them his Spirit, who is holy, and who makes them partakers of a holy nature. He gives them life, not that they may live independent of Christ, but he gives them life in Christ, and life to live upon Christ for every thing. He observed, how safely God's people were safe-guarded and defended, the Lord God being ever with them in their outgoings and incomings. He beautifully observed, how people were mistaken in looking to bring forth fruit without respect to Christ. Christ, says he, is the root, and all the fruit of faith grows by him, by his divine shining and heavenly influences. He observed, how safe God's people were under the Lord's protection. That as God was with his people in the wilderness, and preserved them from the scorching sun by day, and from the cold by night; just so, as to all spiritual ends and purposes, he was, and is, with his dear people.

I am, your's in Jesus,

S. E. P.

LETTER II.

Barton St. David's, Feb. 13, 1781.

DEAR FRIEND,

THROUGH the good hand of my God upon me, I got safe to my journey's end on Saturday last. As I long to give you an evidence of my sincere love and regard for you, on account of the truth which dwelleth in you, and shall be with you for ever, I therefore take the first opportunity of writing to you.

I hope the love of God in Christ Jesus, together with the glorious fruits and consequences of it, is your daily meditation, the delight of your heart, and the joy of your soul.

The love of God is the fountain of all the happiness that saints enjoy, either in earth or heaven: indeed, all that the great Jehovah has done, and all that he has promised, and all that he has revealed of himself in his word to his dear people,

is only manifesting and displaying his love to his elect. God is eternal and incomprehensible, and such is his love to his church. "I have," says the Lord, "loved thee with an everlasting love." The love of God in election, which pitcheth itself upon the individual persons, even upon all the persons of the elect, is so great, 'that the scriptures themselves do not know how to express it; and therefore are fain to do it by the effects.' From all eternity, God chose his people in the person of his co-equal and co-eternal Son, set his love upon them in Christ, and the love he bore towards the persons of his people from eternity, was as great as all transient acts can express to eternity. Having chosen the elect, the Father presented them in the glass of his eternal decrees and purposes unto his co-equal and co-eternal Son. And the Son of God beholding them in all that beauty and majesty which they were to be adorned with, fell in love with their persons, and asked them at the hands of the Father, that they might be his bride and spouse; and God the Father gave them unto him, and gave him for them. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days, for ever and ever." The Father having chosen the elect in the person of his Son, and having given their persons into his hands, he, as the Father of his people, blessed them in Christ with all spiritual blessings; and, foreseeing the fall, he, in his infinite wisdom, and out of the riches of his love and grace, formed the scheme of salvation, entered into covenant with his co-equal Son, who, blessings on him! engaged to become the Surety of his people, and assume their nature into union with his divine person, to bring in for them an everlasting righteousness, and to die in their stead, bearing their sins in his own body on the tree, and to suffer all the curse of the broken law. Glory be rendered to the eternal Spirit, who covenanted to quicken the elect from a death of trespasses and sins, and to reveal the Lord Jesus, and shed abroad the Father's love in the hearts of the elect, by faith in the finished salvation of the Son. Let us take a view of three acts of God's love towards his people. The first is his love towards them from eternity; the second is, his giving Jesus Christ for them; and the third is, when he calls them by the eternal Spirit, and turns, and converts them to himself. The love which God did first take up in the first act of it, says Dr. Goodwin, is as great as all

that God doth to eternity. They are but (all of them) mere expressions of that love which he first took up. Christ and heaven, and whatever else he shews you of love and mercy in this world, or in the world to come, they did all lay in the womb of that first act of that love he took up, wherewith he loved us. God was not drawn out to love you, as a man is, who first begins to love one, and to set his heart upon him; and then his heart being engaged, he is drawn on beyond what he thought, and is enticed to do thus beyond what he intended. No, God is not as a man herein. But, as known unto God are all his works from everlasting, so is all his love that he means to bestow. And he took up love enough at first, as he should be venting all sorts of ways that he hath taken to do it, to eternity; for there is no new thing with God. If there should be any one thought, or degree of love, rise up in his heart afterwards, which was not there at first, then there should be some new thing with God; and the reason is clear by this too, that he doth love us out of his own love, therefore his love at the first dash of it was as perfect as it will be in heaven, when we are there. When Adam fell, God was not drawn out to give his Son. No; we are not so to conceive of it. God had all before him from everlasting. And this, I say, is easily manifested; for the first act of God's love was the womb of his giving Christ. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Therefore the Scriptures make all grace which ever we shall have to be given us at the very first, when God first loved us. 'My brethren,' says Dr. Goodwin, 'when God first began to love you, he gave you all that ever he meant to give you in the lump, and eternity of time is that in which he is retailing it out. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." And then all the goodness he means to communicate to them to whom he is thus gracious, is a passing before them even to eternity. First, the giving of his Son. He came first in the train, and then giving the Spirit, and then grace and glory.' The second act of God's love, was his giving Jesus Christ for us, the richest jewel in the cabinet of heaven, for with Christ the Father gives us all things. The third act of God's love is, when he calls us at first, and converts and turns us to himself. 'What is the reason,' says Dr. Goodwin, 'that we should account it, (*i.e.* effectual calling) so great a work?'

‘The reason,’ says he, ‘is, because then we are quickened with Jesus Christ. Let the principle of life be ever so small, it is the seed of God that shall rise to eternal life. Therefore he that believeth, hath eternal life. When God calls a man, all the thoughts of love which God had from eternity, all the thoughts of love he had when Christ came into the world, all that he means to do for the man is before him, and he states this man in all that God hath done, or will do; all are in this act centred, when he quickens him, for then a man hath possession and right to all. And this shall go on, till it come to the height of perfection, even to sit with Christ in heavenly places.’

Let us behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we, sinful and abominable as we ourselves are in our Adam-nature, should be called the sons of God. Let us consider the nature of that love, how free, full, and sovereign it is! It passeth knowledge, transcends the brightest understanding, puzzles the very angels of heaven, and perplexes those spirits of light and glory. View we the wonderful acts and effects of this love. The Lord Jesus delighted in the persons of his people before the foundation of the world, and in the fulness of time assumed our nature into union with his divine person, and by his most perfect obedience to his Father’s holy law, he magnified it and made it everlastingly honourable; and by the sacrifice of himself upon the tree, he put away sin. He made peace by the blood of his cross, put away sin for ever out of the sight of his Father, and opened a way into the holiest of all for poor sinners. Oh! that God the Holy Ghost may enlighten our understandings into a clearer view of the riches of divine grace.

The great love of God, and the unsearchable riches of Christ, are revealed and testified of in the Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit bears the same witness in our hearts of Jesus and his perfect salvation, that he does in the word.

Oh! let us consider ourselves as the beloved of God from all eternity, as united to the person of the Son of God from everlasting, as appearing always before God in the glorious spotless robe and garment of our elder brother’s righteousness, and as perfectly cleansed before the Lord from all our sins, through the most precious blood-shedding of the God-

man Christ Jesus, and as represented by him before his Father complete in his adorable person. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ loves all the elect with the same love wherewith he loves Christ himself, looks upon them in Christ with everlasting complacency and delight, and he rests in his love towards them. Glory be to God! We may well bless ourselves in the God of truth. We, as the members of Christ, are always the objects of the Father's ineffable delight. We are eternally secured from the curse of the law, and may enter with boldness at all times within the vail. Oh! 'tis heaven begun to know Jesus to be our Lord by the Holy Ghost, and to enjoy the Father's love in him. My hearty prayer for you, and all your dear friends with you, is, that ye may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God. Look not a moment off Christ. Look wholly and only to Jesus. Make use of his blood, and plead it against all accusations. Plead it in the court of your own conscience against all law-charges, and you will be more than a match for all your spiritual enemies. Beg the Holy Spirit to enable you to honour Christ daily and momentarily by believing. And surely as God himself is perfectly satisfied with the work of Jesus, your conscience may rest most perfectly satisfied therewith. Jesus Christ is our Head, and he is to supply us out of his fulness. He does not leave us to do something for ourselves. No. But we are called upon to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

S. E. P.

LETTER III.

Barton, March 17, 1781.

DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE you are rejoicing in God your Saviour, and blessing him from the ground of your heart, because he has dealt bountifully with you.

What streams of pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying mercy flow from Jesus! Enough to fill our soul with greater wonder and amazement than Elizabeth was filled with, when she brake forth and said: "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" For

Jesus to dwell in your hearts by faith, and set up his abode there, is such marvellous grace, that your soul will admire him for it, on your own behalf, to eternity. I hope your thoughts are often led to contemplate the eternal love of God towards you, and the glorious acts of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, in the well-ordered covenant, in which the eternal Son of God undertook your cause, became your Surety, engaged to fulfil his Father's holy law, and bear your sins in his own body on the tree; and blessings on Him! he has magnified the law by his obedience unto it, and made it everlastingly honourable, and he has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Oh! look off every object beside, and look wholly and only to the love, the everlasting, eternal, and unchangeable love of God towards you, which encircles you (and if I may so express it), in the arms of which you will be sustained in eternity.

Look on Jesus, in whom all the glories of the Godhead shine forth. In him the glories, the titles, word, and works of God shine forth, and are displayed.

Jesus Christ is the great Days-man between God and us. As one says: 'He is the miracle of wonders! the marrow of our love! life of our joys! fountain of our comforts! and centre of our hearts!' In him we have all our souls can possibly desire. He is our Head, our Brother, our righteousness, our sanctification. Who has obtained for us eternal redemption. Who is now at his Father's right hand, as our representative, and glorious fore-runner, and has assured us, "that where he is, we shall be also, to behold his glory," and to be like him, by seeing him as he is. I doubt not but the language of your heart is: Hasten, O Lord, that blessed time! Oh, let thy kingdom come!

Look upon Jesus as the brightness of the Father's glory, and look upon him as wearing our nature, and as fulfilling all righteousness in his life, and dying for our sins, and he appears under all these considerations, as altogether lovely.

Oh! look upon him as made sin for you, as having borne all those sins of thought and practice, original and actual, you have been guilty, and are the subject of. Look on Jesus in his sufferings, as having undergone and sustained all that anguish, grief, and torment which was due to your transgressions; and in those sufferings read his love towards you,

which is indeed higher than heaven, deeper than hell, longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. You may lose yourself with pleasure in the contemplation of Christ's love; and the more you study it, the more happy your soul will be. Never forget that you are not accepted of God on account of any thing in yourself, but you are accepted in the Beloved. Your righteousness in which you appear before the Lord, and on the account of which God justifies you, is the complete and perfect righteousness of the God-man. And as this righteousness is always one and the same before God, so you are always and alike righteous in the sight of God, in this glorious robe of your elder Brother's righteousness. Keep your eye constantly fixed upon this. And ever remember that all you feel, find, and experience in yourself, has nothing to do with making you righteous. You are to hang all your hopes of justification before God on Christ's righteousness. Your pardon and justification does not depend, nor is it to be built upon your experience, but upon the most precious blood-shedding, and perfect obedience of the Son of God. And therefore remember, though you may at times feel much coldness, dulness, and corruption; yet all this should only serve to drive you more out of yourself to Christ, to rest more upon what Jesus has done and suffered for you. If Jesus is a Saviour, make use of him as such, and don't put any thing of your own in the place and room of Christ.

I wish you would read over 'The Drop of Honey' with great attention, you will find it full of substance. The more you understand it, and live out of yourself by faith on Christ's fulness, as you are there directed, the more your soul will flourish, and the stronger you will grow in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. 'My brethren,' says Dr. Goodwin, 'all your grace must be grace in Christ, all your holiness must be wrought in Christ, all your holiness must be acted in Christ, and by motives from Christ, and by grace fetched from Christ. 'Eye,' says he 'the soul's going out after Christ, more than after all the legal holiness in the world.' Holy Romaine, says, 'Jesus Christ gives us life, not that we may live independent of him, but that we may live in him, and on him.' Oh that the Lord Jesus may daily be more and more precious to you. May you daily by faith, be meditating upon, and taking a survey of, the heights, and depths, and lengths,

and breadths of his wonderful love. It is his love that must warm our hearts. 'Tis a sight of his free, full, perfect, and finished salvation, that alone humbles us in the dust, and brings us to renounce ourselves. I hope you trample under foot all your own righteousness as filthy rags, and rest upon Christ alone for present and eternal salvation.

Hear what an excellent worthy says, 'In Christ thou hast perfectly obeyed the law, perfectly suffered, and satisfied for all thy sins to the justice of God; so that in Christ thou art perfectly just and righteous; and therefore it is said, that "our life is hid with Christ in God," and we are raised up with Christ, and made to sit with him in heavenly places.'

Though in thy flesh, there is a body of lust, and corruption, and sin, and there is a law revealing sin, accusing and condemning for it; yet we are to live by faith, in and on Christ, and in the apprehension of his love, believing in the life, righteousness, obedience, satisfaction, and glory of him whom the Spirit calls ours. Christ is ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. When the believer lives in the belief of these truths, he lives out of the power of all condemnation, Christ being the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. And thus a believer is blessed only in a righteousness without him, not within him; and all his assurance, confidence, and comforts flow into him, through the channel of faith, in believing what Christ hath done for him; not for what he hath done or can do for himself.

A believer's comfort, hope, joy, and confidence should be the same in God at all times, because that God who hath loved him with an everlasting love, hath loved him in his Son. Thou art not beloved for thy own sake, or for any thing in thee, but upon the account of the Lord Jesus, in whom God is well pleased. Believers are never the more just before God for their own integrity, nor the less unjust for their iniquity. God doth say of himself, I am God and not man. I am the Lord, and I change not. His love is as himself, ever the same; and Christ in whom we believe is ever the same; and Christ in whom we are beloved is ever the same, yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever; and hereupon should we live by faith, and rejoice evermore with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We should keep our justification and sanctification distinct, and not reason out our justification, from our sanctification; but we should look to Jesus Christ, the rock on whom a christian should build his soul.

We should always keep up, and keep distinct our justification as the spring and way to sanctification: for the fruits of justification are peace, joy, boldness, and strength to do the will of God. All this doth come into the soul from Jesus Christ in a way of believing, and not from sanctification. And as we are not to conclude our justification from any effects of sanctification, so we are not to conclude that apprehension of justification to be from God, which takes us off from the ways and rules of sanctification or holiness.

Justification is quite out and off ourselves, consisting in the imputation of Christ's righteousness, inherent in Him who sits at God's right hand, far above the reach and sphere of sin's activity. Thus it is therefore perfect and complete, yea, the foundation of all blessedness. The latter (namely sanctification) is in ourselves, therefore, weak and uncertain. He that understands not the true nature and doctrine of justification, cannot enjoy true and stable peace, but is apt to be led away with every wind of doctrine. In the right understanding of this point, is treasured up a fountain of reviving consolation. So says Mr. Robert Purnell. And they are choice sayings indeed.

May the Holy Ghost in all his divine influences and graces descend upon you, revealing unto you more of the Father's love in Jesus, and shedding it abroad in your heart, making you perfectly happy in Jesus, and filling you with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

My most cordial love to the whole society, and I earnestly wish the choicest blessings of the everlasting covenant may be communicated to them.

I am, your's in the bowels

Of the slaughtered Lamb of God,

S. E. P.

LETTER IV.

Barton, March 17, 1781.

DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE this will find you and your family in good health, as I am at present, blessed be God for it.

