

LETTER XV.

October 24th, 1778.

DEAR MRS. B.

I AM in great distress concerning you fearing you should think me ungrateful in not writing to you at I——I as desired.

The week after I received your most precious letter, I set myself apart on purpose to write to you and my dear A——friends, and wrote almost half a quire of paper full. I wrote to Mrs. T., Mrs. C., Mr. P. and son, and left them with a friend who told me he should be able to send them by sea, and that they would be left there with a gentlewoman of Mr. Tanner's church. I rejoiced at the thought of saving the expense, and it hath been a month since, to a few days, that I wrote. My love and affections are so sincerely knit to the saints with you, that I've thought it an age before you could receive my letters. I would not have them lost, for I trust the Holy Ghost will cause the truths they contain to set your souls in flame towards the infinite, precious, glorious, and almighty Jesus. Your letter was a feast to my soul; what thanks shall I render unto God, night and day, for you; eternally magnified be the Lord, for enabling you to receive the gospel, not as the word of man, but as the word of the living God, which effectually worketh in you that believe. O Mrs. B. study the loving heart of the dear Lord Jesus; never forget that you are complete in him. In him the Father beholds you without spot or wrinkle; in him you are, in the sight of God, far more glorious and righteous, than was Adam in paradise, or than the angels that never fell; for your righteousness, which constitutes you righteous, is the righteousness of the God-man Christ Jesus. Your sins are as perfectly blotted out through the blood of the everlasting covenant, as though they had never been; and all the perfections and attributes of Jehovah, all his great and precious promises, are yours in Christ Jesus. You may, therefore, well rejoice and sing, seeing the everlasting covenant is made with you; this is all your salvation, and, glory be rendered to the Holy Ghost, he hath made it your desire. I have therefore nothing more to add, but to pray the Lord

the Spirit, as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation, to make known and reveal more and more of the perfect love Jesus bears towards you, of the complete righteousness with which Jesus hath adorned you, of the infinite merit of that sacrifice which Jesus hath offered up for you, whereby you and all his redeemed are perfected for ever; so that God the Father rests in his love towards you, and rejoiceth in his love with singing. And may the Lord the Spirit give you to see that the precious Jesus appears in yonder world, as a Lamb newly slain. He still, and to all eternity, will appear in the presence of God for us: he is our high priest after the power of an endless life. And when we sin, and there are none of God's elect but do, through the frailty of the flesh and the malice of the devil, then let us go to Jesus as our advocate with the Father. Oh, that the glories of Jesus may be more and more discovered to you, and by you. In Christ all fulness dwells: in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: in him are unsearchable riches; keep your eye, therefore, fixed on Jesus.

Dear Mrs. B., look off from yourself, from your trials, from the law, and Satan, and look to the peacemaker. Let the devil, the accuser of the brethren, say what he may, there is no condemnation in the high court of heaven against you. God himself can no more lay sin to your charge, and condemn you for it, than he can Christ himself. Glory be rendered to the eternal Trinity; it was the good pleasure of the Father's will to choose us in the Beloved; it was the will of the Son to live and die for us: and the Lord the Spirit to apply and reveal Jesus in us the hope of glory. Consider you have God's word to assure you of this, and the oath of God to confirm your faith. The Lord grant that your faith and love may grow exceedingly; may you, day by day, grow more and more rooted, and grounded, and settled in and upon Jesus. So prays him who wishes you still higher and more communion with God, and to be filled with his Spirit.

I am, your very humble servant,

In the crucified Lamb of God,

S. E. P.

P.S. My love to your husband, sister, and daughter, and to all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ.

LETTER XVI.

Petworth, Oct. 5, 1778.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I SUPPOSE you conclude that I have quite forgotten you, but assure yourself that I find great pleasure in finding an opportunity in writing to you. I received your's, dated July 21st, and rejoice greatly on your behalf for the grace of God, which is given you by Jesus Christ. Blessed, for ever blessed, be God, that your faith is in him. Do not be surprised, nor too much cast down on account of the lying, sly, and subtle insinuations of the devil. His whole plan is to keep you from looking to the Lord Jesus. My dear friend, resist him steadfastly in the faith; knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. None that have the faith of God's elect, but are tried in the very same manner; and Satan does not in general tempt believers to outward sin, but to spiritual sin; to legal dependences and to doubts and mistrusting of God's love towards us; therefore, pray night and day that you may know more and more of Jesus, of his glorious, perfect, and finished salvation. By this knowledge, you will see yourself completely saved from sin. Satan, law, and justice. Glory be to God, you may well disdain the thought of desiring to be anything in yourself but a sinner, saved alone by grace. Look for all holiness as well as righteousness, for sanctification as well as justification, in Christ. I charge you, by the Lord, that you suffer none, neither men nor angels, though the archangel Gabriel himself propose it, suffer none, I say, to take you from viewing Jesus, as made of God to you, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Let God be true, and every man a liar; to the law and to the testimony. You say the first chapter of the Ephesians appears glorious to you, and that some of its hidden glories may appear, I shall endeavour to give you a

plan of the whole chapter. First then, the apostle, writing to the church of Ephesus, styles them saints and faithful brethren in Christ Jesus, where, observe, that the Lord's people are styled saints while they travail here below; every believer is a saint, being separated by the everlasting purpose of God to the service of God, and being by the instrumentality of the eternal Spirit, separated from a vain conversation, and made partakers of a divine nature. They are not only saints, but faithful, being by the Holy Spirit formed anew, by the belief of the truth, they, through the same Holy Spirit, are kept faithful to the truth; and what they are in Christ Jesus. Every believer is in Christ as members in a head; all your life, light, grace, holiness, strength to overcome sin, is in Christ, as in a treasure house; and is, by believers, derived from Christ by faith. Consider this. Such the apostle wishes, grace and peace from God as a Father; such he is to us in Christ. He wishes grace and peace, that is, the continued communication of grace and peace to our souls from God our reconciled Father, and from Jesus Christ our glorious peace-maker, ver. 1, 2, then ver. 3, he falls a-blessing God, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for that he hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Oh, my friend, consider this, God himself hath blessed you with all spiritual blessings—all. God hath but all things, and glory be to his name, they are all our's in Christ Jesus; when were we thus blessed? even before the foundation of the world; for then he chose us, not in ourselves, blessed be his name; but in Christ predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, and made us accepted in the Beloved. What blessings are these? Chosen—our identical persons were chosen of God from eternity; chosen in Christ; made accepted in the Beloved; and all this from eternity. What then can ever alter the heart of God towards us? Nothing! Neither sin nor Satan, life nor death, things present nor things to come, can ever separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; and here consider Christ is called God's Beloved, and we are ingrafted so into the favour of God the Father by being accepted in the Beloved, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ loves you with the very same love wherewith he loves Christ Jesus himself. This appears in that God the Father loved him from everlasting,

so he did you. God the Father blessed Christ as God-man—mediator with all things; so he has you. All the unsearchable riches of Christ are your's; therefore, may the Lord help you to be daily counting over your riches. Oh, for an abiding, for a growing experience of God's love to our souls in Christ Jesus. Intreat the Holy Spirit daily to shed it abroad in your heart. But, say you, these are great and eternal blessings, and I perceive were given from everlasting; but I, as a sinner, have forfeited my title to them. No such thing. In the adorable Son of God we have redemption from all our guilt, from all our miseries, even full, free, and everlasting forgiveness—of what? *some*, no, blessed be God, of *all* our sins. I must beseech you, therefore, not to magnify your sins more than the blood of Christ. Oh, my friend, Jesus Christ appears in yonder heaven as your intercessor, and you are deeply engraven on his very heart; how safe then are you; let not unbelief, nor any man, take your crown of rejoicing from you. Mind election, predestination, being accepted in the Beloved, and blessed in Christ, with all spiritual blessings, having redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of all your sins is entirely through the riches of his grace. All this doth suppose merit in the creature by which he may enjoy these benefits, but all these blessings are given to you, who in yourself are a sinner. Nay, do not fret at that, for to eternity, when seated on the throne with Christ himself, you will be nothing in yourself any more than now, which is a sinner saved by grace; and, blessed be God, you may well rejoice that you are such. Let Satan know and tell him boldly you do not wish to be better in and of yourself; for God hath been more honoured by your Lord's obedience, than ever you dishonoured him by your disobedience. What, think you, can the Father resist the cry of the Son's blood? No; he cannot. Christ's blood cries aloud in heaven on your behalf.

My dear friend, my heart has been so drawn out towards you in writing, that I cannot but earnestly pray these glorious truths may come with their proper weight to your soul. I am among a dead, lifeless, barren people. Oh, what a mercy to be kept alive to God; I hope I shall, and I expect to leave them soon. The Lord the Spirit help you to live at a high

rate. I wish you a deeper enjoyment and experience of all Christ's benefits.

I am your servant, in all spiritual services, for Jesus' sake,

S. E. P.

P. S. I hope you will excuse me that I have not executed my design of going through the whole chapter. I hope what has been written will be applied by the Holy Ghost to your heart. My most cordial love to dear friend —, and his wife. I beg an interest in your prayers.

LETTER XVII.

Petworth, Oct. 6, 1778.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU wrote a few lines to me which I intend to requite, by writing a long epistle to you. I am glad to hear you are enabled, by the Lord the Spirit, to see yourself comely through the imputation of the righteousness and bloodshedding of the Lord the Redeemer. Eternal blessings be rendered to our Jesus; he hath ingrafted his elect into the favour of his Father to such a degree, that God the Father may as soon forget to love Jesus himself, as forget loving us, with all the love of his boundless heart.

Oh, my friend, in the strength of God press after greater sights of Christ. Pray for an increasing knowledge of Jesus, of the efficacy of his blood, the dignity of his righteousness, the bowels of his mercy, the eternity of his love, and the riches of his grace. The Lord the Spirit grant that you and your dear yoke-fellow may know more and more of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Whatever you want, let Jesus know of it. Spread all your wants before him. What a happy life is it to live the life of faith, to hang upon Christ for soul and body, for temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings.

My dear friend, let your mind, your memory, your heart, your conscience, be clothed with and stored with the knowledge of Jesus. Oh, that Jesus, in all things, may have the pre-eminence in your heart. Consider being in Christ, made through rich, free, electing, grace, one with Christ; all that Christ hath is your's; you are divinely related to the glorious person of Jesus, and must to eternity share with him in all his benefits. All that the Son of God is worth is your's, his heart is set on you, his grace hath already been manifested towards you in conversion, and it shall, glory be to God, reign through Immanuel's obedience unto eternal life. His wisdom is your's to order all things for you; not an hair of your head shall fall to the ground without his sovereign will. His power is your's to uphold you amidst all the temptations, and to preserve you notwithstanding all the suggestions of the devil. His atonement is your's, with all its merit. His righteousness and spirit—all his fulness is your's, given you to live on. Now, to have the fulness of Jesus to supply you, surely must needs be enough to rejoice the heart at all times. His unceasing glory, and those pleasures which the God-man enjoys in heaven; even you, in this likewise, are ordained to partake. Oh, what a Christ! What love! What mercy! What grace and glory will be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Lord help you to live like a son of the Most High God. All things are your's: the Father's love, the Son's salvation, the Spirit's grace—all is your's. You and every believer, the weakest as well as the strongest, are an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ Jesus. Are you an heir of God? What will this bring you to? None but God can tell.

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus, that you may know more of his love, more of his grace, have more fellowship with him in all ordinances and in all things; and know more of the riches of his inheritance in the saints.

In a former letter I undertook what I did not finish. Suppose I attempt finishing it here. It is to enumerate the grand blessings contained in the 1st of Ephesians. The first is election to holiness, ver. 4; predestination to adoption and glory, ver. 5; the foundation of all this is said to be the glory of his

grace, ver. 6; then redemption and forgiveness of sins, ver. 7; then effectual calling, ver. 8; the power of it, ver. 9; the heaven and glory, ver. 11; the earnest of the Spirit, ver. 13; and last of all, Christ is the head, ver. 22. And he is this for you that were dead in trespasses and sins. What hath grace done? I wish you may be able to make it out. To make it the more plain, I will enumerate the blessings, election, predestination, adoption, acceptance in the Beloved; redemption and forgiveness of sins; effectual calling, heaven and glory; Christ as the head of his body, the church; the foundation of all these blessings is the rich free grace of God. I heartily long for my dear A—— friends to live high in communion with God; to soar aloft, and live much by faith in heaven, before we get there; and this hath drawn out my heart to write to so many of you. If my Christ should be thereby exalted, your faith strengthened, and hearts comforted, I shall then rejoice.

Praying that my God may count you worthy of his heavenly calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his will, and work of faith, with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I conclude, as your servant in Jesus,

S. E. P.

LETTER XVIII.

Petworth, Oct. 5, 1778.

DEAR MRS. C.

I HOPE you do not interpret my not writing to you as the least disrespect to you. Surely Mrs. C.'s kindness to me requires me to remember her with great esteem. Mrs. B. informed me you would be glad to hear from me, and I am now enjoying the pleasure of writing to you. Oh, that the Holy Ghost may guide my mind and pen that our glorious

Jesus may be exalted. What a soul-edifying, soul-enriching wisdom is that, even the wisdom that cometh down from above, and which makes us wise unto eternal salvation; to know Christ is indeed life eternal; to know the glories of his person, the infinity of his love, the perfection of his work, the inexhaustible fulness of his grace, and the power of his arm, cannot but render Jesus the delight and desire of our souls. How doth all heaven gaze with astonishment to behold the person of the eternal Son clothed in our nature, and who is now in the midst of the throne as a Lamb newly slain. What are the thoughts of those tens of thousands that there wait upon him? and what the thoughts of Jesus' love are to his people? They are surely nonplussed what to think or say of it; and after all their study and experience of it, must cry, it passeth all understanding. But, though they can never come at the bottom of this love, which is as unsearchable as God himself, yet they are happy in making fresh discoveries of it. May we, like them, be making more and more fresh discoveries of this love, as revealed in the Scriptures, and made known, and shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; let us consider that in the Scriptures all the infinite glories, beauties, excellencies, honours, royalties, fame, and renown, together with all the unsearchable riches, and the very secrets of his loving heart, are held forth to public view to his dear people. There we are led to behold Jesus rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and declaring that his delights were with the sons of men; there Jesus is represented to us, as travelling in the greatness of his strength, having all his garments dyed in blood in order to bring salvation to us. We are presented with that wonder of wonders, God manifest in our nature, standing up in our stead, clothed with our sins, and bearing the whole curse of God due to our transgressions. Astonishing sight! Here the mighty God sinks in deep waters. Here the darling of heaven is made a curse. Here the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person, is heard crying out, to the amazement of all heaven and earth, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And here, glory be rendered to our Jesus for it, here the God-man is seen, making peace between his Father and us, by the blood of his cross. Blessings on him, he hath by himself purged our sins; and through the infinitely meri-

torious life and death of Jesus, every believer is as perfectly discharged from all the guilt of his sins, as though he had never sinned, for our Jesus hath and still doth bear away the sins of the world. He bore it away by his atoning sacrifice, and when his people sin, he, by the precious efficacy of his blood, takes it away continually out of the sight of the Father, blessed be God.

Let who will, at their peril abuse it. Yet there is no more sin charged by God to the sinner's account that has fled to Jesus, and hath by faith taken the benefits of Christ's atonement, than there is to Christ. No. Blessings, eternal blessings, be rendered to the great atoning Lamb of God, we have in him, by him, and through him, redemption, even the forgiveness of all our sins; and, glory to our Jesus, whom he cleanseth he cleanseth eternally. How doth this truth shine forth with resplendent lustre in God's book. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of the people, and covered all their sins." "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins." "In those days and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Judah shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Israel, and they shall not be found."

Do but reflect on the words made use of by the Holy Ghost to set forth how perfectly he pardons and forgives his people. First, he doth not behold iniquity in his spiritual Israel. How so? Doth he not see that in and of ourselves we are sinners? Yes. But, glory be to God, he doth not impute sin to his elect, because he hath already laid their sins upon the Lord Jesus. Well then, it is your duty to look upon yourself as God looks upon you in Christ. In Jesus, the adorable Head of the church, you are complete; in him you have a complete obedience, which causeth you to appear glorious in the sight of God the Father. Never did the natural sun appear so dazzling and glorious in your eyes, as you, through the imputation of Immanuel's righteousness, shine before God. "We are," says the apostle, "made the righteousness of God in him." In Christ you have free, full, and eternal pardon for all your sins. In Jesus you have sancti-

fication and holiness, as well as righteousness; for, indeed, Christ with all his fulness, with all his merit, with all his blessings, is made over to the believer. To him and his infinite fulness you are directed in the scriptures to repair, that by the divine communications of Jesus' grace, all the wants of your soul may be supplied. It is not by looking into yourself, by poring on your corruptions, that you will be humbled, but it is by eyeing and making use of the blood and righteousness, the grace and fulness of the adorable God-man. Oh, that this may be your happiness to be looking up in faith and prayer to the Lord the Spirit, daily to glorify Jesus more and more in your heart. It is his office to glorify and testify of Jesus, to shed abroad the Father's love in our hearts, to bring us to trust upon nothing for the pardon of our sins but the atonement of Jesus, and to renounce all hopes of acceptance but in the righteousness of God our Saviour, and to bring us to live out of ourselves upon the infinite fulness of Jesus. May it be his blessed pleasure to make our hearts continually happy in the enjoyment of the Father's love in Jesus, by faith in Christ's finished salvation. May we know more and more of the infinite preciousness and efficacy of our Saviour's blood; and may we be daily growing out of ourselves into Christ Jesus, grounding our dependence daily more and more upon him, who hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. That our God in all things may be glorified is the prayer of,

Your humble servant for Christ's sake,

S. E. P.

LETTER XIX.

Oathall, March 29, 1779.

DEAR MRS. B.

I RECEIVED your very precious letter, and my heart rejoiced in the views the Holy Ghost hath given you of your com-

pleteness in Christ. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, for ever and for ever, for working out an everlasting righteousness in which we are made the righteousness of God; in whom we are cleansed from every spot and stain of corruption through his most precious bloodshedding. Though you and I have the feeling of sin, and are partakers of a body of sin and death, yet, in the sight of God, we are as perfectly righteous by the imputation of his Son's righteousness to us, and as perfectly pardoned and forgiven all trespasses, and by the sacrifice and through the purgation of our sins, wrought out by Christ upon the cross, we are this moment before God as spotless as Christ himself. Christ, saith the apostle, loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might cleanse it, through the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

How astonishingly glorious and beautiful does the righteousness of Christ make us; so glorious that Christ himself cries out, "Turn away thine eyes from me for they have overcome me;" and marvellous efficacy must there be in the blood of Jesus, which doth cleanse us so perfectly, absolutely, and eternally, that we thereby are so perfectly clean in the sight of God the Father, that he, beholding us in Christ cleansed by his blood, and clothed in his righteousness, cannot behold iniquity in Jacob nor perverseness in Israel, so as to charge it upon us. Blessed be God the Father, for choosing us in Christ from all eternity; and blessed be Christ, for engaging with his Father as our Surety and substitute. Glory, eternal glory, be rendered to God in the highest, that every believer, weak and strong, the poorest believer, as well as the believer that is richer in experience, is looked upon by God the Father in Christ. The Lord takes no view of his people out of Christ, but he looks upon them in the Beloved, and what he is we are. In him (not in ourselves) we are perfectly righteous, even as he is righteous; in him we are (not shall be) accepted; in him we are blessed with all the fulness of the Godhead; in him we have redemption through his blood from sin, Satan, death and hell, and we have the free, full and everlasting forgiveness

of all our sins ; in him we have life, light, grace, holiness, sanctification, and a title to eternal glory. Oh, what a mercy beyond expression is it, to be one with Christ in all the blessings of the Father's love, and in all the blessings of the Spirit's grace ; we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. In Christ we are complete ; we are interested in Christ's person, for we are, says the apostle, "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh ; we are interested in Christ's love, for, as you gloriously observe, you were locked up in his heart from eternity. You are interested in all Christ's obedience, and in all Christ's sufferings ; you are interested in his death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, advocateship, and eternal glory. How rich then are you ? It is impossible to tell. All Christ's unsearchable riches are your's, and, by and by, you will be introduced into the palace of the King, be made a pillar in the temple of our God, and go no more out. How will your heart be ravished and your soul amazed, when you shall be brought into King Jesus' presence, and behold him arrayed in his coronation robes ; and he shall embrace you in his arms of everlasting love, grace, and mercy, causing you to sit down on the same throne with himself ; and with his own most blessed hands, which, for your sake, were pinned with nails on the racking cross, place on your head a crown of glory.

What, Mrs. B——, heaven will be to us, I can but very faintly conceive ; we find heaven begun in our hearts by faith, and when the Holy Ghost reveals Jesus but a little, we are sometimes overcome ; but for Jesus Christ to shine with all his splendour and glory upon our souls, what a weight, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, will this be ? May it be our constant desire and prayer to the Holy Spirit, to behold more and more of the glorious beauty, majesty, love, and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as represented in the glass of the everlasting gospel, that your heart may be, day by day, more and more happy in his love, your affections more and more drawn out after him, and from a sense of his matchless worth, and inconceivable preciousness, you may more and more cleave unto him. Remember me in all your prayers ; I do you, and the Lord be with you.

My love to all the lovers of the crucified Jesus with you.

I wish you a rich and most precious experience of the love of the holy and most blessed Trinity, and pray that you may live more and more upon Christ's fulness; and am,

Your humble servant, for a precious Jesus' sake,

S. E. P.

LETTER XX.

March 29, 1779.

DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE this will find you rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; to rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, is not only our duty, but it is also our privilege; for God's chosen, God's elect, God's jewels, have abundant cause to rejoice. The love of God which runs through the sacrifice of Jesus, and is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, is always sufficient matter of rejoicing. Meditate, my dear friend, upon these words of the apostle, "and we have known and believed the love which God hath in us; God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Observe how the apostle put knowledge before faith as the producing cause of the effect. In order for you, who are made a partaker of grace, to grow more into the knowledge of God's great love towards you, read and meditate upon the revealed account of God's love in the scriptures of truth; there we find that the Lord loved his people from everlasting, that, in the council of heaven, God the Father gave all the elect into the hands of Christ, his co-equal and co-eternal Son; that he gave them grace in Christ before the world began; let this be ever remembered, that God chose his people in Christ before the world began, before the mountains were brought forth; God the Father entered into covenant with God the Son concerning the souls of the elect to save them from sin, death, and hell; and, oh, what marvellous grace! Jesus Christ rejoicing in his people, rejoicing in a prospect of his doing and suffering for them, all that is necessary to recon-

cile them to the justice of God the Father; God the Father wrote the names of the elect in the book of life; God the Father delivered them all into Christ's hands, who voluntarily engaged to come into our world, to unite our nature to his own divine nature, standing in the law place and stead of his people, having all their sins imputed to him, charged to his account, and he to suffer the whole wrath and curse, shame, death, and hell, which all the elect ought to have suffered in hell to all eternity; and that the holiness of his nature and the righteousness of his life, shall be imputed to the elect for their justification, and his meritorious sufferings should discharge them from all the curses of the law, and by his most precious bloodshedding, and infinitely meritorious sacrifice, all the sins of his people should be put away out of the Father's presence.

In consequence of this council of peace, which was held between the Father and the Son, all the love of the Father, and all the grace of the eternal Spirit, was bestowed upon Christ as God-man, as the Head of his body the church; all the vessels of mercy were committed into Christ's hands, and all those vast stores of love, grace and mercy, which were to be expended upon them were laid upon Christ Jesus; and it was the Father's sovereign good pleasure that in him should all fulness dwell. Here we may behold the great love of God towards us, in choosing them in Christ before all time, in loving them in Christ from everlasting, in giving them grace and providing salvation for them in Christ before the world began, and giving his co-equal and co-eternal Son to be a covenant for them. Now, my dear friend, if you ask how great God's love is towards these sinners who are chosen in Christ, the answer must be that it is so inconceivably great, that the gift of Christ and eternal life, the gift of the Holy Ghost in order to quicken, convert, and reveal Christ in us and to us, that heaven and eternal glory is but all little enough to express the greatness of God's love from eternity towards us.

The blessings of God's love to us are election, predestinating us to the adoption of children, acceptation in the Beloved, the gift of Christ's person, pardon of all our sins through his blood, justification from all things in his righteousness, a right to the throne of grace, liberty of entering

into the holiest of all through the blood of Jesus; the divine Spirit, to teach and lead us into all truth, and to abide with us for ever, and heaven and eternal glory; these are the blessings of God's great love towards us; the great love of God, in its eternity, durableness, freeness, with all its blessed fruits and consequences, are set forth in its glory in the everlasting gospel; with it in our hands, and the light of the Holy Ghost shining on our hearts, and testifying of Jesus to our souls, and opening and explaining the scriptures to our understanding, we shall be wise unto salvation by faith which is in Christ Jesus. We have known by the divine teaching of the Lord the Spirit, and from the holy scriptures of truth, the love which God hath to us, and what is the foundation of our faith in God, the word of God; and the more we know of God's most blessed word, mind, and will, love and grace, the more confidently shall we be enabled to depend upon God. God is love, there is nothing in the heart of God but love towards his people, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

May the Lord God give us more and more experience contained in this scripture; may the grace, mercy, love, and presence of God, be constantly experienced in your and your sister's heart, who lives with you; may the Lord the Spirit lead you on from faith to faith, from grace to grace, till you appear before God in Zion above.

I subscribe myself, your servant in the Son of God,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXI.

St. Agnes, Jan. 5, 1780.

DEAR FRIEND,

I RECEIVED your very kind and affectionate letter, for which I sincerely thank you. My reason for not calling at

C——, was because I judged it quite necessary to visit our B—— friends; and I intended, by God's assistance, to have paid you a visit very early after my arrival at St. Agnes; but to my disappointment my horse died, and that prevented me. I am very soon going again out of the country, and I intend to come and see you and our dear friend P., and I trust shall find you both rejoicing in Christ, and triumphing in the God of your salvation; Jesus Christ, and him crucified is the object of our faith and trust, the alone foundation of our hope and our glory. Eternal thanks be rendered to the Son of God for his thoughts of love and mercy towards us from all eternity, and for engaging with his Father, and undertaking the cause and salvation of elect sinners, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and heaven were formed. God was in Christ, forming and contriving the method of man's salvation. The which salvation doth make all the divine attributes shine forth most gloriously, and the divine persons in the Godhead are manifested to the elect, as bearing an everlasting love towards them. In the council of peace, God the Father engaged his co-equal Son, and called him to the great work of bringing Jacob, *i.e.*, the elect, back again to God, from whom they had wandered by sin. He engaged with his eternal Son that he should become their substitute, and take man's nature into union with his divine person; that he should stand up as God-man in the law-place, room, and stead of his people; that he should fulfil all righteousness for them by his life, make full atonement for their sins by his death, and upon the account hereof, God's pardoning love and mercy should be made known unto their souls, and they be accounted righteous before him. The eternal Son of God was pleased out of the boundless love of his heart, to engage to become true and very man to be made under the law, to put himself in the law-place, room and stead of his people, to fulfil all the holy law of God for them, and to bear all their sins in his own body on the tree, and to bear the curse, to carry the sorrows and die the death, yea, to feel and suffer the whole curse of God due to sins of the elect, to make his soul an offering for sin; and God the Spirit, who is in the Godhead a distinct person from the Father and the Son, and yet co-equal and co-eternal, engaged to quicken the Lord's elect from a death of trespasses and sins, to impart spiritual life to their

souls, to make them partakers of a divine nature, and to reveal, make known, and apply the Lord Jesus Christ to the hearts and consciences of his people.