Perhaps you are desirous to know how I like my situation. As for the agreeableness of my abode, I believe it is impossible for me to be fixed at a place more agreeable to my natural inclination. The air is wholesome, the country quite pleasant, and in the morning the first sound I hear is that of the little birds chanting forth their great Creator's praise. My health is in some measure restored, and I spend a great deal of time in walking the fields, which I find to be very useful. I have a reason to hope God will be glorified in these parts, by the means of preaching pure, free, and unmixed grace, which is indeed to sin-burdened consciences, a reviving sound. Jesus Christ is, as one sweetly observes, 'music to the ear, honey to the mouth, and melody to the heart of a believer.'

I hope your heart longs to view and discover the glories and excellencies of the infinitely and inestimably beloved Jesus. One look from him, and one look to him, will melt the heart, enliven the affections, warm the soul, subdue sin, and conquer our corruptions more than all our legal endeavours possibly can.

We must first have a discovery of Christ's love, manifested to us by the Holy Ghost, before we can love Christ. "For we love him, because he first loved us." And when the love of Jesus has taken place in our minds, there will be a walking in Jesus, and an abounding in the work of the Lord. How precious Christ is to a believer, is impossible for any one to describe. He is the believer's meat, and drink, his physic, his garment of salvation, his all sufficient Saviour, his fountain of happiness, his foundation, comforter, and the whole of his hope and confidence is built upon the doings and sufferings of Jesus Christ the righteous. There is no friend like Christ. He is a friend indeed. He shewed his friendship towards his people in engaging as a Surety for them from all eternity; when our case was desperate, he

engaged for us. When justice was ready to give the blow our transgressions deserved, he interposed and averted it by taking it on himself. And when he knew that we should run through all our stock and become bankrupts, he became our bondsman, and engaged to pay our whole debt. When he saw we should fall into the depths of sin and misery, he undertook to bring us out of them, to cleanse us from all our sin, clothe us with his righteousness, and bring us safely to glory. His dying for us, paying our debts, purchasing our persons out of the hands of law and justice, and procuring all things needful for us, is a proof of his friendship. Oh! let us look to, and live upon Jesus, as our all in all. I hope you see more into the nature of Christ's salvation than ever. We are lost as to ourselves entirely, and can do nothing for ourselves, except it be to hasten on our own ruin. And those who are saved, it is entirely owing to the Lord's rich, free, and sovereign grace. And it is only to such as feel and experience their own lost, miserable, and undone condition, that Jesus Christ appears to be a precious and suitable Saviour. Those that are themselves void of all righteousness, and see the need they stand in of a perfect and an all-sufficient righteousness to present them perfect at the bar of God, to the end they may be delivered from all condemnation, such will most gladly betake themselves to the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. And only such as feel their own guilt, impurity, and sinful defilement, will fly to Christ's blood, as the fountain which alone can cleanse from all sin and uncleanness. O my friend, I cannot but wish you to make constant and daily use of the Lord Jesus, for every purpose of salvation. Do you need pardon? Go to Jesus for it. Do you need righteousness? Go to Christ. Are your corruptions strong? Go to Christ for the subduing of them. Whatever you need for soul and body, make use of Christ and his fulness, and you will find that he giveth to all believers liberally, and upbraideth not. Cast therefore all your cares upon him, trust your all in his hands, and you will find him more than sufficient to supply all your needs, and able to do for you above all your expectations. You cannot trust the Lord Jesus too much, nor yourself too little. The more you trust the Lord Jesus, the more you will honour him; and the more you go out of yourself entirely to Christ, so much the more do you

glorify him. All fulness dwells in Jesus for this purpose, that out of his fulness we might receive, and grace for grace. He is the fountain from whence all grace flows, and it is always high tide with Jesus Christ. I do myself sincerely wish you a great and blessed supply out of Christ's fulness, and from his Spirit.

Read 'The Drop of Honey;' and if you really value the good of your soul, pray that you may understand what is therein written and contained. It is not so easy as many think to gain a true and proper acquaintance and knowledge of Christ's salvation. Resting on convictions is not resting upon Christ. Few, very few make Jesus their refuge; and his person, work and offices, are too much overlooked and neglected.

I hope you are enlightened to see that the way of salvation, is by the life and death of the Son of God. He undertook the cause of his people. He stood up in their law-place, room, and stead, and died the just for the unjust, that he might bring them unto God, and he hath opened the fountain for sin and uncleanness, and he stands ready to bestow free, full, and eternal salvation, upon all that come unto him.

I hope that the Holy Ghost will give you a sight of the precious Jesus, and enable you to rest your whole dependence on him, and may you be found in him, clothed with his righteousness, washed in his blood, and renewed by his Spirit, then you will be safe from all the curses of the law, and the thunderings of Mount Sinai.

Oh! that you may be enabled by the Holy Ghost to try the virtue of Christ's blood. It is this alone sprinkled on the conscience, can sanctify us, and purify and purge our consciences from dead works. It is his glorious obedience imputed to us, that alone can make us righteous 'before the Lord. It is faith in Christ Jesus alone, that can make us holy and happy. One says, 'Faith in Christ Jesus supplies all wants, it honours God, as the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews shews, and God honours those most that live by it. By faith we may live a life to God, of joy in him our righteousness, as if we had never sinned. By faith we live above sin, infirmities, temptations, and desertions, sense, reason, fears, and doubts. Faith sweetens the sweetest mercy, and the bitterest misery; it renders great afflictions as none. It is the bulwark of the soul's strength and comfort. By

faith we cheerfully, readily and constantly obey God. In a measure it makes the yoke of Christ easy and sweet. It states the soul in the possession of heaven while the body remains here upon earth. By faith we view the glory of heaven, even then, when to a carnal eye we seem most miserable.'

Those that live by faith live upon God, and are refreshed by him in his house, which is plentifully stored with all desirable dainties, having this welcome, "Eat, O friends, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Praying you may live upon Jesus, and live to Him, and for Him in all things, I conclude with my love to you and your family.

Your's, in the Lord,

S. E. P.

LETTER V.

To a Church of Christ.

Barton, April 20, 1781.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I HOPE you enjoy health of body, and health of soul, and are going on with growing strength in the ways of God. I hope the Lord the Spirit has led you into greater acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ, and given you a sight of the complete, free, and full salvation, which the God-man has wrought out for sinners. It is a blessed thing to be taught of God, and to be led into a real acquaintance with the love of God, Father, Son, and Spirit. The love of God is the fountain from whence all our spiritual blessings and benefits flow.

I hope the Lord is daily filling your hearts with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, arising from a view of the eternity and unchangeableness of God's love towards you in his

dear Son ; and I pray God the Holy Ghost may glorify the Lord Jesus Christ more and more in your hearts.

There is nothing more dishonourable to God than legality, and unbelief ; and one great reason why the children of God are so often full of fears, is, they pore too much upon themselves, and are too little acquainted with the word of God.

Yesterday I had the happiness of conversing with a most blessed saint indeed, who lives wholly out of himself upon Christ's fulness. Oh ! that this might be more and more the case with us. I believe Romaine's 'Walk of Faith' would, in the hand of the Spirit of God, be a great help to lead you more to look to, and live upon the Lord.

I will give you the following extracts from an old book which lately fell into my hands.

'We cannot in any one thing more gratify Satan, and wrong ourselves in point of comfort and content, in point of peace, and in point of boldness, than to live in a state of doubting. A man that lives without assurance, lives so as to leave his soul open to many blows and knocks, frowns and wounds, from God, from the world, from carnal friends, and from Satan. Besides, if we live and die in unbelief, "he that believeth not, is condemned already." The sin of unbelief is a great sin. All in a state of unbelief are condemned, by the law, and by the gospel, and by their own consciences ; all these have passed the sentence of condemnation upon that state already.

'The sin of unbelief is a great sin, and it is our sin to give way to it. We nourish a snake in our bosoms that will sting us to death. To doubt and despair of mercy, is to make the God of truth a liar. Doubting makes the countenance sad, the hands to hang down, and the knees feeble, and the heart full of fears and tremblings ;—besides, the time of doubting is a barren time. There is no praying, nor praising, nor growing, nor any vigorous acting. Surely this state comes not from God, he bids us make our calling and election sure. Neither doth it come from Christ, he speaks and gives peace to his people. It comes not from the Holy Spirit of God, for he is the great and most sweet Comforter, revealing and applying the love of God unto the soul.'

The great Dr. Goodwin says, 'Labour for assurance, to see by faith yourselves in Christ, in all that he did for you, to be

able to view yourselves in him when he died, that as by faith you believe yourselves one with Adam, when he was in the garden and ate the forbidden fruit, so that you were in Christ, when he hung upon the cross. Reckon yourselves to be dead with Christ, to have died when Christ died. Faith will help a man to put himself into Christ as hanging on the cross, and this is to reckon a man's self as then dying with him, and then you may see all your sins done away, purged away, and yourselves perfected for ever, that your sins shall be remembered no more. And to see this all the world cannot help you. It must be the Spirit who knew Christ's mind then. Only in the mean time, you may go blindfold as it were, and cast anchor in the dark, and refer the casting your state to what Christ did then. Now let faith sometimes make such suppositions as these:—‘Suppose thyself in Christ, when he was in the garden and on the cross, and that all he did, he did and suffered it for thee; is is good and warrantable to inure our hearts to such suppositions, till faith comes. Suppose that what Christ did, he did for thee.’ There is a glorious meaning in this. May the Holy Ghost teach us the divine art of living by faith on the Son of God.

A worthy says, ‘The greatest thing indeed we can desire, next to the glory of God, and our own salvation, and the sweetest thing we here can obtain, is the assurance of our own salvation. In this life we cannot get higher, than to be assured of that which in the next life is to be enjoyed.’

All God's people shall enjoy heaven when they leave this earth; some enjoy a heaven whilst they are here on earth.

That Christians may enjoy heaven upon earth, let them enquire after, and diligently seek for, and cheerfully embrace the doctrine of justification freely, and only by the free grace of God, as the cause, through Christ as the way, and through the Holy Ghost as the worker and evidence, for these reasons:—

1. Because this doctrine is the foundation and basis of all Christian religion.

2. It is the inlet of all spiritual divine peace and consolation.

3. It is the root and spring of all gospel obedience.

4. It is the great stop and bar to keep out all floods of error.

5. It is the main support of a soul under trials.

6. This is the doctrine which Satan doth most war against, either to prevent or corrupt; it being that by which his kingdom is undermined and overthrown.

7. This doctrine is the hardest piece of divinity to be learned, it being wholly supernatural in every part of it, above the reach of nature, and all things in us do oppose it.

That this doctrine is the foundation and basis of all Christian religion, doth clearly appear by these several instances:—

1. To begin at the bottom. Our election is the election of grace, and according to the good pleasure of God's will. Eph. i. 2, 3, 4, 5.

2. Our vocation is according to his grace. 2 Tim. i. 9.

3. Regeneration is of God's own will. James i. 18.

4. Faith itself is the gift of God. Eph. ii. 8.

5. Justification is freely by grace, and a free gift. Rom. iii. 24.

6. Forgiveness of sins is according to the riches of his grace. Eph. i. 7.

7. Eternal life is the gift of God. Rom. vi. 23.

Whoever asks what is the nature of this free grace? The answer is, grace in its proper notion signifies favour, or good will whereby God is moved to open the eyes of the blind mind, and to let it know the love of God which passeth knowledge. If any ask why the doctrine of the gospel is called by the name grace? I answer, Because it is only God's free will to bestow it upon those that did most want it.

If any ask further, why this free grace was ever bestowed at all? Or why one age, or place of the world should receive it rather than another? Or why God should be found of them that sought him not, or be made manifest to those that asked not after him? No other answer can be returned than this, "That no flesh should glory in his presence. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Whoever builds, and builds not upon this foundation, doth build upon the sand, and his house in a storm and tempest will fall. Or if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, the fire shall consume it, and try every man's work of what sort it is.

This doctrine is the inlet to all spiritual, divine peace in the soul. This is a vein through which this peace that passeth all understanding is conveyed to the soul, which the

men and women of the world know not. No man or woman can know the way to this peace, until the Lord give them light that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and guide their feet into the way of peace.

No man can receive, retain, and enjoy this peace of God, unless he wait on God at the springs of peace. I will mention them.

The first spring of peace is faith. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Faith seeth Christ to be our peace, and from him freely given to us; and the vein through which it runs to the soul, is the vein of faith, laying hold on, and applying of the free grace of God to the soul.

The second spring of peace is this, a man must not only know it, where it is, and believe it, but he must stay himself wholly upon it, and upon God, in the constant expectation of the increase and supply of it. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

The next spring of peace, ariseth from a soul's resting satisfied in Christ's righteousness, adding nothing to it. "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. For thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness." The perfection of it is held forth in the word, and always lieth before us, that we may be thankful for it, and peaceable with it, and rejoice in the bestower of it. The Lord Jesus having spoken peace to the soul, and acquainted the soul that he hath paid all his debts, and that his sins, which are so many, shall be remembered no more, then the soul begins to be filled with joy and peace in believing, beholding, and enjoying Christ's righteousness, which begets in the soul a perfect peace, a precious peace, a full and complete peace, and an everlasting peace.

The next vein through which peace comes to the soul, is by our acquainting ourselves with God. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee."

Now by acquainting ourselves with God, these things will fall in. First, thou wilt see that thou wast cast out to the loathing of thy person. That when no eye pitied thee, much less stood ready to relieve thee, that then, even then, when

man was ready to perish, should be the time of love with God, when he cast his skirt of compassion over him, and said unto him, Live! 'O, ye heavens stand amazed? and O, ye saints, O, ye sinners, who believe on Jesus, rejoice and triumph, for when there was no eye to pity thee, the arm of the Lord brought salvation, by raising up a mighty one out of the house of his servant David, even Christ the Lord, "the wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace:" who became man, under the law, and obligation to obedience; and not only so, but also became Surety for us. To do, and suffer, and fulfil that for us, which we are no ways able to do for ourselves. The covenant of works rested in, and trusted to, can never work settled comfort, peace, and quietness of heart, let a man walk as exactly as ever flesh and blood can attain unto. Let him build as confidently on this foundation as he possibly may, yet the heart will be still suspicious, in doubt and fear. But the doctrine of grace rested in and trusted to, doth settle a soul in peace. This is a sure anchor for the soul to rest upon. Let waves swell, let winds blow, he retains a firm peace. Stand here, and we are safe for ever.'—Robert Purnell.

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, bless you abundantly, and fill you with all peace and joy in believing, is the hearty prayer of him who loves you in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

S. E. P.

LETTER VI.

Barton, May 6, 1781.

DEAR FRIEND,

It is with the greatest pleasure I embrace the present opportunity of writing to you. I hope you daily increase in that knowledge of Christ, which is life eternal. It is the great end of the gospel, and the grand design of God in it, to glorify and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. And indeed, it is the sole design of the doctrine of grace, to exhort all

that are the Lord's, to ascribe their whole salvation from sin, Satan, death, and hell, to the free love of God, and to the death of our sweet Jesus Christ, and him alone; and to none or nothing but him. For let me ask the following questions:—Who was made sin for us, but Christ? Who bare our sins in his own body, but Christ? Who was ordained to take away sins, but Christ? Who finished transgressions, and made an end of sins, but Christ? Who appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, but Christ? Who came into the world to save sinners, but Christ? Who washed us from our sins, and purged them away, but Christ? Who gave himself for our sins, but Christ? Who was made a curse for us, and delivered us from the curse of the law, but Christ? Who laid down his life for us, but Christ? Who bare our sins, and carried our sorrows, but Christ? Who was stricken and smitten, afflicted and wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, but Christ? Who made peace for us by the blood of his cross, but Christ? By what means are our iniquities blotted out and forgiven, but by Him? Who could deliver us from the wrath to come, but Christ? What blood could cleanse us from all sin, but the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Who could make us complete and all fair, without spot, and perfect us for ever, but Christ? What Redeemer and Saviour have we, but Christ? who is all in all, in salvation work.