Oh, that the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, may be graciously pleased to direct your heart into the love of God the Father towards you, in singling you out from all eternity and fixing his heart's love upon you; and out of that boundless love he bore towards you, as an elect vessel of mercy, he gave Jesus, his dearly beloved and only-begotten Son, to redeem you from the curse of the law, and the damnation of hell. The love of God towards his people is as eternal as himself: there never was any beginning of God's love towards his people, and there never will be an end of that love—it reaches from eternity to eternity. Not Adam's fall, nor our actual transgressions nor backslidings, alter the heart's love of God towards us, but it is one constant, and immutable, and inconceivable love which draws after it all the blessings of heaven. Christ with all his blessings, the Holy Spirit with all his grace, heaven and eternal glory, are but the fruits and effects of God's everlasting love towards us.

May the Lord the Spirit enlighten your understanding with a glorious discovery of the person and glories of Christ as God-man. Consider him as God, and he has all the perfection of heaven. Consider him as man, and he has all the beauties and perfections of the earth. He is beauty beyond compare. How astonishing the grace! This adorable person, God's only-begotten Son, hath wrought out for sinners an everlasting righteousness, and God the Father imputes this righteousness to sinners without works, and God the Spirit makes known this righteousness, and gives the elect faith, whereby they believe with their hearts in this righteousness. Now, consider you are to look at Christ, and Christ alone, continually; you are to look off every other object, and to look wholly at Jesus as the substitute of sinners, as the God-man who has perfectly obeyed the law, and made it everlastingly honourable; and as having borne the sins of his people, and been made a curse for them, and having made perfect peace by the blood of his cross. Do you see your want of a righteousness to justify you at the bar of God? Behold the righteousness of the God-man, of him who is Jehovah's fellow, and in his righteousness shall all the seed of Israel be

justified and shall glory. In the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ imputed to every believer, the weakest as well as the strongest, is justified perfectly at the bar of God from all things, and God sees the soul that is wrapt up in Christ's righteousness, perfectly righteous, without spot or wrinkle; every believer, through the most precious bloodshedding of Jesus Christ, is discharged from all its guilt, and cleansed from all its sins before God. God looks upon his people as one with Christ; and as Christ became their Surety, their sins thereby became his; as his righteousness becomes their's, his righteousness becomes our's by imputation; and so our sins became his by imputation, for he was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. In order to bring these glorious truths down more clearly to your understanding, I will let you know how I live. I feel everything that is evil in my own heart, and have all those very things in me which makes you at any time uneasy; but instead of reasoning about it, I look away from myself to Jesus, and I consider that in him I am accepted. It is not, my dear friend, on account of what the Lord does within us that we are accepted, but our acceptance is in Christ the beloved. When I have a sight of my unrighteousness, I at the same time consider, let the devil say what he will to the contrary, that I am in Christ this present moment, and shall be to eternity, perfectly righteous in Christ. Does a sight of my unholiness present itself to view? Jesus is my perfect sanctification in the sight of God. Does sin stare me in the face? Christ was made sin for me. Do the devil, conscience, law, and justice terrify me? Who is he that shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God himself that justifies, who is he that condemneth; It is Christ that died, yea, is also risen, and at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. Electing love, God's eternal purpose to save his people, the finished salvation of the Son of God, is my security; and blessed be God, is the whole foundation of all my comfort and rejoicing.

May the Lord the Spirit bear his testimony in your heart, for Jesus and his finished work, and help you to build with comfort and confidence on Christ's blood and righteousness. Do not look at sin and self, but look off from your sins, and out of yourself to Christ's righteousness alone, and blood

alone, which, to use the words of another, is the main thing of the gospel. I would recommend to you 'Romaine's Life,' or 'Walk of Faith.' May the love of Christ dwell richly in you, and great grace rest upon you.

My cordial love to Mrs. P., and I intend seeing you in two or three weeks. I hope you will not think me guilty of slighting you for not writing before. I pray the Lord Jesus abundantly to bless you with his Spirit's teaching.

I am your's, for Christ's sake,

S. E. P.

Honiton, April 26, 1780.

LETTER XXII.

DEAR MR. H.

I TAKE this present opportunity of writing to you and the dear friends with you, whom I love for the truth's sake, which dwelleth and abideth with and in you. I hope your souls are as watered gardens, and that Jesus is pleased, daily, to communicate his gracious and heavenly influence unto you, so that you can say of him as the spouse does, "that he is altogether lovely." Jesus Christ the rock of refuge, the foundation of our hope, the protector of his people, the healer of his Israël, of all their diseases, is in the eye of God his eternal Father, in the eye of angels, and of all the redeemed, called, sinners, altogether lovely. If you consider the relation of Christ to God, he will appear altogether lovely. He is the eternal and only begotten Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: who has every perfection and attribute of Godhead equal with the Father and the Spirit. He is distinct in person, and yet one in essence with the eternal Father, and eternal Spirit. As the Son of God, his essential glory is far beyond all conception. He did, from all eternity, lie in the bosom of the Father, and was happy in the contemplations

of his own infinite and boundless perfections ; and solacing himself in his Father's love unto him, and in his infinite delight of him. And eternal glory be rendered unto him by all the host of angels and the redeemed, he was then rejoicing from everlasting in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men. His eternal Father chose all the elect in him, presented them unto him in the glass of his eternal purposes, in all that beauty and holiness which he determined to put upon them, and the Son of God, viewing the elect as they were thus represented unto him by the Father, fell in love with their persons, and they were given unto him. "Thine they were and thou gavest them me;" to be his bride and spouse, and God the Father gave them into the hands of Jesus; he gave all their persons into his hands, and he blessed them in Christ their Head, with all spiritual blessings before the foundation of the world; and foreseeing the fall, God, in his infinite wisdom, contrived the way, and in the everlasting council purposed it to his Son, who being the Head of his body the church, agreed to become the Surety of his people, and as their Surety, to make himself answerable for their debt of obedience, and for the debt of suffering.

Accordingly he undertook, in the covenant of redemption, to take our human nature into union with his divine person, and by becoming God and man in the person of one Christ, to work out that divine obedience to the law, and to offer that sacrifice for sin, which as man he would be capable to perform, and as God-man would be capable of rendering it available to the satisfying the demands of the law and justice to the very uttermost; whereby the righteousness of the law is everlastingly magnified, and sin perfectly atoned for; and as he was God and man united in one person, he was hereby capable to merit as God, and render his doings and sufferings in human nature everlastingly available to justify his people before the Lord, and to make full satisfaction for their sins.

Jesus, as the substitute of his people, is lovely in the eye of faith; glory for ever be rendered unto him, he engaged from before all worlds in the everlasting covenant, in the behalf and for the sake of the elect, and in the fulness of time he was manifested in the flesh, and did live and die for his chosen people. Christ is lovely in his person as God-man, as Im-

manuel, God with us, God in our nature, encompassed with all our infirmities, tempted in all points like us, yet without sin. He is lovely as the Lord our righteousness, who wrought out and brought in for his people an everlasting righteousness, in which every believer appears in the sight of God righteous, even as Christ is righteous. In this righteousness imputed, we are more righteous than Adam was in paradise, or the angels which are in heaven, for this is the righteousness of the incarnate God, and which makes the elect eternally and invariably righteous. Jesus is lovely as our atoning sacrifice, who has removed all the sins of his people for ever out of the sight of God the Father, and has got them a free, full, and everlasting discharge from all their guilt, punishment, and condemnation. Jesus is lovely as our intercessor, and representative, and advocate at God's right hand, and as our father brother, friend, counsellor, shepherd, leader, and king. Oh, that you might be all led more and more, by God the Spirit, to know, to feel, and experience, more and more of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. The believer is beloved of God, united to Christ, a partaker of the Holy Ghost, interested in the everlasting covenant, heir of the exceeding great and precious promises which God hath made to his people in Christ, and entitled to everlasting glory in heaven. How safe and eternally secure, then, is the believing soul? He is loved with an everlasting love, interested in God's everlasting mercy, clothed with an everlasting righteousness, hath an everlasting pardon, and God has given him everlasting consolation, and made him partaker of everlasting life, and prepared for him an everlasting habitation.

“Happy are the people that are in such a case, yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God.” Oh, let us look to Jesus Christ and to him alone, continually for every blessing we stand in need of; Jesus is our one object. Let our wants be what they may, Jesus Christ is consecrated and appointed by his Father to help, relieve, and supply us. All fulness dwells in him, all the fulness of righteousness, holiness, grace, pardon, comfort and consolation dwell in the great head of the church, and this is our Lord's command: “Look unto me and be ye saved.” May you be kept constantly looking out of yourselves to Jesus alone. Oh, remember what you are in him. In him God the Father

chose you from eternity, and, as members of Jesus, he loves you with same love wherewith he loves Christ himself, he views you in him, clothed in his righteousness and cleansed by his blood; and in Jesus, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, ye are complete.

I have read over our dear friend's book, and I think it contains a whole body of divinity; the doctrine of Christ's proper sonship, eternal deity, his covenant engagements with his Father for his people, and his divine and ineffable and manifestative glory, as God-man Mediator, is gloriously treated of in it. I wish you all to read it carefully and with the greatest attention, and to pray for a right knowledge of what it contains, as I doubt not of its contributing, under God's blessing, to your growth in spiritual wisdom and understanding.

I sincerely thank you for all past favours; please to give my most cordial love to all our dear friends. I hope dear S. B. is enabled through grace to look to the bleeding dying Lamb; all her disquietude arises from looking too much to herself and too little to Christ Jesus.

I am, Sir.

Your sincere friend and servant for Christ's sake,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXIII.

Chard, Sept. 24, 1811.

To the Church of Christ, meeting at Eagle and Child Alley,
together with their Deacons.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

GRACE be with you, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

I most heartily rejoice to hear from you, and to find you have the Lord's truth amongst you, the Lord's presence with you, and that you are at peace among yourselves. These are invaluable blessings. May you see them to be such. May you at all times enjoy them as such. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. With respect to myself, in this I have great satisfaction, that there is no gospel truth I ever knew, believed, enjoyed, and have had fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the knowledge and belief of, but I have set it before you, both in my preaching and writing. I say this affords me pleasure, that as I have been allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so I have preached, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth the heart. I am still living in the same truths; I shall die interested in them. This does not admit of a single doubt; blessed be God for it. As it respects your kindness as to my remaining in the country, I thank you for it. I do make a shift to get out on a Lord's-day, and preach in the morning; but my speech is very low. I am generally quite worn out; by the time I have finished I am quite spent. I cannot move to any distance from this place without help, so that as to going to Plymouth, on Tuesday, I shall not be able to get there, except one of the friends at either of the places accompany me. I do think, were I in London, I should not be able to do anything; for although I am not so ill as when I came here, yet I have not got above one single complaint. My pain in my back and stomach is, at times, what it was when I left town. What keeps me up is the air, and going to bed before nine o'clock in the evening. Every exertion is too much for me; and were it left to me, even here, although I love preaching so well, I really should give it up. As old age comes fast on me, and speaking is really hurtful to me, so that if I speak in conversation I am sure to suffer for it, I think you should give me quite up, as altogether a worn out old soldier. I am fit for nothing but to sit still, and write, and that I am, at times, quite tired out with. Now this being the truth, what can you expect of me? It is the writing now, which is the only thing I can engage in. Well, according to your letter, you give me leave to visit my friends. I cannot

remove from hence until November; so that, should I outlive the winter, you cannot see me until the spring; and I do believe one week in London would lay me by, as I could not walk to meeting, and the confined air would shut me up, and I think none of you would be able to hear me.

Well, we have had enough of this. The Lord give you all clear, bright, and spiritual discoveries of the Lord Jesus Christ, in all his essential, personal, relative, and mediatorial glories. This will attract your minds; this will enlarge your hearts; this will raise up your affections to high and heavenly things. You will find everything in Jesus Christ which can make you happy, and which can make you holy. The more you are led into discoveries of his love and mercy, of his blood and righteousness, the more precious he will be unto you. To have and enjoy fellowship with him is the greatest blessing this side glory. May the Lord the Spirit breathe on all your souls, and under it may you be breathing after more knowledge and fellowship with the worthy Lamb. Aim to crown Christ continually, by giving him the whole glory of your present and complete salvation. The whole glory of it is all due to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who, by will and counsel, covenant and oath, sealed the salvation of the elect by an eternal purpose in Christ; the knowledge of which is the ground of all real confidence in God. Therefore I would say to you, my friends, study the covenant; seek to obtain clear views of it from the written word of God; for it is the magna charta. It is that which conveys to us a knowledge of what passed in the mind and will of the eternal Three concerning us before all worlds. Therefore I say again unto you, study it; don't rest with what knowledge you may have of it; but be diligent in reading the Scriptures; that from them you may clearly see with your eyes that you are interested in it, and that you may know more and more what belongs unto you in consequence of it. I would not have you conceive past attainments will do, as it respects helping you on through the journey of life, and giving you to increase more and more until ye are brought to the everlasting kingdom of glory. No. Too many think so. But I say unto you, although it is but the same knowledge as it respects the object and subject, yet there is an increase in the knowledge of the same. And it is as the Holy Ghost is pleased to give you best views of

Christ, and of the Father's love in him, that there is a real outgoing of our souls after God and Jesus Christ. And as this is the case, the promise is fulfilled, "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." And, agreeable with this, our Lord said to Nathaniel, "Believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these." To have the mind distinctly fixed on Christ as Saviour is truly blessed. To be led to take in distinct thoughts of Christ's blood and righteousness into our minds, is still more blessed. To be led to have some heart-warming views of the love of Christ is an increase of blessedness. To survey the mercy and compassions of Christ to us, affords us a fresh feast. To go over, very particularly, in our minds, the sufferings of Christ in body and soul, this is a means of our getting faster hold of him. To be led clearly to consider the union which subsists between him and us, this bears us higher still. To know we are accepted in the Beloved, is even beyond all the the former. And to be favoured with a knowledge and apprehension of his person, this exceeds all. Now I say, as I have often said unto you, general thoughts of Christ will do you no good. It is taking in distinct spiritual thoughts of all these important truths and eternal realities which alone can feed your souls and nourish up your minds to life everlasting. May the Lord himself give you to see the truth of it, and give you peace always, and by all means. Grace and peace be with you all, with your deacons, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the desire of my soul, and the prayer of my heart for you, being

Your's in the bonds of the gospel,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXIV.

Chard, Oct. 9, 1811.

To the Church of God, meeting at Eagle and Child Alley.
Grace and peace be multiplied unto you.

BELOVED OF GOD,

THE relation in which I stand in unto you, often draws out my heart towards you. Not want of affection, but as you well know, bodily infirmity has, and is the means of being at a distance from you. I must say, I do not think you need my personal ministry, as I cannot declare God's truths among you more fully, freely, and scripturally, than in my writings, which you have, and is read among you. I have also been labouring in season, and out of season, notwithstanding all my bodily infirmities; and sometimes I have been ready to drop with the pen in my hand, in sermonizing Solomon's Song for your use and benefit; so that I do think you ought to give me entirely up, as not worth much at this time of life in the preaching way, and leave me as an old worn out soldier, to live and die in the country, especially as I wish to live and die in church fellowship with you, and also in going on in aiming to write out all the Canticle sermons for you. Now, my beloved, do not you think this would be shewing me great respect? I really think so; indeed, indeed, I do.

But, my beloved, I will tell you what I think you want, and ought not to be without. I think you should have that church ordinance, the Lord's supper. You will, it may be, say, How can we? How shall we? You are not present. If we had you with us, we should have it immediately. But would you have us engage another minister to celebrate the ordinance with us? I answer, No; it would be disorderly so to do; but I would have you, without so doing have the Lord's supper, and have it immediately too; and go on regularly too. According to Dr. Goodwin, and other great dignitaries in the church of Christ, in the absence of the pastor, a deacon (the church requesting him) has a right to dispense

the supper of the Lord to that church in which he stands in that relation. It is an office act; it is an act of office power. I have no right to administer that ordinance unto you but in consequence of the office power I hold among you, by your own assent and consent. Now there can be no more in my administration, than there would be in one of the deacons. There is no more holiness and sanctity in me, than there is in them. I must die, and may die soon. You will not, I hope, break up as a little body on that account. I may outlive my faculties. What is that to you? Must you be deprived of any ordinance on that account? Beloved, I should rejoice to hear you were so settled, as not to be easily overthrown, and that you have all the ordinances of Christ amongst you.

I will give you some general account of the Lord's supper. Of the simplicity of it; of the acts in which the shewing forth the death of Christ consists; of the end of it, with the command of Christ respecting it.

The worship of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whilst of the utmost importance and spirituality, yet it is of the utmost simplicity. One great part of the excellency of divine worship, consists in the simplicity of it. We are all of us so carnal, that we overlook the simplicity of Christ's holy institutions, and must, as we conceive, add something unto them. For instance, baptism, although an ordinance appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ, yet it consists in nothing more or less than in going down into the water, and dipping the whole body, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, under water, so as for every part of it to be buried in it. And in these acts, the overwhelming sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is most solemnly recorded. It is common on the occasion to preach, pray, and sing; yet this is no part of the ordinance; it does not belong to it. I am not speaking against these expressions of our faith, love, and reverence to the Lord Jesus Christ, but I say the ordinance would be as truly complete without it as with it. Yet we, it may be, should scarce look on it rightly dispensed, without these additions. There's our legality and want of simplicity. It may be a minister must be engaged; whereas Philip was only a deacon, and he baptized the Lord High Treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia.

So with respect to the Lord's supper. The Lord Jesus Christ instituted it. I never conceive it rightly celebrated except the words of the institution be read; I don't like always to read Paul's words, to the neglect of Matthew, Mark, and Luke's. I would read one at a time, and the other the next time, and so go through all four. With respect to the actions, the bread is to be taken, to be blessed, to be broken, to be given, received, and eaten. After which the cup is to be taken, to be blessed, to be given, to be received, and this is all which belongs to the ordinance.

In these acts, and by these actions, the death of Christ is recorded, and shewn forth. All beyond this is an addition to the ordinance, and is wholly superfluous.

Now there is majesty in this simplicity. This was all Christ himself did. So the evangelist tells us, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, take, eat, this is my body, and he took the cup, and gave thanks, and, gave it to them, saying drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins," chap. xxvi. ver. 26, 27, 28. Now the end of it is the shewing forth the death of Christ, by these acts. Taking bread; blessing it; breaking it; giving it; receiving it; eating it. Also, in taking the cup; blessing the cup; giving the cup; receiving the cup; drinking of it. Here is the whole of this ordinance. The simplicity of it is such as few are contented with; hence we commonly speak much on the occasion, in explaining the symbols and memorials of Christ's body and blood. Whilst I have no objection against it, yet this is not essential to the ordinance itself. It is said by Dr. Rippon, in what he stiles his Baptist Register, that in the church of Christ under the pastoral care of Dr. Watts, it was proposed to the church if there should be anything said at the table? The church would not admit of it, insisting on reading the words of institution, and then taking the bread; then thanksgiving; then breaking it; then distributing it; and to be left wholly to to their own private meditations. Then taking the cup; giving of thanks; then giving and partaking; thus the ordinance being finished, they sung an hymn, and so departed. In that church the great Dr. Owen had been

pastor, next after him Dr. Chauncey, and Dr. Watts, at the time I allude unto. Now as you could give one of your deacons a call to engage in celebrating the Lord's supper unto you, I think you would act very right in so doing. I should most heartily approve of it, and would very gladly set my seal to it; and I think were you thus to act, you would be so knit together as not easily to be overthrown and separated. All you are to expect from an observance of the Lord's supper, is not to look at the administration of it, but for Christ's blessing on his own institution. I am growing in years. I really do tremble at the thought of returning to London; I fear the air will not suit me. It is not an unwillingness to serve you. No, indeed: I am better, but my voice is very low. I could not preach but once on a Lord's-day; then I must omit reading and praying; neither could I be in London, without at least being in a measure ready, were Mr. Bailey to require me, to be at Brixton. Nor, was I to return to you, could I be with you until the third Lord's-day in November, and then I must entirely give up all my friends at Plymouth and Truro; were you to give me up entirely, my plan would be to be so long with friends at one place, and so long at another. I find myself all the better for the air. When I get into so confined air as London, I expect to be just as bad as ever. I am also getting to feel a very common infirmity of old age, and that is a good deal of timidity. Now I have honestly laid my views before you. The greatest use I can be of now at this time is writing. I sometimes think I shall lose all my preaching gift. I cannot exert myself. I must keep myself very quiet. I am at times so low in voice, as not to be heard even in family prayer; so that what you will find in me I know not. However, if nothing will content you but my coming back, then you must give me to know it. Then I must arrange my matters accordingly; and I must write to Brixton, and will desire Mr. Bye to fetch me, as he most kindly has offered. And then I must spend most of my time there, because of the benefit of the air. My dear friends, whilst I am better, yet I have my relapses; I have had two very bad nights this week. My memory is not what it used to be; not that it is discernible in my writing, but I conceive it must in preaching. Now, my dear people, whilst if I come it will

be on your account, yet let things be as they may, I must say so much to Mr. Bailey as this, viz. to give him an account of my coming to town, of my real state of health, and offer, if he chooses to accept of, part of my services. It may be refused; yet I must act thus. Since I came here I had a very kind letter, saying, if I could make myself happy their house was open to receive me, and I might command them. Mr. and Mrs. Bye have also said and proposed everything that is kind; and if I come back I must be there as much as I can. My dear friends, I have one thing more to say, and you must grant it. If I come back at your request, and should I not be able to stand the fatigue, you must then give me leave to quit London for ever. Let your determination concerning me be what it may, yet I would beg you to attend to what I have written concerning your observing the Lord's supper. It will be for the glory of Christ; it will be for your benefit. Should I come, I will gladly sit down at the table with you, to give countenance to it. The Lord be with you in all his persons and perfections. May the Lord go before you, and his glory be your reward. I wish you all, each, and every one of you every blessing. Brethren, pray for me. Look off all things to Christ; look not at men and things; never give yourselves any concern about what others may say, or think of you; do not consult with flesh and blood; never attend to carnal reason; set the crown on the head of free-grace; ever remember the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand; the Lord himself, in blessing may he bless you.

I am, in him, your's most affectionately,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXV.

June 28, 1814.

To the Church of Christ at Eagle and Child Alley.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

As we are drawing on to part for a season, and it is with the Lord only to know whether we shall ever see each other in the flesh, I would address you in these few lines, beseeching you as brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to consider your obligation unto him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Love as brethren; be fruitful; be courteous; let nothing be done through strife and vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. It will be a real blessing to attend unto, and also to practise these apostolical exhortations. There can be no peace where there is not unity. Peace and unity in the members of the church of Christ, is as great an evidence of its being the body of Christ which can be given. Do nothing as a church of Christ without consulting him; be sure you have his answer to your petitions, before you make and proceed to any acts, let them seem to you as they may. Let every thing which concerns the church, as a church, be made known. Let there be no kind of concealment nor partiality. Paul says to Timothy, who was an evangelist, I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. It is the whole of the foregoing epistle he refers to; which in it contains all which belongs to pastors, deacons, and the church of Christ, framed agreeable to the word to attend to. I would request you, each of you, each of you deacons, each and

every one of you individually as members, to read this first epistle of Paul to Timothy, and pray over it. Seek to understand it; you will learn by it, the church of the living God is the pillar and ground of truth; that the subjects preached in it, and held forth to open view by it, and are engraven as on a pillar of brass, and wrote and inscribed thereon, as with an iron pen and lead, are most truly great and divine. They are thus expressed, "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." The order of the church, the government of the churches, the duties of the members of the church to each other, and their walk before the world, is all comprehensibly set forth in it. You will do well to consider and attend to these important things. I most assuredly love you. I conceive I have given you full proof of it. I have set before you in the papers you received from me last year, my views of your church state and circumstances. I recommend it to your consideration to call on each of your deacons to exercise themselves in preaching, expounding, and explaining God's holy word unto you. I am still the same in my views. They are both men of God; men of truth; hating covetousness. I would have them both called on; I would have them both exercised. I would not have one word said by any individual, I like this, I prefer the other. No; I would have them both called on. And when a sufficient trial hath been made, then let the church meet together, and speak how it hath been with their souls under each of them. This is the very spirit of what I wrote, which I here refer to. And I would have you to consider if this is not most like the simplicity and sincerity which is in Christ Jesus. Paul says to Timothy, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." 1 Tim. v. 21.

I am truly well pleased with your church articles concerning calling on the deacons to administer the Lord's supper in my absence, to you. For my own part, I most heartily approve of it. Nor wander one from another. Should it be so, it will prove you do not understand the ordinances of Christ,

as it respects our instituted church, nor the relation you stand in to each other, and the duty you owe, and are to exercise towards each other. Beloved, be on your guard. Errors abound on all sides. We live in a day of rebuke and blasphemy. May we, therefore, be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

I conclude with the apostle's words, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." 2 John, 8.

Your's most affectionately in the Lord,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXVI.

Chard, July 26, 1814.

To the Church of God, which is at Eagle and Child Alley.
Mercy and peace be with you.

BELOVED IN GOD,

CALLED to be saints, and into fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord, I think it needful, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance, putting you in mind of the grace of God, and exhorting you all with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord. I hope above all things, you are in spiritual health and prosperity; living over in your thoughts, the truths and doctrines of the everlasting gospel. It is in so doing, you only increase in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. Soul prosperity is a personal reality; it is a personal benefit; it is a personal blessing. It cannot be enjoyed, but as we are kept looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. It is a blessing

when the church of the living God is established by the Spirit of God, and built up on Christ the only foundation thereof. It is sign of spiritual prosperity, when individual churches are alive to Christ, and standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. May the Lord cause his face to shine upon you in Christ Jesus, and bless you with clear, spiritual, and personal communion with himself in the person of God-man, through the influence of the Spirit.