The holy Scriptures attribute all our blessedness, and all our salvation to him, the ever blessed Son of God, alone, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Let us therefore prize the Lord Jesus Christ, lay our whole stress upon him alone, fetch all our comfort from him, and live in a constant view of the everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of his body and soul upon the cross, and in a sight of his all-perfect righteousness, deriving all our life, happiness, peace, strength, comfort, joy, and all our blessedness from Christ alone, and not from any thing in ourselves. One whose name I cannot find, the title-page being lost, says: 'Every thing gives a believer comfort, had we but eyes to see it. God and men, heaven and earth, sin, justice, hell and condemnation, give you all comfort.'

'If you look up to justice, that saith: You poor believing creature, go your way comforted, I am satisfied to the full.

If you look to hell, and death, and condemnation, they say, Be comforted, you poor believing soul, we have no power over you, the Lord Jesus Christ hath conquered us. And if you look to your own sins, they tell you thus much, and say, Be for ever comforted, for we have pleaded against you, but we have lost our cause. If you look up to heaven, there you may see glory, and happiness, and blessedness, ready to entertain you, and every believing soul, and they all call after you and say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;" therefore go away cheerfully, and get you to heaven, and when you come there, be comforted if you can. If Christ, and God, and heaven, and all call you and say, Come hither, ye believing souls; come, O believer, then lift up your head with joy, and draw the waters of comfort and consolation from this truth. Only remember this, when you find your sins roaring against you, and telling your Father that you have sinned, and justice cries, and hell threatens, then take the blood of Christ, and set before your eyes all that ever Christ hath suffered, and see justice fully satisfied, and hear the blood of Christ speaking, as well as the clamours of sin. It is our misery that we can hear the bawlings of sin, and Satan and corruption crying and saying, What, have you salvation, and yet have these and these corruptions? We hear these, and we hearken not to the other. The blood of Christ hath pardoned, and will heal all. Oh! hear that voice, and you shall see and hear admirable things." This same worthy says, 'This is the doctrine that holds up the soul and keeps it from sinking and fainting in the sight and sense of sin.'

This doctrine removes many objections which otherwise would trouble and discourage us.

This doctrine saith, There is nothing to pay, all is paid. It cost Christ dear, that it might cost us nothing. It is not of works, nor according to our works. Our life is hid with Christ in God. The answer of a good conscience is, O God, thy Son hath died for me. Satisfaction is made; what more canst thou require of me? Oh, the unsearchable riches of Christ! this is the doctrine that raiseth the soul when fallen, and enables it to rise and return to God. Not any thing can keep the soul from utter despair, and raise it when fallen, but Christ's satisfaction, and the unchangeableness of the love of

God. Tell me, what peace or comfort could we have, were it not that Christ was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him? This is the doctrine that is full of sweetness and life. Behold a living fountain that can never be drawn dry. It ever flows full of sweetness. Lo! here is strong consolation, full of spirit and life for the soul to drink freely at, at all times, to refresh itself withal. Here is peace, security, consolation, joy, contentment, in that not any thing can be laid to thy charge. Our sins shall be remembered no more. Oh, what a fountain of consolation is here! What manner of love is this! What marrow and fatness is like to this! If my soul is deserted, and faith fail, yet God is my God. I change oft, but he never. When I cannot apprehend him, I am apprehended of him.

Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He that understands not this doctrine, can enjoy no true, solid, settled comfort. In the right understanding of this doctrine, Christ is rightly understood, and our souls enjoy such marrow and fatness as gladden our hearts, and keep our souls from fainting in a world of misery and corruption. God may, for reasons best known to himself, suffer corruption to be too strong for thee, it may be to abase thee more in thine own eyes, to see thy weakness, and to see more of thy Saviour's strength.

God may leave thy personal sanctification the more imperfect, that thou mayest the more study and behold thy justification in Christ Jesus; and lean the more upon him, and joy the more in thy justification by him.

We ought not to live upon, and fetch our comfort from our subduing our sins, but from Christ who is made unto us, both righteousness and sanctification.

When we are at the best, we may not live in ourselves, not by sight, but by faith; and when we are at the worst we ought to live upon Christ by faith; and comfort ourselves in him, and in him alone. It's the folly of many, when they want strength and comfort, they seek it in their duties, and subduing of sin; and comfort themselves there, but Christ is not in all their thoughts.

The greatest peace any saint enjoys, is to be neither ground nor encouragement for them to believe, nor ought any terrors

any possess, to be a ground of discouragement in believing; for our happiness is not in any thing we feel or apprehend in ourselves, but in the word and promise of God, and in that we are known of God, who loves us, and comprehends us in his Son, and in his not imputing our trespasses unto us.

Consider the price that was paid for thy sins, it is infinite in value, being the blood of Him who was truly and properly God. Count all thy sins, still they are the acts of a finite creature; Christ is God, therefore his satisfaction is above them. His righteousness is greater than thy sin. Consider the covenant of grace, it is not made with us, nor can it be broken by us. It is not founded upon such a sandy foundation as thyself and duties are. And seeing the covenant stands sure for ever, it should satisfy us for ever, and cause us to cast away all our doubts and fears. May these quotations prove a blessing. Oh, that God the Holy Ghost may help you, my dear friend, more and more to understand the love of Christ and his great mercy, and perfect work; to the end you may ever crown him in your heart and conscience, and trust the whole of your salvation upon what he did and finished in his life and death.

Draw aside the curtain, and look within the vail, and take a view of what Jesus is there doing for you, and please yourself with this, that Jesus has all your concerns before him, and will withhold no good thing from you. Let this encourage you to cast all your care upon him who careth for you.

It was a noble saying of John Careless the martyr, in his letter to Mr. Philpot, 'I will now with you sing away care, for now my soul is turned to her old rest again and hath taken a sweet nap in Christ's lap; I have cast my care upon the Lord which careth for me, and I will be *careless* according to my name.'

Socrates, a heathen could say, 'Since God is so careful of you, what need you be careful of any thing?' May these most excellent quotations be a real blessing to your soul, and may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, abundantly bless you with a supply of all grace. May grace and peace be multiplied unto you.

I am, your friend in Christ Jesus,

S. E. P.

LETTER VII.

Barton, May 18, 1781.

DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE Jesus Christ is your only hope, the joy of your heart, and the rejoicing of your soul, and that out of his fulness you are constantly receiving grace for grace.

Glory be rendered to God even the Father, who has not only given Jesus Christ for us, to atone for our sins, to obey the law, and to conquer all our enemies, but (eternal blessings be rendered unto him) he has given Jesus with all his fulness unto us, that all our wants might be supplied therefrom.

If we consider the love of our heavenly Father, and the blessings of his love bestowed upon us in Christ Jesus, we shall find occasion and good reason to say with David, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name." Oh, that the eternal Spirit may be graciously pleased to influence your heart day by day, with fresh discoveries of God's everlasting love, as revealed in the written word, and as testified of in the hearts of God's chosen.

Dr. Goodwin says, 'God's love is like a river, or a spring that runs under ground, and hath done so from everlasting. Where breaks it up first? Where doth this fountain begin to bubble up, and spring forth? When a man is first called, then that love that hath run from eternity under ground, and through the heart of Christ upon the cross, breaks out in a man's own heart too; and it (that is, the love of God) is the foundation of all mercy, and of all grace and glory whatever.'

If the love of God is the cause of his manifesting his mercy towards us, we may well observe these excellent words of the same great divine, 'Seek to be accepted, but above all seek to be beloved.' It being God's eternal love towards the elect that is the cause, next to his own glory which is the ultimate cause, of his manifesting all his perfections in the contriving and securing the salvation of his people.

“By grace are ye saved.” Grace shone forth in the eternal council and transactions of the eternal Three. Grace reigned in election, and manifested itself in the choice of God’s people. It is therefore stiled “the election of grace.” Grace appeared in its eternal splendour, in the incarnation and work of Jehovah-Jesus. And grace reigns through the righteousness of God incarnate, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

One end of the sacred Scriptures, is to lay open the doctrine of free grace, and of God’s eternal love, and redemption by Christ, and the blessings issuing therefrom. And ‘if christians’ judgments were well and thoroughly grounded in the doctrine of God’s free grace, and eternal love, and redemption by Jesus Christ, and in the most spiritual inward operations of God’s Spirit, that would fix them from taking in any falsehood of any great moment.’

God fixed his love upon the persons of his people from everlasting, chose and accepted them, in the person of his beloved Son, blessed them in him with all spiritual blessings, and formed the scheme of redemption before the world began, and free grace is the fountain of all, as will appear if we read over the first chapter of Ephesians.

God’s choosing us in Christ, before the foundation of the world; his blessing us as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all spiritual blessings; his predestinating us to the adoption of children; was “according to the good pleasure of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” Eph. i. 5, 6.

You see, God predestinated us to the adoption of sons, to the praise of the glory of his grace. ‘God’s glory therefore,’ says the renowned Goodwin, ‘is more interested in our salvation, than our own good; for not our benefit comes in here, in the mention of what moved God, but the glory of his grace alone. You think it so difficult a thing to work God off to save you. Why? he hath that in him which moveth him more, and did move him from all eternity to do it. He has the glory of his own grace as his motive for saving you.’

Observe, when the apostle saith, God hath accepted us in the Beloved, he doth not say, that this acceptance of us is

in the blood of the Beloved. It was not so founded, but it is founded upon our relation to his person, and so Jesus Christ being beloved, God accepteth us in Him. God hath chosen us in Him, to have relation to his person; and so Jesus Christ being beloved, God accepteth us in Him, and for his relation's sake unto Him, as the principle beloved.

This acceptation of us, even of our persons from everlasting, is founded upon Christ being beloved. And therefore you shall find, that the love wherewith God loved Christ, and the love wherewith he loved us, are said to be the same love. See John xvii. 23.

Thou art a good soul, tell me whether dost thou prize more, the person of Christ given thee, or the benefits thou hast by his death? Thou wilt say, I prize the person of Christ most; and thou prizest right, it is more worth than all his benefits. I used to say (and it is most certainly true) that Christ's love is more than his sufferings, his sufferings worth more than all his benefits; but his person is more than either benefits or sufferings. Now God in choosing thee to be in Christ by election, and in him accepting thy person, he gave thee, in this, his person, and a relation to him, to live with him, and to have communion with him, and to be like him for ever.

But then, over and above this, God gave him as a Redeemer for thee. 'The knowledge of Christ, and communion with his person, and the glory thereof, is part of the happiness ordained for us in the world to come. But the knowledge of Christ in his benefits of redemption, is that which takes up our thoughts here, and both conduce to make him most glorious and dear unto us, and us most completely happy in him.'—Dr. Goodwin. If we search the Scriptures ever so narrowly, we shall find all our blessedness and happiness arise from the pure gospel; which holds forth to the view of faith, the free, sovereign grace of God. This is the case, 1st in respect of God's everlasting purposes. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for

every man." Heb. ii. 9. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up freely for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32.

Zanchy observes on these words, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Rom. v. 15. What means he by the gift by grace? To which that great divine replies, 'Even that very redemption of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ himself, for it was the free grace of God that did order that as a gift to us, for our salvation and justification.' So that in this respect we are saved by grace, this original grace of God. And the grace that is in Jesus Christ, take it as it is for us, is but a second grace, it is but a gift of grace. This is the fountain. It is grace given us in Christ Jesus. Again we are saved by grace, as God hath laid up all our salvation, and all the grace by which we are to be saved in another, viz. in his Son. It hath pleased the Father, that in Christ, the Head of the church, should all fulness dwell. From Christ the Head, believers receive a suitable supply. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and his members are complete in him. In him they are beloved, chosen, accepted, justified, and blessed. In him they have light, life, holiness, and complete salvation. Christ is the matter of his people's glory, and they do well to glory in him, and make their boast of him, and rejoice continually in him alone, for he is his people's all, and Jesus Christ is all things to his people. He is their garment of salvation, their fountain to wash in, and be clean. Their physician who healeth all their infirmities. Their counsellor to direct them in all difficult cases. Their meat and drink. "I am," says Jesus, "the bread of life."

And it will not be amiss to observe, that bread is prepared food. The corn must be threshed, and winnowed, and ground in a mill, and baked in an oven, before it can be bread for us to eat. So the Lord Jesus Christ was, as it were, threshed by afflictions, and winnowed by temptations, he was ground in the mill of the Father's unbounded wrath. For it was he that trod the wine press of the Father's wrath alone, and all this was done that he might be prepared food, and a fit Saviour for us. Likewise bread is common food, it

is common to the poor, as well as to the rich, for the foolish, as well as for the wise. The poor have bread, if they have any thing. So the Lord Jesus Christ is a common Saviour to all sorts of sinners, when God the Holy Ghost shews them their need of Him. Christ is a full, free, perfect, complete, and common Saviour to all his people, whether they are high or low, rich or poor, noble or ignoble, all of them are beholden to Christ alone, for peace and pardon, righteousness and life, grace and holiness. Bread is likewise the stay and staff of life, so the Lord Jesus Christ is not only the food of our souls, but the soul of our souls, the life of our lives. He is likewise the water of life, who refreshes his people, when they are faint, and satisfies their souls with his goodness. Jesus is likewise the way in which they walk, their gate of admission into the Father's presence, their door to everlasting life and felicity, and a fountain of all good to them, whose love towards them is so great and transcendent, as it is impossible ever fully in earth or heaven to comprehend it as it is. And what should further endear this precious Jesus to us, is, that he will never leave us nor forsake us. No, nothing can ever separate us from his love. He loved his people before all time. He engaged on their behalf in the covenant of grace before the world began. He fulfilled his covenant engagement in the fulness of time, and finished the transgressions of his people, made an end of their sins, and brought in for his redeemed ones, an everlasting righteousness, and is entered into heaven itself as the forerunner and representative of his people whom he presents before the throne, cleansed from all their sins and filthiness in his own blood, and made the very righteousness of God; in that royal robe of his obedience wherewith he hath clothed them.

The elect are complete in Jesus, and they shine before God as so many jewels in the mediatorial crown of Jesus. I would write, were I capable of it, on this subject, as might be a means of discovering such beauties in Jesus, and such treasures of grace and glory in Him, as might cause your heart to glow afresh with holy fervour to Jesus who loved you, and gave himself for you. But I am insufficient for this. May the Holy Ghost therefore take the matter into his own hand, and glorify Jesus in your heart.

I shall conclude with these words of a most excellent person, and may they afford you, by the blessing of the divine Spirit, fresh encouragement to wait upon God for all that you stand in need of. "Lo! I am with you always," says Christ. "Lo! I am with you," to own you. "Lo! I am with you," to direct you. "Lo! I am with you," to cheer you. "Lo! I am with you," to counsel and direct you. "Lo! I am with you," to assist and strengthen you. "Lo! I am with you," to shelter and protect you.

S. E. P.

LETTER VIII.

To a Church.

Barton, June 30, 1781.

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,

I TAKE it for granted that you are, one and all, exceedingly desirous of my returning to you, in order to go in and come out before you, as your teacher and minister. This I conclude from what you have written to me on this subject.

I hope you have duly considered the matter, as it is an affair of great and important consequence.

The church of God in scripture, is compared and resembled to a natural body, wherein are many members, united to each other, and to one head, by one spirit. Now in order to this union, we are to assemble ourselves together in obedience to that great command, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Heb. x. 25.