Beloved, in real experience, there is not a greater than to have our minds truly and spiritually enlightened into the knowledge of the person, love, and salvation of the worthy Lamb. In spiritual regeneration, which is an act produced in the mind by the Holy Ghost, and for all we are endued with a spiritual intellectual faculty, by which we are capacitated to receive the knowledge of Christ, and to enjoy real communion with Christ. The Holy Ghost enlightens the renewed mind. He opens the faculties of it. He reveals the objects and subjects to it, which are to be received, and enjoyed, and lived on. His chiefest work is to make known the revelation of Christ, given in the word, and by the same, to make a revelation of Christ to the renewed mind. It is hereby he forms Christ in us; and also reveals Christ in us the hope of glory. Now, to us who have a spiritual intellect, there is nothing of greater importance than to receive the doctrine of the putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself. It is the greatest blessing you can, any of you, enjoy this side heaven, to have all guilt and condemnation removed from your minds, by faith in the most precious bloodshedding of Christ.

Beloved in Christ, you can never be too much acquainted with the reconciliation made by the blood of Christ. In the sovereignty, and according to the transaction between God and the Lamb, the Father laid our sins on him. He made him to be sin for us. And Christ himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He purged out all the guilt and filth of it, by his agony and bloody sweat. His wounds are our health and cure. His stripes contain our peace. His blood is our balsam. His sufferings are our release from the desert of sin. His being made sin is our complete salvation. His putting it away by the sacrifice of himself, is our complete discharge for all our sins before the Lord, and that for ever.

Beloved, whilst we all profess to believe the truth of this, yet we find, in our cases and experiences, we really apprehend very little of it. If we did, we should outlive the very angels of God in glory. If we lived in the true and real belief of the one perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice of God-man, that it hath perfected for ever the putting away of sin, and that by it we are, in the sight of God, in the person of Christ, without all sin as truly as Christ himself is, we shall then enjoy the peace of God, and find our heaven begun. There is a continual propensity in our hearts to live upon anything, and everything, but Christ. Yet there is no living one single moment to God, but as we live by the faith of the Son of God. And we cannot live by faith on Christ, if his righteousness and sacrifice is not exalted in our minds. To live in the belief that we are sinless in Christ, pure in Christ, free from law and curse in Christ, that we are made the righteousness of God in Christ, is to live unto the praise and glory of God. We live so, without feeling it to be so. Feeling hath no place here. It is truth is all here. We believe ourselves to be blessed in Christ, because the word declares it. In believing it we enjoy it. In the enjoyment of it, we enjoy the benefit of it. And from hence flows a feeling sense thereof. There is a greater danger in the present day, and from the present state of the visible church of Christ, the doctrine of salvation should be lost, than any of us conceive. The salvation of Christ is a glorious mystery of grace. It suits us well as sinners. Yet we don't like to receive it so freely as the Lord God hath revealed in his holy word. And when we have received it, yet when sin and guilt operate on the mind, we give up Christ. I can't believe now; I can't rest on his finished salvation now. Why not? Oh, I am so and so; I have done so and so; I do not feel myself comfortable. Well, and suppose all this; what hath this to do with what I am in Christ? And with what I am to believe concerning Christ? Nothing. Be assured, beloved, we may overlook and neglect Christ by attending to ourselves, whether it be sinful, miserable self, or very good and comfortable self. I am never afraid of such as are under the gospel, but on account of their legality, which altogether consists in self-righteousness.

May the Lord Jesus Christ teach every one of you to tremble at anything which inclines you to neglect Christ. Oh,

pray the Lord the Spirit to give you so to view Christ in the gospel of his grace, as you may clearly apprehend. He hath made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, finished transgression, brought in everlasting righteousness, and made peace by the blood of the cross, so as that you are saved in him, with an everlasting salvation. And what can you want more than complete salvation? And what can you have to rejoice in beyond the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ?

Beloved, to be in Christ, holy, righteous, and without all sin, in the sight and before your heavenly Father. If this does not comfort you, I ask what can?

Beloved, you either believe these truths, or you do not. It is what you receive of Christ and his salvation into your minds, not what you enjoy of him, is the matter of importance. In real believing, we are favoured with realizing views and apprehensions of Jesus Christ, so as to have our whole minds carried out after him. One good thought of Jesus Christ conceived in our minds, makes way for the Holy Ghost to work with, and by, and to draw out ten thousand.

Beloved, don't, at any time, think upon what you are yourselves. Never look on your persons, but as one with Christ. Think and view yourselves in Christ. Enter within the veil. Behold yourselves as represented by Christ, in his own person, before the throne. Then you will triumph over all the angels in glory, because in Christ you exceed them all. Remember, faith discerns the Lord Christ. We have hereby believing views of him formed in our minds. To converse with Christ in his ordinances, to have and hold fellowship with him in them, this is that which turns them into a blessing, and renders them desirable unto us. May it be given you to deal with Christ in every ordinance of worship; may the Lord Jesus Christ be in the midst of you; may he preside at all your assemblies; may he give you to do all things without murmurings and dissentings.

I expect to set off for Truro next week. Should I live to the close of the month of August, I hope to write again. You need not write me, as at that season you may expect to hear from me. I want to have my mind kept as clear and free as possible. Old age is weight sufficient.

I have laid my plan to go from hence next Monday, and

proceed, without any circumrotary route, to Truro, so as to be there next week, where I mean to spend four Lord's-days. I expect to be at the Lord's table the same day there, you will be engaged in the observance of the same sacred institution. We shall, doubtless, remember each other. We cannot be disappointed if we have fellowship with the Lord. His word of promise runs thus: "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." This is enough. It is so for me. I want nothing to be added to it. It cannot be denied but it is enough for you. I hope you will pray for me, and that his gospel may have free course, and may run and be glorified. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest; and, by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith. To God, only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen.

May the Lord, if he please, bless what I have written, and render it effectual for your mutual benefit. May you accept the same as a fruit of love, and may it increase our mutual love. Even so, Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. We shall then have further reason to bless him, whose name alone is excellent—whose praise is above the earth and heavens.

May the Lord comfort such among you as are cast down. For the support of such, I transcribe the following words, which the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."

Men, brethren, and sisters, the blessing of Jehovah be upon you.

I remain your's, very affectionately, in Christ Jesus,

S. E. P.

P. S. There were four persons yesterday together, of which I was one, and our ages amounted to 298. And each of us believers in Christ Jesus.

LETTER XXVII.

Truro, August 27, 1814.

To the beloved of God, called to be Saints, the Church of Christ, who assemble at Eagle and Child Alley. Grace and peace be multiplied.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

WILLING to testify my love of you, and regard for you, I take up my pen to write you a spiritual epistle, being truly glad to hear of an increase of members amongst you, and praying also it may be of the Lord, and that he is adding to your number such as are saved in Christ with an everlasting salvation.

It is a real blessing to a church of the living God when it is thus; every such addition lays us all under the greatest obligations to walk before the Lord unto all well pleasing. I am truly glad you have been led to have the Lord's supper amongst yourselves; I most sincerely rejoice in it. I hope you will go on with everything which concerns the glory of God, and your own good, and your good as a church, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, in a scriptural way and manner. The apostle gives us, you, in a very particular manner, at this time, and in your present circumstances, most truly excellent and blessed counsel, direction, and advice, as you may read in the second chapter of his epistle to the Philippians. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. You will be greatly advantaged by attending to this, it will prevent many evils, it will produce real good. Church ordinances, church meetings, church acts, are in themselves, in their own nature, end, and design, sacred, they should be so considered, they are so to be practised, as that Christ in all things may be

glorified. No spirit, no temper, no selfish motive should prevail in what we have to say, or do, or act for Christ. His word is to be our directory, his glory our end. May the Lord grant this may eminently appear in each and every one of you, may you all be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; "For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." "Humble yourselves therefore;" says Peter, "under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time;" "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you."

May the Lord bless you with his life-giving presence, with his life-giving Spirit, and with his life-giving teachings. May you each see there is nothing out of Christ worth one single thought, nor any sort of misery which can, or may befall you deserving a single sigh; you having that in Christ, which exceeds all created good, which will outlast the world, which will enrich your minds for ever, which will make you happy to an eternal duration. My prayer for you is, that you may be favoured with real sights of Christ, and true spiritual apprehensions of him. I would have you rest alone in him, and not be contented with any present attainments; but be pressing on to know the Lord Jesus Christ, more fully, more comprehensively, more experimentally, more practically. We shall never be taken with the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as we truly know him from the word, and by the revelation of the Holy Ghost; we shall never love him but in proportion to our spiritual knowledge of his love to us; we shall no further get out of self, but as we are favoured with believing views of his righteousness; we shall never get above our own personal guilt, but as we are led by the Holy Ghost into believing views and apprehensions of his most precious blood. It is the blood of Christ is the true atonement for sin; it is his blood is our eternal purity, which makes us clean from all sin; it is in the belief of it, we enjoy peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. May the Lord make good his promise in you, and to you, as a church, and also individually to you as his beloved ones. Even this: "The path of the just is as shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." You cannot expect to be always in the like frames and circumstances; be as strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, and as strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus as you may, yet the Lord will exer-

cise his royal and sovereign power and authority over you, as seemeth good unto him, both as it respects your minds and circumstances. You will be sometimes shut up in your frames, you will sometimes be under guilt and corruption. You will sometimes be full of corruptions, you will sometimes be cast down. There is no cause for it, as you consider what Christ is to you, and what you are in him—yet so it will be. It will be well to have a right knowledge how, and why it is so. It is the Lord. If you could always act faith alike on the Son of God, it would be seen then as though faith was a mere natural act, whereas it is wholly and in every exercise of it, a supernatural act, which cannot be drawn forth and exercised on Christ, and the Father's love in him, but under the influence of the Lord the Spirit; therefore aim to study the Lord's own design in all his spiritual dealings with you. As it respects providential events, you will find, and the Lord will prove by his particular acts towards you, that he will deal with you, he will give, he will take away, he will make prosperous, and he will not make prosperous; he will bring low, he will lift up, as seemeth good in his sight. Every saint hath his personal case, and his own particular cross. The Lord himself will not remove it. He may vary it, he may carry above and beyond it, by his gracious presence with the mind; this is all he will do. He does not save us from indwelling sin, nor from the effects of it, in crosses, trials, temptations, griefs, pains, and sorrows.

It becomes us, therefore, to make a proper use of this; to submit to the will of the Lord herein. Not to be too much cast down under any case or circumstance which may be ours; it is the way in which our Lord means to do us good. It would be well for us not to express our grief too much; whilst we cannot but feel, yet it may be we feel too much. We can never lose anything but what the Lord gave. If he removes it from us he hath done us no harm; he meant nothing but good to us. He says, "I will never turn away from you from doing you good. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Trials of every sort and kind, with which the Lord may be pleased to exercise any of us who are his beloved, is only a medium whereby we are to be made partakers of some invaluable blessings. Job said, under bereaving dispensation, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb,

and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." It may be some time or other some of these hints may be of use to you.

I have written so many letters since I left you, that I scarce know how to vary the subject, and give some pleasing accounts and views of eternal and important subjects; you must accept the will for the deed; and if you find no real satisfaction in this my letter, it may be of use to you and me, by putting a stop to any further intercourse this way. Beloved, it will be of real benefit to you, to survey and look on the Lamb of God, in the midst of the throne; the mediatorial glories of his person and office, is at all times sufficient to create a perfect heaven in our minds; a sense of his mediatorial love and finished salvation, is at all times sufficient to set us up on high. It is a sight of the Lamb upon his throne, which will lift up our minds even in glory; nothing but this will do it. May the Lord the Spirit help us to make the name and praise of our Lord Jesus Christ glorious. Oh, that we may give him glorious praise. It is very good to attempt it; we are always gainers by any-spiritual efforts of our minds this way, our greatest and most particular desires must be to have communion with him; this makes way for us to shew the honour of his name; we cannot cease to praise him. May the Lord Jesus do you good, and that continually. May you hear his blessed voice, and obey his royal command in the following words—"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: for behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise on thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

May what is contained in the following words be opened to your minds, enjoyed in your hearts, and be realized in your souls, by the Spirit of the living God: "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt be called *Hephzibah*. The Lord delighteth in thee; as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Oh, that you may have a spiritual sight and sense of the blessedness contained in these expressions, as it will influence your minds to de-

sire and request increasing fellowship with the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit. "I would say, rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for it becometh well the just to be thankful."

I would by this epistle, tender my christian love and respects to each and every one of you. I would pray the Lord Jesus Christ to be to each of you as your cases require. May he be very precious to each and every one of you individually. May he look upon you with a look of love. May he say to each of you,—I am thy salvation.

Even so, Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Your's affectionately in the Lord, and for his sake,

S. E. P.

The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits. Grace be with you. Amen. I do not want a church letter.

LETTER XXVIII.

Chard, Oct. 17, 1814.

To the Church of Christ, at Eagle and Child Alley.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

As you did not return me any reply to my last, I concluded you gave me leave to stay here; for which I thank you. As I have almost finished my course and work in these parts, I write to inform you I shall, if the Lord permit, set off from this place on the close of this present month, and be in London, and at your service, on the first Lord's-day in November. May our Jesus be with us all, and shine on us, and bless us, and be merciful unto us. Then we shall have cause of joy,

and reason to cry out, and say, "Let the people praise thee, O God, yea, let all the people praise thee."

Beloved, all health and spiritual prosperity is received and enjoyed in our minds, as we receive Jesus Christ into our hearts by faith. It is as the Lord Jesus Christ shines into you, and shines within you, that you are drawn and divinely influenced with his person, love, salvation, and glory. It is very advantageous to be truly, deeply, and spiritually engaged in contemplations on Christ. It is not general ideas of Christ, and saying, "He is all in all," are beneficial to our minds; neither is an universal assent and consent to all the truths of the everlasting gospel, the means of nourishing up our souls into that life everlasting, which is actually enjoyed in real and personal communion with Father, Son and Holy Ghost; at least, I never found it so in my own soul; and, from daily observation in and amongst all the churches I am in the habit of visiting, I am quite confirmed in my own judgment, that it is a real mistake they, as churches, make. They think it is all-sufficient to rest in a general knowledge of Christ, and never seek for further attainments in their knowledge and acknowledgments of him. I know for my own self, and in my own case, a general knowledge, though a true one, will not do for me. I must have a particular knowledge of Christ; an intuitive knowledge of him. This must be received from the word. This must be conveyed from it to the mind, by the Holy Spirit. Then the truth of Christ is fully evidenced: "The words which I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." I hope in the secrets of your own souls, you are collectively and personally pressing after more clear and particular apprehensions of the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is suited to your own particular cases and griefs. We all live in this present world, and have our own griefs and complaints, that the grace of the Lord may be displayed towards us, and upon us, and his faithfulness may be manifested, and his promises fulfilled, and we have such clear evidence of the same, as for us to be able to say, "He is faithful which promised." My folly is this: if I am in sorrow, I wish myself comfortable; if I am distressed, I wish myself out of it; if things arise unforeseen, and they are opposite to my will, and hurt my feelings, I am all confusion and sorrow. Now I can see myself in all this. I see, and learn

by such things as I have intimated, my own self; the emptiness of it; how very self-important I am; and that I want the teaching of the Holy Ghost to lead me to make a true and spiritual improvement of all this. I find all I really am, is to be discovered in a measure unto me. My will is to be crossed, that I may learn all my inherent sinfulness consists in my own selfwill; that when I am left to it, I am so far, and so long, extremely miserable. Thus, so far as I cease to attend to my own will, and look to the Lord Jesus Christ on whom I believe, that it is my mercy, not in any one instance, to lean to my own understanding; well, I learn to know myself to be a poor worm, and to be as great a dunce as ever existed, as it respects making use of the Lord Jesus Christ, as he most exactly suits me, and as my every case most exactly suits me, to make my immediate application unto him. It is in this all my present blessedness consists. My salvation is completed in Christ; but it is by the teachings of the Holy Spirit, I am led off myself, and with the whole of my necessities, to cast my every burthen on the Lord who careth for me. If I were more and better acquainted with Christ, in a way of believing and real communion, I should be far superior to what I am, or ever expect to be this side heaven.

Now, my beloved, when I write you, or others, I always commit to paper what occurs to my own mind; hoping it may be of use to others, as well as myself. May you, each and every one of you, be so truly satisfied with the person, love, salvation, righteousness, and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, as may give you such true and spiritual satisfaction, as may yield you a real heaven. Why, my beloved, it is this will make you of one heart and of one soul, striving together for the faith of the gospel. May the Lord Jesus Christ be very highly esteemed by you.

My beloved, take Christ into your minds; live on him in your hearts; exercise your thoughts on him; make continual use of him; do nothing without him; consult him; commit your all to him; leave all with him; be careful for nothing, but cast your every care upon the Lord, and encourage yourselves in him as the Lord your God. I can say but little, for want of a more enlarged acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ. I want no more doctrinal knowledge of him, but I

want a more complete, intuitive, and comprehensive acquaintance with him, in real inward fellowship with him. I am sure I go on but a snail's pace heaven-ward; yet this is my shame; indeed, indeed, it is. I hope you all exceed and out-do me in living Christ, and in having blessed, free, and close communion with him.

It appears to me, such as we give the title of the Lord's people unto, have very little to do with Christ, in real converse and communion with him. Hence it is, they do not speak in an heart-warming way and manner concerning him. Why, my dear friends, what is all we profess to know worth, if it leaves us destitute of fellowship with Christ, and the Father in him by the Spirit? Surely, you will say, Nothing. Whatsoever knowledge we have in profession concerning the Father's everlasting love, the Son's complete salvation, the Holy Spirit's testimony and revelation of Christ to us, if we have not communion with the Father in his everlasting love, and with our Lord Jesus Christ in his salvation, and with the Holy Spirit in his divine graces and consolations, in proportion to our knowledge; depend on it, 'tis all but notional and ideal. Certain causes will always produce certain effects. We do not, in the course of our lives, nor in our walking with God, sufficiently attend to this.

As a church of Christ, I would just recite to you the words of the apostle to the Corinthians: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ: for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

May you all be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and under his most blessed and sacred influences, speak the same thing; may there be no divisions among you, but may you be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment. Don't you at any time forget what the apostle says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." These words of exhortation, given by the same apostle to the church of Corinth, deserves a place in all your memories: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done in charity. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love

be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen. You will excuse my troubling you with this letter; I thought it might be needful to inform you when you are to expect me. I do not want you to write me, as I shall so soon be with you.

I remain your's most affectionately,

And also respectfully, in the Lord,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXIX.

Chard, July 26, 1818.

To the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, at Printers' Court,
Shoe Lane.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

THESE words of the Lord's, spoken by him, and delivered through the ministration of his servant, the prophet Isaiah, without all doubt may be taken up by you, and yield you unspeakable delight and spiritual satisfaction: "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." chap. xliii. ver. 4. You, as the beloved of the holy and incomprehensible Three, have been in the eye and heart of Jehovah from everlasting, and will continue to be everlastingly beloved, accepted, and blessed in Christ, with all contained in grace, salvation, and life everlasting. You need nothing but an increasing knowledge of this, to give you the fullest assurance hereof, in your own souls, of the truth hereof. And how is this to be effected in you? By your increasing in the knowledge of the truth, through the teachings of the Holy Ghost. There is a most wretched propensity in our fallen natures to depart from the truth. As we never knew a single tittle of truth aright, but as we were taught the same by the Holy Ghost, so neither can we abide in any one truth, though taught it by the eternal Spirit, but

as he is pleased to keep us in the same. To be, therefore, established in the truths of the everlasting gospel, this requires the mighty power of the eternal Spirit. Peruse the following doxology, and you will see this for yourselves: "Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began; but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandments of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith,) to God only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen." Rom. xvi. 25, 26, 27. It is God's own great end and design, to bring us to the true knowledge of his Son Jesus Christ, by the everlasting gospel, and then and by the very same gospel, to establish us in every article of the same. My last text which I preached unto you from, the words of it were these, "Wherefore also we pray always for you, brethren, that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. I cannot but wish you a true and spiritual comprehension of the same. They are full of importance; the matter is great; the truths most excellent; the prayer is very concise, yet it is vastly instructive. I doubt not but the reading this, and the former epistle written by the apostle to the same church, was of as much benefit unto those saints, as any sermon which the apostle had ever delivered unto them. I doubt not but they gave particular regard to every expression he made use of in his prayer for them. It was as well with them to have his writings as his preaching, as they terminated in one grand point, to keep them alive to Christ, and to preserve them from seeking for any blessing but what came from him alone; and which being treasured up in his infinite fulness for them, they received by faith in him into their own minds. I, for myself, doubt not but many of the saints were more edified by Paul's letters and prayers, than by his own personal ministry. Nay, it was a very principal part of it, and in which his grace and knowledge respecting Christ shone forth most gloriously. The

substance of the prayer is this; he prays that God would grant these saints the end of their calling, which is perseverance in the truths and doctrines of the everlasting gospel. The least departure from the same, is to depart from Christ. If you look at anything of your own, or look into yourselves for anything, you are looking off Christ, and this, let it be ever so partial, it cannot but be to your loss. Perseverance in the faith, and truth as it is in Jesus, is what is included in these words, and the enjoyment of glory everlasting on a dismissal from this present state. "Wherefore also we pray always for you, brethren, that our God would count you worthy of this calling." In the next petition on their behalf, which is contained in these words, "and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness," he entreats God would accomplish all his gracious decrees and purposes concerning them, as it respected their effectual calling, justification, sanctification, and glorification; all which is thus summed up, "and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness." It is the good pleasure of God's will to us, in Christ Jesus, to carry on his own work in a glorious way and manner in our souls, beyond all our conception, and exceeding all our expressions of the same, in giving us right spiritual apprehensions of the grace of God towards us, manifested in our effectual calling, and expressed in our knowledge of our manifestative justification, in the grace contained in our personal sanctification, which consists in the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and in the promise, and prospects, and foretastes we have of our future and eternal glorification, as may fix our minds on these most important realities. Then, he knowing the day in the which they lived, and their church state, he prays their faith may be strengthened, let their trials and oppositions be what they might. Hence the next petition, "and the work of faith with power;" that is, the faith which God worketh. Faith is his work. He works it by the agency of the eternal Spirit in the mind. And this by the written word. Then he adds the end of the particulars which he had prayed for on their behalf, "That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." My beloved, for the Lord Jesus Christ to be glorified in you, and ye in him, must be the genuine desire of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in

sincerity. This cannot be in giving up our connections in the church and household of faith, and preferring other communities to that one to which we belong. Such views and spirits are not of Christ. And if such as are Christ's are so disposed to act, it is certain they do not act so agreeable either to the word, the spirit, or doctrine of Christ. Nor can any church of Christ truly prosper who act so. We should value the good of that church of Christ to which we belong; we should study the good of the same; we should avoid everything which would make a breach in it. These words are not in the Bible for nothing: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Rom. xvi. 17, 18. The holy apostle provides a cordial for such saints as may be thus exercised in a church state, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." v. 20.

I hope to write again about the time I leave this place for Cornwall. I do not want any of you to write me, as I am so fully employed; I have work to engage my whole time and mind. It is my intention, if the Lord will, to be with you at the time appointed. I also mean, as before expressed, to write you, either on my leaving this place, or when I get into Cornwall, and also on my return from Cornwall hither; so you may perceive I am not unmindful of you. Nor do I want to be. As this is written as a church letter, so I omit personal salutations, as the whole church are here included. May God almighty bless you, and make you of one heart, and make you stand fast in one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. May you increase in the knowledge of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; and have distinct and personal fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, as they stand related unto you, agreeable to the economy and revelation they have been pleased to make of their acts and transactions in the everlasting covenant. To this I set my amen; because I cannot pray beyond this for you; nor would I pray for anything below this. Now I beseech you, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit,

that ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me; that if acceptable to the Lord, I may at the appointed season, come unto you with joy, by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Your's in the Lord,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXX.

Truro, August 31, 1818.

To the congregated Church of Christ, meeting in Printers' Court, Shoe Lane. Peace be unto you.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

I THOUGHT it meet to inform you I arrived at Truro on the past Saturday evening, and preached the past day, and am well in body and mind. I may therefore well say and sing, "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my strong rock and helper; and let the God of my salvation be exalted." He has most graciously protected me, and guarded me on every side. He has been my shield; he has given me strength equal to my day; I have had many seasons and opportunities of shewing forth his glorious praise; I have not yet been set aside by him; therefore I may well set up my fresh Ebenezer, saying, hitherto the Lord hath helped me. It is somewhat remarkable, the past day, about five and thirty years past, was the first Lord's day I spent with the people, over whom I was set apart and ordained. I came into this county in June 1777; I came to Truro then, and preached there as a stranger; and in the year 1783, I was invited to make a trial amongst some of this place, which I did, and remained amongst them eleven years; so that it is now a long season since I first came here; the people whom I now visit are very happy in appearance; they are entirely kept up and kept together by reading.

It is a very decent congregation, so that the place is very decently filled; and once a month they have the Lord's supper amongst themselves; so that they are become, to those who may have hitherto despised them, terrible as an army with banners. Beloved, there is nothing like perseverance in the truth; the Lord alone can keep his people in the truth, and a greater blessing he cannot bestow on any of us than to keep us in his truth. The gospel, the everlasting gospel, the truths and doctrines of the pure and unmixed gospel, is the only food for new-born souls; it is the bread of life indeed, which only and alone can nourish up our souls unto everlasting life. I suppose it was on this account, as well as on another, that the apostle Peter says, to those unto whom he wrote, I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. God's eternal election of his people in Christ, before the foundation of the world, his predestinating purposes in Christ concerning them, with the whole good pleasure of his will in Christ concerning them, both as it regards their grace, salvation, and glory, with all the blessings and benefits resulting from the same, is most certainly implied and contained in what is expressed by the true grace of God. To abide in the true profession, real belief, and right profession of the same, is that which is full evidence for us, that we are in the real possession and enjoyment of the true doctrine of grace; and, in the present time, in the which we are admitted to live in this present time state, it is a peculiar blessing to be kept in the true and right profession of the truth. It is not all gold which glitters. It is not the smattering of truth proves a man to be a man of truth. Whilst it may escape our notice and observation, yet without all doubt it must be so, that real saints have communion with the Lord God, Father, Son, and Spirit, by the knowledge which they have of the distinct and sublime truths of the everlasting gospel; each of which are of greater worth than the whole world, none of which should be denied nor concealed. Paul says, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," which ministers should abide steadfast in; every article of faith; so should churches also. The following exhortation belongs unto the church, and every individual of it, as truly as it doth to the ministers of the same.

Yea, it concerns every distinct church of Christ, which is the body of Christ, and every individual member of the same in particular. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine," or, as it is in the margin, shine ye "as lights in the world;" holding forth the word of life. Not only walk agreeably to the general tenor of the gospel, but let the doctrine of the person of Christ, the love of Christ, the salvation of Christ, the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ, the everlasting love of the Father, to his beloved in Christ, his acceptation of the persons of his elect, in the person of his beloved, who, by way of emphasis and distinction, is still *the Beloved*. Let these truths be so mentioned in our conversation, as that each individual, who is a member of a church in Christ, give proof that the word of life, the everlasting gospel, is to him, and in his view, the very mean that makes Christ to him, and in him his all in all. This way of acting promotes the prosperity of the spiritual mind. There can be no spirituality where Christ is not the object and subject on the which it is exercised. Nor can this be when and where, and by whomsoever, the truths of God, as revealed in the grace of God in his most holy word, are dropped. May the Lord himself make all his churches, ministers, and people, valiant for the truth. Our Lord is pleased to say, "That which ye have already, hold fast till I come."

May you have the showers of divine influences come down continually and abundantly upon you, even showers of blessings. The Lord keep you continually looking unto Jesus. He is the one only soul-satisfying object and subject. When you have real communion with him, then it is that you are most truly blessed and happy; when you are holding fellowship with him, all in earth and heaven is a mere blank. The glory of Christ outshines all; the person of Christ puts down all; the love of Christ transcends all; the righteousness of Christ contains in it an infinity of perfection; the sacrifice of Christ surpasseth in worth all the glory of heaven. The fulness of Christ contains all the grace of the church on earth, and all the glory of the church in heaven. It is all contained therein. Out of his fulness the church here, in our world, receives grace for grace; and out of the same

fulness the saints in heaven receive glory for glory. The relation the church stands in to Christ, and the relation Christ stands in to his church, is high, glorious, mysterious, and most divine. The personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the church, which is Christ's body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, is a great and glorious subject for spiritual contemplation. So is our perfection in Christ. As also how the Father loves us, beholds us, and is well pleased with us, in Christ our Head, representative, and Saviour. Indeed it is in our contemplation on these subjects the Holy Ghost is pleased to admit us into real communion with the Father and the Son, and himself is the efficient of all the inward fellowship which we have, or ever shall have, on earth or in heaven, with the Father and the Son. I do not conceive I have written a correct letter; nor did I aim at it; truth is my element. I am, and have been, and still am, so fully employed, I must send this just as it is. I think you will find enough to perfume your minds with so much of the knowledge of divine truth as will be, by the Lord's blessing, feeding, nourishing, strengthening, and comforting. I shall only remain here two weeks; then, if the Lord will, I shall return to Plymouth; from thence to Chard; so as to be there on the third Lord's-day in September. Soon after I am there I will give you another letter. May the Lord Christ be in your minds. May the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits.

So prays your well wisher,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXXI.

Chard, Sept. 21, 1818.

To the Church of the living God, who worship at their Meeting Place, in Printers' Court, Shoe Lane.

BELOVED IN CHRIST JESUS,

PEACE be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; "according as his divine power

hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us unto glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." You have all things in Christ; and you have all things pertaining to everlasting life; in that divine nature you were made the partakers of in regeneration; by the which, according to the apostle Peter, ye are said to be partakers of the divine nature; because ye have in your own souls, in spiritual regeneration, every grace, faculty, and sense that is suited to the true knowledge of God, and the present and everlasting enjoyment of him: so that every part of the revelation the Lord God hath been pleased to make known of himself and his divine nature, persons and perfection, love, covenant, and how he stands related to us, the divine nature wrought in us in regeneration, is capable of receiving into our renewed minds, of enjoying in our hearts, and of having communion with the Lord God in the same.

I hope, beloved, you are alive to God, living by the faith of the Son of God, and in a most free, blessed, intimate, distinct, and personal communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in their mutual relations in which they stand in relation to the church, in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in this everlasting blessedness consists. To have but an outgoing of mind towards having communion with the Three in Jehovah, must be grace; for to have communion with the persons in the essence, this must be the essence of grace, and that in the which all true blessedness consists. The more your hearts are enlarged towards the Lord, in right views and scriptural and spiritual contemplations of the everlasting love of the Holy Trinity in Christ towards you, the more you will be fitted, in an experimental way, for this most blessed fellowship with the Father; so as to say, "Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Beloved, look on the love of God, as the fountain cause; as the great original of all grace and glory; on Christ as the glorious person and medium, in whom all this shines forth, with dazzling lustre and all its glory. View the person of

Christ, the love of Christ, the union of Christ to his church, and the relation of the church to Christ, with his covenant transactions with the divine Father, and his incarnation in the fulness of time, the substitution of his person on the behalf of his people, the transfer of their sins to him, the infliction of the curse due to their transgressions on his body and soul, as salvation itself. Consider his burial, resurrection, and ascension, as most glorious proofs that he hath finished the transgression, made an end of sins, brought in everlasting righteousness, and triumphed over sin, Satan, principalities and powers, death and hell. I account this the whole gospel; it contains it; and is so to say, *multum in parvo*. Then comes in the work and office of the Holy Ghost, which is to give us an understanding, to know the Father in his love, and the Son in his person and salvation, and thereby to lead us into real communion with the Father in his everlasting love, and the Son in his person and salvation, and all the blessings of the same. It is hereby we are led to know our own personal interest in Christ, and in the Father's love in him; and it is by the Holy Spirit we are sealed up unto the day of eternal redemption. May each of these particulars be really known unto you; may they be engrafted in you; may they be realized in your souls, from the word, by the Holy Ghost; then you will never fall from the same; for many there are who profess the great truths of God, who are not taught the same from the word and the Spirit of God; and they, not having been brought under the mighty weight and authority of them by the Spirit of God, have never found them to be spirit and life unto their souls. I most certainly pray you may, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, grow up into Christ in all things, an holy temple in the Lord. And, as the church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth, may you ever be kept in the truth. In the prime and architectural pillars which support and bear up the whole church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; such as the essential doctrine of the Holy Trinity; the person of Christ; the revelation made of these most important mysteries in the sacred oracles of truth; the personality of the Holy Ghost; his co-equality with the Father and the Son, in the incomprehensible essence, with his joint concern with them, in the whole economy of grace.

These are truths which, in the knowledge, experience, and enjoyment of them, constitute the being and well being of a christian. May the Lord himself establish, strengthen, and settle you in all the truths of his holy and everlasting gospel.

I know not how to add any more, unless I subjoin these words of the apostle, who, writing to the saints at Thessalonica, says, "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you; and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you; to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." 1 Thess. iii., 11, 12, 13.

I subscribe myself,

Most affectionately and respectfully,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXXII.

Chard, July 8, 1819.

To the Church in God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, meeting for worshipping the Father, in the Son, through the grace and influence of the Eternal Spirit, at the Meeting Room in Printers' Court, Shoe Lane. May grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; "according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

As the brethren and sisters of Christ, I would address you

as the apostle doth, including you both in the same, saying, Holy brethren, for such you are as one with Christ, as one in Christ, as the beloved of God, as the called in Jesus Christ, as partakers of the heavenly calling, as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is as such I write unto you, as also as your servant in Christ Jesus. I hope you are in the enjoyment of all spiritual good, in real spiritual communion with the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity; in the right spiritual apprehensions of the love of the Father, the salvation of the Son, the grace and consolations of the eternal Spirit; then all is well with you: for all spiritual prosperity is the fruit and effect of the true and right knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. It is a very considerable attainment in the school of Christ to receive the truths of the everlasting gospel, exactly and precisely as they are set before us in the records of immutable truth. There they are revealed, just as they are in the mind of God, which is the original thereof: therefore the gospel, which is the copy of the same, is as immutable as the will of the Three in Jehovah is; and there can be no change in the one any more than there can be on the other. It is of great importance to each of you rightly to know and apprehend truth, in its regular and particular statement of the same, as set before you in the written word. It cannot be you can live over the truths of the everlasting gospel, but as you have a clear understanding of them. Let the mind be clearly informed from the scriptures of truth into the knowledge of the doctrine of the holy Trinity, we shall hereby acknowledge the mystery contained in the doctrine to be what it is, wholly incomprehensible; neither shall we meddle with the mystery of it; we shall only attend most closely unto the same, as it is recorded in the glorious doctrine of the same, which we cannot dispense with, but we must give up every article of our most holy faith; because this is the foundation of the same. The apostle, writing to the saints at Colosse, expresses himself on their behalf thus: "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." Surely this implies it is of great consequence to know the truths of God, in a regular and orderly manner;

as the doctrine of the Trinity, the person of Christ, the love of the Three in Jehovah to Christ, as God-man; the love of the Three persons to the person of Christ, and to the elect in him; to have these subjects clearly apprehended in our understandings, with a true knowledge of the reality of the same so received into our minds, as for our faith to act clearly, particularly, and distinctly on them; this makes very greatly for the improvement of our minds, and is to our edification; and it also increases our joy in the Lord. As it is so with respect to these most sublime truths revealed in God's most holy word, so it is also with other truths, which are as so many branches flowing from them. There are three great acts in God, which each of the divine persons in the Godhead have expressed towards the elect, which we can never have too clear apprehensions of, and it becomes each of you to study, as they are laid down in the Scriptures as the sole foundation of all your love to God, of your faith in God, and love to him. These three acts are equal to the three distinct divine persons in the glorious Godhead, and are as follows: the first is election; the second is salvation; the third is effectual calling; and they are thus ascribed to each of the divine persons. Election to the Father: "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Salvation is the incommunicable work of the Son of God; of whom the apostle expressly declares, concerning himself and his son Timothy, saying, "who hath saved us, and called us with on holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

It is by the one sacrifice of Christ all our sins are removed from us out of the sight of law and justice, and from before the Lord. It is Christ who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. It is the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin. The interest and concern of the whole Trinity, in every part and branch of our salvation, is thus set before us; "but after the kindness and love of God, our Saviour, towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according

to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." We are saved by acts in the eternal mind of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; we are saved by time acts, even by the incarnation, life, obedience, passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; we are saved by transient acts; by those internal and efficacious operations of the Holy Ghost on our minds, which he produces and forms in us, as he renews us, and reveals Christ in us, and sheds abroad the love of God. May you all be preserved in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace; seeing ye are called into fellowship with God and his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, by the Holy Spirit. I hope you bear me on your hearts at the throne of grace. I have had many, very many, dilapidations since I left you, both on the road, and since I came into this place. As to my eyes, they are worse than they have ever been; sometimes they are in such a state as seems to be portentous of their being entirely without any use to me. You will, it may be, say why did you try them by writing to us? My good friends, I was willing to give you a proof of my regard for you, and that you might know that though we are absent in the body, yet it is not, out of sight out of mind. I can assure you, were it possible for you this instant to see my eyes, you would pronounce them to be very, very, very bad. Therefore if you do not receive a letter as a church from me, you are not to impute it to my forgetfulness of you. My dear friends, with the utmost and most sincere regard and affection.

I subscribe myself your's in the Lord,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXXIII.

Chard, Aug. 10, 1820.

To the Church of Christ, at Printers' Court, Shoe Lane,
London.

BELOVED OF THE LORD,

I GREET you in the Lord, as his beloved, elect, chosen ones, whom he hath loved in Christ, accepted in Christ, blessed in Christ, and whom he hath saved in Christ with an everlasting salvation.

Beloved, the relation in which I stand in to you, calls upon me, it prevails with me, it inclines and also constrains me to write these few lines unto you, as a testimonial of my love and regard for you in the Lord; as the professed members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones. You should consider it is impossible you can stand in a higher relation to Christ, than to be his members, his brethren, his sisters, his people, his sheep, his lambs, his portion, his inheritance, his joy, and the rejoicing of his heart. The Lord hath, doth, and will for ever love his church. They are the joy and the very rejoicing of his heart.

The Lord, speaking to his church by the prophet Zephaniah, saith, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing." chap. iii. 17. It will be your blessedness, and also it will be the means of increasing your actual blessedness, in your real and personal communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be giving up your minds to the real spiritual study and contemplation of divine truth, as it is revealed and set before you in the Scriptures of truth. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the love of the eternal Three, the person of Christ, his relation to his church, his headship, his mediatorship, his union, interest, and communion with his church, his salvation finished on their behalf, with the free bestowment of himself, and all contained in his eternal salvation, on his people; these are those subjects which are of eternal importance.

May the Lord the Spirit give you increasing spiritual light into these subjects, to the end your minds may be fed and feasted, and you may each of you be increasing with the increase of God. I have been admitted, through the good hand of the Lord upon me, to go through many places in Kent, and also Cambridge and Cambridgeshire, and at Godmanchester in Huntingdonshire, and have preached in these places the same Lord Jesus, his great salvation, with the same everlasting love, and sovereign grace, as the fountain cause, which I have again and again set before you. In some places I have found those who are alive to these great things. But the state of the church of Christ is very low; truth is very little known; less beloved and received than is commonly apprehended; anything and everything seems to go down except the truth, as it is in Jesus. This, however, increases an estimation for all those who receive the truth, profess the truth, and abide in the same. I love you in the Lord; I wish, you good and increasing knowledge of the Lord; I have your spiritual welfare at heart; therefore, I cannot express myself beyond exciting your remembrance of the Lord, in all his truths and ordinances. Paul saith, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free." Believe me, errors of various sorts abound and are spreading. Notions and opinions are more the religion of the people throughout our land, at the present, than is conceived of. Therefore, I can assure you, such are most truly blessed, who lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset them, and who with faith and patience run the race set before them, looking unto Jesus. It is a great honour to live in such times as the present, when sin is rampant, and errors and heresies of all sorts abound, because the grace of God in preserving the feet of his saints, in keeping them alive to Christ, and preserving them from making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, is the more clearly evidenced. Nothing is a greater preservative from error, of all sorts, than a sound judgment and right gospel knowledge of the truths of the everlasting gospel. It is an excellent saying of the apostle to his son Timothy: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Tim. i. 7. The mind cannot be sound, without a true and gospel apprehension of divine truth. The written word is the

only true and right medium, from whence truth can be rightly received. We are sure to be right, when we receive the true doctrine of God our Saviour, from the gospel itself; for therein is contained the revelation and record of God concerning his Son. And this is one important truth, contained in the record of God concerning his Son, that his blood cleanseth us from all sin.

Beloved in the Lord, study Christ; apply your minds to the receiving the truth, as set before you in the Bible. Value the same next to Christ himself. I do prize the truths of the everlasting gospel, beyond my own salvation. And indeed, if I did not, I should not think I had a right scriptural knowledge of them. The whole revealed glory of the Godhead, of the persons in the Godhead, and their everlasting goodwill towards their beloved ones, styled the elect, shines forth manifestatively, and in the reflection of the same, by means of the written word. I do prize the scriptures of truth; they are to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.

Since I left you, I have had many dilapidations, some of them have been very serious; yet I have not, the Lord be praised, been prevented from preaching at any season proposed; this I esteem as a blessing. I suppose we travelled 200 miles last week, and preached five times; we went from Cambridge; we went to Chatteris, in the Isle of Ely; from thence we went to Godmanchester; from thence to St. Neot's; then to Oxford; from thence to Bath; from which place we came yesterday to Chard; and I was very poorly, but to-day I am a little revived.

Blessed be my Lord, he keeps my mind in perfect peace. As he cannot be with me corporeally, he has given me such a friend and companion in my dear wife, that she really is the greatest outward evidence of our Lord's goodwill to me he can give. I am not speaking of his spiritual presence, and spiritual blessedness and blessings; but of what I want him for the body. I am now old, and have my old age infirmities. I am quite provided for death, having my dear wife to take care of me to the very moment I may drop, so that I am peculiarly easy. I am better to-day; I want rest; I shall remain here for a season. I hope to be with you on the fourth Lord's-day in October. You will not expect my writing a second

letter. I have so many persons to remember, that it is really a work which is to me more trying than even preaching is. I desire my love to each and every individual of you, and request your prayers, that as places are open for me, and will be continued, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mysteries of the gospel.

May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. May great grace rest upon you all.

I remain, dearly beloved,

Your real friend in the Lord Jesus Christ,

S. E. P.

P. S. Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is there any merry? Let him sing psalms. Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you. Brethren and sisters pray for us, that is, for I and my wife. The Lord be with your spirits. Amen.

LETTER XXXIV.

Croxley, Sept. 6, 1822.

To the Church of Christ, at Printers' Court, Shoe Lane, Holborn, London.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

WELL knowing it will yield you and your deacon, our well beloved brother, Mr. H., real pleasure to know my state, how the Lord hath dealt with me; and that the same may comfort your hearts, I write as follows:—When I left London, Monday, August 26, I was very infirm, and was by no means improved by the journey. We dined at Watford; in the

afternoon we got to Croxley, where we were most kindly received. During the space of being here, the air has been very salutary to me, so that I am very greatly revived; and having had nothing to do but once since here, and this only to sit down and speak once on last Lord's-day, I am beyond what I ever expected to be. Beloved friends, it is not that I have lost all my complaints. No; so far from it, the most material of these are what they were. Nothing but death will be a cure for them. I fully perceive I never shall be capable of serving you or Brixton, as I have done. I hope I may come in and out to you once in a fortnight, so as to preach on a Lord's-day once, and then go home immediately to Brixton. If you expect more, you will find I shall be incapable of the same; and I myself shall fall back, and be as ill as ever. I would have you to consider this, and also the expediency of giving up the room, you at present rent for me, at Mrs. Middleton's. You are to pay for it when you give her warning; and my wife and self will engage to pay her a quarter's rent after the warning is given, that she may be no loser by us, during which space we will get our things from thence removed. If it be asked, if these things are carried into execution, how are we to be with you once every other Lord's-day in the morning? The reply is this; there comes before Mr. Bailey's gate, the Brixton Hill coach, every morning, which will take us to town, so as to set us down at the bottom of Shoe Lane, time enough for the preaching, and the same will take us home the same afternoon; and, say you pay for this, yet it will greatly diminish your present expences. I shall not expect you to maintain me, as I must diminish my labours amongst you. When you read over my last letter to you, you will see this is of the same nature with that. My friends, my age is great; the clock of my time goes on fast; it will not fail of being stopped in the Lord's time. Yet, if it be prolonged, depend upon it I shall not be capable of exercising myself, one way nor another, as heretofore. It is our present expectations to leave this place the week after next, so as to be at Mrs. Middleton's about Monday or Tuesday, September 16 or 17, or thereabout, and return by the Brixton coach home to Brixton. Then we will return the last evening of the same week, and try to speak on the Lord's-day morning, and if it be your Lord's supper season, I will try to be

present. If I am not able to do so, you will understand my goodwill towards you, and be pleased with the same. Miss B. is quite free, and very respectful to us; so that we are both happy. I have enjoyed my rest and sleep most wonderfully, which is a great restorative to nature. She very kindly observes a week longer will be no way disadvantageous to me, as it may be an improvement in my recovery. I also consider it as my own time, seeing, if the Lord had not prevented it, I should have been at Chard. I am fully convinced I could not have borne the journey; nor never shall more. This is, where we now are, within twenty miles of London, and it is quite far enough. I enjoy a great deal of ease and rest. This I find old age more and more looks for, and absolutely requires.

My good friends, I have wrote this, that you may know you are not out of my thoughts. The Lord be with you in his covenant, and also in his manifestative and influential presence, and increase you with men like a flock. I pray in the words of the apostle for you, as it respects the substance of the same, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another." The Lord is most kindly preparing you and me, for that which shall most certainly take place, you to be so settled amongst yourselves, so as not to miss me at my removal from you; nor I, as it respects my change by death, leave you destitute. Blessed be the Lord, he has proved to you, and that even to demonstration, that you can do without me. He adds to your number, he blesses you with his life-giving presence, he gives you to find it good to wait on him. All this must be evident to you, he is in the midst of you for good, which gives me real spiritual satisfaction. And my freedom in Christ, and through the knowledge of Christ, from all fear and dread of the dissolution of my body, this cannot but yield you pleasure, as hereby Christ is magnified in my body, whether it be that life be prolonged, or death soon does its office within me, and upon me. Well, my beloved, I must conclude. And with what words can I do better, than with these? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

I include you, the whole church, the brethren in Christ, the sisters in Christ, your officers in Christ. So that you

are to consider yourselves, individually included and comprehended.

I remain your's, most affectionately and respectfully,

S. E. P.

Should it be so we should not be in London, as hath been mentioned, you may, let that be as it will, expect us fully on the Saturday evening, to preach to you the Lord's-day morning, September 22.

LETTER XXXV.

August 31, 1812.

To the Church and Saints of the living God, who worship as a Congregational Church, at Eagle and Child Alley, including those who sit down at the Lord's Supper with them, and those who are stated hearers of the everlasting gospel with them at that place, grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

BELOVED IN GOD,

YOUR church letter and token of love came safely to me; whilst I would by no means cast a slight on you for your kindness, yet as I seek not your's but you, I should have been as truly well pleased had you wholly omitted the same. Well you have done it, and I have received it, and all is well. I am this day to set off for Truro; yet I would not omit to write you, as this will be my last epistle for this season, as I hope to preach to you, and celebrate Christ's passion amongst you, on the first Lord's-day in October. The apostle addresses the church of Christ at Philippi, thus, "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved,

and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." He had been speaking to them concerning their citizenship in heaven, saying, including himself with them, "We have our conversation in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the mighty working even to subdue all things unto himself." From these glorious prospects, which he and they had been blessed with a spiritual and realizing view of these invisible and eternal realities, his own soul was most divinely animated, and he well knew theirs must be also, so far as they entered by faith into the knowledge and apprehension of them. He therefore addresses them thus sweetly and affectionately, therefore, which word connects the exhortation with what went before, seeing you are citizens of heaven, and have present conversation there, seeing you are looking for your Lord to descend from thence, who will consummate your felicity in body and soul, by making you both in body and soul, like unto himself, and so conform your bodies to his, that they shall be like unto his glorious body, which his omnipotent power will effect; he being able to subdue all things unto himself. My brethren, joint partners in this glorious grace, and partakers of the same blessings, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. Improve your faith by the constant exercise of its love; think; speak, act, and walk, under the real knowledge and believing apprehensions hereof. A most noble spirit is expressed and breathed forth in this. The Lord give us, you and me, to partake of the same. May he continue us in the truth. May he give us to be continually receiving his truth into our renewed minds; may he help us constantly to live his truth over in our hearts; may it be given to you and me to stand fast in the Lord. Ever remembering man doth not live by bread alone; but, by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. It is blessed living to be under the breathings of the Holy Ghost. To have Christ high in our hearts, supreme in our affections, and to have the pulse of our souls beating high, after communion with him, and the Father in him, through the Spirit, is true blessedness. When it is thus with us, then

we can truly say with John, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." May the God of hope fill you with all joy, and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost, is the prayer of

Your's, most affectionately in the Lord,

S. E. P.

P. S. I would address you who sit down with us at the table of the Lord. Beloved, let me ask you in the words of Christ, have you understood all these things, which from time to time hath been delivered unto you at the holy table, concerning the person, the glories, the fulness and perfections of our Lord Jesus Christ? Does Christ dwell in your hearts by faith? Are you living daily by the faith of the Son of God? Are you maintaining constant faith in his righteousness, and atonement? If so, I must then pronounce ye are blessed of the Lord, which made heaven and earth. The Lord be with you. Amen. Remember me at the throne. May great grace rest upon you, and abound towards you.

I would speak a word to you who constantly hear the word of the gospel with us, and the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let these sayings sink down in your hearts. It is an unspeakable blessing to give full admittance and reception to every gospel truth. We cannot have spiritual life but from a supernatural knowledge of Christ; nor can that life be drawn forth into act and exercise, but by an increasing knowledge of the Lord and Saviour.

May the Holy Ghost give you to treasure up in your minds the truth as it is in Jesus; that you may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Never forget that the blessing of the Lord is upon the righteous, he will compass them round continually with it, as with a shield; and none are righteous before him, but such as he makes righteous, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto them. I cannot wish you a greater blessing than for you to know and receive this important truth into your minds; God made Christ sin for us, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him; nor can you enjoy a greater blessing out of

heaven, than to be living continually in the real belief of this. May the word of Christ dwell richly in you, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; may the everlasting love of the Father warm your hearts, and the finished salvation of the Son set you up on high; may the Lord the Spirit be your teacher.

This is the prayer of your well wisher,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXXVI.

Chard, July 2, 1808.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

I RECEIVED a letter last evening from Mr. —, wherein he informs me, you have lost your dear little infant. Depend on it, this is a proof of our Lord's love. You and your dear partner feel much disappointment; I also feel much for you, so does your dear Lord himself, yet the stroke came from his royal command. You have already felt on a like occasion; this fits you the better for the present dispensation; you may think otherwise, but our blessed Jesus knows best. You may therefore assure yourselves, it is all the fruit of infinite wisdom and everlasting love. I would refer you to the following scripture, "Thus saith the Lord, a voice was heard in Ramah. lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, and refused to be comforted for her children, because they are not. Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping; and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own borders." Here will I leave it. May the Lord the Spirit make such an application of it to you and your dear partner, as may afford you support and consolation. Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen.

S. E. P.

LETTER XXXVII.

MY GOOD SIR,

I HAVE had many letters to write; therefore, I put off writing to you, not out of the least disrespect, for I have received many favours from you, and feel myself very greatly obliged. May the Lord Jesus be increasingly precious to you, and sanctify every dispensation of his love towards you, and thereby teach you to profit in the way which he is pleased to lead you. It is always well, when we can look simply to Jesus Christ, and trust wholly on him alone; we need nothing so much as to improve every thing, which we see in ourselves and which daily befall us, so as to make more use of Christ's fulness, and live out of ourselves on him. You have this present trial, not to crush you, but to improve you. I know sense and reason must be crucified to the very end that our faith may be revived. You are to have nothing to do but with the Lord Jesus, he is your all, the whole of your salvation is in him; every blessing of it is treasured up in him; you are to be continually receiving out of his fulness every moment, every blessing, until you are translated to heaven; and even then, you are to be receiving out of his fulness, all the blessings of eternal glory. You are in the prime of life. I love you in the Lord, and wish you may be a most blessed witness for Jesus.

The more you are led into personal and spiritual communion with Christ, the more you will be qualified to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; and the knowledge of Christ is the spring of all spirituality; so that the one principal thing which I wish you to be growing into, is the knowledge of the person of Christ. In him, the whole Trinity are known; in Christ all the glories of the Godhead shine forth. All the love of God is displayed in the person and work of the God-man, Christ Jesus. You can never be too well acquainted with the person of Christ, God manifest in the flesh. He is Immanuel, the fellow of the Lord of Hosts. As you get into an increasing knowledge of the dignity and divinity, glory and majesty of Christ's person, you will be led into the mys-

tery of the Trinity, and of their distinct offices and operations in grace. A true acquaintance with these divine realities, will save you from abundance of errors; to hear of, and set forth the covenant of the Three in Jehovah, in the same order and manner in which it is revealed in the holy scriptures, should be our study and delight. If we attain this, then we shall give the Father his true, distinct, and proper glory; we shall give the Son his praise; and, in a right way, honour the eternal Spirit for his office in the economy of grace. When we have light into these important points, we shall then put all things into their proper place. Salvation, which we need as sinners, will then be brought forth in its proper place. Not as that on the account of which God loves us! No. It is the fruit of God's love, not the cause of it. God's love is an act of his own infinite mind. The persons of the elect are the objects of it; and election is the effect of it. This is an immutable act in the mind and will of God. It is without the least shadow of turning. Out of the immensity of the Father's love to his elect, he chose their persons in Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world; so that they were in Christ, united to him, had relation to his person before the world was; this is grace beyond our conception; yea, we shall never fully comprehend it, even in glory; for God to love us with an everlasting love, who can fathom this? Not a saint in glory! It is incomprehensible! It is well with us when we are sweetly swallowed up in spiritual meditation thereon. As the elect were in Christ from everlasting, so the Father beheld them in him with infinite complacency; they were the objects of the delight and complacency of the essential Three, before all time.