Those that are assembled together according to gospel institution, are or should be a communion of saints, who give up themselves to the Lord, and to each other according to the will of God, to walk with each other in love, and to join together in all those acts of religious worship, such as conference, prayer, hearing the word, and in attending to the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper.

Without entering into a particular discussion of these things, I would observe that Jesus Christ is the only foundation, and the supreme Head, Lord and King, over his own house, the church. That the end of religious worship, is to confess Christ before the world, to testify our love and obedience unto him, and be a means of glorifying him in the world.

In order that members of a gospel church may walk together in love, it is necessary that "they all speak the same thing, and that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." 1 Cor. i. 10.

The glory and honour of Jesus every believer ought to seek, advance, and promote by all ways and means; and it is highly incumbent on the members of Christ, to embrace, receive, and stand fast in the firm belief of the truths of the everlasting gospel; and in order to your spiritual profit in the means of grace, it is necessary that you should be unanimous in your choice, and that you should be in some measure convinced of the abilities in the person you choose, call, and appoint over you, as will be for Christ's glory, and the edification, comfort, strength and benefit of your souls.

These things, if you have duly attended unto them, and if you have made known your case to the Lord, and are in any measure convinced that I am the person pointed out by God to be your pastor, I have no objection.

I must, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, once more impartially beg you, earnestly, seriously, and deliberately, to consider this matter.

If I come, and you should after a season appear dissatisfied, unless there should be any reason for it in my life and doctrine, you will not only grieve me, but you will in some measure cause the name of God to be reproached. But if you will earnestly commend me, in all your prayers at the throne of grace, if you will kindly and mutually sympathize with me in all my weaknesses and infirmities, if you will express your esteem of me, as appointed by your own choice over you in the Lord, and by the Lord; this will draw out my love towards you, and will, by the blessing of God, be for the mutual comfort both of you and me.

Beloved, pray earnestly to the Lord God for me, and for his blessing upon me, both as a Christian and as a minister, that Christ may be glorified in me and by me. Remember,

it is not the most glorious truths in God's book, delivered ever so clearly and faithfully, that can quiet the conscience, comfort the heart, and influence the life, without the divine blessing of the Holy Ghost, whose sacred presence ought therefore to be sought, for without him we can do nothing.

I cannot but beg you would have a meeting on purpose to pray for me, and I wish you would continually ply the throne on my behalf.

Dearly beloved, look to Jesus. Consider his love! Call to mind what Jesus has done, what he has suffered, and what he is now doing in heaven for you.

Blessings on him! he loved his people from the days of eternity. He engaged on their behalf before the world began. In the fulness of time he assumed their debased nature, bore their awful curse, and paid their boundless debt, rejoiced in the habitable parts of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.

Oh, for more faith in and more love to a precious Christ, that influenced by the spirit of Jesus, you may all go on from strength to strength. May the Holy Ghost quicken your souls, animate your hearts, and draw your affections more and more after Jesus, and make him your constant joy and delight.

Remember the relation Jesus bears to his people. He is their Head, they are his body. He is their Father, they are his children. He is their Bridegroom, they are his bride. He is their Shepherd, and they are the sheep of his pasture.

He is the foundation, and they are the building. He is the vine, and they are the branches. Oh, that with the spouse in the Canticles, you may by the testimony of the Holy Ghost be enabled to say, "my beloved is mine, and I am his." Oh, what transcendent blessings, graces, and privileges are contained in the knowledge of Christ, and in real communion with him. May the Holy Ghost discover him and his unsearchable riches daily to your spiritual view.

The believer is one with Christ, and Christ is one with him. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the God and Father of all believers in Jesus. The believer is accepted in the Beloved. The Father sees him in Jesus, and is well pleased with him in his Son, and he is in

Christ, everlastingly reconciled, and embraces the believer in the arms of his everlasting love, saying unto him, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

Jesus with all his fulness is the believer's. His righteousness is the believer's, in which he glories, saying in the language of faith, "I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God and will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." All the unsearchable riches of Christ are the believer's. All the divine perfections of Christ are engaged for the believer's good, and are as an hiding place, into which believers may flee, and be safe. The blood of Christ is the bath in which his people are washed and cleansed from all their sins and filthiness, and to which they may continually fly and repair, when they are at any time afresh defiled.

The obedience of Christ is the robe which presents them before God, righteous even as Christ is righteous. The everlasting arms of Jesus are laid underneath his people, and he, the eternal God, is their refuge.

Blessings, eternal blessings, be rendered unto him. He sends down his Holy Spirit from heaven into the hearts of his dear children, to testify of what he has done; and it is by the Holy Ghost that believers are enabled to call Jesus, "my Lord and my God." Without the Spirit assisting, we can do nothing, being naturally dead in trespasses and sins. And after we have received the Holy Ghost, he is the continual breath of spiritual life unto us, yea, as much as the air we breath, is of natural life.

Every spiritual sensation of peace, comfort, and joy in God the Father, is from the divine agency of the Spirit. Every act of religious worship is performed acceptably by his strengthening us mightily in the inner man, and giving us to will, and to act that which is truly pleasing and acceptable in his sight.

If we pray aright, it is in the Holy Ghost. If we hear aright, it is by his blessing on the word preached. If we sing aright, it is by his blessing, it is by the same Spirit. And, therefore, we are not only commanded to seek his assistance in all we do, but also a growing and increasing measure of his gifts and graces.

Beloved, time is short, and the judge is at the door. Oh, that you may all, through grace, improve every opportunity

of glorifying the riches of God's love in Christ, by your lives and conversations. "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." And to the end my coming may be for the Lord's glory and your benefit, pray mightily to the Lord God of hosts for me. I sincerely wish you all an abundant supply of the Spirit of Christ.

I conclude with the words of one now with God, and may they afford you, by the blessing of the divine Spirit, fresh encouragement to wait upon the Lord for all you stand in need of.

"Lo!" says Christ, "I am with you always." "Lo! I am with you," to own you. "Lo! I am with you," to counsel and direct you. "Lo! I am with you," to cheer and comfort you. "Lo! I am with you," to assist and strengthen you. "Lo! I am with you," to shelter and protect you. "Lo! I am with you," to work all your works in you and for you. "Lo! I am with you," to strengthen your graces and weaken your sins. "Lo! I am with you," to scatter your doubts and answer your prayers. "Lo! I am with you," to bless you, and crown you with immortality and eternal glory.'

May Jesus be every day higher in your affections and esteem, and may you never lose sight of him by faith, till you see him face to face.

So prays your's for Jesus's sake,

S. E. P.

LETTER IX.

Boskenna, Jan. 9, 1783.

DEAR FRIEND,

It is a long season since I received your's, and for want of time it is but now answered.

I hope your heart is happy in the enjoyment of God's love

in Christ Jesus towards you. It is an unspeakable mercy to be interested in God's everlasting covenant. A covenant which proceeds wholly and only from the grace of the eternal Trinity, and in which Father, Son, and Spirit were engaged from eternity. A covenant which proceeds from God's everlasting love, is founded upon an everlasting righteousness, supported with everlasting mercy, administers everlasting consolation, confirmed by the everlasting God, and sealed by the blood of the everlasting covenant. This covenant is all of grace. In it God engages and becomes the God of his people, promises to pardon all their sins, to conquer all their enemies, to lead them safely through life, to support them at death, to bring them to eternal glory, and to be their exceeding great reward.

The Father's everlasting love, the Son's free, full, perfect, finished, and eternal salvation, and the Holy Spirit's grace and consolation, is the sum and substance of the blessings and blessedness of this covenant.

May you be led by the sacred Spirit to view this glorious covenant, and to see daily your interest clear to all the blessings of the same, that you may rejoice in life, triumph in death, and join with the innumerable number of the elect and ransomed ones before the throne, singing salvation to God and the Lamb.

Look wholly, live only and rejoice simply in Jesus, in his blood and righteousness, in his intercession and advocacy. He lives in the presence of God for you; he wears your name on the breast-plate of his heart; he rejoices in you, and over you, to do you good; and you will shortly see him face to face. Let nothing hinder you from rejoicing in the Lord. Blessed be God, I am quite well. Oh! for more spiritual health. Oh! for an heart all on fire, and on the full stretch for God.—Adieu.

Your's in Jesus,

S. E. P.

LETTER X.

June 26, 1795.

MY VERY DEAR AND MOST HIGHLY ESTEEMED FRIEND IN
THE LORD,

THOUGH your letter has for a long season remained unanswered, yet 'tis not owing to forgetfulness, but so many things call for my attention, that I have not with real convenience been able to write. Also I consider, when I was present with you I endeavoured to set before you all that I knew, and had been taught, concerning our most blessed and precious Lord Jesus; and in my sermons and letters, which since my removal I have from time to time transmitted to you, the same blessed and ineffably precious subject hath been renewed again and again. And as I look on you as one with Christ, brought to know him, and believe on him through the gracious teachings, and blessed influences of the Holy Spirit, I have thought it better to write to such of the Lord's beloved ones as were not brought so far on in the school of Christ as you are. I highly esteem you in the Lord, for your close cleaving to Jesus with full purpose of heart. May Jesus shine upon you, and within you, and give you such a view of his glory, such an inward perception and apprehension of the virtue, value, efficacy, and dignity of his most precious blood, as may ravish your soul, warm your heart, purify your mind, and render him in his person, love, righteousness, and 'blood-shedding very precious to you.

I sent you, a long time since, a sermon which I had preached, and afterwards recollected, and wrote on the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity. I would wish you to read it, and give up your mind to the great importance of it, as it appears to me to be of the greatest consequence to the souls of God's believing people, to have some real, scriptural, and divine acquaintance with the doctrine of the holy, essential, and eternal Three, who co-exist in the self-existing incomprehensible essence, and of their eternal acts in the everlasting

counsel and covenant. This leads us to give glory and praise to each of the divine persons for their covenant-relation to us, and for their covenant-engagements on our behalf, and for our present and our everlasting benefit. 'Tis good to dive deep into the revelation which the Lord hath given us in his blessed word concerning these things.

Since I wrote last, I have been very deeply impressed with a sense of my speedy departure from this vale of tears, and was brought into such circumstances as to be in my own view, apprehension, sense, and feeling, actually dying, and those who were with me thought so too; at which season the Lord was very gracious indeed, for I was enabled to triumph in Jesus, and found it would be beyond description and conception easy to die, in the exercise of simple faith on Jesus. Yet the Lord hath been pleased to continue me in the body, though several times since I have been in so low a frame of body, that I expected nothing but its immediate dissolution. The doctor himself told me from the state of my pulse, he conceived, and should not wonder, if it were to terminate in a palsy, or apoplexy. The winter has tried my health, and many a time I have in appearance been just going to launch into eternity, but I am at present very greatly recovered; blessed be the Lord for it. Yet the cause is not removed; and it is most probable, in the Lord's time, it will end in sudden death, which will be best, and a real blessing as to myself, because for me "to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

As to the word sanctified, in the Scripture you mention, viz. Heb. x. 13. "By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It means separated; such as are elected by God the Father, and are set apart in predestination, to partake of grace and glory, such are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ for them, their sins are removed from their persons, and out of the sight of God, by the sacrifice of Immanuel. And all these persons are, and will be quickened, and made alive to Christ by his Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Do not look into yourself for grace and sanctification, but look wholly out of yourself to Christ Jesus for it. View yourself in him, as represented by him before the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, as shining in the presence of your heavenly Father,

in the person, righteousness, and sacrifice of the God-man, Christ Jesus. 'Tis as you look to Christ, view yourself in Christ, and have communion with Christ, you will find real and substantial happiness. There is nothing like spiritual meditations on Christ, and going over all that Christ is, hath been, and done, and suffered, and is now doing in heaven, to make us spiritually minded, and to increase our spirituality. Sure I am, and I frequently think it over in my mind, it is rare to meet with such as profess Christ, and are really spiritual in their frames and conversations. We cannot be a single moment spiritual, any further than Christ is viewed by us, and we live on him. Blessings for ever on the Lamb, he is our life, light, holiness, righteousness, atonement, peace, salvation, glory, blessedness, and all in all. He loved us, and gave himself for us; he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; he was made sin and a curse for us; he hath loved us, and cleansed us from every spot and stain of sin in his own most precious blood; he hath destroyed death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil. And I am aiming, through the teachings of his blessed Spirit, to live as though there was no such thing as death, by living on Christ as the very Paschal Lamb of God, who was offered for us, who by his death hath destroyed death, and by his rising to life again, hath restored us to everlasting life.

May Jesus live more and more in me, and may I live more and more in him, and so eat his flesh and drink his blood, that I may daily experience that Christ liveth in me, and I in him.

S. E. P.

LETTER XI.

Boskenna, March 28, 1783.

DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE your eye of faith is kept, by the divine Spirit, fixed upon the Lamb of God which hath borne off and carried away the sin of the elect world. To behold Christ as our Surety

and sacrifice, our righteousness and redemption, is a blessed sight. This divine person, Jehovah-Jesus, Immanuel, God incarnate; we are called upon throughout the Bible to view, admire, and behold. And a sight and view of Jesus will most effectually eclipse all the glories and excellencies of the world, and will captivate, engage, and most divinely, sweetly, and powerfully draw our hearts and affections towards Him who is altogether lovely. God make it the language of your heart more than ever. "Draw me, and we will run after thee."

I hope the Lord Jesus is every day more precious in your esteem. The more you look on him by faith, the more you must and will love him. Such are the transcendent glories, excellencies, and beauties of Immanuel, that when the Holy Ghost describes him, in the word, he ransacks heaven and earth for images to set forth this illustrious fair one. Sometimes he compares him to the sun, which is the cause of all light, and heat, and warmth; and what the sun is in the natural world, that Christ is in the spiritual. Our life and light, our love to God, and growth in grace, are owing to the divine influences of Christ the sun of righteousness, who arises upon the souls of his people with health and healing under his blessed wings.

Sometimes he is compared to the bright and morning star; for as that is the presage of day, so Christ, the bright and morning star, where he arises, is the blessed presage of a glorious day which will never know a setting sun; in which the Lamb, in the midst of the throne, will shine forth in all his splendour and majesty, in all his brightness and meridian glory, upon his church and people.

The Lamb of God is to his people upon earth their all in all: and he will be their heaven of heavens in eternal glory.

Christ is compared to light; he says, "I am the light of the world." John viii. 12.

We have no spiritual light but from him. "In thy light," says David, "we see light."

He is compared to the lion of the tribe of Judah, to point out his almighty power to conquer his enemies, and to defend and protect his people. The might of his arm has been most amazingly displayed in his conquering the old serpent called the devil, and in his bruising the serpent's head.

How does the power, the almighty power of Christ appear in the work of salvation completed by him? That he might deliver his people from the curse of the law, he was pleased to wrestle with the wrath of infinite justice. He stood up between God and us, and our sins meeting on him he patiently withheld not himself from shame and spitting. He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, and 'bore all incarnate God could bear, with strength enough and none to spare.'—Mr. Hart.

He bore what? The sins of all his people. The curse and wrath of his divine Father due to their crimes, with which he was charged as their Surety. He bore up under all these weights, and by his sufferings, sacrifice and death, he made a full atonement for sin, obtained a complete victory over sin, Satan, death and hell. He satisfied divine justice perfectly, and bore away for ever out of the sight of God, the sins of all his church and people. And God beholds his children clothed in the immaculate righteousness of his beloved Son, and completely cleansed from all their sins through the inestimably precious sacrifice and blood-shedding of Jesus.

The God-man bore the curse of the broken law to deliver us from it. He is now in glory making a presentation of himself continually in the holiest of all, as the finished righteousness and atonement of his people. And "if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" of intercession.

Here is the foundation laid by God for our faith and hope. Jehovah the Son became incarnate, to deliver us from our sins and miseries.

The Saviour is God and Man, united in one Christ. His holy nature, his perfect obedience, his expiatory death, his resurrection from the dead, his entrance into heaven, and his appearing there in the presence of God for us; lays a most glorious foundation for the support of our faith, the strengthening of our hope, and for encouraging our souls in approaching the throne of grace.

We have a Great High Priest, who is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. One whom the Father heareth always. One whose righteousness and blood contains all the efficacy and worth of the eternal Godhead. One who pleads

powerfully in the court of heaven, and carries successfully all causes put into his hand, and which are committed unto him. He is the Wonderful Counsellor.

The Lord the Spirit teach you and me to put all our concerns into his hands, to rely wholly upon and live on his fulness, and evermore to rejoice in him as the God of our salvation.

May this promise be daily fulfilled in you, and be your constant experience, viz. "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be as a watered garden, and as springs of water whose waters fail not." May the Lord abundantly water and refresh your soul.

S. E. P.

LETTER XII.

Truro, Sept. 23, 1783.

DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE your heart is perfectly happy in the love of God, and I trust you are led to view the eternity of it—the perpetuity of it; it was in God's heart towards you from everlasting; it was fixed on your person before the world was. Blessed be the Lord, nothing can cause the Lord God to remove his love from you. God loves his people in Christ. He chose their persons in Him, and accepted them in the beloved. The Father blessed them in Him, with all spiritual blessings. The Father views them in Him with eternal pleasure and delight. In Christ's righteousness they are everlastingly righteous. In the blood of Christ they are without spot. God's whole soul delights in them. He rejoices with his whole heart and with his soul to do them good. He beholds them continually in the person and finished salvation of Jesus.

If you would maintain a sense of God's love towards you at all times, and in all places and cases, it must be by believing, by relying on Jehovah's word; for if you attend to

your own sensible enjoyment and experience of it, you will be led off from your proper centre and resting place.

It is a most blessed thing to go on your way to heaven, believing that all things are working together for your good. God will never leave us nor forsake us. He loves us with an everlasting love. We are everlastingly righteous in Christ. All our sins are removed from our persons, and taken away from before the Lord, by the sacrifice of the God-man. To believe this from the Scriptures of truth, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is a matter of vast importance in real experience.

My friend, there is no rock of refuge for us but Christ. He is our resting place. He is our centre. All our salvation is in him. Our all rests upon what he hath already done and suffered. And when we are enabled, in the light of God's eternal Spirit, to view the glory of Christ's person, and the perfection of his finished righteousness and atonement, then we shall see the need of relying on him, and his most perfect work, and our safety and security in so doing.

Every thing within us and without has a tendency to lead us from looking wholly unto Christ. But it is the invariable command of God in the gospel, "Behold the Lamb." "Look unto me, and be ye saved." Look at Christ, and you will please the Father.

"Behold," says the eternal Father, "my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break; and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth."

'This is the record of God concerning his Son. His choice of him, his love to him, his furnishing him with every grace of the Spirit to go through the work of salvation. Christ is here revealed. And what is thus written of him hath been fulfilled. He hath finished the work, and the Holy Spirit is calling sinners through the gospel to come and trust in Jesus.

'May we do it in faith, nothing wavering. But setting our seal to the record of God, may we declare, this is my act and deed. The Father sends convinced sinners to the

Son, and commands them to look upon him as He does. May we behold him thus! There is nothing in Christ but what should encourage sinners to come unto him, and to trust in his name. Convinced sinners labour and are heavy laden, because they refuse to come to Christ, and to trust in him for his promised rest. It is the will of God, his saving commandment, that sinners should believe on Jesus. May we obey it and be saved. And whoever flies to Jesus for refuge, has two immutable things to trust in, the counsel and the oath of God.' I have quoted this from Romaine. May these most excellent sentences serve to establish your faith.

I do trust, my dear friend, you are looking only and wholly to the immaculate Lamb of God, and I hope you are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Surely, to feel and know what is contained in these following lines of Dr. Young, is an unspeakable mercy.

'Thou my all! my theme! my inspiration and my crown! my soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth! my strength in age! my rise in low estate! my world! my light in darkness! and my life in death! my boast through time! bliss through eternity! eternity too short to speak thy praise! or fathom thy profound of love to man! to man of men the meanest, even to me; my sacrifice! my God!—What things are these?'

Poor convinced sinners are saying, 'I am afraid Christ hath not died for me.' 'And why not for thee?' says good Master Bridge. He adds, 'I shall tell you what I have heard concerning a young man, that lay upon his death bed, and went to heaven. While he lay on it, he comforted himself in this, that the Lord Jesus Christ died for sinners. 'Oh, blessed be the Lord,' says he, 'Jesus Christ hath died for me.'

'Satan came in with his temptation to him, Young man, but why for thee? how canst thou make that appear, that Christ died for thee! Christ died for sinners, but why for thee? To whom the dying person replied, 'O, the Lord Jesus, he died for sinners, and therefore, Satan, why not for me?' So he maintained his ground, held his comfort, and went to heaven triumphing. And so say I to thee,' says Master Bridge; 'poor drooping soul, thou art labouring under temptation, why did Christ not die for thee? Why not for

thee? Why not for thee? And so say unto Satan, why not for me? Christ's satisfaction lies open to all sorts of sinners to come unto it.'

I am, your real friend in Christ Jesus,

S. E. P.

LETTER XIII.

Truro, March 15, 1785.

MY FRIEND,

I HOPE you are more and more in love with Jesus Christ. Blessed be the Lord, the day hastens when you will quit the church militant, to join in the song with the church triumphant in glory. What an unspeakable love does Jesus bear towards all his mystic members! It is a love which passeth knowledge. It is boundless and bottomless. It is immense and incomprehensible. It is the wonder of heaven, and the song of eternity. In the love of Christ we behold mysteries indeed. For out of the immense love wherewith he loved us, we behold the eternal Son of God taking hold of our nature, and becoming man, God and man united in the person of Christ. And when we view God in our nature, obeying and suffering, bleeding and dying, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God, we have great reason to call upon all the faculties of our souls to admire and adore, praise and extol our Lord Jesus Christ. Last Lord's-day I preached here from the following passage of scripture, Hosea ii. 19, 20.

"And I will betroth thee unto me for ever: yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness and thou shall know the Lord."

In which discourse I endeavoured to point out Jesus Christ as the bridegroom, and the church, the Lamb's wife, the bride; and that God the Father from everlasting loved

the elect, and presented them to Christ in all that glory and beauty which he intended and designed to adorn her with in heaven. The Son of God, viewing the elect as thus presented to him in the glass of his Father's eternal decrees and purposes, fell in love with them, and asked for them at the hands of his Father, that they might become his bride and spouse; and that the Father gave them unto Christ. They being thus from eternity united unto him, when they in Adam fell into sin, Christ their heavenly husband came from heaven in order to pay the immense debt to law and justice, and thereby obtain for them eternal redemption. In a day of the Redeemer's power, when poor sinners are drawn to Christ effectually, then the words of the text are fulfilled. For Christ, the husband of his church, out of love to his people, sends his gospel to proclaim and publish his grace. The ministers of Christ are sent on purpose to court poor sinners, to describe Christ's beauty, to declare his love, to proclaim and sing aloud of his righteousness and blood, to bring forth his promises and invitations as so many love tokens, and to declare that all things are ready, therefore, come ye to the marriage. All things are ready on the part of God the Father, Son, and Spirit. The Father so loved the world that he gave his Son to die. Gave him to be a covenant for the people. And he has given him in the word with all the love of his heart to sinners as sinners. Therein he sets him forth as a propitiation, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

Indeed the language of God the Father in the Bible, is, 'Take my Son, and with him every blessing that can make you holy and happy.'

The Father's law and justice are magnified and satisfied by the obedience and blood-shedding of the Lamb, and therefore God is pleased to reveal himself unto his people in Christ, as the God Lord, gracious and merciful, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. The righteousness and atonement of Christ are set forth in the word, to the end that those who are truly convinced of sin, and of their want of Jesus, may rely thereon for pardon and peace, righteousness and acceptance. And the Son of God thus addresses his people in his word: "I will betroth thee unto me for ever." A strange and surprising act of grace, for the Son of God to

fall in love with such poor dunghill worms as we are ! And while we are in our sin and in our blood, to pass by and speak life into our dead souls, and cover us with the glorious garment of his salvation, and cleanse us in his own most precious blood. And blessed be his name ; he says unto his people, “ I will betroth thee unto me for ever ; ” for our union and marriage relation unto Christ is indissoluble, it can never be broken ; “ Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness,” for in his own most perfect righteousness he adorns and clothes his people. And the Church of Christ is perfectly righteous in him. And in him his people are eternally complete.

I am your's in Christ Jesus,

S. E. P.

LETTER XIV.

Truro, Sept. 26, 1795.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

CHRIST is all in all. The text. The subject. The end and aim of all true preaching. I know of no way to heaven but Christ alone. I expect to die glorying in the Cross of Christ. I would be found only in Him. Christ's blood and righteousness are all my salvation. Blessed be the Lord who has been graciously pleased to lead you into the knowledge of divine truth, and has brought you to some degree of establishment in it, which will be a great means of comforting your soul, and of leading you on with holy courage in the good ways of God. Your object of faith is Jesus Christ. And your happiness lies in viewing and beholding Him. The gospel contains Christ's unsearchable riches. The more you know of Christ, as set before you in the everlasting gospel, the more precious he will be to you. The beauties of Christ discovered in the word are engaging. He has overpowering charms. His love is most powerful in winning and engaging our minds. It most sweetly and divinely con-

strains the hearts of his dear people. When the eternal Spirit is pleased to open our understandings to understand the scriptures, and what is written in them concerning Jesus, and when he gives us to behold the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, then we see such transcendent excellency in Jesus, as cannot but draw our souls to him, and engage us to follow on to know Him. For there is such a depth of sin in us, and there is such a depth of grace and mercy in Christ, that nothing can be so suitable unto us, as sinners, as the provision which free grace has made for us, and the supply of all our wants in the fulness of the Lord Jesus.

Oh! what a depth of love does the gospel discover! such as passeth knowledge. A love which is, and will be, the wonder of Heaven throughout eternity. The love of Jesus is the grand subject of the inspired volume. It is therein set forth to the view of faith. And after all that is revealed of it, it remains an unfathomable ocean, without a bottom or a shore. Indeed the more we know of it, the more we wonder at it; and are lost in holy amazement. The love of God in Christ towards his people, is the spring and fountain, yea, the ocean of all the believer's happiness. And the gospel is the discovery of it. The bloody sweat which Christ bedewed his sacred body with in the garden of Gethsemane, with the agony his soul was then in, when conflicting with divine wrath; the stripes he endured, the crown of thorns he wore, his crucifixion and death, all loudly proclaim his boundless bottomless love towards poor miserable sinners. Oh! for a steadfast and lively faith in the great Redeemer's sorrows and sufferings. It is by faith in the efficacious sorrows and death of the God-man that we get to triumph over sin, Satan, death and hell. We cannot do one single moment without Christ. We every moment need his assistance. Without him we can do nothing. No further than as we really deal with his blood and obedience, do we get relief from present evil. Let our wants be what they may, there is a provision for them in the fulness of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is an all-sufficiency of grace in Jesus, for the supply of his people, and his love truly known, believed, felt, and experienced in the soul, cannot but make the heart truly and perfectly happy.

It is most blessed indeed, when the believer is helped on

day by day, through the Holy Spirit's teaching, to live by simple faith upon the Lord. It should never be forgotten by us that Christ, the object of our faith, is revealed in the word. That we are to view him as the Holy Spirit has revealed him in the word of truth. Our faith being exercised on Christ as revealed in the word, we are quickened, comforted, and strengthened. There is no life to be compared to a life of faith. The word of God is the ground of faith. It is the means whereby it increases and grows, and brings forth fruit to the praise and glory of God. We should distinguish between faith and its fruits. The business of faith is not to be looking into ourselves for discouragements, but to look into God's word for encouragements. Let our cases, trials, temptations, or experience be what they may, a faith's view of Christ, looking unto Jesus, is an infallible, and a present and immediate remedy. Faith in Christ, in act and exercise, will make believers more than conquerors. Our Jesus is a Saviour that has delivered, does deliver, and will deliver us. He is a self-existent Saviour. He has all power in heaven and in earth. His eye and his heart are upon his people perpetually. He is a wall of fire round about them, to protect, secure, and defend them; and is, in the midst of them, their glory.

May the Lord bless you with increasing knowledge and light into the mysteries of Christ's redemption.

You have abundant reason to thank the Lord for his appearing for you. You see the keeper of Israel watcheth over you for good. The eye of the Lord is over the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. The Lord suffers his people at times to be brought low, but it is with a view to their real, spiritual and eternal good.

I most heartily wish you an abundant supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

May you increase with the increase of God.

S. E. P.

LETTER XV.

Truro, March 20, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE your heart is perfectly happy in the blessed enjoyment of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. I should have given you a short epistle before this time, but many things hindered. But I do not forget you at the throne of grace. It is our happiness, our Jesus continually remembereth us in the court of heaven. He hath engraven us on the palms of his hands.

I hope you are taken up in the contemplations of the glories of the person of our most adorable Mediator, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and in viewing him as Jehovah our righteousness; and on relying on him as your peace-maker, who has made peace by the blood of his cross. What a blessing is it, when the Holy Spirit is pleased to give us to see that we are one with Christ, united to his person; clothed with his glorious obedience; washed from all our sins, both original and actual, in his own blood; set as a seal upon his heart, that we are complete in him, and made one spirit with the Lord. This knowledge is blessedness itself. I have been lately considering the importance of what is contained in the following words, Titus i. 2, 3 :—
“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour.”

The apostle speaks of the hope of eternal life. Which hope is founded on the promise of God. Which promise contains an immutable truth. He that made the promise is “that God that cannot lie.” The time when God gave this promise was “before the world began.” The person to whom God made the promise was “Jesus Christ,” his co-equal and co-eternal Son, considered as God-Man; the head of his body the church, their representative and Surety. The elect were considered in him, just as all mankind were considered in the first Adam, and the covenant of works was made with him, as the head and root of all his posterity; so

the whole election of grace, all the mystic members of Christ, were in him from everlasting. Hence he is styled, "the everlasting Father." Isaiah ix. 6. And he represented them, and acted for them, and on their behalf, before all time, and spoke on their behalf, and received grants of grace, and the promise of eternal life for them; and he is the everlasting life, as well as the everlasting righteousness of his people. "Your life," says the apostle, "is hid with Christ in God." Col. iii. 3. Christ is the root and fountain of all spiritual life in us. He dwells in the hearts of his people, as in his own house and palace; and they dwell in him. The ground in which our hope lays hold for eternal life, is the promise of God. This promise contains undoubted truth, it being given by that God who cannot lie. God gave this promise to Christ, the head and representative of the elect, before the world began. The means by which he manifested it, is by the preaching of the gospel; which is called in the Bible: The counsel of God—the gospel of the blessed God—the gospel of the grace of God—the gospel of your salvation—the everlasting gospel. Which exhibits the Father's everlasting love—the unsearchable riches of Christ—the treasures of the eternal Spirit's grace.

And for us to know, by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, that it is the good pleasure of God's will to save us, to save me, a poor sinful hell-deserving creature, by the one perfect obedience, and propitiatory sufferings of Jesus Christ, this is the sum of all true knowledge. 'This is,' says Dr. Goodwin, 'the very pith of the gospel.' And I will add, this is sufficient for salvation, for the whole salvation of the soul. For this knowledge is indeed manifestative salvation.