Under the foreviews of the fall of the elect in Adam, with the consequences thereof, the eternal Three counsels and covenanted to raise them up and above the ruins of the fall by the person, incarnation, obedience, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is the incommunicable work of Christ; it is the fruit of the covenant; it originates from everlasting love. To have a true acquaintance with the person of Christ, of his suretyship engagements, of his incarnation, of his finished work, and complete salvation, is the only means of keeping up and maintaining faith and hope in God. All our faith begins with Christ; he is the immediate object

of it, and from him we ascend to the Father, as the ultimate object of it. As soon as we begin to see and feel sin, we are fit subjects to receive the salvation of Jesus. Yet, through the darkness and legality of our minds, we fly from instead of flying to Christ. It is owing to this, we want to be something in ourselves; and so it is, very few even of such as are under some work of the Holy Ghost, get any sure gospel knowledge and apprehensions of Jesus as a Saviour, and the perfection of his finished salvation. In the generality of such as are under a profession, self is uppermost; it carries all before it; some creature acts are extolled; some natural efforts are exhorted to and most highly magnified; then devotions are magnified; and it comes to this, my experience is more to me than your's. Oh, wretched self! I might call it nonsense, for it cannot be good sense, to forsake the Lord, the fountain of living waters. Thanks be to the Lord for shewing you the fallacy of all this! One good thought of Jesus Christ, created in your mind by the Spirit of God, exceeds ten thousand things of the forementioned kind. Indeed, indeed, it does! Let us bless the Lord, we have not so learned Christ. May the Lord reveal Jesus Christ in all his glories, in all the perfection of his salvation, in all his freeness and fulness of grace; that you may rejoice to say, all my sins, O Jesus, are on thee. When we are engaged in spiritual apprehensions of Jesus, we then forget sin and self, with all our misery and sorrow. And blessed employment it is to contemplate Christ! Nothing can exceed it; for it is present life and salvation. Whilst we are in this world, we are in our fallen nature full of sin and sorrow; therefore, so long as we look to ourselves and sins, we must be as miserable as we can be out of hell; and we cannot escape or be saved one single moment from one single sin, unless it be given us to look off ourselves and sins to Christ Jesus.

Now Jesus is a most blessed friend to such poor sinners as you and I are. Oh! his blood is a most blessed antidote for a guilty conscience; his righteousness is our all-sufficient and everlasting righteousness. When we see the perfection of it, in the light of the word and Spirit, then we renounce all other righteousness. It is blessed to be engaged in spiritual apprehensions of the righteousness of Christ; it is life everlasting to take into our minds, and believe in our hearts, that God

made Christ sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. While we are led into the knowledge of the subject, by the teaching of the Lord the Spirit, we enjoy real blessedness; because we have then communion with God, and in it we are admitted to many divine secrets; one of which is, the knowledge that all our sins are done away in Christ. He hath removed them far from us; he hath borne them himself; he bare them in his own body on the tree; he hath washed out all our stain and pollution; his blood is our health; his stripes are medicinal; the sacrifice of himself is our everlasting discharge; his righteousness is our robe of salvation; it is upon us; we are clothed with it; we shine in it before the throne of God. The Father beholds us in Christ; he sees us to be what Jesus is; we are as righteous as the righteousness of Christ can make us. The Father beholds us in Christ as pure as the blood of Christ can make us. It is very good to keep a clear distinction between what we are in Christ, and what we are in ourselves, and also what our state is in Christ, and what our frames are. It should ever be kept also in our remembrance, that the life we are called to live is a life of faith. Most people live a life of sense, which is supported by their frames and feelings; they make what they are, and feel within themselves, matters of encouragement or discouragement unto themselves. But faith is neither discouraged by what we are in ourselves, or encouraged by anything either felt or enjoyed. It is sustained by the word of God; it is fed by the promise of God; it lives in sight and views of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father's love in him; it is a supernatural life; it is begun and carried on by the power of the Holy Ghost; he created us anew in Christ Jesus; he gave us new and supernatural faculties; he is pleased to open them, and he shines with his own light upon them. He reveals Christ the object and subject of faith; he takes of the things of Christ, of his love and mercy, of his blood and righteousness, of his fulness and power, and shews the same to us, and he brings all home to the mind; applies all to the heart, and seals all home upon the conscience; and thus he brings the renewed person out of himself into Christ; and he keeps him alive to Christ, and he leads him to believe on Christ, and he teaches him to rest his whole salvation on Christ; to centre wholly on him, to glory alone in him, and

to say concerning him; he is all my salvation and all my desire. This is the work of the Spirit of God. It is a work glorious and divine to live thus under his most glorious influence; it is to live a heaven upon earth.

I have, in my time, seen a book bearing this title, 'Heaven upon Earth;' and surely, to live Christ, is all this. But before this can be, heaven must be open to our view, and heaven is open to our view when Christ is set before us, and the Holy Ghost has been pleased to open the eyes of our minds, and enlighten them with the eye-salve of the word, to behold the unsearchable riches of Christ. Oh, bless the Lord you are where you are, and what you are: a poor sinner in the school of Christ, and full of all sin and misery in yourself, and therefore you need the whole contained in the salvation of Jesus. Oh, that your ears may always be open to hear the voice of Christ! Oh, that he may daily open your understanding that you may understand the Scriptures! May your eye be constantly fixed upon him, who can lead you into all truth! He hath the key of David; he openeth and none can shut, and he shutteth and none can open; he can unlock the whole cabinet, and admit you to such views of the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent Majesty, as may well fill your soul with holy admiration; this will most wonderfully endear him to you. All things under such light and views of the Lord Jesus, will put down sin, self, the world, death, and hell. It will cause you to cry out, Oh, how great is his goodness! how great is his beauty! We never can be in love with sin and the world, when we have had a spiritual view of Christ. Very little is wanting to suffice the wants of the body; we want, were we to live ever so long in this world, but food and raiment, and our God will supply all our needs out of the riches of his glory by Christ Jesus. Poor creatures! that we are, we look to creatures and creature-things to make us happy. Yet all things out of Christ, the whole creation, and the very essence of all creature-comforts, are not worth one single moment's thought. Christ alone is worthy of our uttermost affection. Oh, that you may continually be going out after Christ! You see our Lord's love to you; he will not let you have a small blessing, though actually bestowed, continued, because he will have your whole heart; therefore, he hath removed the gift,

that you may look more unto and love the giver. Now, my dear friend, you are to aim to improve every trial, by going more to Christ, and holding more free converse with him. This is one great part of our blessedness, to be taught of the Holy Ghost, how to have free access to Jesus at all times, as the matter requires; and as we go out of ourselves to the most precious Jesus, we then gain by everything which befalls us. Now your life and holiness is in Christ, your faith is nothing more or less than a free spiritual exercise of your thoughts on Christ. This is so simple an act that the devil is always aiming to puzzle and perplex us about it. Says he, will you look on a simple act of the mind to be faith? What do you call this faith in Christ? Surely, then, any body may believe; therefore, you are surely deceiving yourself. Thus the devil preaches; and he preaches this doctrine to real saints, and he never gains attention more than when he thus addresses us. Many are led to believe all this comes from the good Spirit. Alas! alas! It is the very devil in his white surplice. Nothing is more hurtful than such insinuations, yet it is so plausible to carnal reason, it overcomes the mind, and proves too often a powerful temptation, by which carnal reason is set on work to oppose the glorious gospel of the blessed God. If it be so, then of all evils do you not heed carnal reason. It is the very support of all legality and unbelief. Do not you reason about truth; put honour on God's revelation of Christ; receive it into your mind; give full credit to all which the mouth of the Lord has spoken; treasure up his word in your heart; let it be your daily study and meditation; imitate Jeremiah in this particular; he says in an address, "Thy words were found and I did eat them: and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart, for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of Hosts." I am sure I wish you as well as my own soul; therefore, I cannot but recommend you to the most precious Jesus. He is able to make all grace abound towards you; he can and he ever will rule all things which befalls us; so that they shall work together for your good. He will turn everything into a blessing, and the blessing of the Lord shall be upon you; so you cannot have more than this. All, therefore, I wish for you is, that you may live up to this; and live like yourself, as an heir of God, and as a joint heir of Christ Jesus. Because

in so living, you will glorify the Lord, and set the crown on the head of Christ; and thus you will go on in your day and generation, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

I hope you will find it sweetly pleasant to recommend the precious Jesus to poor sinners. I am to set off on Monday next for Devon and Cornwall. May the Lord himself go with me. It is not altogether so pleasing to me, at this time of life, to go from one place to another; yet so it is, and so it must be. I could wish to say, the will of the Lord be done. He hath promised strength according to the day, and he wonderfully fulfils it to me; therefore I have to praise him for his faithfulness. It is very pleasing to me time flies so fast: very soon I shall be called up to see Jesus in his kingdom and glory. Then for it: I shall have communion without interruption; perfect happiness in the sight and vision of the Lamb upon the throne; fellowship with the eternal Three in the one Jehovah, in the person of the God-man. I can assure you I long for to be admitted to this most blessed state, where God will be all in all. And surely, I have to please myself; I am got into the sixty-third year of my age; with many it is the dying year. I do not expect if I do not get out of the body this year, by which I mean the sixty-third, I seem to be positive I cannot exceed sixty-four; yet I know all this is with the Lord, and I have nothing to do with it. I would give up my all into his hands and say, "not my will, but thine be done."

As it respects the money I sent you, it settled all I owed you. Will you send two dozen of the books to Mr. J. T., the sooner the better; I will pay you for them. As to the letters I left, if you like to print them, do so; but be sure let the volume be so large, if not larger than the former. I think I can say where some might be obtained, which would be like them for date. I shall not be here after Monday next, until the second week in August. If you want to write then, do; but do not neither desire nor expect any more letters from me, except they are very short. The Lord himself bless you and your dear partner, to whom I desire to be most affectionately remembered. I do remember you both at the throne; I expect you will do likewise. It is a good means to unite the heart, and keep up christian union and communion

with each other. We can speak that on the behalf of each other to Christ, which we cannot to each other; it would not be convenient. I most sincerely wish you every blessing. May you have free and full communion with the Holy Trinity in every ordinance.

Your's in the Lord,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXXVIII.

London, Feb. 28, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR,

BOTH your letters have been received. Your request is such, I think, it cannot be answered so far as you extend it. I do intend, if the Lord will, to see you, and be a short space with you. But I suppose it will be wholly out of my power to remain so long as you speak of. Never forget it is Christ's presence, unction and Spirit, which can only do us good. You do not need me so much as many others do. I do intend to come, and if it should be permitted, we must make the best use of our time, and look to the Lord for his blessing; then let the time be long or short, all will be well.

To preach the Lord Jesus Christ in his love, mercy, blood, and righteousness, as the alone salvation of a sinner, is my one invariable subject. When I am enabled to preach the Lord Jesus Christ as exactly suited to my case, I am well pleased, not with my own performance, but with the subject; but none can need Christ in all the fulness of his mercy and compassion, in all the virtue of his efficacy, and wounds and blood, in the efficacy of his sacrifice and righteousness, more than myself. Old Adam-nature is all sin and corruption, all wounds and wants, all disease and death, all hell and damnation. These are my views of it which is concerned and connected with my inward perception and feelings of the same.

This is my every day's experience. "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." I find in the indwelling of sin all evil contained; and I expect it will be so as long as breath is in the body; so that I may as well look into hell and among the damned for comfort, as look within myself for it. I would ever wish to have these views prevail; to carry about with me, and to be inwardly clothed with self-loathing and eternal abhorrence, and to remember shame and confusion of face belongs to me, because I have sinned against him; and also never to forget, to the Lord our God belongeth mercy and forgiveness, although I have rebelled against his Divine Majesty. It is a part of my creed that the Lord God never created a creature, either angel or man, to be happy in themselves; and all our happiness can only arise out of himself, who is alone the fountain of living waters. It is Christ alone who can sanctify the mind. He is a soul-satisfying portion; when we are brought to know him, we find true and everlasting satisfaction in him; and in our living on him, we enjoy the perfection of all good. The knowledge of Christ is the one principal thing in christianity. It is his person is the perfection of heaven, the glory of the everlasting gospel. It is his person stamps divinity, majesty, glory, excellence, and perfection on the whole Bible. He is the all in all of it. His salvation is the one great subject of it, which the more we know of it from the revelation made of it in the holy word, and the record and testimony of the divine Father given of it therein, the more we are enabled to receive and believe this into our minds—that "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." When we give full credit to this, we believe on Christ; we honour him by trusting simply on him for our present and everlasting salvation. Faith is a most simple act of the spiritual mind. It consists of a spiritual apprehension of Christ; he is hereby received into the mind; he hereby is enjoyed. To think spiritually on the Lord Jesus Christ, this is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. To be speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ spiritually and scripturally, this is evidential of our living Christ.

A life of faith on the Son of God consists in a total renunciation of ourselves, and in a simple and entire dependence

on him alone. We must not look to Christ and ourselves; no; we must look entirely off ourselves and everything we are in ourselves, to him alone, to his blood and righteousness. We must not make anything in ourselves, or wrought in us, the ground of our faith. It is the word of Christ alone that must be the ground of our faith. If so, what better warrant can we have for believing on him than those words, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." Surely none, my good friend; there is abundance of religious chat, profession and attention amongst members which hath nothing of Christ in the same, and yet the name of Christ is mentioned, whilst it really is taking his holy name in vain. I do conceive in the present day there is as little preached and known of Christ as at any period since the reformation. I conceive many who sit under the real preaching of Christ rest more in what they hear, and in their own apprehension of what they hear, than they do in Christ himself. If it be so, it is a delusion. The Lord save us from it. We cannot know Christ in a supernatural way and manner but by the revelation of the Holy Ghost. Such as know Christ can more or less speak of him. Such as know will put their trust in him. To have the guilt of sin removed from the conscience, and to enjoy the grace of God which surpasseth all understanding, by spiritual apprehension of the most precious blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ, is of the greatest importance. It is by this means we can live comfortably, and die confidently. To know the virtue of Christ's blood and righteousness in our minds, saves us from guilt and guilty fears. It leads us to prize Christ. To speak of him practically and experimentally, to glory in him, to rejoice before him, to triumph in him, to live on him, to enter in him, to make him our all, to live on him for all, to bring him into all, to make use of him in all, and thus we make a complete Christ of him in our own particular cases. This is most assuredly to live Christ; and this is a most blessed life, the most blessed upon earth, which can only be exceeded by the life of glory in heaven. The living Christ is the best preparation for death, for glory, and for everlasting life. I know a little of it; may I be led more and more into a practical and personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus; this will be a blessed means of increasing fellowship with him, which cannot but be very desirable, as I am to live with Christ,

and together with him to all eternity. It is the very essence of grace to increase in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Communion follows this; the fruits and effects of which will appear in high prizing of Christ. I should conceive that such as have been favoured with a gospel sight and view of Christ, cannot but renounce all perfection, be it in saints on earth, or all the saints and angels in heaven, as nothing worth, as not worthy one single thought, as everlastingly outshone and exceeded by one spiritual apprehension of the person and worth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet one scarcely meets with any one in whom self is not predominant. The Lord crucify it in us more and more.

Should I be permitted to come to you, I should be very desirous of preaching at Totness. I have been informed that there is a Mr. E. would be glad to receive me. If you know him, I should be glad if you would intimate my intention unto him. Please to give my christian love to all friends. I wish them every blessing in the Lord. I am much pleased with what you say concerning the preaching. I am always glad to hear of good ministers in the establishment, and think they far exceed in general the dissenters. It is the simple preaching of Christ which attracts and wins the hearts of sinners, and is the means, in the hand of the Spirit, of drawing their hearts after him. My christian regards to Mrs. T. and all our friends in Christ Jesus. The Lord be with you all; and give you to increase with all the increase of God. May your eye and heart be fixed on the Lord Jesus. None beside Jesus can afford us the least succour and relief in the article of death, and we need him as much in life as we shall in death. For we have now to struggle with sin, and we shall then have nothing but dissolution to contend with. I do not mean but we shall have the same sinfulness inherent in us which we have now, yet I conceive it cannot break forth then, because the body being sinking, we shall have no inclination to it, because we are sinking in our mortal frames; so that we shall need Jesus most especially to give us an easy dismissal from them, and to receive our souls to his everlasting embraces. May our faith even now be looking to Jesus for this, seeing he will entirely take us to himself by death when we least expect. May Jesus shine on you, and bless you with his life-giving presence. When I shall leave London, and arrive at Chard,

and have fixed my plan, I will write to you. I conclude myself, with regards to the whole of your family.

Your friend in our Lord Jesus Christ,

S. E. P.

LETTER XXXIX.

Brixton, Surrey, March 9, 1824.

MY BELOVED FRIEND IN CHRIST,

I HAVE been very ill indeed, and in all appearance nigh unto death, yet the Lord hath had mercy on me. He is again lifting me up from the gates of death, so that I shall again praise him, Father, Son and Spirit, in his persons, and perfections in the gates of the daughter of Zion. I have for the five Lord's-days past, been permitted to go on regularly, without the least interruption. This I esteem a great favour. I very sincerely love and esteem you in the person, love, and salvation of the most adorable Lord Jesus, whose name is exalted above all blessing and praise. His person is transcendantly glorious. He is God in our nature, God-man in the person of one Christ. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." His love will be the admiration of the whole election of saints throughout the ages of eternity. His person will be in heaven their one perpetual ordinance, in whom they will behold the glory, and enjoy the uttermost blessedness of communion with the Three in Jehovah, they can possibly partake of in the ages of eternity. We have now some blessed apprehensions of his salvation. This carries us out of self; it takes us off ourselves. We are hourly brought into personal and sensible communion with him. We know him, we believe in him; we trust wholly in his blood and righteousness. We have fellowship with him, in all the virtue, efficacy, and worth of the same. We, you and I, know what it is to eat his flesh and drink his blood, to have him dwell in our hearts by faith; to feed on him as our sacrifice for sin; by the which we are for ever sanctified

through the will of God by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. The whole election of grace, all the elect of God, are alike cleansed, washed, and alike purified by his one oblation. The whole and every individual belonging to the elect of God are one in Christ, equally beloved, justified, and pardoned, washed and sanctified and complete in the same one head and hope; saved in the one and same Christ with an everlasting salvation. It suits well when we have these views of these comprehensive and most important subjects.

I love your letters; your views of Christ suit me. The very words you express yourself on salvation subjects are very acceptable; are such as I most cordially and sincerely approve of. You and I do not need to be brought to the knowledge of the truth; we are enlightened into the knowledge of Christ; he is revealed in us. His person, work, and salvation is the sole foundation for our hope of glory. We do not want to believe on Christ for life and salvation; our life is the proof of this, for it consists in living over in our minds what we believe from the scriptures of truth concerning Christ. Paul says of himself, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself." He loves you and me as truly, distinctly, and particularly, as he does all, each, and every particular individual of the rest of his distinct members of his own body, the church, who are members of his body, his flesh, and of his bones. It is for your advantage and mine to make a proper use of this, and that at all times and on all occasions we shall certainly find our advantage therein.

My good friend, according to what you have written me, your nearest and dearest relations, together with yourself, are made partakers of the benefit of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Your wife and one of your daughters are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, in those blessings and benefits which the world can neither give nor take away. Your riches in Christ are invaluable; your treasures in Christ are immense; your life in him is immutable; your grace in him, and which was given you in him before the world began, which you cannot increase or decrease, you may obtain in-

creasing knowledge and enjoyment of, but you cannot be more personally and blessedly interested in him: no, that is impossible. Therefore, you are at all times, and in all places, and in every circumstance, alike interested in him. The true apprehensions of which is a very great means of keeping our minds in perfect peace, and of staying our minds upon the Lord, it being an immutable act in the Lord's will. "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation."

May the Lord bless you, my dear friend, and your beloved and highly favoured family, with an increasing knowledge of his love to you, and interest in him, of what you are in his sight, and as he beholds you in the person of his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom his soul delighteth, and is well pleased. The Lord the Spirit fix you. Whilst your spiritual mind is exercised on such important subjects, you will have the enjoyment and blessedness contained and expressed in these most important realities. You are, my friend, a most blessed and happy man; you are "the blessed of the Lord who made heaven and earth." It would be more easy to speak and to declare and specify the riches of our King George the Fourth, and what the sum total amounts to, than to express your worth and greatness, because Christ is yours, and his person is your portion. His unsearchable riches are your treasure. His fulness your treasure-house; all he has is yours. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." It is your fault if you are not the happiest man out of heaven; you have all in Christ which can constitute you so; live on Christ, and then you will prove yourself to be actually so. I say, therefore, to you, look only, look wholly, look constantly, look continually to Christ, and then be miserable if you can. Our Lord says to you, "Behold me, behold me; behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, let no man take thy crown." If you are wise in Christ, and by his teaching increase your knowledge of him, and in real spiritual communion with him, you will easily perceive that you must not be taken with the appearances of religious people, nor with their speeches. There is too little reality in the same for any of such as know the Lord from the teaching of the word, and the teaching of the Lord the Spirit, to be taken

with. We now live in the very dregs of time; and as one who is now in heaven said to me, we live in the very dregs of the same. In all places, from one end of our land to the other, there is nothing but preaching and professing of Christ; and what is there of Christ in truth and reality in the whole thereof? I think there is nothing of worth and importance. Many there are who have outlived their profession, and such as have not, almost know not what to do to keep in so much as the formality of the same. Well, and what of it; and what is there in the same; what can we see in it, and by the same? Why that which is expressed by Mr. Wilcox, in his 'Choice Drop of Honey from the Rock Christ,' 'that a Christless professor is the blackest sight that can be out of hell.' Blessed be the Lord we are not Christless. We know him; he knows us; he lives in us; he is our all, and we are his all; and nothing can separate us from his love. We are safe in him; he is our safety and safeguard. You and I can sing and say, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Christ is your shadow, your protector, your salvation, your refuge; you cannot be exceeded by any other friend, nor in any other friendship.

The Lord help you to improve your friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ, it will be of lasting benefit to you.

I have been very sad with respect to my eyes for some time past; they have been so bad I cannot use them either to read or write. I have been preaching again and again without the use of seeing the very text. At present I have the restoration of them, for which I desire to praise the Lord.

My wife desires her love in Christ to you, your wife, and daughter. May great grace rest upon you all. When you have an opportunity just signify that you have received this with an increase to your library. I wish I could further increase it, but at present it is wholly out of my power, so be content; we are all confined, neither can we go by any means beyond it. It is true wisdom not to wish to do so. I am persuaded it is great grace to be well pleased, to be well contented, to be perfectly satisfied with all the good pleasure of the Lord's will concerning us. The apostle says, "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." I would cite these Scriptures as vastly

important. "I am the Lord that healeth thee." "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. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

I subscribe myself, with every good wish to you in Christ Jesus,

S. E. P.

LETTER XL.

Brixton, May 26, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIEND WHOM I LOVE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD,

I RECEIVED your very kind letter with real pleasure, and all upon it gives me real satisfaction. You express yourself so as no saint on earth can go beyond you. For it is not strong bold expressions prove our real knowledge and esteem of Jesus Christ; it is the spiritual breathings and outgoings of our souls after him, give the real evidence of our knowledge of him and his great salvation; and our spiritual delight in thinking on him and speaking of him as the beloved of our souls, carries its own evidence with it, that Jesus hath been with us, and that we have been with him. You say, Christ is the life and salvation of your soul, that his blood is your everlasting purity, his righteousness is your everlasting perfection. It is in the person of Christ you are accepted. No one that really knows Christ can get beyond this; neither will any one who has fellowship with Christ withstand this. Blessed be the Lord the Spirit who taught you this. May he keep you alive to all this, even to the very last moment of your continuance in this mortal state; for herein life eternal is contained. Jesus Christ, the same

yesterday, to-day, and for ever is your portion and inheritance. He will never leave you nor forsake you; therefore give yourself no concern about any one's friendship. Better be without such as are not sound in the faith; may you say to them as Paul did to such, "what, came the word of God out from you, or came it unto us only." The Lord be magnified for keeping you from denying the holy Trinity, the Godhead of Christ, and the personality of the Holy Ghost. Christ is the bread of life. I know you cannot be fed and nourished up unto life everlasting but by the word of sound doctrine, even by the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. It shews the exceeding greatness of God's love to you, his keeping you from receiving any doctrine into your mind which is not to be found in his most holy gospel.

Your wife, yourself, and daughter are, I think, very blessed persons. What gives me to think so is, what you say concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely, to be enamoured with him, is real blessedness. He exceeds all on earth; he transcends all in heaven; his name is exalted above and far beyond all blessing and praise.

I wrote you a letter, and sent it by the post; whether you received it I know not, as you say nothing about it. If you received it, all is well; if not, never mind it. I am going on fast in the journey of life, hastening unto Jesus. I have many bodily infirmities; my age is great; I cannot do as heretofore. I preach once a-week, and no more. I write very few letters. I am almost seventy-seven, and just about entering on the seventy-eighth year of my pilgrimage. I conceive these will be my words for my ensuing birthday, which will be on the 23rd of June, "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God." I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever; it is all of grace. This is not my salvation, yet it is a stream from the same inexhaustible fountain. Salvation is contained in the finished work of Christ; his righteousness and sacrifice contains the whole of it. The everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus; this is my centre; here I trust; neither do I want to be removed from hence till I see Jesus Christ face to face in heaven; for my everlasting purity, even in glory, will all consist and everlastingly remain in his offering of himself, by which he hath abolished all the sin and sinfulness of his people out of the sight of law and justice, and cleansed

his whole mystic family from all sin. The apostle says, "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin." When we receive this truth into our minds through the grace, light, and teaching of the Spirit of God, we are at a point; we having hereby received the atonement into our hearts, we are by the same discharged in our consciences, so that we are delivered from all condemnation. The Lord has given you the right conception of the gospel; you cannot too highly prize the same, neither can you ever honour Christ too much, by trusting wholly and alone in him. The more simply you do this, the more you honour Christ Jesus. This is the greatest act of worship on Christ we can possibly perform in this world, to trust all we have and are with Christ, for soul and body, for time and eternity. Encourage your dear wife and your beloved daughter to trust in our Lord Jesus Christ continually.

I shall never be in Devonshire any more; I am too old; travelling is become to me very burthensome, yet you and I, and my wife and yours, with your daughter, may have many very blessed meetings before the Lord, and communion with him, and with each other in him at the throne of heavenly grace. He will look us full in the face. He will say—here am I, "whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Let what will await us, we have the Lord nigh unto us in all that we call upon him for, so that we need fear no evil, no, not were we this moment walking through the valley of the shadow of death, Christ will even then be with us; his gospel will then have an all-sufficient subject to support and comfort us.