My friend, if we knew what treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid and contained in the gospel, we should be very earnest in searching the Holy Scriptures day and night. For all that ever will be made known of Christ upon earth is revealed in them.

And to know and believe from them, that God hath loved us from eternity, with an everlasting love, and that he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that Jehovah the Father views and beholds us in his Son, and that until he cease to love him, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, he will not, he cannot

cease to love us, to love his elect, his church, his people, to delight in them, in us, and to rejoice over you, to do you good. This is indeed wondrous grace! It will be the wonder of saints in eternity.

To be viewing Jesus acting as your Surety—representing your person—obeying in your nature—bearing all your sins in his own body on the tree, and enduring the inexpressible curse of the broken law for you—living in the exercise of a real, spiritual, and supernatural faith on this Jesus, and his work of salvation:—It enlivens the soul, warms the heart, quiets the conscience, and emboldens the soul before God at the throne of grace.

You should never come to God, but under the consideration of your being one with Christ, and in the steadfast belief of your being brought nigh by the blood of the Lamb.

You can never expect to receive too much from the Lord. He is able to do exceeding abundant above all that we ask, or think. There is no change in him. He says, “I am Jehovah, I change not.” Jesus Christ is “Jehovah, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

The Holy Spirit’s testimony in the word, concerning the Father’s love, the Son’s salvation, its freeness and perfection, and that it is for sinners, is always one and the same.

My principal subject yesterday morning was on these words—“To reveal his Son in me.” I observed there were two ways whereby God did reveal his Son. The one externally, the other internally. He has revealed Christ in the word; and the Holy Spirit, by means of the word, reveals Christ in the believer. The word and Spirit always go together. The Holy Ghost gives us a new and spiritual understanding of what is revealed concerning the person, love, righteousness, sacrifice, resurrection and ascension, glorification and intercession of Christ in the scriptures. By this means he reveals Christ in us. Hereby we are brought to embrace him as our Jesus, to cleave to him as our everlasting portion, praying in life and death to be found in him.

My dear friend, time is precious, and much work is before me, and the king’s business requireth haste, and I cannot write anything to you but what, blessed be the Lord, you are well acquainted with.—Adieu.

S. E. P.

LETTER XVI.

Truro, August 31, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I BLESS the Lord on your behalf, that you find and prove Jesus Christ to be the life-giving, and the life-maintaining head of believing souls. He never forsakes the work of his hand. What he begins by his power, he carries on with his arm. The bruised reed will he not break, and the smoking flax will he not quench. His heart is love, his bowels are full of mercy, his name is Jesus, and he will be an almighty and an all-sufficient Jesus to all that put their trust in him.

God will always carry on his own work in his own way. I am always glad when I find the Lord's people kept steadfast in the faith. There is much preaching which serves but to little purpose. "We preach Christ crucified," saith the apostle. And this is the only preaching which can be of real benefit to precious and immortal souls. There being no name, person, or thing under heaven, whereby we can be saved, but Christ alone. The great end and design of all preaching being to make known Christ, to set forth his glorious person, his infinite love, his deep humiliation, his everlasting righteousness, his efficacious sacrifice, his continued and prevalent intercession and advocacy at the right hand of God on the behalf of his church:—this I say, being God's end and design, it should be attended to by all preachers of God's most holy word. They should remember, they are to preach, not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, as the alone Saviour and Mediator. And when the crown of crowns is set upon the head of Jesus, the God-man, and the whole glory of our salvation is given unto him; one is truly glad and happy to hear such faithful ambassadors, for "their lips are as choice silver."

I expect, and am encouraged to believe, that Christ alone is exalted amongst you. That his righteousness and blood

are insisted on, as absolutely necessary to be known, believed on, and embraced; to be trusted in and relied on for justification, pardon, and salvation.

I hope you are happy in feeding by faith on Christ's atonement, and find your soul daily nourished up unto life eternal.

Jesus is the bread of life. He is to his people life itself. Believers are one with Christ. They have Christ dwelling in them. They shall not perish. They have everlasting life. They enjoy Christ in this life, and they shall enjoy him in glory.

It is the blessedness of believers in Jesus, that they have a life which death itself cannot touch. When they are removed from a time-state, they will live in the immediate presence of God in heaven for ever. All this is wholly of grace, free, sovereign, unmixed grace.

When all the elect are brought to glory, and the crown of life is bestowed upon them, the top-stone will then be brought forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

May you go on from strength to strength, looking wholly and only to Jesus. The more you look to him, the more you will love, praise, and admire him.—Farewell.

S. E. P.

LETTER XVII.

MY FRIEND,

MAY you be looking for the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ. It is but a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Oh! what a blessing to be in Christ! to know Christ! to live in Christ! to have real communion with Jesus! And bye and bye you will fully experience, that, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

I suppose you have had such views of Jesus, as have

removed all guilt out of your mind, and the fears of death also. Indeed, you would dishonour Jesus Christ if you were in bondage to the fear of death. You are secure in Christ. Believing in Jesus is your best evidence of it. Our Lord saith, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."

My good friend, learn to live less on your comforts, and more on Christ Jesus.

We honour Christ most when we trust him most. You cannot honour Christ more than by casting all your care on Him. The Lord help you so do.—Amen.

S. E. P.

LETTER XVIII.

Truro, Feb. 23, 1787.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

THE Lord will never leave you; he will never forsake you; nor his people, for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to love them with an everlasting love. Glory for ever be rendered to the Lord our God, his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

If he takes away any of his dear people from the church below by death, they are joined to the church above, where they behold Christ in all the glory of his majesty, are encircled in the arms of his everlasting mercy, and praise him uninterruptedly.

If the Lord does not add to any particular church such as shall be eternally saved, yet still his work is going on in his churches at large, and his word will make his church fruitful; and not one elect vessel of mercy, but shall be effectually called and brought to glory.

I write in this strain, expecting to hear something or other from you, which is distressing to you. But be it what it may, I hope you will look beyond present time, and present things, and consider what you are in Christ. That you

are a member in him, eternally united to him, and are already clothed in the all-glorious garment of his everlasting obedience, and cleansed from all your sins in his most precious blood.

I hope the love of God's heart towards you in Christ Jesus, is a fountain of comfort and consolation to your mind, and that you are fully persuaded the love of God, wherewith he loves you in the Son of his love, can never alter, change, nor vary. He has loved you with an everlasting love, and he will continue it to your person to everlasting. And though the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, yet his loving kindness shall not depart from you, nor the covenant of his peace be removed, nor broken.

The Lord himself hath spoken it, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them," *i. e.* his people, "that I will never turn away from them from doing them good." And this is our mercy, and our security. And until God's word fail, you, who have been led to believe what the Lord hath spoken, cannot.

It will be your mercy to be refreshing your memory daily, with thinking and meditating upon the love of God the Father, and to be viewing the blessed revelation he hath made of Christ in the sacred Scriptures, and it will be truly blessed to be led by the Holy Spirit to mix faith with the word, and by believing to honour God's record concerning his Son, and to be setting your seal to the truth of it.

Jesus Christ is most gloriously and highly exalted in the word. And it is the office of the Holy Spirit to exalt Christ, and to honour him in our hearts, by giving us to receive him into our minds as our everlasting righteousness, and our everlasting all.

To be considering what God the Father says concerning Christ, that his soul delighteth in him, that he is everlastingly well pleased with him, and to be looking unto, and to be exercised in believing in Christ, viewing his righteousness to be that which makes us completely righteous before the throne: to behold him as the Lamb of God, who hath abolished all our sin, and presents us before the Lord everlastingly cleansed from every spot and stain, this is blessed. Then we lose a sight of our guilty, sinful selves, and triumph over sin, Satan, death, and hell, in Christ.

Nothing can make us truly spiritual but sights of Christ, real discoveries of him made by the Spirit unto us. Glory be rendered to God the Holy Ghost, it is his great and blessed work to take of the things of Christ, and to shew them unto us. To glorify Christ in our understandings, hearts, and consciences, and to make him inestimably and everlastingly precious unto us.

The eternal Three are engaged by covenant, promise, and oath, to bring us to eternal glory. Therefore, when we are at any time dejected and cast down in our souls, let the cause be what it may, we may well rebuke ourselves, and say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God." All our dejections, doubts, and fears arise from our own hearts, just as all the mist, and fogs, and vapours do from the earth. Blessed be the Lord, the bright rising and shining of Christ, the sun of righteousness, dispels them.

Oh! how blessed is it to be warmed, quickened, healed, and comforted by the Lord Jesus Christ!

A believer can no more live to God without the presence of Christ, than the world can be happy without the light and presence of the sun. And as nothing can hinder the sun from rising, and its constant course is fixed by the Lord, so nothing in us can hinder Christ from arising upon us. As sure as he hath already risen and shone forth upon us, he will again. And as the return of the sun makes spring and summer, so the return of Christ, in his grace and presence unto our hearts, makes a spiritual spring and summer in our souls.

It is most blessed when we are enabled to leave all our concerns for body and soul, for time and eternity, in the Lord's hands, knowing that he careth for us.

Whatsoever it may be which disturbs, distresses, or perplexes you, consider that Jesus Christ is your beloved, and your friend; he hath graven you on the palms of his hands; he represents you before the throne; he pleads your cause in the court of heaven; all the concerns of your soul are in his hand; he must first forget himself before he can possibly forget you.

Your name is written on the breast-plate of his heart.

The love of Christ, the heart of Christ, the mercy and

compassion of Christ, are the same now they ever were. The blessed apostle Paul encourages us to come to the throne of grace with boldness, upon these very considerations. "We have not," saith he, "an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

May the Lord Jesus warm your heart more and more with his love.

May the Lord visit you, and the rest of his beloved ones with you, and refresh your souls, and make them joyful in his house of prayer.

You are to consider that Christ is the Rock of Ages, upon which his church and people are built, and the gates of hell will never finally overcome, and prevail against Christ, or his church.

I long to know how you go on, that I may either joy with your joy, or sorrow and mourn with you in your sorrows; and may know the better how to pray for you.

I am, your friend for Jesus' sake,

S. E. P.

LETTER XIX.

Truro, Dec. 12, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I TRUST Jesus Christ is truly precious to your soul. And that his love warms your heart, and raises your affections up within the vail.

It is most blessed to be viewing over by faith, what Christ hath done and finished upon earth, and what he is doing for us in the court above. His love brought him down from heaven, yea from the heaven of heavens. It blazed forth in

its transcendent glory upon the cross ; it breaks forth from the Redeemer's heart now he is in his kingdom of glory towards us. It burns and flows forth in acts of everlasting mercy and compassion, now he is at the right hand of the Father, where he maketh continual intercession for us. It is good for us to be engaged in meditating on the love of Christ until we feel it warms our hearts, and inflames our souls. We should wrap up ourselves by faith, in the garment of salvation, the robe of Christ's righteousness, and present ourselves at the throne of grace therein. For in Christ's obedience and atonement, the Father beholds us complete, without spot or wrinkle, unblameable and unreplicable in his sight.

I have often admired an expression of one of our English martyrs, Mr. Lawrence Saunders, who wrote thus to his wife, a little before his burning.

After desiring her to send him a shirt, in which he was to suffer, he breaks out into this sweet prayer : ' O my heavenly Father, look upon me in the face of thy Christ ! or else I shall not be able to abide, that is to bear, thy countenance ; such is my filthiness. He will do so : and therefore I will not be afraid of sin, hell, death and damnation, or what they can do against me.' And when this blessed saint arrived at the place of execution, he kissed the stake, and expressed himself in a transport of joy, saying, ' Welcome the cross of Christ, welcome everlasting life.'

God cannot behold us out of Christ with the least pleasure and delight. No, no. Nor can we look to God with any love and delight, but as we believe him to be everlastingly well pleased with us in his dear Son. It is as Jehovah the Father beholds us, as eternally united to his dear Son, and as wearing his righteousness, and cleansed from all our sins through his most blessed blood-shedding, that he loves us, blesses us, and rejoiceth over us to do us good. Blessed be the Lord, his love towards us changeth not. It is always the same. Without increase or decrease. He loves his saints on earth, with the same love with which he loves his saints in heaven. He loves his people on earth as perfectly as he will when they are in glory.

What reason have you to bless and praise the eternal Three, day and night without ceasing, seeing God hath

revealed Christ to you, and in you, as your one hope of eternal glory. And for shedding abroad his love in your heart, by the Holy Ghost given unto you. Christ is exalted in your understanding, heart and conscience, as exceedingly, yea, inestimably precious. Take heed therefore of harbouring legal doubts and suspicions in your mind, concerning the love of the Lord Jesus Christ towards you.

Remember you are not to judge of his love by providences, but by his word and promise. Is not this sufficient for your faith, even his own declaration in these words, "I will, never, never, never leave thee; I will never, never, never forsake thee." Faith in the word of Jesus triumphs over all enemies, laughs at impossibilities, and cries, It must be done.

I often think on what I once heard you say; you had been reading in the book of Psalms, and you told me you observed how David considered himself as one with Christ, and went to the throne of grace with this view, and in this faith.

I say, "Go and do thou likewise." And you will enjoy blessed freedom with the Lord, strong confidence in Him, and holy boldness before him.

Your's in Jesus,

S. E. P.

LETTER XX.

Truro, Feb. 8, 1788.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I WAS truly glad to receive a letter from you, and am glad to find, though things are not with the church as you and I could wish, yet Christ is your's; your portion, ornament, and everlasting crown. Our Lord will never forsake his people. But he will try them, and that in a way perhaps they least expected, and by them most dreaded. But glory be unto his Majesty, it is in very faithfulness he causeth them to be troubled.

I assure you I feel and am afflicted with you on account of your church matters. Yet the Lord is God, and acts wisely

in all his dispensations towards his saints. It would be our happiness, and it is our duty to leave all in our Lord's hands, and to leave it with our Lord to carry on his own work in his own way, and by whomsoever he pleaseth. We need not distress ourselves so much about present appearances, for the blessed Jesus will see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Not one whom he hath purchased with his own blood shall ever perish. This should be matter for our joy.

For a long season, I know the Lord hath been driving a contrary course in appearance to all your prayers and tears concerning the chapel. But your love for his truth, cause, and people there, is highly well pleasing to Him, and he hath heard your prayers. But he will take his own time to answer them, and it shall be in his own way too. And perhaps the Lord is teaching both you and me, not to be too solicitous about a particular interest, but to have our hearts and affections more expanded towards all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

Your real happiness lies in having fellowship and communion with the ever-blessed Jesus, who is the beloved of your soul, and he hath taken you into his arms and heart, and will never leave nor forsake you. Therefore you must learn to make up all your happiness in him. He is the Fountain of Living Waters; and he will refresh your soul with the streams of his grace, and warm your heart with his own love. His love will never be removed from you. He will sanctify and bless his providential dealings and dispensations with you, and let you see in the end, that all things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose.

You must not look too much at providential events. God's paths in providence are a great deep. Your best study will be the subject of God's everlasting love, and the eternal covenant of his grace.

My dear friend, the Lord would not have you perplex and trouble yourself with, or about his outward dispensations. All his paths, even in the most dark and trying dispensations, are mercy and truth. His goings forth towards his people are in a covenant way. He hath the everlasting covenant in remembrance. He will fulfil every promise of it, and bestow

every blessing contained in it, to his people. Their every affliction shall redound to their benefit. And if you are enabled to mix faith with these words spoken by the Lord himself, you will then have a present cordial, sufficient to keep you from sinking at any time:—"I will never turn away from you from doing you good." Jer. xxxii. 40. If you attend to this word of promise, meditate upon it, and pray over it, your faith will be strengthened, and you will triumph in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of your salvation.

Remember Habakkuk's faith: he said, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." On this the prophet relies. If all outward things should, in appearance, make against God's word, yet we should believe, with joyful hope, its certain accomplishment. "For though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." It will be your wisdom to leave yourself and every concern with the Lord, and commit all, by simple faith, into his hand. Cast, my friend, all your cares on the Lord, he will sustain you.

Remember the apostle's direction: "Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God."

The Lord is sometimes pleased to permit a death to be brought upon all our comforts, and cuts off all our expectations. He commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, his beloved son Isaac. He permits Abraham to bind his son, to lay him upon the altar on the wood, to take his knife to slay his son. And then he calls out of heaven, saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." You know that Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-Jireh, *i. e.* "The Lord will see, and provide. In the mount the Lord will be seen." You have Abraham's God with you and for you. Therefore fear not. Let matters come to the very worst, the Lord will be with you. The Lord will provide for you.

I have met with the following remarkable story in the

course of my reading, concerning a child of God, who was a prisoner for Christ's cause, and it was the design of his enemies, by a progressive subtraction of all subsistence from him, to starve him to death.

'Matthias Dolastius, was a prisoner, designed for such purposes in the city of Prague—and at length all the attempts of godly people, and of a gracious matron among the rest, secretly to relieve him, had a total stop given unto them. Now one day, when he was on the very point of starving, he cast his eyes towards the grate of the prison, and saw a little bird sitting there with something in his bill. His curiosity leading him thither, the bird flew away, but left a bit of cloth, in which, when he took it up, he found a piece of gold; and with this piece of gold, he found ways tolerably to furnish himself with bread until the death of the king, on and by which he obtained his full deliverance.'

You see from hence, God is a wonder-working God for his people. He will see and take notice of the wants of his people, let them be either temporal or spiritual, and will provide.

S. E. P.

LETTER XXI.

Truro, Oct. 21, 1788.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

MAY the Lord enable you to say, all is well, and help you in patience to possess your soul, and make you perfectly happy in a heartfelt sense and enjoyment of his love.

Whatever God does is well and wisely done. Your happiness and salvation do not depend upon seeing a glorious work, and an increase of real converts to Christ in the place where you live. But it lies in living in and upon Christ. In your having actual fellowship with him, in the enjoyment of his love in your own soul. His finished righteousness and sacrifice are your perfect salvation. You cannot rest your

soul too confidently thereon ; for they will never fail. Christ is God, true and very God. He is God over all, blessed for ever, Amen. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, and all the worth and efficacy of Christ's life and death arise from his eternal deity. He is Jesus Christ, "yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same," without any variableness or shadow of turning. His love, mercy, work, word, promise, and grace, remain the same for ever.

Here you may trust. In this you may rejoice and triumph, and leave the Lord's cause in his own hand, to carry it on in his own way, and as he pleaseth.

All your care and concern cannot alter the Lord's decrees and purposes. May you learn this lesson, "Be still and know that I am God." The Lord is ever with his people, he will ever be mindful of his covenant.

Mr. Stephen Marshall, bachelor of divinity, who died in 1654, when his friends were talking with him about his death, he replied, 'I cannot say I have so lived as not to be afraid to die. But this I can say, I have so learned Christ, that I am not afraid to die.'

This is true learning ; here is practical and experimental divinity. So to learn Christ, by the teachings of the Holy Ghost, as neither to fear life or death.

I trust you have also from the word and Spirit, thus learned Christ. You will find no one thing in the whole world, but will endeavour to lead you off Christ. Yet there is nothing but Christ can satisfy you. He is the pearl of great price ; you are in his hands ; your everlasting happiness consists in seeing him face to face, and in beholding his glory. Time is ever on the wing. You will very soon be absent from the body, and be present with the Lord.

It may be, present trials wean your heart from present things. The want of fruitful ordinances makes you long more for the everlasting banquet above ; to sup with the Lamb that was slain, and gaze for ever on him. Then these present trials have done you real service. They are working and do work for your good. Take up, therefore your Lord's advice. He says, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

S. E. P.

LETTER XXII.

Truro, Oct. 20, 1789.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

THE account you gave me of your deceased friend is comfortable. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. They are absent from the body and present with the Lord." Blessed be the Lord, precious in his sight is the death of his saints.

It is nothing short of our being bottomed entirely upon God's electing, everlasting love, and Christ's most perfect and finished work of salvation, can support and bear us up, and carry us comfortably through the dark valley of the shadow of death. It is good, therefore, to be often refreshing our minds and memories with a remembrance of what Christ hath done for us, of the relation he bears unto us, and to remember we are saved in him with an everlasting salvation.

God hath chosen his people in Christ before the foundation of the world. They were one with Christ, united to his person by an immutable union, from everlasting. Which union is the foundation of all that Christ has done for them, made known unto them, or communicates unto them.

God loves his people in Christ, with the same love wherewith he loves him. The love of God as it is in his own heart towards us, his chosen and beloved ones, is without variable-ness or shadow of turning. It cannot admit of either increase or decrease. It is fixed and founded upon the persons of God's elect as chosen in Christ, and as one with him.

Election is the root and foundation from whence salvation, with all its graces and blessings, proceeds. This foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. Here we may rest with confidence and safety, and be fully persuaded that all things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called, according to his purpose.

It is of all blessings the greatest, to be brought to know our names are written in the book of life of the Lamb slain

from the foundation of the world: who became incarnate, and by his personal obedience, and as standing in the room and stead of his people, as their divine substitute, brought in for them an everlasting righteousness. Who has borne the sins of his people in his own body on the tree; and having endured the utmost curse due to sin, he hath made full, perfect, and complete atonement; and by his stripes we are healed. His blood cleanseth us from all sin, and that for ever.

At such a time of extremity as it must be at your town, in consequence of a raging fever, when death enters into the windows and cuts off many, it is a cordial to consider the safety and security of the people of God. They are eternally safe under the protection of the blood of the very Paschal Lamb of God, who loved them, and gave himself for them, who hath promised never to leave nor forsake them, but is engaged to be their God and guide even unto death.

It is recorded by Mr. Toplady, 'That when the plague was in London, in 1665, when the Lord, to correct and punish the inhabitants of this kingdom for their national impieties, sent amongst them the most dreadful plague that had been in the memory of man, which was preceded by an unusual drought; the meadows were parched and burnt up like the highways; insomuch that there was no food for the cattle, which occasioned, first a murrain among them, and then a general contagion among the human species, which increased in the city and suburbs of London, till eight or ten thousand died in a week. The richest inhabitants fled to the remotest countries; but the calamities of those who stayed behind, and of the poorer sort, are not to be expressed. Trade was at a full stand; all the commerce between London and the country entirely cut off, lest the infection should be propagated thereby. Nay, the country housekeepers and farmers durst not entertain their city friends and neighbours or relations who came from London, till they had performed quarantine in the fields or out-houses. If a stranger passed through the neighbourhood, they fled from him as an enemy. In London the shops and houses were quite shut up, and many of them marked with a red cross, and an inscription over the doors, 'Lord,

have mercy on us!’ Grass grew in the streets, and every night the bellman went his round with a cart, crying, ‘Bring out your dead!’

Lord Craven, who was then in London, upon the breaking out of the plague, prepared to depart into the country; the coach was at the door for to take him. One of his servants, a black, says, ‘I suppose my master’s God lives in the country that he his going thither.’

His lordship heard this poor heathen speak thus, and he thinks with himself, my God is everywhere present, and can protect me here as well as in the country. He commands the horses to be taken out of the harness, and remained in London all the time the plague raged there, visited many of his poor neighbours, and was made remarkably serviceable unto them, and the Lord preserved him from taking the infection.’ So true it is, “that he who dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

The same Lord Jesus is your everlasting friend, your keeper, and guide. I hope he will preserve you from the fever, and make you truly useful to the bodies and souls of many of your neighbours.

S. E. P.

LETTER XXIII.

Truro, Dec. 23, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

JESUS is your’s. Your joy and crown. Your well-beloved. Time hastens on, and is continually on the wing. It will soon cease with you, when you will be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

May your heart, hopes, thoughts, and meditations, be employed more than ever upon the Lord Jesus Christ. May you consider him to be, what he truly is God—the Son of

God and man, in one person, Immanuel, God with us, who created all things, upholds all things, governs all things, and who will one day fold up the heavens as a worn-out garment, and dissolve the present system of the universe, by which I mean our globe, by fire. He was, and is, from everlasting to everlasting, God over all blessed for ever. Amen.

When you consider Jesus as one in the incomprehensible Godhead, co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and contemplate his ineffable love, in undertaking the work of salvation, and engaging as your Surety before all worlds, you see then the foundation of your salvation laid in the covenant stipulation between the Father and the Son, of which the Holy Ghost is witness, and which he hath revealed in the sacred Scriptures. He informs us in them what was spoken, agreed, and promised by the Father and the Son, in the everlasting covenant which contains all our salvation, and from whence flow all the springs of divine clemency. It is good to be truly and spiritually led by the Holy Spirit into clear spiritual perceptions of the personal acts of the Father and the Son, on our behalf, in the covenant; and how the holy and eternal Three are related to us in their œconomical offices.

This will produce much boldness and confidence in God. For as we view the gospel as revealing the Father as contriving, the Son engaging, and the Holy Ghost revealing and applying the Son's salvation, and making known and manifesting the Father's love in the hearts of his people, we behold all the persons in the Godhead equally engaged in our salvation.

I would add, by tracing salvation to its great, grand, and original fountain, viz. grace, free, rich, and sovereign grace, it begets in our minds generous thoughts of the eternal purposes of the Trinity towards the elect. I have felt the following word of sacred Scripture, with efficacy and energy, working on my soul and encouraging and drawing out my heart to praise and bless the Lord Jesus. The words of Peter to Cornelius, viz. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with him."

And truly when I consider spiritually the grace of Christ, in humbling himself to become man, how he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; and that his human nature had all the sinless affections proper to it, I view the Lord Jesus then exactly suited to shew mercy and to bestow salvation on me. He being God-man, his heart, his bowels, his compassion and concern, are just and exactly what I need, what my peculiar case requires; and what my wants call for. Yea, my sins, corruptions, miseries and griefs, only serve as occasions for him to display upon me his surprising grace and infinite compassion. He became true and very man, that in our nature he might manifest divine love to the uttermost by living, obeying, suffering, and dying "the just for the unjust," that he might bring us unto God.

When I reflect on our Lord's amazing love, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich—and that by means of the ancient promises, types, symbols, and figures he was made known to his people under the patriarchal dispensation—I see holy expectation, great faith, and real joy expressed by Jacob in our blessed Jesus, when on his death bed, with exultation he cried out, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." One writing on these words says, 'Our interpreters refer it to a prediction of Samson, who was of the tribe of Dan, who was afterwards a deliverer of the Israelites, and say, that Jacob's prophetic spirit of the dangers of that tribe, made him break out into such pathetic expressions.' But did not the other tribes conflict with dangers as well as Dan? Why should Jacob have such an eruption of soul in his speaking of this tribe more than any other which were to undergo as great sufferings, and were more considerable than this? Besides, Jacob speaks not of Dan as afflicted, but as victorious. Gen. xlix 16, 17. "He should judge his people, and as a serpent overthrow the rider."

Jacob had certainly a higher consideration. And therefore some of the ancient Rabbins thus paraphrase these words. When Jacob foresaw Gideon and Samson to be the deliverers of his posterity, he saith, 'I do not so much expect the salvation by Gideon, nor the deliverance by Samson, which are temporal and created salvations, but I

expect that redemption which thou hast promised by thy word to come to Israel, that salvation which shall be for ever.'

The Lord Jesus fill your mind, will, and affections, with a most blessed enjoyment of himself.

S. E. P.

LETTER XXIV.

Truro, Aug. 21, 1794.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE you are rejoicing in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, on whose righteousness and atonement your whole trust and confidence is fixed for life everlasting. Being fixed on the person, work, and salvation of Immanuel, the gates of hell cannot prevail against you.

It is a sad mistake which many, very many of the dear children of God make, they look within themselves, they rest on a work of grace wrought within them, they search for some marks and signs of grace to fix and bottom their hope on, and thus they neglect Christ, they do not look to him as the one immediate object of their faith. Whereas it is the very office of faith to deal with Christ alone in the business of salvation.

I find it good and blessed for myself, when I have my heart and thoughts entirely and spiritually engaged by the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost, in contemplating God's everlasting love, in considering it to be always one and the same, fixed immutably on my person, as viewed and considered by the Father as one with Christ. This serves to unbottom me, to take me off, wholly and altogether from all that I am in myself, both good and bad, and is as a pillar to bear up faith and hope, and carry me with free and full sail into the ocean of everlasting love, and into the element of free grace. And the more I dive into that sea, and live in that element, the more I am sure to thrive in spirituals, and to increase with all the increase of God. To be swallowed up in admiring and adoring thoughts of electing love, to have the minds and

thoughts steeped and bathed in the contemplations of Christ, his righteousness and blood, his grace and fulness: to have faith distinctly exercised on the glory, beauties, and perfections of the Lamb of God, this is spiritual and most divine.

I have seen that in Christ which exceeds and transcends the whole creation of God; and can truly say I know from my own experience, that all things are truly dross and dung when compared with him; that all worlds set in a balance with him are everlastingly outweighed: yea, that heaven and earth are in comparison with him less than nothing and vanity.

Truly the Holy Ghost has taught me that there is no being and existence to be valued, but being and existence in him.

To be in him by the Father's act of eternal election, to be related to his person and united to him, and to be made one spirit with the Lord, this is true blessedness and glory everlasting.

It is the great part of our salvation to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and what he hath done for us, and how completely he hath saved us, how gloriously he hath triumphed as our Head, over all his and our enemies.

It is too common with the people of God to forget, that their heavenly Father loves them in Christ, hath accepted them in Christ, hath blessed them in Christ, and beholds them in Christ, holy, righteous, spotless, and complete. He having made Christ sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him.

It is good to view ourselves by faith in Christ, before the foundation of the world. To consider the outgoings of his heart towards us, when all was boundless eternity. To behold him undertaking our cause, approaching his Father on our behalf, becoming incarnate for us in the fulness of time. To meditate on his being born, and that in a low condition, for us, that we were in him, so that when he was circumcised, we were circumcised in him. He obeyed for us. Hence the righteousness of the law is said to be fulfilled in us. Rom. viii. 4. We are said to be crucified in him—buried with him—risen with him—ascended with him—entered into heaven with him. To sit with him in heavenly

places, because he was our public head and representative, and we were in him, and are fully interested in all, and in every act of his mediation. And did we but know, that by effectual calling we are fully instated into the actual possession of all these blessings which flow from those acts, being called by the Lord into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and had we but faith to live up to our privileges and high calling, we should then be truly happy and truly holy. Oh! what a misery is it to ourselves, and a dishonour to our dear Lord, that we should look a single moment off him, and that we should look on ourselves any otherwise than as one with him. We should try to have fellowship with Christ, and be concerned to improve it by all which befalls us. Jesus is what we need him to be, full of grace, clothed with bowels of mercy, infinite in his love, endless in his compassions. Nothing hath befallen, doth, or can befall us, which will ever take off his heart, or abate his affection for us. Whom he loves he ever loves, yea, he so loves them, as to vent his love in surprising acts and instances of mercy, which we experience agreeable to our personal and peculiar cases.