I mean to go about twenty miles out of London this summer, if the Lord please, for about the space of three months, and then return. I sent you a book by your brother. I have none of my books, they are all in the hands of others, so that I cannot have one except I buy it. My friends conceived it would be best for me to leave them to others; so it is. No one, had I them to give, should be more welcome than yourself. You are one of my favourites in Christ Jesus, that you really are. I think you are better off on a Lord's day to be at home with your family, and read a good gospel sermon, and pour out your heart in prayer before the Lord; you will enjoy more of the Lord in so exercising of yourself than by going hither and

thither. The gospel is but here and there to be found. The Lord hath blessed you; the Lord doth bless you; the Lord will bless you. Cast yourself wholly on the Lord; he will not fail you; he will refresh you; he will "work all the good pleasure of his will in you, and the work of faith with power." You are, and yours with you, the blessed of the Lord, which made heaven and earth; therefore, it becomes you to bless yourselves in the God of truth. You may well break forth and sing, and say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness: as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." To be clothed with Christ, to be in Christ, and to be pure in the sight of God in the blood of Christ, to be complete in Christ: this is blessedness indeed, and everlasting perfection.

I now leave you to ruminate on what I have written. May the Lord make it good and acceptable unto you with his blessing. May he bless you, making your home like the home of Obed-edom, which the Lord did bless. My wife joins in wishing your wife and daughter the same blessing, and that you may increase in the knowledge of Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

I remain your's in Christ Jesus,

S. E. P.

LETTERS
ON SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS.

(First published in 1838, by Mr. F. Silver, under the title of
'Posthumous Letters.')

LETTER I.

TO MRS. HODGE.

Kingsbridge, June 13 and 14, 1796.

MY DEAR MRS. HODGE,

FROM the interview I had yesterday with your beloved partner, I find you are unwell. As I sincerely respect you for the Lord's sake, I thought I would address a few lines to you, it being probable I may see London before I return to Cornwall; if so, then I shall not return by way of Plymouth and Dock.

In a certain sense this is a truth, that it matters not where a believer in Christ is, at home or abroad; nor in what circumstances he is, whether sick or in health; because Jesus Christ is with him. His eye is upon him for good; his everlasting arms are underneath him; yea, the believer is in Christ, one in him, and one with him; bound up in the bundle of life with him; and Jesus saith, "because I live, ye shall live also."

I do conclude, you have tasted that the Lord is gracious; found that in his favour there is life, and his loving-kindness is better than the life itself; that Jesus is to you precious. Blessings on the slaughtered Lamb, he hath

“loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” This love is everlasting. It is the standing miracle of heaven. The heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of it, cannot be unfolded, no, not in glory. It is infinite, it is incomprehensible; and Jesus hath in a most amazing way and manner expressed his love to the many which the Father hath given him. Before time began, he undertook as their Head and Surety, in the covenant of the Trinity, to be their Saviour and Redeemer, from sin, Satan, death, and hell. In the fulness of time he became incarnate, and bore all the sins of his people, “in his body on the tree,” and was made “a curse for us.” He hath made his soul “an offering for sin,” and his blood “cleanseth us from all sin.” In him we are saved with an everlasting salvation; in him we are sanctified, justified, accepted; have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins; in him we are complete.

My dear friend, look off every object and thing; look wholly out of yourself, and look immediately to and intensely on the Lord Jesus, as having borne your sins, and carried your sorrows. Mount higher, and consider what you were in Christ, before the foundation of the world. As the object and subject of God’s everlasting love, you were chosen by the Father in Christ, before the foundation of the world; so that before all time you were in Christ, united to, interested in, and related to the Lord Jesus. Here is the believer’s blessedness; he is in Christ, and the whole heart of Christ is immutably fixed on his beloved ones. He was their Head before time began; they had a virtual representative being and existence in him from everlasting. They had grace given them in him before the world was. What the love of God is, how great, how immense, it is out of the power of all saints on earth or in heaven to say!

Do but think with yourself what it must be to shine in Christ before Jehovah the Father, to be viewed by him in Jesus our Head and representative, to be beloved of him with all the love of his heart, and for that love to extend from eternity to eternity; to be kept up, fed, and continued in the infinite mind of God with perpetual pleasure, with infinite delight, in continual vigour; so that the Lord is

fain to express himself thus, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing!" Here I must stop; it is ineffable, it is incomprehensible love! and must cry out, "O the depth!"

This love (which to use Dr. Goodwin's expression) ran like a river under ground from everlasting, brake forth in the heart of Christ, when he hung on the cross, and was "made sin and a curse for us." Here, my friend, you may view as in a mirror, the love of God towards you. It shines forth in Christ in a full blaze of splendour, yea, it shines and is reflected on us, in the person and mediation of Jesus Christ. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." These are some of the greatest acts of God's love to us in our own fallen, sinful state. His so loving, as to give his only-begotten Son; his laying help on him; laying, and causing to meet on him the iniquities of us all; and this is one of the highest expressions of it, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him."

When God gave his Son, he bestowed him on us, with all the love of his heart; gave him freely, gave him fully, to be the purifier; or, in other words to be a covenant for the people. This was a gift indeed, which is unspeakable; you and I may well cry out, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." Our Christ hath openly displayed his love to us; and the highest acts of it towards us as sinners were, his covenant engagements on our behalf; his giving himself for us; his bearing our sins, and the curse due to them: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." He hath purged away sin by the sacrifice of himself. His most precious blood cleanseth us from all sin; his most perfect life of obedience is our righteousness in the sight of God; we are more pure in Christ, than we are sinful in our fallen nature; we are more righteous in Christ, than we are unrighteous in ourselves; we have life in Christ, which sin cannot destroy, Satan cannot reach, death cannot put an end to. We have a fulness of grace in Christ, which all our wounds and wants

can never exhaust. We have a full, free, complete, and finished salvation in Jesus, in which we may trust with the utmost confidence, and shall never be confounded; in which we may make our boast, and perpetually triumph; on which we may live, and derive from it every blessing we need.

My dear friend, it is to be greatly lamented, few, very, very few know Christ; and it is impossible souls should be enamoured with the love, beauties, grace, and salvation of Jesus, who have no knowledge of him. The generality of professors trifle with the everlasting gospel of the blessed God. Ask questions, which, if they receive replies to, are of no service to their souls; it is the Holy Ghost alone, who can quicken souls, and make them alive to God by faith which is in Christ Jesus.

I look on you to be one of those who feed secretly on Christ by faith. My dear Mrs. Hodge, you find it is, as you contemplate Jesus and his finished work, your heart is revived. When you view his righteousness and blood to be the whole of your salvation; his word to be your ground and warrant to believing; and rest simply on this truth, that "the blood of Jesus Christ," the Son of God, "cleanseth from all sin;" it is this brings in peace to your mind.

My views of the gospel are, that it is the Father's revelation of Jesus Christ, who is set forth in it, with all the love of his heart, in all the bowels of his mercy, with all the excellency and efficacy of his righteousness, in the full perfection of his sacrifice and most precious blood-shedding, to sinners as sinners. And this is God's method of grace and salvation; it is no matter what the sinner is; be he as vile as hell, as guilty as sin can make him, stained and blackened as much as sin can; yea, could it be proved, that in point of sinfulness he had and did exceed all the damned in hell, yet Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin; and in believing this, the sinner is justified from all things. This is God's remedy for guilty consciences, for filthy sinners, for lost guilty men, "Whoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely: whosoever will, let him come to me," saith Jesus; "and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," nor cast off.

My prayer on your behalf, my good friend, to the Holy

Ghost shall be, that it may please him to teach you how to make use of everything you see and feel in yourself, to look wholly to Christ. There is in Christ every thing you want for life, death, and eternal glory. His person, blood, and righteousness, is the whole ground of all your hope in God; his word believed in, brings into your heart a sense of his love; his heart is all love, there is nothing in it but love; "thou art," saith Jesus, "all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." In Christ you are a perfection of beauty: he presents you in himself, holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight.

May the Holy Spirit open to your view the very heart of Jesus, shew you the love with which he loves you, and give you some precious cordial draughts, such as may fill you with everlasting consolation. Jesus is your friend; as such he will make use, and take the advantage from all which befall you in this vale of tears, to prove himself your fast and faithful friend. There is no feeling of your mind, no sigh nor tear, no groan nor pain, you are the subject of, but Christ sees and keeps his eye on. He will cause all, every thing which befall you, to be for your real good; his everlasting arms are underneath you. He saith unto you, "Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; I will remember thee with everlasting kindness." "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "I am thy God, and will be thine everlasting light and thy glory."

You may safely venture to believe these exceeding great and precious promises, which the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. Trust, and be not afraid; Jesus saith to you, "Be not afraid, only believe." Cast, therefore, all your cares and burthens on him, who saith, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my sayings he shall never see death." "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though, he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die."

All may fail, nature may fail; life, strength, flesh and heart may fail, but Jesus will not, Jesus cannot fail you. May you live and die, looking wholly to him. Oh, that he may continually, in a manifestative influential way, look on you, and fill you with all peace and joy in believing, that

ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

I am, in the best of bonds,

Your's, in Christ's Jesus,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER II.

TO MRS. STARK.

Boskenna, March 20, 1797.

DEAR MRS. STARK,

I INTENDED, some considerable time past, to have addressed you with a few lines; but many concerns, which required my particular and immediate attention, prevented. As a few moments are now granted, I am willing to employ them to testify my remembrance of you, and regard for you. Years and age must now be greatly felt, and all your weakness and feelings must remind you of your own approaching dissolution. I hope Jesus Christ is the one and only foundation of your hope; that you are looking simply to him, and resting wholly on his righteousness and blood, cleaving with full purpose of heart to him.

My good friend, there is nothing in Christ to discourage you; nor is there anything in you, which you see, feel, and experience, should keep you a moment from Christ. Jesus is all love, all mercy; he is full of compassion; he is salvation itself; his blood is all healing, all purifying; it cleanseth from all sin; it hath eternal, perpetual, and everlasting virtue and efficacy. His righteousness is infinitely, it is everlastingly perfect; and Christ's salvation is for such as we are: his finished work is the whole of our salvation.

Methinks I can read your heart, and am in some measure acquainted with the thoughts you conceive and entertain, concerning yourself and Jesus Christ. You feel yourself a sinner, and see nothing good in yourself; therefore, you think you are, and must be altogether unfit for Christ. You would fain be better, and are looking too much at what you are in yourself, and make a very ill use of it.

It is our very great misery to think too much of ourselves, and too little of Jesus and to entertain false thoughts and ideas of him in our minds. When we begin to be concerned about our souls, and have solemn thoughts concerning death, judgment, and eternity, we are prone to overlook Christ, as though we could be saved without him, or at least must be fitted for him, and his acceptance of us, by being made able to do something, which will recommend us to him. If we look within ourselves, and see our sin and guilt, we think we must be better, or Christ will not save us. We pray for grace, and expect to feel a great change in ourselves, and think without it we cannot be saved; which shews what dark thoughts we have of Jesus as a Saviour. We are only fit for him as we are sinful, guilty, lost, and ruined in ourselves. Jesus is most exactly suited to us a Saviour, whose very crown of crowns it is, to pardon the guilty, to heal the wounded, to purify the unclean, to clothe the naked, and to save from sin, Satan, death, and hell, to the glory and praise of his own grace. Jesus Christ hath taken away sin; he hath brought in everlasting righteousness; he hath conquered every enemy, and is almighty to save: and you should apply to him, and present yourself at his throne of grace, with all that you are in yourself, with all your complaints, that he may shine on you, bless you, and give you such views of himself, and salvation, as may encourage your faith and warm your heart.

My dear friend, Jesus makes no objection against you; he is every way suited to your case; there is no sin in you, but his blood is all-sufficient to cleanse from. There is not a want you have, but his grace is sufficient to satisfy.

S. E. P.

LETTER III.

 TO MR. JOHN TREGO, JUN.

London, Nov. 28, 1804.

MY GOOD SIR,

LAST evening, Mr. Butler gave me the parcel you sent, and also four pounds in notes, towards the publication of the sermon. As to the word 'subsisted,' instead of 'obtained,' I prefer the latter; but am not displeas'd it should be omitted for the better. Some other alterations, I conceive, are for the better, though others, it may be, are not. I thought that the Doctor would have wrote a few lines by way of preface, which I see he has not. Having lately sent forth the substance of all contained in this sermon, in my treatise on the 'Growth of Grace,' I think it will be best to drop the printing it; and as money is not very plenty, and taxes, increasing, and I have no cash to spare, and doubtful the matter might remain unsold, I freely write to you, that if you please I will return the notes to Mr. Butler, and both the sermon and your copy of it; as, if you have both, you can and other friends, get it copied, and read it either as altered, or in its first state, just as you please, and save all your money. I really think this will be best.

Jesus Christ is the believer's all; his presence and glory makes heaven to be what it is; his love contains a fountain of infinite blessedness, a spring of everlasting joy; when we live in spiritual contemplations on it, we find it so. It is true blessedness to look off, and live above every object and subject, on the Lord Jesus. Let us seek happiness where we may, it is only to be found and enjoyed in Christ: "It hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." If all fulness is in him, all is emptiness out of him. We do not make enough of being in Christ. Very few see all depends on this, therefore they dwell more on the effects than on the

cause. Few see the glory, and taste the sweets of divine, spiritual, and supernatural truth. It is a very low time with the church of Christ; though such multitudes profess, yet very few know Jesus, and the power of his resurrection. Union to Christ is the foundation of all communion with him. The Holy Spirit must make it clear and plain to us from the scriptures of truth, that we are one with Christ, and that he is one with us, before we can rest wholly on him, and live in real communion with him. Yet how seldom is this great truth touched upon! How very rarely is it opened and explained! Surely it should be frequently unfolded and explained in the ministry of the word. It is because the person, and finished salvation of Christ, is not the one constant subject in the pulpit, many of the Lord's people live so low, and are so dead and lifeless. Surely there cannot be a living on Christ, where persons so coldly speak of, and preach him. Not that I ever meddle with others. I want, as you remember I told you, that your misery and wretchedness did not unfit you for Christ, to go in a sight, and with a full sense and feeling of all to him. He will cordially receive you; he will most effectually heal you; he will most freely express his love to you; he will most affectionately compassionate you; he is always one and the same in his love and pity. Oh, try him constantly; live on him continually; look on him as your own; live on him as though he came down from heaven, and lived only for you, as though you were the only object of his love on earth or in heaven. This will lead you to be very familiar with him; this will remove all guilty unbelieving suspicions from your mind; this will make him very precious to your heart; it will endear him to your very soul; then all will go well with you. When you live in a simple dependence on him, you will have free and constant communion with him, and this will sanctify your whole walk and conversation, and produce all the fruits of righteousness, to the praise and glory of God.

Do not forget, your soul cannot be borne up under the guilt and pollution of inward sin, but by studying the everlasting virtue, worth, and perfection of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. We are in him saved with an everlasting salvation; we are in Christ, the objects and subjects of the Father's everlasting love; we are in Christ, without all spot

of sin, as pure as his blood can make us ; we are in Christ, everlastingly righteous in his righteousness ; in him we are complete. Let us get rid of our misery by believing this, and by remembering this, that though we are as black as hell in our nature selves, yet we are all fair in the sight of our heavenly Father, as he beholds us in our living Head, and glorious Mediator, the God-man, Christ Jesus. This only can bear up our minds above all our experience of inward sinfulness. We want most assuredly to apprehend how God beholds us in his Christ ; he takes no view of us, but in his Son. It is what we are in Christ, not what we are in ourselves, is the matter of eternal importance ; therefore, I dwell so much on it.

Please to give my most cordial and christian love to Mr. and Mrs. Hewett, and all the friends. I suppose you received my letter, though you did not mention it. Indeed, I have almost dropped all my acquaintance, as it respects writing to them. I am very sure I have set forth all I know of Christ in my letters, and am fully persuaded you have heaps upon heaps of them in your towns, which if they were read would do such as want to be encouraged in the Lord their God, real service. Please to make my respects to the Doctor, and thanks for his trouble.

I will be glad to hear from you as soon as possible ; and I hope what I have wrote concerning putting a stop to the publication, will be quite satisfactory, as I cannot see any prospect of sale ; and as I will return you both, I think it will be best for all, as money will be more and more scarce, and I hate picking of pockets. I am very greatly obliged to the friends for their kindness, and to you also. The Lord bless them and you with that pearl which surpasseth all understanding.

I am so cold, I cannot conveniently proceed. Therefore I conclude.

Your's most respectfully,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER IV.

 TO THE SAME.

London, December 23, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR,

I WISH in all things you may grow out of yourself into Christ Jesus. From what I apprehend by your letter, our Lord is making use of the means whereby this may be your blessed case. You speak much of what you are in yourself; the Lord save you from making a wrong use of your spiritual complaints. I am not against your feeling and complaining of a body of sin, only I would not have you keep your eye there; nor so complain, as though it made against you; for most certainly it makes for you; it is an immutable proof of your being born of God. The use you should make of it is, to study your case, to take a view of the total corruption of your whole nature, of every faculty of soul and body; to consider closely and attentively the salvation of Jesus, and how exactly suited it is to the whole of your sinful disease. This will lead you to see that the Holy Ghost is your Teacher; and that he gives you to see, feel, and experience what you are in your fallen nature, that you may learn more of your need of Christ, and go to him continually with the whole of your pollution, guilt, and apostacy, believing that his blood cleanseth from all sin. To go to Christ, with all our guilt and pollution; to place ourselves before his Majesty at his throne; to receive life, health, cure, salvation, and every blessing, as the gifts of his own royal grace, this is right and well-pleasing in his sight, and the only way for us to enjoy those blessings of pardon and peace which we need.

I want to be coming to Christ continually, just as I am. I am as you are. There is no wound, want, misery, or guilt you can be the subject of, but I feel and truly experience the same. It may be you and I may differ here. I never expect to the last moment of my life to see and feel less evil in

myself. You, it may be, are in hopes you shall outlive the feeling of some evils inherent in your nature, and experience corrupt nature renewed. Examine if you are thus expecting some deliverance. It will do you good to find out every thing which casts you down, and keeps you in the least measure at a distance from Christ Jesus. Go to him, let your case be what it may. I aim in all I write to encourage your heart and hope in the Lord. I want you from the scriptures of truth to know Jesus is your's, and that you are his ; that he is just that loving, all-sufficient Saviour, you need him to be. I want you to receive your knowledge of Christ from the Bible ; to believe what is there recorded of him, and to take into your mind and heart all which is there revealed concerning him. This is the very end of the scriptures. In them the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, sets Christ before us, and by them the Holy Ghost reveals Christ to us and in us, and makes him truly and divinely precious to us ; that we receive him as therein set forth, as all our salvation and all our desire. We are to look to Christ, as he shines forth in the gospel ; we are to believe on him through the word. When we do so, we get above sin and self, and all the power of the enemy.

There is nothing in you but Christ is suited to. He is the cure for the whole of your disease ; he has effectually cured it by his personal obedience and death. He stood for you, he represented you ; all the whole of your disease was laid on him. The Father imputed the whole of it to him ; he bore it in his own body on the tree ; he put it out of the sight of law and justice, by his one sacrifice of himself. You are as complete in him, as though you had never sinned ; you are this moment in the sight of God, as he beholds you in Christ, as righteous and spotless as you will be when in heaven. Do you say, but how shall I believe this to be the truth of God ? I am sure I see, feel, and experience myself to be very far from being righteous, holy and sinless in my own nature. You do so ; yet the former truths are the true sayings of God. And oh ! that the Holy Spirit would be pleased to bless my writing to you, whilst I attempt to declare upon what ground and warrant you are to believe.

It is not from my assertions ; nor from your frames nor feelings ; your own experience neither, will not help you to

believe. No, indeed; it will not. But you have a foundation for believing, which is as immutable as Godhead; it is the word of God; and thus saith the Lord, is the ground and foundation of faith. The Lord's written word is your warrant for your believing all he has been pleased to reveal therein concerning the person and salvation of Jesus. May the Lord give you light into this: it will then translate you, as it were, into a new world. It is what the generality of professing people are dark in. They hear of Christ and salvation, yet they stick in themselves, in something they feel and experience; therefore the person of Christ, the love of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, his putting away their sins out of the sight of God, his having been made sin that they may be made the righteousness of God in him, are subjects they never found life eternal, glory inexpressible, blessedness inconceivable in. Yea, my dear friend, the multitude and commonality of persons under a profession, have not Christ in all their thoughts. They think about themselves, look to themselves, live on themselves, trust in themselves, glory in themselves; all which is most awfully realized in the generality of hearers, and of the bulk of professors in our day. If we believe on Christ aright, we believe in his person and work, upon the foundation of what is revealed of him in the word.

It is this makes the Bible so precious to a believer, because it testifies of Jesus; it is full of Christ. The sun is not so full of light, nor the sea of water, as the scriptures are full of Christ.

If you ask, how you are to believe in Christ? I answer, by giving full credit to what the Father says of his beloved Son in the word. He says of him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Your faith is the echo of this; it consists in your being well pleased also with the person of Christ; and his most glorious mediation. You are to believe his blood cleanseth from all sin, because the Lord himself declares it. In your believing this, the Holy Ghost will give you to know your interest in it; but you should make more of Christ, and of his righteousness, and most precious bloodshedding, than of your own apprehensions of it. Christ, the object and subject of faith should engross your whole mind, and swallow up all your own

things. It is in a sight of Christ we lose ourselves, get out of and live above ourselves; and seeing ourselves complete in him, we renounce all beside and below him for evermore. Do not you on any consideration drop the exercise of faith on Christ, nor cease going to him for everything you need. Take heed of dwelling too much on what you are in yourself. Do not stand looking at your own personal corruptions. Remember, it is the will of Christ you should be the subject of them; it is his good pleasure you should feel them. They are to do you good; they are to teach you continually your need of Jesus; you are to go with them continually to Christ; you are to be as confident in Jesus, as though you had none of them. You are to look at his blood and righteousness for the whole of your salvation; to rest on him for every blessing. He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Believe his word, and you will find the truth of it made good to your soul. Let nothing felt or feared hinder you from trusting wholly in the Lord. Be as free with Christ as your beloved friend, as possible. Go to him continually; speak out all your heart to him; keep no secrets from him. Thus I go on; the Lord teach you, and help you to practise all this.

I am, your's in him,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER V.

Chard, May 17, 1805.

TO THE SAME.

CHRIST THE SAVIOUR OF SINNERS.

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. i. 15.

THE man who spoke and wrote thus, learned the gospel, and received it immediately from Christ himself. He says,

“I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Gal. i. 11, 12. As he thus received it, so he was caught up into the third heavens to finish his spiritual education, where he saw Christ shining forth in all the majesty and glory of his mediatorial person and office, and heard the song sung to the honour of his name by all the crowned heads within the veil. Having lighted his taper at the source of uncreated love, he descended, and came down with an exceeding loud voice, crying out so sonorous, that if possible he would have heaven and earth resound with the echo thereof, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”

In the preliminary verses going before our text, the apostle, speaking of the gospel, styles it “the glorious gospel of the blessed God;” speaks out his sense of the grace of God towards him, in appointing him to be a preacher thereof, which he esteems, and praises God for, almost as much as for his own salvation: “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” All the glorious perfections and persons in Godhead, are revealed and shine forth in all their manifestative glory in the everlasting gospel of the blessed God. This glorious gospel of the blessed God was committed to Paul, to communicate and publish the same. This made its impression on the apostle’s heart; therefore, he says, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who before was a blasphemer.” Such was the malice and cruelty of Saul’s spirit, when a persecutor of the church of Christ, of the saints and children of the most high God, that he would not let any of them escape his rage, when he entered into their places of worship, but upon condition of their blaspheming the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Whilst this shews his inveterate rage, so it shews what real saints may be left to; and should lead us in many circumstances to feel for, and compassionate the people of the most high God, even when and where we cannot vindicate them. The apostle enumerates what he had been before the

Lord was pleased to visit him with his great salvation: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief." He then magnifies the goodness of our Lord Jesus, in looking with a look of love upon him, saying, "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." The meaning of it is; when our Lord first opened his eyes and discovered sin and guilt to him, and convinced him of his own, he thought surely he had more than enough to exhaust the grace of Christ. But when our Jesus was pleased to manifest the exceeding riches of his grace, his mercy not only exceeded all this man's sinfulness, in the free pardon thereof, and in the full justification of him from all things; but he found himself surrounded on all sides with Christ's mercy which worked and produced in him faith and love, and our Lord being the object on which it was exercised, therefore, he says, "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Then come in the words of my text, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

In which words, we have the following particulars. Here is, first, the importance of the truth delivered, "It is a faithful saying."

Secondly. "It is worthy of all acceptance."

Thirdly. Here is the truth which is of such vast importance, which is delivered in this most solemn manner, "Jesus Christ came into the world."

Fourthly. What Christ came into the world for; it was "to save sinners."

And because the apostle had been in heaven, and seen Christ in all his glory, wearing the crown of salvation, he therefore would not be exceeded by any of the saved of the Lord, either on earth, or in heaven; he therefore, adds, "I am the chief of sinners." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

We have here the whole gospel in epitome; the best news which ever came from the throne of God; the greatest (the man caught up into paradise) brought down with him;

so that we have good news to proclaim to you in this place to-day, sufficient to make the heart dance for joy. This is, to all who receive it under the influence of the Holy Ghost in their hearts, a most blessed and joyful sound; Jesus Christ, with all the love of his heart, came from his Father's bosom, became incarnate, and hereby came into our world, to save from sin, hell, the world, Satan, death, and damnation, every sinner who trusts wholly and alone in him.

I will, in the first place, speak of Christ, his love, and what he came into the world for.

Secondly. That the salvation of sinners was his great object and end.

Thirdly. That the truth of this may be depended on, it being an immutable verity; this is as true as God is true.

And lastly, it deserves and is most truly "worthy of all acceptance."

I will, first, speak of Christ, his love, and what he came into our world for.

Christ is God; true and very God. He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, in the one incomprehensible Jehovah, "God over all, blessed for ever. Amen." He is "the Son of the living God;" and out of the immensity of his love, in obedience to his Father's call and will, he became incarnate, that in his incarnate state he might express his love to his Father, by fulfilling his Father's law, and satisfying his Father's will to the very uttermost; and also display his love to the many which the Father gave him, in a wonderful manner, and to an unspeakable degree. He was pleased to empty himself, to lay aside his glory. The apostle says, in his address to the Corinthians, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Our Jesus became incarnate, "God manifest in the flesh." By his incarnation he emptied himself; he became what he was not, true and very man, perfect God and perfect man in one Christ; the true Immanuel, God with us; made of a woman, made flesh, made under the law, made sin and a curse for us, and for our salvation. Oh, the depths of everlasting love, as displayed by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the glorious redemption of poor sinners, by the blood

and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ! He came into our world by his incarnation to save sinners; that he might save them, he stood in their law-place, room, and stead, and was made sin, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him.