In our walking with the Lord, we have these following things which distress us, and which we can only get above, and beyond by faith. The guilt, filth, corruption, and deformity of our natures, which, as daily opened by the Holy Spirit to our view, lead us to feel ourselves to be in our fallen natures what we are, and what one declared himself to be, who in his address to God, cried out, 'Lord, I am hell; thou art heaven.'

We can only get above and beyond this hell within us, by believing, "that the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin."

There is a continual life in the body of sin within us, which is ever active under one form or other, and will at times put forth its power, and threaten to carry all before it. And it is only in, and by the knowledge we receive from the gospel, as we are taught it by the Holy Ghost, that the whole body of sin was nailed to the cross with Christ, that we can get above it, either in its guilt or power. The apostle calls on believers to remember this great truth: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin

might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. vi. 6. Here we are informed that our old man is crucified with Christ, and that in his death we have most completely the death and mortification of the whole body of sin and death. So that we must be continually looking at the death of Christ for the true mortification of sin; and this is the doctrine of gospel mortification. And we have the experience of it in believing this, and in communion with Christ in his death. He saith, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. As we believe this we shall have victory over it, both inwardly and outwardly.

There is also the deadness, formality, and want of spirituality, which daily accompany us, more or less, in our worshipping the Lord, both in secret and public. And nothing can be an antidote, but the views of being perfectly accepted in our Great High Priest, whose intercession and advocacy are entirely on our behalf.

There are also many things relative to our persons, experiences, and circumstances, which can never be removed from us, but by freely and fully believing that word of truth, which says, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose." Rom. viii. 28.

S. E. P.

LETTER XXV.

Truro, Jan. 6, 1796.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

I HOPE your soul is alive to Christ, and that you are breathing after him, longing to enjoy him more fully, and to receive him and his salvation more freely into your heart, as all your salvation and all your desire.

If you would be happy you must look wholly and entirely to Christ, and make up your whole comfort in knowing Jesus, and in having communion with him, in all the blessings of his complete and eternally perfect salvation.

I most heartily wish you a blessed new year, and such living and feasting on Jesus every future day of your life, as may yield you a sure and certain foretaste of glory, and a blessed immortality.

It is good to exercise your thoughts on Christ, and consider how his heart is fixed on you, how greatly he delights in you, and how completely righteous and spotless you are in the blood and righteousness of Immanuel, Jehovah-Jesus, the Lord our righteousness.

I have made a long journey into Devonshire, had many blessed opportunities of preaching Christ crucified, and am much pleased with attempting to spread abroad the fame and renown of the Christ of God.

The Lord's service is the most perfect freedom. Christ is the rock, his work is perfect. Such as trust in him shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. Blessed are all they who put their trust in him.

You have known Christ, believed in his righteousness and blood, and had an experience of his faithfulness these many years. He was never yet unfaithful to you. He never will be. He will be your God and guide, not only even unto death, but over and beyond it. For he will be "your exceeding great reward."

Do not be afraid of trusting your all into the hands of Jesus. "Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you." My motto for the new year is: "But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head."

The first text I preached on this year was: "Thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life."

The second was: "In blessing I will bless thee."

The third: "There went virtue out of Him, and healed them all."

The fourth: "For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty."

The fifth, which was the last, was, "Certainly I will be with thee."

I recommend you to the blessing of the eternal Three,

And am your friend, for Christ's sake,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXVI.

Stockwell, May 22, 1799.

DEAR SIR,

IT very greatly rejoices my heart that Christ Jesus our Lord is very precious to you; that he is honoured by you; that you have done him glory by trusting on him for the whole of your salvation, and by placing the whole confidence of your heart on him. My good sir, when a poor sinner comes with all his sins, guilt, pollution, wants, and miseries, to Christ, and presents himself before him for health and cure, for supply and comfort, he is sure to succeed. He honours Christ in so doing. Jesus get himself an everlasting name, in receiving such freely—in pardoning fully—in cleansing effectually—in supplying abundantly—in becoming to such everlasting consolation. The sinner, who comes through the teachings of the Holy Spirit thus to Christ, puts a fresh crown on the head of the most highly exalted Immanuel. On himself, the crown of salvation will for ever flourish. He doth, and will for ever wear his own crown with unrivalled fame. I cannot reach it, though I see something of it. But this will be his crown of crowns, to save us in himself, with an everlasting salvation, and to present us before the throne as immaculately pure, and consummately righteous, as though we had never sinned in thought, word or deed. “We are,” saith Paul, “made the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ is the fountain of everlasting life. All the spiritual life, light, salvation, pardon, purity, righteousness, blessedness, and glory of an elect world, is in Christ Jesus our Lord. He is the joy of heaven, and the song of paradise.

He is the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for sin. He is the food and feast of his people. It is good to live in real believing views of him. To be spending our thoughts, and exercising our minds continually on him. All the worship of heaven is given unto him. All the praise of salvation belongs to him. Oh! that the Holy Ghost may give us so to

know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and fill us with such an inward sense of it, as may cause us to cry out under precious discoveries of it, Oh! the depth! Look wholly to Christ; trust wholly in Christ; live wholly on him; make him your all in all. May you be growing into divine fellowship with God and the Lamb, by the divine influences, teachings, and testimony of the Holy Spirit.

The whole Gospel consists of the everlasting love of the Father, in his revelation of Jesus Christ his Son, who hath been incarnate, lived, and died for sinners, and in the Father's testimony of him. Did we trust in Christ as fully as we are warranted from the word of God so to do, we should be perfectly happy.

S. E. P.

A LETTER

Addressed to a Woman in Prison.

June 12, 1795.

MADAM,

As one who by real and blessed experience knows there is redemption for sinners in the most precious blood of Christ; the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, having myself tasted that the Lord is gracious; I feel for you, and most heartily lament the most tremendous and awful circumstances which you are brought into by reason of sin. Alas! alas! you have been left by the Lord to the inward corruption of your own heart, and as thus left, you have done that which cannot be undone. No, not to eternity!

It may be truly said, that sin is the greatest of all evils: yea, the only evil in earth or hell. There is nothing but evil in it. Nor can it produce any thing but evil; present,

future, and everlasting. Your present situation and confinement, your future trial, when you have nothing to expect but a most just sentence of condemnation to be pronounced on you, to suffer death for your crime, is all the consequence of sin.

Far be it from me to insult you in your present state. God forbid. I am indeed a sinner, exceeding sinful; yea, equally as sinful by nature as you are. And though I am no fornicator, adulterer, or murderer, as to the outward act, yet I am a transgressor of God's most holy and righteous law, and I am by nature a child of wrath, even as others. On account of the infinite pollution and total corruption of my whole nature, and every faculty thereof, and the sinfulness of every member, part, and faculty of body and soul, I deserve God's wrath and damnation as justly, and really, as any sinner out of hell. Such as are numbered with the dead and damned, are not more justly condemned to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, than I do, in my own person, for the sinfulness of my nature, thoughts, words and actions, deserve the same. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, he came into our world to save sinners. He saveth such as believe in him from the wrath to come.

I am fully convinced there is no difference amongst mankind sinners, but what is made by the free, rich, and sovereign grace of God. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; and by the deeds of the law can no flesh living be justified." All the world is become guilty before God, and the Lord God "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Permit me, by putting on the bowels of Jesus Christ, and as truly desirous to express the same towards you, having most heartily requested the Lord to bestow his own blessings thereon, to set before you the Lord Jesus Christ, the most precious, almighty, all-sufficient Saviour, in the eternal dignity of his person, in his infinite love, in his everlasting mercy, in his free, boundless, bottomless grace, in his divine righteousness and efficacious blood-shedding, sacrifice, and death, as able to save you from all your sins, guilt, and pollution; as all-sufficient to cleanse you from every spot and stain of defilement; to deliver you from the curse of the law, which you have broken, and to admit you into heaven,

there to live and shine for ever and ever, as a monument of his mercy.

May God the Holy Ghost enable me so to write to you concerning the inestimably precious Lord Jesus, of his mediatorial person, grace, and salvation; and may he so engage your mind and thoughts in reading the same, as to bring you to believe on him "to the saving of the soul." The Saviour of sinners is God and man; he is perfect God and perfect man — God and man in the person of one Christ. He is one of the persons in the uncreated and incomprehensible Godhead. "I," saith he, "even I am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour."

He, as co-equal, co-eternal, and co-essential with the Father, and the Holy Ghost in the Godhead, engaged before all worlds, upon the foresight of the fall, to come into our world by the assumption of our nature, to save his people from their sins. He was accordingly revealed as the Saviour. "To Him give all the Prophets witness;" they ever since the world began bore testimony concerning him, that he was one in the self-existing essence; possessing all the essential perfections of the divine nature, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, and this essentially, and by necessary and self-existence. They testified of him, that he is the essential and only begotten Son of God, who would for us, and for our salvation, come down from heaven, become incarnate, and be made man, that he might fulfil all righteousness, and die the death due to sin, and become the author of eternal salvation.

Thus as the holy and immaculate Lamb of God, who was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, they bore testimony of him; expressly declaring, "that through his name, whosoever believeth on him should receive remission of sins." In the fulness of time, the Son of God became incarnate, God in our nature — God with us, that in our nature he might as God-man express his love, and manifest his mercy to the uttermost.

His love is eternal, everlasting, unspeakable, transcendent love. Out of love he lived for sinners. He bore the sins of many in his own body on the tree. He was made sin and a curse. He died for the ungodly. Oh! that the Lord the Spirit may give you a real spiritual sight and sense of the

love of Christ, to such poor, guilty, sinful, polluted ones, as it may be you feel yourself to be.

Oh, that the Holy Ghost may give you to know and believe that Christ died for, and hath given himself for sinners, and that he hath, doth, and will go on to save from sin, Satan, death and damnation, some sinners, whose hearts, lives, and transgressions, have been entirely like your own.

Your sins are no bar to Jesus, nor should they be any bar to hinder you from looking unto and coming with all your guilt and crimes unto him, because he hath said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

What love did he manifest in his incarnation and life! He took our nature that he might be made sin for us. The prophet saith, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

He was made sin for us, as the Lord caused all our iniquity to meet on him, and as the Lord imputed them unto, and laid them on him, Jesus gave himself for our sins, to be the sacrifice for them, to have the guilt and pollution of them transferred from us to him, and he was to wash us clean from them, and he has done it in his own most precious blood, he bore the punishment due to sin. His sorrows, sufferings, agony, and soul-travail, exceeded all the damned can possibly feel in hell to eternity.

Behold the Lamb of God, when he stood up to suffer the just for the unjust. Having substituted himself in the law place, room, and stead of sinners, and being covered with, and enwrapped about with all their sinfulness, guilt, and pollution, the wrath, sorrow, shame, and curse belonging to them fell on him. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." His most precious blood cleanseth from all sin; it cleanseth the soul from every spot and stain of defilement; and those who are washed therein, are in the sight of God as pure and undefiled as though they never had sinned.

Jesus, agreeable to his engagements with the Father in the everlasting covenant "hath appeared once in the end of the world, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in ever-

lasting righteousness." He hath completed the work of salvation, by putting away our sin by the sacrifice of himself, and by treading on the old serpent called the devil. By destroying death, and opening a way into the holiest of all (for such sinners as you and I are) by his own blood.

The heart of Jesus is love, the bowels of Jesus are full of mercy; his compassions fail not; he is upon his throne as full of love and mercy as when he hung upon the cross. He accounts it a part of his highest glory, though in the heaven of heavens, to heal every wound, to cleanse every stain, to forgive every sin, and save to the uttermost the sinner that comes to him. "For he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins."

What love must Jesus have for sinners, when to save them he left his Father's bosom; he laid aside his glory, left the heaven of heavens. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." What must his love be who bore our sins and carried our sorrows; whose soul was heavy unto death; who sweat great drops of blood; whose whole soul was bruised with the weight and fulness of divine wrath, for he suffered what was tantamount to the sorrows of hell; whose soul was bruised and his body suffered also in every part; his body was scourged by merciless soldiers; his head was crowned with thorns; his hands and arms were stretched on the cross; and his hands and feet bored through with pins of iron to the accursed tree; who hung for six long hours naked on the cross, despised of men and forsaken of God. "Made a curse for us!" Oh, the immensity of his love! what must his bowels of pity and compassion be, who at the very instant, and whilst they were nailing him to the cross, prayed on the behalf of his crucifiers, "Father! forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

What must his mercy be who looked with everlasting kindness on a poor criminal who was crucified with him, who had the hellish impudence to curse him to his face? Yet, on him, Jesus pronounced an eternal pardon, and said to him, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Do you think this Jesus, who is "God over all, blessed

for ever, amen," is not able to save you in himself, with an everlasting salvation? Do you think he is not able to heal every wound which sin hath made in your soul? to wash you from every stain? to pardon all your sins? and pronounce an everlasting pardon on you?

The truth of the matter is, God hath revealed Christ in the everlasting gospel, in the greatness and perfection of his free, full, complete, and everlasting salvation. He calls you to look off yourself, and from your sins, to Christ Jesus; to take sanctuary in his wounds and blood. Say what you will of and against yourself, yet there is salvation in Jesus Christ. And if the Lord is pleased by his Holy Spirit to enable you to believe in the righteousness and blood of the slaughtered Lamb, and to receive the Father's testimony concerning it, that it cleanseth from all sin, you will then find Christ is your salvation, your righteousness, and advocate in the court of heaven.

Have you sinned most tremendously? to the very uttermost? The apostle says, "Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And who can tell the uttermost of Christ's power and ability to save?

The blood of Christ is more efficacious to heal, than sin is effectual to wound the soul.

There is a greater virtue in Christ's blood to cleanse from sin, than there is filth in sin to defile.

If you are in your own view more vile and sinful than ever sinner yet beside you was, it is only for Christ to look on you, to shine within you, and you would then be blessed indeed: you would then find his presence turn your hell into heaven.

As it cannot be expected you will be long in a time-state, I would, therefore, most earnestly request you to consider what I have laid before you. There is no escaping damnation, but by flying to Jesus. None ever came to Jesus, and were rejected. His heart, his arms, are open to receive and embrace all who come unto him.

Tremendous as your guilt is, if you apply to Jesus, you will find Christ almighty to save. Never did a poor sinner come unto him, crying out, "Lord, save, or I perish," that went to hell.

Christ Jesus is all love, mercy, grace, and salvation. He saith, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins, return unto me, for I have redeemed thee."

The blood of Christ is a fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness. And your sin and uncleanness, felt and experienced by the teachings of the Holy Spirit, fits you for it. May he be pleased to make known its virtue to you. If the eternal Spirit is pleased to enlighten your mind with the knowledge of Christ, and open your heart to receive him, and enable you to believe in the everlasting perfection of the righteousness and sacrifice of Immanuel, and rest your whole confidence and hope before the Lord for salvation thereon, you will then find everlasting life in Christ.

May the Lord save you from every false hope. May he give you to feel your need of Christ. May he bring you to a real closure with Him, that you may know that you have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins, and of all your crimes.

Remember, dying out of Christ will be found to be everlasting damnation. Dying in Christ is life and salvation; you must be found in Jesus, clothed in his righteousness, washed in his blood, and quickened by his Spirit, or you cannot enter heaven. May the most blessed Spirit of God give you such an inward, spiritual, perception of the dignity, virtue, worth, and efficacy of Christ's most precious blood, as all-sufficient to cleanse you from all your sins. And may he enable you to depart this life, bearing your testimony for Christ.

Praying the Lord Jesus to shew you the same mercy, and to shine on you, just as he did, in the same wonderful manner as on the dying thief,

I subscribe myself, your friend,

S. E. P.