* * * * *

My dear Sir, go where I will I am always full of employment, which is my apology for sending this instead of a letter, as I positively have not time to write one. As it will not be convenient for me to pass through Plymouth, being short of time, will you therefore be so good to inform me if the books are sold; because if not, I think I could get them off. You can also let me know how we stand; put all the expense of the carriage, and what you have sold together, and the six pounds I have received, and let us come to the sum total, as short reckonings make long friends. Put also this letter in too, as I do not wish you to be a farthing out, and write a short line directed to me at Mr. Pitt's, Chard, Somerset.

Your's in the Lord,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

Chard, July 23, 1805.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

I HOPE you received the little packet I sent you from Exeter, with the 'Drops of Honey.' When you write at any time to Mrs. Butler's, in London, be so good to mention it, as it will be satisfactory.

I most sincerely thank you, and the rest of the friends,

for your kindnesses. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself reward you an hundred fold. May he be with you, refreshing your mind, comforting your heart, and strengthening you with strength in your soul. You will never fail of being truly happy and holy, if you keep your eye wholly and continually on the Lord Jesus. It would be well to know that the whole of our salvation from sin, self, the world, Satan, death and hell, are, and wholly depend on the person, undertakings, life, and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. The everlasting love of the Father, the grace of the Holy Ghost, all shine forth, is displayed, and communicated unto us from the Saviour's fulness; yet so it is, we are always prone to look for and expect some manifestation of the love of God, which keeps us from believing in Christ, and enjoying a sense of the Father's love by faith in the Son's salvation.

It is of real importance to know in what way, and by what means we are brought to the knowledge of the person and work of Christ, and how we receive the salvation of Christ into our minds, and enjoy it in our hearts. The gospel contains the whole account of our salvation. It is most freely and fully revealed therein. In it Christ shines forth in all his glory; it contains the Father's revelation and testimony of his beloved Son; it is a pure revelation of grace. There is nothing in it but pure free grace; it is for sinners, and none beside; it is suited to the worst of men, to the chiefest of sinners; it contains a salve for every sore, a supply for every want. The Holy Spirit bears his divine testimony to the truth of it, which consists in informing us, that the eternal Three have by will, council, and oath, testified that there is life and salvation in Christ, and it is for every one who believeth on Jesus. The gospel brings it to our ears; the Holy Ghost brings it to our hearts. We can never value the outward revelation of Christ too much; we should be very careful to study it closely and particularly; we should prize it next to Christ himself; we should look to the Holy Ghost, that he would be pleased to lead us into the clear knowledge of Christ by it, and that he would be pleased to give us a spiritual perception of Christ in it, and help us to believe on Christ through it, and thus we find the gospel to be "the power of God unto salvation to every

one that believeth." It hereby is realized in our minds; we feel the power of it on our hearts.

As the gospel is full of Christ, so it is of vast importance for us to receive it by faith into our minds, just exactly as it is stated and set before us in the revealed word. Nor can we believe on Christ aright, but as we thus receive the truth into our minds. We must have a clear scriptural and spiritual knowledge of Christ in our minds, from the word and by the Spirit, or we cannot believe on Christ in our hearts to his glory, and our real advantage. Oh! that this may be very clear to you. There is much talk of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, yet very much of it is little to the purpose. It is our mercy when we clearly understand our whole salvation is out of ourselves, and that it is wholly in Christ; and that the whole is set before us in the everlasting gospel of the blessed God. If we thus understood it, we should most highly prize the Bible, because therein the righteousness of Christ is revealed, and it is revealed to faith; it is revealed from faith to faith. The justified man lives upon it, derives his consolation from it; the Holy Ghost shews the glory of it; he testifies to the enlightened mind the perfection of it, and the perfect safety of resting wholly and solely thereon.

I will, for I do not remember I have done it already, transcribe some most precious sentences from Mr. Romaine. He was preaching, June, 1790, Tuesday morning, at Blackfriars, on Exod. xxxiii. 19; and he said, 'Wise men fail in their account of God. The knowledge of God cannot be discovered by metaphysics, for they have set down after long search, doubting whether there was a God at all. In the text we have a scripture view of God; God in Christ. And let a man be what he may, a rebel against God, yet if he is now willing to throw down his arms, there is nothing for him but mercy and plenteous redemption; and he is in his rebellion that does not see this. The text is a proclamation to sinners. May God the Spirit set it home to-day to your hearts. God is here proclaimed the God of grace. The word here translated mercy, is not the usual word for mercy; the word here used signifies "bowels of tender affection;" to love tenderly, intensely, long-suffering. You and I had not been here to-day, if he had not been long-

suffering; he might have cut us off, and we could not have said a word against it. Our God is abundant in mercy and truth; he multiplies to pardon, he keeps it, he keeps mercy for thousands and millions; he keeps mercy for transgressors and sinners, and forgives them as fully, and freely, and perfectly, as though they had never committed sin. When the proclamation is made, God the Spirit sets it home, and the sinner that hears it sets his seal to it that it is true; and it is as clearly revealed to the soul that comes to Jesus Christ, as any object he can see with his bodily eyes. The justice, the faithfulness, the almighty power of God are all on his side. Coming to Christ, believing on him, you stand before God like the angels of his presence. "He forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin," ever so many, ever so great. We have to lament how few there are who believe it, how few there are who enjoy it. Says one, it is rashness for me to expect a pardon; my name is not there. It is no presumption to believe the King's pardon, but an affront not to believe it. Few believe they want this pardon, and fewer get the enjoyment of it.'

It is truly blessed to enter into the spirit of these most excellent sentences. They are full of spirit and life, and convey a sweet unction to the spiritual mind. Free grace known and enjoyed enlarges the heart God-ward, and there is a crimping it by many legal additions, even where we do not always perceive it. I am very glad when I find the Lord's dearly-beloved ones look off everything to Christ alone, and ascribe the whole of their salvation to the free grace of God; every thing should be properly divided—grace, Christ, faith, enjoyment, experience, should be kept at its proper place, then in would be well with us, as it would save us from a deal of puzzle and perplexity. It would be very advantageous for the spiritual mind, if it was more desirous to obtain more light into the scriptures, and were more looking to the Holy Spirit for his light to guide us into a more enlarged view and acquaintance with Christ in them, and of the Father's love as testified of therein. People in our age, are not much given to reading, nor do they like deep subjects; whereas it is impossible to increase in knowledge, except we peruse what is calculated to promote it. None of us ought to be contented with any

present attainments. Paul was not. "I follow after," says he, "if I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." May we follow him in the same most precious exercise of faith, on the same most precious Lord Jesus.

My kind remembrance to Mr. and Mrs. Hewett, and all the friends.

Your's, in Christ Jesus,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

London, October 29, 1805.

MY VERY DEAR SIR,

It does my soul good, and yields real and satisfying pleasure to my mind, that you have received my token of love, and are pleased therewith. As I love you in the bonds of Jesus Christ, so I rejoice to perceive by your letter you are going forward heaven-ward; it cannot be otherwise, from the account you give of yourself. You write of yourself as a poor sinner, as completely lost and fallen in your own nature, person, and state. This is really sound experience. The Holy Ghost is he who hath given you thus to know yourself. He will keep you at this lesson all your days; and that to this very intent that you may feel and know your want of Christ, and that you must go every moment, with the whole of your sin and disease, with all your emptiness and misery to the Lord Jesus, whose blood is your everlasting purity, whose righteousness is your everlasting perfection.

If you have learnt to renounce yourself, and to be contented to be saved now this moment, and ever more by Christ alone, then you have profited by the Holy Spirit's teaching. If he has brought you to be everlastingly out of conceit with all you are in yourself, and well pleased with Christ, then you are a real christian; and he has nothing beyond this to teach you, but how to live on Christ, daily, hourly, momentarily, on the work and fulness of Jesus, just exactly as suits your very case, frame, and feeling. So far as the Lord the Spirit keeps you looking and living by simple faith on the Lamb slain to take away sin, great grace rests on you; and you will be the happiest man out of heaven, if you live on Christ according to your high calling, privilege, and birthright. Jesus is your's; all he has is your's; his finished work is your eternal salvation. Rest on him; in so doing you will put honour on him. He will be glorified thereby. Indeed you can do him no greater service, and perform no higher act of worship, than by putting your soul and body continually under his protection, and casting your every concern and care on him, and living on him as he is revealed in the word, and expecting he will be to you all he engages to be in his never-failing word of promise. Oh, that you may thus live! Then you will make your every case a motive for living out of yourself on Christ. Then you will neither wish or pray to be anything in yourself to the last moment you draw your breath, but what you are; and you will find it life everlasting to be going continually just as you are to Jesus; that he may live in you, and put forth in you his life, his death, his burial, his resurrection and ascension, with all the efficacy and influence of it in your mind, so as that you live continually a life of dependence on him. Look on yourself as one with Christ, and live in the belief of this, and then you will be more than conqueror through him that loved you. There is enough in Christ to make you everlastingly happy; he cannot love you more perfectly in the state of glory, than he doth in the state of grace. You will not be more righteous in him, when you are with him in glory, than you are at this present moment; for you are made the righteousness of God in him. He, as your Lord, Husband, and Saviour, as standing in union and relation to all his church and people, wears this illustrious

name, "Jehovah our righteousness." You are righteous in Christ; he is your righteousness. You cannot take into your mind how righteous you are in Christ, the Lord your righteousness, nor your purity and perfection in him; yet your whole salvation depends on what you are in Christ, and in the views your heavenly Father takes of you in his beloved Son. The true apprehension of this in your mind is manifestative salvation. Have you not found it so? Then acknowledge it. He who is the sun of uncreated and everlasting light and righteousness, hath shone upon you; yea, he hath shone within you. This you cannot but acknowledge. Oh, what a pledge is this of his love! What a proof that he hath loved you! May the belief of his love evermore warm your heart, and make you as perfectly happy as you can be this side heaven.

My love to all friends, and ten thousand thanks to you and them for all kindnesses. You will, according to your request, receive with this, books and sermons to the amount of two pounds. Your brother and wife attend my ministry. I intend soon to visit them. When you think fit, you have my address, I shall be glad to hear from you. The sermons to be subscribed for, are to be printed at Truro. The Doctor did say some few years past he would write a preface. I believe he will be addressed on that subject, but I do not mean to engage. I shall give it up to a friend, and when the plan is settled it shall be laid before you.

I remain, your's in the Lord,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER VIII.

 TO THE SAME.

London, January 2, 1806.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

WE have now entered on a new and important period of time. Every thing, as it respects the nation, wears a gloomy aspect. All things are growing worse and worse. To whom, and to what shall we look for succour? To Jesus—he is all-sufficient; he can make us as happy in the worst as in the best of times. All the worst of times are to us the best of times, if so be we are led by them to look more to, and live more upon our Lord. Nothing out of Christ is worth enjoying, nothing in Christ can be effected by the times; all out of Christ is under the curse. Our Jesus hath saved us from it; he hath delivered us from the wrath to come. Let us, therefore, sing away every care and fear; let us triumph in him because of his word. He says, “I am the Lord thy God;” in which he says all; nothing can be added unto it. He is Jehovah our God; his eye is ever on us, he never withdraws it from us; his ear is open to us; he says, “Ask, what shall I give thee?” He is able to supply all our wants, to sanctify all our sorrows, to give us strength according to our days, to strengthen us with strength in our souls; he is able to supply all our need, to bless us in our bodies and souls, to conduct us on the journey of life, to comfort us in the article of death. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.

Therefore, all you and I want for the present new year, is only to trust more simply in Christ Jesus; to give up our souls and bodies wholly to him; to submit to his most holy will in all things. Then we need fear no evil, nor dread any enemy. Blessed be the Lord, in and with those views I

have begun and desire to live every day of this present year, 1806, looking unto Jesus, living on him, in him, to him, and for him in all things. I think you say, it is my prayer and desire also. I believe you speak the truth. How are we to carry it into practice? By renouncing ourselves; by leaving out self entirely; looking away from and above it, we get into a frame which fits us for looking on Jesus.

There is self in all; and it is our worst enemy. It works chiefly in vile legality, sly subtle insinuations. 'I wish I was what I am not; I wish I did not feel what I do; I wish I had not so many wants; I should be glad if I had more strength; I wish I enjoyed more, I want more comforts; I cannot be happy because I see nothing in myself to be pleased with.' My friend, these are the workings of a self-righteous legal mind. Such things as these make up almost all which passes under the title of sound experience. Few see the whole tends to keep up the mind from exercising itself on Christ. I trust our Lord has given you to view all this rightly, to reject it wholly, to cast it off entirely. Oh, bless the Lord for it; because you are nothing in yourself but sin, darkness, disease, emptiness, misery, and death; therefore you are fit for, and well suited to receive Christ, and for him to glorify himself in you and by you; to be content with what you are, and to be well-pleased for Christ to be what he is, a free, full, complete, present, and an everlasting Saviour, and to make use of him continually for all the purposes of spiritual life and salvation; this is to give proof that we are taught by the Spirit of God. This is to live a life of faith on the Son of God; this is to glorify God. When we live thus, we honour the holy Trinity. We then honour the Father for his everlasting love, in believing he has treasured up every grace and blessing of it for our use in the fulness of his Son; we honour Christ also, by trusting in his everlasting precious righteousness and sacrifice, and in relying on it as our complete and everlasting salvation; and we honour the Holy Spirit, by receiving his testimony into our hearts, concerning the Father's love to us in his dear Son, and in setting our seals thereunto.

No words can speak the blessedness of being enlightened from the word and by the Spirit into a saving, gospel, spiritual knowledge of Christ; it is life eternal. Most people

have nothing more than a natural knowledge of Christ, and what they style heavenly things. I do not know what you find; but I very rarely find persons who have a spiritual discernment, and who really take into their minds a spiritual and supernatural knowledge of Christ. It is this makes the difference between man and man, between one professor and another; and it originates from being born again. Many have and do experience many great and powerful changes in themselves, tempers, and circumstances, who never were made partakers of a new and spiritual birth. Such as are, have an inward spiritual apprehension of Christ, which leads them to fix on him, and centre in him alone. You and I every day find and feel the inward and total corruption of every faculty, affection, of every part of our constitution, both of body and soul. And it will not do to look at it; we must look off it, and fly from it, and go with the whole of it to Christ. There is no other way to get above it, or to be saved from it, but by looking unto Jesus. I hope in my own case never to keep from Jesus on account of any thing I see, feel, or find in myself. I write thus freely, hoping you will improve by it; and that you will be learning every day in this new year, what you live for. You will find, it is to know yourself, what you are in soul and body, and what you are in Christ, and how you are to live on Christ continually; then you will go on with an high hand heavenward. I would advise you to choose some scripture for your new year's motto, and live by faith on Christ as he is set forth in it. You will find it very advantageous. I have practised it many a year. It serves to keep up faith, to stop the mouth of unbelief. To encourage the mind, I have taken for this year these words, "Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." Jesus is mine, he is my Saviour and my God; his person is the glory and ornament of the whole creation. He is the heaven of heavens, he is the brightness of glory, the glory Jehovah, the Lord of glory, the fountain and spring of glory to saints and angels in the state of glory; he is God-man, Immanuel, God manifest in flesh; he is, blessings on him, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. What cannot he do? What must his love be? He loves

you, me, and each of his beloved ones with the same equal and perpetual love. He is your salvation and mine; we have him for our righteousness. He hath washed us from our sins in his blood. You and I have Christ's blood for purity, his fulness is ours. We are to receive our every supply out of it; his arm is our defence; his word is our warrant for believing in him; his promises belong to us; he loves with the utmost freeness. He would have us come continually to him, with all our wants, cares, complaints, sins, corruptions, and miseries. He can, he will, he does lift up our hearts above all, and raise up our minds again and again to his blessed self. Surely, from what you and I have seen in Christ, there is none beside worth enjoying. None but Jesus worth trusting, nothing out of him deserves a thought; and I conceive our Lord will prove this in his providential dealings with the people in this land. Well, let it be so. I am safe, because I am in Christ; I have his word, which says, "My God shall supply all your need." I am in his care and keeping; so that I, and you may join me, and we may both say, God Jesus is our hope and strength, "a present help in trouble, therefore will we not fear; though the hills be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the seas; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake at the swelling thereof, God is in the midst of us; we shall not be moved; God shall help us, and that right early."

May the Lord bless you with free and full communion with himself. May he make you as happy in the enjoyment of his love as you can be this side heaven. May you be living on Christ continually; feel what you may, experience what you will, let it not hinder you from keeping up, and maintaining fellowship with your most precious Lord and Saviour. Turn everything you experience concerning sin, self, circumstances, friends, times, enemies, and temptations, into matters of faith. Go with all these things to Christ, and pray for me that I may do likewise.

I wish every blessing from the Eternal Three, which will be for their glory to bestow on you, and yours to receive.

And am your's in Jesus,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER IX.

 TO THE SAME.

London, Jan. 2, 1807.

MY VERY GOOD FRIEND,

I RECEIVED yours last night. It would have given me pleasure to have been informed you had received the proof of my friendship to you; but hope it will be soon. I am entered on the new year, a monument of mercy, a miracle of grace. The Lord Jesus has shone upon me; he has shone afresh within me; he has graced the new year's day with his presence, feasted me at his table, given me my private and public portion, and also my private and public motto. The former is, "I will be with thee, and I will bless thee;" the latter is, "Go forward."

I will aim to give you the outline of what I delivered yesterday on it. I began thus: the Lord spake these words to Moses; the Lord spake this sentence by him to the people of Israel; "The Lord said unto Moses, speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Exod. xiv. 15. And the Lord the Spirit caused them to be indited in the scriptures for our use; and he speaks by them unto us, saying, "Go forward." We are admitted, through the tender mercies of our God, to enter on a new period of time; a believer in Jesus would wish to enter on it, as he would desire to close life, and enter heaven. "Looking unto Jesus," is the only mean to keeping us alive to God, and of enabling us to walk with God. It is a surprising display of goodness, that we are alive before God this day; for life is a mystery. We did not give ourselves life, we cannot continue it one single moment; it is God who upholdeth our souls in life; he it is who hath fed us all our life long to this present moment. We have, therefore, great and good reason to set up our Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

If it be asked, What is your life? The apostle James replies, "It is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away." This sentence, "Go forward," with which I mean to address you with at this time, contains very suitable advice.

I will endeavour to set what I mean to say to you, in the following order.

First. With an introduction.

Secondly. By shewing what must be known and attended unto, before we can obey this command.

Thirdly. In what we are to "Go forward." It is through the journey of life.

Lastly. What the end of it will be to us who believe, eternal glory.

With respect to the introduction. Some of us are born again, and translated out of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son; yet we were born into this world sinners, in a sinful state, and under sin. There was a time when we knew not Christ. I am sure there was a time when I knew not Jesus. I can declare, though from the age of five and seven, I was accustomed to read the scriptures, and pray, yet I was under a very solemn profession of what is styled religion, and yet knew nothing of Christ and his great salvation. I used to pray, fast, spend whole days in devotion, and entering into solemn covenanting with God, and yet knew nothing of Christ as he is set forth in the everlasting gospel. I know the time, can say the place when, and where it would have made my heart dance for joy, if I could have conceived it possible for the Lord God to have saved me from the damnation of hell. But at that time I knew nothing of the covenant of the Holy Trinity; it was a long while after, before I had any knowledge of that wonderful transaction of the Holy Ones in the incomprehensible Jehovah. It was some time by the Lord's teaching from his word and Spirit inwardly, and for a while imperceptibly, and afterwards by the preaching of the late truly blessed Mr. Toplady, I came on forward in the knowledge of this; and I was led more fully into this covenant under the preaching of that blessed man, Mr. Romaine, who when I came to London first, which is between thirty and forty years past, he never preached a sermon without speaking of

the covenant of the eternal Three. I mention it, because our salvation depends entirely upon that blessed and everlasting covenant. I have no doubt but some present are believers in Christ Jesus as truly as I am myself. As such I address you. Beloved, you are born again that you may know Christ, and you do know him in a measure; from what you know of him, springs your faith in him. The knowledge of Christ makes way for believing on Christ; believing on Christ makes way for communion with Christ; communion with Christ makes way for living on Christ; and in living on Christ, you honour Christ to the uttermost. Well! you are entered on the new year, "looking unto Jesus." Here is a watchword for us, "Go forward." But we cannot, except we take into our minds, and fully believe in our hearts, the following truths, which I mean, secondly, to set before you.

We are in a world where there is nothing but sin and sinners. We have in our fallen natures the whole essence of sin; we cannot act, but every thought, word, and work, which springs from our fallen natures is all sin. If we look at ourselves, we cannot but loathe ourselves. If we look within ourselves, there is a spring and fountain of uncleanness, nor shall we get the least good by looking at it. We must look wholly off it, and ourselves, to the Lord Jesus, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin. We must take in such views of the person, love, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ into our minds, as will be sufficient to carry us entirely out and off ourselves, or we shall not renounce ourselves; and we shall never get to live above sin and sorrow, unless we live out of ourselves. Christ is able to make us truly happy; his love can make us as truly blessed on earth, as it will in heaven. But we must live in believing apprehension of it, or we cannot have the enjoyment of it; therefore it is true blessedness to have a clear, gospel, spiritual apprehension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his complete salvation. We are as complete in Christ, as any saints in heaven. Jesus is ours; his person is most glorious. We esteem him our heaven of heavens; next to his person we value his love; it is the greatest thing in Christ. His love to us in beyond his salvation; because it is the spring of all his mediatory acts. All he did, it was out of love to

us; he loves us as truly, as perfectly, as intensely, as immutably, as he does his saints in glory. Our persons are the objects and subjects of his everlasting love. His mercy is our shield; his mercy is his love manifested to us in acts of everlasting kindness; in pardoning our sins, healing our diseases, comforting our minds, supplying our wants, speaking peace to our hearts. And in declaring again and again to us, "I am your salvation; I am the Lord your God." He is our righteousness; "He was made sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." To understand this, and take it into our minds, is life, everlasting life. God the Father hath laid all our sins upon Christ; Jesus bare them in his own body on the tree. He hath put them away by the sacrifice of himself. His blood now and evermore cleanseth us from all sin. As one in Christ, and one with Christ, you and I are in God's sight what Jesus is. We are without all sin in him. We are everlastingly righteous in him. The Father sees us in him, loves us in him, accepts us in him, and stands related to us as our God and Father in Christ Jesus. We must take in this knowledge, and have these views of the subject, or we cannot walk with God; therefore it is absolutely necessary for us, to apply our minds to study Christ. None of us know so much of Christ as we think we do. I am sure I do not. There is one man whose writings I have found a real pleasure in perusing, who was a non-such in his day, and in his highest breathings after heavenly things; he prays, that "he may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable unto his death." May you and I be aiming after an increasing knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot increase in spirituality and holiness, without increasing in the knowledge of Jesus. All true spirituality must spring from the knowledge of Jesus; all real holiness must be the fruit of communion with Jesus.

I will proceed, Thirdly, to shew in what we are to "Go forward." It is in the journey of life. We are proceeding on; we shall be soon at the end of it; we have a good guide; the Lord hath promised to "guide us continually." Believers, the Lord saith, "Go forward." You will with alacrity, if you put your all into Jesus' hands, and

commit all to his care and management. Do you say, but life is uncertain; it is a dangerous road; there are innumerable evils and enemies! Say you so? Yet the Lord can lead you on so safely and securely, as you shall have no cause to fear any evil, "For the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rereward." If you will but attend to your Lord's words, you may soon get completely settled in your own minds concerning many subjects which respect your state and continuance in this present world. Our Jesus says, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." If we believe this, and act in the belief of this, we shall "be casting all our cares on him who careth for us," and be perfectly contented with such things as we have. For he, our Christ, hath said, "I will never, never forsake thee: I will never, never forsake thee." As we "go forward," we shall meet with sin, earth, and all the host of hell; but they are all conquered by our omnipotent Jesus. So that we may sing all the way "Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." There is no sin and corruption within us, but our Jesus hath conquered it for us. He will dethrone it in us; he says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; ye are not under the law, but under grace." The apostle exhorts us to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." As the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt by his mighty hand and outstretched arm; so he took them under his immediate care and protection. We read, "They took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, on the edge of the wilderness; and the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night: he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people." They were safe and secure; they had the Lord in the midst of them; he surrounded them on all sides; he kept them day and night; he was nigh unto them in all things, which they called upon him for. And the same Jehovah says to us, "I, the Lord, do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." He says, "My grace is sufficient for you." As we look to, trust in, and live on the Lord Jesus, we shall find

strength equal to our day; we shall prove his everlasting arms are underneath us, and that he, the eternal God, is our refuge. The term, "Go forward," suggests it is a progressive motion; every step is one the less; every moment brings us nearer to our journey's end. We shall be completely happy then; we have Christ for our Captain; he is our shield; he will strengthen us with strength in our souls; he will keep our feet firm on himself, the rock of salvation.

So that I conclude, lastly, to speak of what the end of our journey's believing will be, eternal glory. Our dying moments will be our best moments; our dying day will be our coronation day. We shall have Jesus with us; he will safely convey us through the article of death, and swallow it up in us, as he hath already swallowed it up for us everlastingly into life everlasting. We have, believers, no more to fear from death than our elder brethren in heaven.

The Lord bless these truths unto you. May the Lord the Spirit realize these truths to you, and in you. Even so, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen, amen, and amen.

I have given you a brief sketch of the new year's morning sermon; when I have an opportunity I will send you two dozen of the 'Drops of Honey.' I have got them. Then I will mention what you are in my debt. I wish you and yours every blessing.

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

Chard, July 10, 1807.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE you are well in every sense, and are full of the Holy Ghost, and endued with power from on high. As I love you in the beloved Jesus, who is our head and hope, so I am going to aim at giving a fresh expression of it by writing

again to you. Jesus is, he must be my subject; he suits me well; he is a complete all-sufficient Saviour, and I am a poor miserable sinner; therefore, he being suited to me, and I to him, so long as I see, feel, and apprehend this, we cannot but be agreed to walk together; because the Holy Ghost, by preaching him to me in his everlasting efficacious righteousness and blood-shedding, encourages me to go off myself entirely, and centre wholly in, and rest wholly on him. There is no one subject worth one single thought in compare with Jesus.

It is of no consequence to us how things go in church and state, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. He is King of nations, as he is also King of saints; his eye is on us, his heart is fixed on us, his arms are underneath us, he is our everlasting life, our everlasting light, our everlasting Saviour, our everlasting salvation, our everlasting righteousness, our everlasting health and purity, our everlasting friend, our everlasting consolation, our everlasting all. He is to us, in his relation to our persons, in his interest in all our concerns, in his mindfulness of us, in his delight in us, in his care of us, in his close attention to us, beyond what all words can declare, or thoughts conceive. We want to be learning the truth of all this every day of our lives; then we should bring real glory to our Jesus, and get, as his witnesses, to speak boldly for him, and shew forth his truth.

It would be well to take into view what the Lord hath really done for us, and made known unto us; how he hath kept us in the hour of temptation, and carried us on ever since he brought us to believe on him; and how he is still pleased to continue in our minds a sense of his loving-kindness, and proved the truth of his word, and his faithfulness, in fulfilling his promise to us, and in our hearts. It was his divine command, uttered by the mouth of Moses to the Israelites, and recorded in the word for our use and direction, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness; to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or not. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna (which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know) that he might make thee know that man doth

not live by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." It is well to enter spiritually into all this. And first, and before all things, it is most truly blessed so to know Christ as to close with him. We must be brought to a spiritual apprehension of Christ from the word, and by the Holy Spirit, or we shall never renounce ourselves and cleave to Jesus.

To have our spiritual understandings enlightened with the knowledge of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, is of vast importance; therefore, whatsoever does not tend to advance and promote this, is of no use to us. I often lament to see the Scriptures so full of Christ, and view so few of the Lord's people who have really a scriptural knowledge of the precious Jesus; whereas we, though the Lord's, are living to no purpose, if we are not gaining more knowledge of him whom our souls love. How can we grow rooted, grounded, and settled in him, except we grow into a real acquaintance with his person, love, and salvation? Yet very few see any necessity for this. The word is the instrument in the hand of the Spirit, whereby alone we can grow into Christ; and as the Holy Spirit gives us real spiritual views of Christ in the glass of the gospel, we have our understandings further enlarged, by which means the glories of Christ are reflected on our minds, and influence our hearts. When we so know Christ in the dignity, majesty, and excellency of his person, as to acknowledge him to be God over all blessed for ever, amen, then we see there must be eternal worth and infinite efficacy in his righteousness and sacrifice. And when we are led by the Holy Spirit through the word, to apprehend a greater virtue in Christ's blood than there is in our sin, and to receive the testimony of God concerning this, "that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," then we are settled in this very important truth, that God made Christ sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

The real knowledge and belief of this, lifts us off ourselves, and fixes our heart and hope on him as our Saviour and complete salvation. Then the blood of Christ speaks its proper language in our minds, and we make constant use of it as the antidote against all our guilt and stain, both original and actual, inherent and manifestative. A very

blessed lesson it is, to learn we stand before God as Christ himself doth. That our heavenly Father beholds us in Christ. We are in his sight as righteous as Christ's righteousness can constitute us. We are as pure in the sight of our heavenly Father as the blood of Christ can make us. We are in God's sight as fully justified and pardoned as we shall be in heaven. Yet we are very slow in believing this truth. We feel so much sin, and see so much of what we are in our fallen natures, that sense and reason is continually contradicting the doctrine and language of faith. How can I be as pure now as I shall be in heaven? Is it not absurdity to conceive it? Would it not be blasphemy to believe it? It would be so, were we to believe this without viewing our relation to Christ, and believing it on the warrant of God's most holy word. We are too little in the habit of believing in Christ on the warrant, testimony, and authority of God. It is generally, I think of Christ so and so, I believe so and so. What we think of Christ, and say of Christ, is not worth a nut shell, if it be not to an hair's breadth with what God himself thinks and declares concerning him in his most holy word. It would be well if we were more spiritual and scriptural in our knowledge of the Saviour. Let us therefore look at Christ as revealed in the scripture, and we shall there be taught; we are accepted by our heavenly Father in the person of the Beloved. He loves our persons in the person of Christ. He beholds us in him; he views us righteous and sinless; he having imputed the righteousness and atonement of Christ unto us, so that we shine in Christ. He is the Lord our righteousness. We are pure from all sin in Christ, for he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. It is the Lord the Spirit's teaching to set up the Christ of God in our hearts. It is his blessed work to purify our minds by faith in the blood of Jesus. He it is who establishes our minds in a good hope through grace, founded upon the righteousness of Jesus. And has he not led us to rest on the person and righteousness, blood and death of Jesus, as the ground of all our confidence in God? Let us bless him for it; let us speak agreeable with this. If any ask us how we are? let us give a direct reply, 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from sin. It hath cleansed us.' We have received the

testimony of God concerning it into our hearts. We have hereby our consciences sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. We are under the purple covering of his most precious blood. We have found redemption in the blood of the Lamb, the forgiveness of sins. In him we have eternal redemption. We, believing the truth of this, we therefore speak. When the guilt of sin is removed out of the conscience, by believing in the blood of the Lamb, then we enjoy the peace of God, and also the love of God. This gives a death-blow to the whole power and body of sin, and now we look to Christ for the dethroning it in our hearts and lives.

It is now of the utmost importance to attend to what the apostle says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that is, with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." We are one with Christ, in his life, and death, and burial, and resurrection. We have communion with Christ herein; and as the Holy Spirit is pleased to quicken up our minds into a manifestative and influential communion with our precious Lord Jesus, we have an inward and sensible evidence of it in our minds; so that we, as the Lord's witnesses, can declare to others, how we have been taught what we know, and in what way the power of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ hath been put forth in our hearts; nay, we must say, we never obtained any victory over our besetting sin, over no part of the body of sin, were never raised above and beyond ourselves, but by looking unto Jesus. We have, since thus taught by the Lord, and set at liberty by views of our complete salvation in Christ, been assaulted by Satan, and had our particular seasons and hours of temptation. Our inward corruptions have lifted up their heads, and shewed their strength; yet we have found this promise suited to such a case, "I will be with thee in, I will keep thee in the hour of temptation. My grace is sufficient for thee. Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." And in believing the truth of what Christ hath spoken in his promise, and looked up to Christ who is on his throne, almighty to save, for him to fulfil his promise to us, and put forth his strength to strengthen us with strength in our

souls, we have found his arm powerful to crush our inbred lusts, and pull down the power of sin within us. This we are ready to declare to others, that our Christ may be magnified, and that they may be encouraged to fight the Lord's battles, considering our motto, "The Lord is our banner;" Jesus is our shield; he is also our ensign; he is our standard. We repair to him, we fight under him; he is the Captain of our salvation; under him we fight. In the full belief of his everlasting victory and triumph over all our spiritual enemies, we conquer. The more fully we believe he hath finally conquered for us, we are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. As in our walking with God, and in our communion with the Father and the Son, the Holy Ghost is pleased to realize in us, and unto us, the truths and doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ, his person, love, mercy; his righteousness and salvation, and leads us into supernatural acquaintance with him, so we are admitted to be more and further familiar with him, so as to speak of what we have seen, and tasted, and handled of the word of life. We are the epistles of Christ; he dwells in our hearts; we see him to be our all in all; we have his ear open to the voice of our cry, his eye is continually on us for good; he knows all our walking through the dreary wilderness of this present world, and he does not suffer us to want any thing. We have every thing to praise him for; none of his dealings with us can we complain of. His past mercies towards us are so many pledges of future ones. He cannot do more for us than he has already done. He will never work more effectually on us than he has already.

I want you and others of the Lord's people to see and understand the truth of this. It would make way for much praise and thankfulness to the Father of all our mercies. So it is, many regenerated persons think, speak, and act, as though the Lord was yet to work that in them which yet he had not. There is a mistake in it. If we are born again, and translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, then we are in a state in which it is very safe, either to live or die. If we are continued in a time-state, it is that we may live Christ; if we die, it is that we may enjoy Christ in his glory for ever. When the Lord God has made known himself to us, revealed

Christ in us, and bestowed his Holy Spirit on us, he has done his all. When we know Christ, and are admitted into communion with him, and with the Father in him, through the Spirit, we are advanced as high and far as we can be on this present kingdom of grace. As we live, and whilst we live here below, we shall need daily, hourly, momentarily communion with the God of our salvation; as this, we shall just so much, and just exactly as we need. Sometimes our Lord will shine and outshine past discoveries of himself to us; yet it is the same Jesus, it is the same shine, though it may be to our sense more refreshing than ever. So we may come into peculiar difficulty; we may feel more of our sinfulness, we may apprehend more of the malice and strength of our spiritual enemies. Be it so; yet all is designed for our good; it is only to bring us into cases and circumstances, to see more of the love of our Jesus unto us; to trust more on him; that we may see the propriety of saying, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." We by these means learn more of ourselves. Hereby we are led, through the Holy Spirit's teaching, to trust more to Jesus; yet all this is but a reiteration of the same experience and grace of God in Christ unto us which we have had evidence of over and over. Our heavenly Father cannot increase in love to us. Our Jesus cannot do more for us than he hath done. The Holy Spirit cannot put forth his power in our minds more efficaciously than he hath already. Yet, as we want him to be putting forth his power every moment, so every fresh and renewed act and instance of his love to us, hath this influence and effect on us; we think and speak of it, as though we never knew anything like it; although in another sense, it is what is daily more and more the blessed case with us.

I am sure of this, the Lord cannot do greater things for my soul or body than he has already. He cannot love me beyond what he doth; nor can he give me greater evidence thereof. I cannot be more deeply ingratiated into his favour. He cannot behold me more acceptable in his sight, than he does this very moment, in the person of his Son. Yet he can repeat his love, and realize it in a communicative way. He can, he will every moment whilst you and I are in our militant state, carry on the work of

faith with power, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his will. It is well for us to take a view how the Lord hath and still doth fulfil his holy covenant with us, and give us to enjoy the good contained in his exceeding great and precious promises. It is well for us to be at a point, and to be continually pressing towards the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I hope you are ever on the stretch for heaven. Let nothing keep you one single moment from Christ. He knows all which has passed between you and him. He knows his own heart towards you: his own love to you, his own feelings for you, and the whole of his purposes and promises respecting you. He remembers all the outgoings of your heart also towards him: he speaks to this purpose himself saying, "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, I remember for this sake, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord." Something suited to these expressions, was the case with us when first brought to the knowledge of the Lord; and although many chilling, nipping blasts have checked our spiritual vigour, as it respects our own frames, feelings, experiences and apprehensions; yet the Lord is pleased to remember what our souls expressed of love and affection towards him, and is pleased to speak of it with divine complacency, and is pleased in this passage to bring it to our remembrance.

Mr. Romaine once said, 'There is a state which you call your first love, but God is pleased to bring his people into a state which as far exceeds it, as the heavens do the earth.' I suppose he meant when the Lord's beloved are brought to live a life of faith on the Son of God.

For us rightly to apprehend the state we are in before the Lord, and to live up to our high calling and privileges in Christ Jesus, this is to live indeed; and this is the life I want you to live; and there are but two things which can possibly keep you from living like yourself, as a son of God, and an heir of glory. The one is, an ignorance of your state in Christ, of what you are in him, and what belongs to you as in him. The other is, your own legality; which you should never, in any one instance, give way to. Always act in direct opposition to your own heart,

and to all you know of it, and feel arising from it. When corruption works, take no view of it; look away from it to Jesus. Never muse on any thing you feel in the body of sin; never expect any alteration in it; rejoice that nothing you are, or see, or feel in yourself, is imputed to you. Bless the Lord, your salvation is wholly upon, the footing of imputation. Think more of Christ's righteousness, and less of inherent grace. Deal immediately with Christ in every act of worship; learn to be very free and familiar with him; study the everlasting and efficacious offering of his body and soul in union with his person to take away sin; and dwell on the subject, and consider yourself interested in it, and view yourself in Christ as complete as any saint which surrounds the throne in glory. Give yourself up more than ever to the exercise of your mind on gospel truth. It is as you are led into the knowledge of Christ, you will have a greater confidence in him, and also increasing communion with him. Never think or speak of yourself but as one with Christ. Let no one hear you complain; and when you cannot but complain at the throne of grace, make it even there a matter of faith; then you will be a gainer by it. Indeed, if you once get the blessed art of living on Christ, and remember the Holy Spirit is all-sufficient to teach you, then you will be a gainer by every thing which befalls you.

I shall pray for you. I hope you will also remember me. The Lord himself bless you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

I have wrote you a long letter, and hope it will cost you nothing. I shall leave this place the last day in August, and be in London on the first Lord's day in September, if the Lord will. Should you write to your friends, say if you have received this. Please to give my most sincere christian regards to the Doctor. I remember him as engaged in the work of the Lord at the throne. Tell him so. My best remembrance to Mr. Wilson, Miss Lakes, Mr. Godfry, and all friends. I called to see the person at the Bridewell, but he was in the fields at work, so the servant told me I could not speak to him, since which I wrote to him. I wish you would tell his wife so.

I remain your's in the Lord,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER XI.

 TO THE SAME.

London, February 3, 1808.

MY VERY DEAR AND WELL-BELOVED FRIEND,

I RECEIVED your's and am very greatly obliged to Miss Lake and you for the kindnesses shewn, and proved in the notes sent. I fear the books were not sold. If not, she should not have sent the money for them. I really did not desire it. Be it as it may, I can only say, I found it very acceptable, and am very greatly obliged; and you will further oblige me, if you will be so good as to ask the Doctor if he will be so kind as to write a short preface to the sermons. If he will then the sooner the better. Also will you be so good, if you can, to get me some subscribers. The Sermons are in the press; the volume will contain twenty-three. The price is, three dozen, £10 16s.; one dozen and a half, £5 8s.; one dozen, £3 12s.; and half a dozen, £1 13s. If one volume single, then it will be seven shillings. It is good paper, and good letter, so that it will be very cheap. My good Sir, I do not want to impose on your friendship, but if you can get any customers, and their money, and send it to me immediately, it will be very helpful. I suppose the books will not be quite ready until June. As to the 'Drops of Honey,' &c. mentioned by you, I hope soon to give you an answer. So much on this subject.

With respect to my arm and health, our Jesus is most wonderfully kind and good. The arm and hand are daily increasing in strength. My health is most amazingly recovered. In my own view I am a miracle; I mean, Jesus Christ has proved himself a miracle-working Jesus, in upholding me as he does. My own private motto for this present new year is these words, "I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will

hear me." My public one is, "I will go with thee, and will bless thee." At night the words were, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." And the first Lord's-day morning the text was, "Look thou upon me." In these words I have all my soul needs, and can possibly desire. The eye of Christ upon me. The ear of Christ open to me. The arms of Christ underneath me. The fulness of Christ to supply me.

My Jesus is very precious to me. I shall never be able to declare on earth, or in heaven, his exceeding great kindnesses to me in a providential and manifestative way. Indeed, I never, never shall. I shall be very glad to have my whole soul swallowed up in heaven, in gratitude and praise to the ever-blessed Immanuel, for all his dealings with me, for his blessings bestowed. Sure I am, to all eternity, his name will be exalted above all blessing and praise. I am a poor old sinner, not worthy to crawl upon the earth, yet often refreshed with views of Jesus, and expect soon to see him, face to face. Oh, what grace is this. I am going on fast to close my sixty-second year, yet all my senses and faculties are active and entire. And I am going down to the grave with composure and alacrity, looking unto and trusting in Jesus, the conqueror of death. All which proves the grace and faithfulness of Christ, to a wretch who has been permitted to live out of hell, on this world, on purpose to prove "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," that I am among the number of his saved ones. Blessings on him, I cannot doubt if I would of his friendship to me; because in every thing which daily befalls me, I prove that his merciful kindness is ever more and more towards me, and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Therefore, what can I do, what can I say, but praise the Lord. Indeed I look on it as the fruit of Jesus' love to me, that I have never had but one private sabbath on account of my broken bone and dislocation. All since, one single one excepted, have been filled up by me in the pulpit.

Such a Christ is our's, that he gives strength equal to the day; and that is all we need. My dear friend, do not you say, write, and think so much about what you are in yourself. There is more legality in it than you are aware of.

Leave it all out. Think of what you are in Christ, of what Christ is to you, and how you shine in him before the throne of God. This will take you off yourself; it will do more for you than all complaints whatsoever. When you complain so much about the indwelling of sin, it is as though you had forgot the Holy Ghost dwelleth in you, and that your soul and body are the temple of the living God. You most certainly know and believe that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Live, my beloved friend, in the belief of this, then you will bid an everlasting farewell to all your complaints. The Lord fix your eye and heart on Christ; on his righteousness and sacrifice, and help you every moment in a way of believing, to be receiving the benefit thereof. Labour, stretch every spiritual nerve to comprehend more of Christ's everlastingly complete and finished salvation than ever. Let it be your constant study to keep the doctrine of salvation distinct from all the fruits and effects of it. And do not you look for the fruits and effects of being in Christ, any further than as you believe you are in him. And you must believe this upon no other foundation than the revelation made of him in the word. When you therefore are enabled to apprehend Christ spiritually, from the word and by the Spirit, then you cannot but close with him, and live upon him; and in living on him you cannot but be as fully persuaded of your interest in him, as you are of your own existence.

Surely you know all this. I am not writing as though you were not most blessedly acquainted with all this; but I write to simplify it to you. Well, I can say no more. The Lord bless it to you, and make you a good scholar in his school. It is real grace to depend all on Jesus, and true wisdom to receive all from him. I really love you in Christ, and pray all grace may abound towards you in fellowship with him. May the blessing of the Eternal Three rest most abundantly on you; and may your every attempt to glorify Jesus be crowned with success.

My best respects to the Doctor, the Miss Lakes, and all friends. I wish you a very blessed happy new year. May you have much fellowship with Jesus. May you be setting him, the Lord, before you, then you will be kept from sinning against him.

When you can give me an answer, do so. I am always glad to hear from you. But I must request a favour: it is, you will not request a long letter for the future. I assure you, as age comes on, I want to keep all my strength and spirits for the pulpit.

I remain, your's in Christ Jesus,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

Faversham, April 12, 1808.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

IT is really out of my power to express my gratitude to you, and other friends with you, for the great kindness shewn towards the present publication of Sermons. May the Lord Jesus richly and evidently reward you for this work of faith and labour of love, which ye have shewn to his name and truth. I beg my respects to the Doctor, and I am very greatly obliged to him for the preface; I am very much pleased with it.

With regard to my visiting you and the friends, I should be very much pleased, and it may be our most blessed Lord may admit of it, but the case stands thus. Sometime past I wrote to my friends at Chard, saying, I did not intend going from them for the time I should be out of London. Therefore, until I am with them to speak on the subject, and know if they will give me up for a short season, I cannot write you on this; but if they will, I will most assuredly come down to see you, and stay with you one week. It can be longer, because if I come to you, I suppose I must go to

Truro; so it must be a little here, and also there. As it respects meeting the Miss Lakes at Rittsford, about Midsummer, I think I may be able to accomplish that; only I would wish to have a letter at least a week before they will be there, and when they would wish me to be there, that I may order my matters at Chard accordingly. Perhaps you will come there also, then it would be to you just as though we were all of us at Plymouth. I am very willing to lay myself out to the uttermost of my ability in the cause of God; yet, what cannot be I must submit unto, and say, "the will of the Lord be done."

You are where, and in the very frame you should be in, when you are looking off yourself, and looking on Jesus, and unto him. Every thing in us, without us, and which surrounds us, serve, when we attend to it properly, to bid us look continually to Jesus. Our Lord would not leave sin in us, nor permit us to feel the cursed workings of it, in its nature, spirit, and effects; but to shew us hereby the utter impossibility of having any relief from it, but by looking wholly off it, and entirely from ourselves, and be continually beholding him, who is the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. All creatures are empty; all creature comforts are full of vanity; every one we converse with is full of misery, and all should teach us to renounce all, and trample on all, and look to Christ, who is able to raise us up above all, and who can make us happy in the enjoyment of his love, now we are in a world in which are none but sinners, and nothing but misery. What a Jesus must our Jesus be, who can turn our very hell into an occasion to shout his everlasting praise!

What hath our Jesus done for us, in raising us above all our sin and guilt, corruption and misery, by discoveries of himself, his grace and salvation to our minds! Oh, he is beyond what we conceive, a precious, lovely, almighty, all-sufficient Saviour. He hath done in us, he will do for us, above all we ask, or think. He has begun with us, and he will shew us greater things than these. He will cause all his goodness and all his glory to pass before us. He hath already given us an intuitive knowledge of him, and he will give us increasing light, that in his light we may see light. And hereby he will fulfil in us, and unto us his holy promise, which

runs thus, "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

It is good for us to leave ourselves entirely in the hands of Christ, for him to work in us all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power. Our grand business is to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. We are saved; we are brought to the knowledge of it; yea, we have the enjoyment of it; and as good an evidence as we can give of this, is, our simple dependence on Jesus for every grace and blessing which he hath promised us in his holy word. All the promises of God are nothing more or less than the purposes of God. What he wills, he does; his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. Now, his eternal purposes of grace towards us, he sets before us in his exceeding great and precious promises; and they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. So that we know God's eternal purposes towards us, by his promises made and given in Christ Jesus unto us. Therefore, in them we may read the love of the Holy Three to us. And being the children and people of the Holy Ones, we may well rejoice in the Three in Jehovah, and rejoice in the salvation set before us in the worthy Lamb, who is our everlasting life and light, and will be our everlasting glory. Were we to view God's promises as God's purposes, and consider they are put into promises in the language of, I will and ye shall, it would most assuredly strengthen our faith. We should most certainly be saved hereby from legality and unbelief. We should hereby see there is nothing in God's holy and revealed word makes against us, but everything in it makes for us. It would keep us from legalizing the word of God. "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," would be a most wonderful declaration to support our faith and hope in God. Indeed, it is because we look into ourselves for a ground to encourage our minds, and bear us up God-ward, that we have so little confidence in him. We act thus to the neglect of God's word, and therefore we go without the enjoyment of what the Lord hath promised. He will fulfil his word, but it shall be in his own way. He will not break the order of the gospel for us. The Lord's will is we should look to, and live wholly out and off ourselves, on Christ Jesus for everything. He wills we should be wholly

out of conceit with ourselves, and be perfectly satisfied with his Son Jesus Christ, and his finished salvation. God's will is, that we should live on the fulness of Jesus, and have all our wants supplied therefrom.

When our wills, through the operation of the Holy Ghost upon them, are brought into unison with the will of our heavenly Father, then all is well with us. And then we glorify the Father and the Son, as truly as any saint around the throne of Christ in heaven, when we are perfectly satisfied with the work of Jesus, and rest according to the warrant of God's word for so doing, on the righteousness and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus for our everlasting discharge from all sin, and our complete righteousness before the Lord.

Blessed be Jesus, he is our all. We are accepted in him. In him we are blessed. We live now in him. We eat his flesh, we drink his blood; and very soon we shall see him face to face. We shall be where he is. We shall behold his glory. We shall live with him. We shall live as he does. We shall be everlastingly satisfied with him, and bless him for ever and ever.

Whilst we are left here, it is that we may be witnesses for him. We stand forth to say, we have found redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

I am now at Faversham in Kent, where I have been preaching Jesus and his salvation, several days past. I shall leave this place to-morrow, and go to Maidstone. I have then to set off on the last day of this week for Mr. Bailey's at Brixton; and shall set off from thence, if the Lord will, on Monday, May 2, for Reading, and preach there on the second Lord's day in next month; and get to Chard, and preach there on the third Lord's day in May. I will give orders to send three dozen of the books by the waggon to you. Your friends were well when I saw them last. When you write me next I shall be at Chard. I write when and where I can; because in journeying from place to place, if I do not make use of every opportunity, I am sure to find it gone for ever.

Please to give my cordial and christian love to Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Blamey, Mr. and Mrs. Courtis, and all friends. I am afraid my voice being

very low, it would be a disappointment to my Plymouth friends, if I were to come to preach. I am now an old man, aged 62 years ; what is to be expected but the voice must be low. I am exceedingly well in body. Never better. Blessed be Jesus Christ. He is good to me, beyond all expression, beyond my uttermost conception. I would not trouble you with the expense of this, but I consider you may be glad to hear I received yours with the note safely. And also you will understand when I shall be at Chard.

My dear friend, be sure you pray for me. I am always full of employment, and I do witness the faithfulness of Christ to his promise, in giving me strength according to my day. It is in my mind as soon as I can to publish another volume of letters, and have brought a large parcel of them from Canterbury, where I was last Friday. I could wish you to speak to Mr. Hodge, if he would give up his to the press. He should most undoubtedly have a volume in print for them. But I suppose the MS. would not be returned. This however will not be wanted for a good while to come. I must soon drop writing letters, for it will be needless, as so many of them are and will be in print. And I have a work already begun, which lies by me unfinished, which I should be glad to redeem time to finish, so by dropping letter-writing, there will be the more time for other matters.

I look on myself as very greatly indebted to you ; I cannot, but the Lord will reward you. Indeed he will. Oh ! let us praise his holy name for all his goodness to us. We may well exercise ourselves in so doing. We are never better employed. I find the truth of Mr. Romaine's saying, 'Young christians abound in prayer, and old christians in praise. I am very greatly obliged to Mr. Bourne and Mr. Cooper ; but if I come, I suppose I must visit Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. Well, we have nothing to do with to-morrow, we may meet in heaven, before we expect. Well, I am fully persuaded I am prepared for it, as I shall not love you better then than I do now. For I love you in Christ, and love you for your kindness towards me in him, and I shall love you in Christ for it, even in the state of glory. The Lord be with you, bless you, comfort and enlarge your mind

abundantly towards him, and give you increasing communion with him.

May the Lord bless you in all things,

I am your's,

And shall remain your's in him, for ever,

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

Charley Green, May 30, 1808.

MY VERY DEAR AND WELL BELOVED SIR,

I GOT safe to Chard, and aimed to give you an hint of it, in a letter I wrote the young friend in your town. I wrote before to you, thinking her peculiar case might require it. As I meant no disrespect to you, I hope you did not take it as such. I hope your beloved spouse and servants are well, and that you are quite settled, fixed, and grounded on Christ, the foundation and corner stone of his church. He is the rock; the rock of salvation; the rock for refuge and shelter. He is the rock, in whom is everlasting strength. As you are led to view by faith the everlasting love of the co-equal, co-eternal, and co-essential Three, and their covenant transactions as they are revealed and stated in the everlasting gospel, there is a glorious subject for you to meditate on; in which everlasting life and blessedness are contained. And as you live over the same in your mind, you are a real partaker of all the blessings and benefits thereof. As you are led by the Holy Spirit into daily views hereof,

the Father's love and Son's salvation will become more precious unto you; and thus you will be increasing with all the increase of God. As you must ever have the knowledge of truth in remembrance, so you cannot be too simple in your apprehensions thereof. All you want for your soul's good to know and believe is, the Father's love, the Son's salvation, and the Holy Spirit's testimony thereof, all which is contained and set before you in the scriptures of truth. You are led to know and apprehend the Father's love is a free and sovereign love, an ancient and everlasting love, an immutable and infinite love; that he chose his elect in his Son, loves their persons in his person, as God-man, their Head and representative, and that with the same love wherewith he loves him. You know the persons of the elect are the objects of the Father's love, and he loves them in Christ, and ever did, and ever will behold them in Christ with eternal delight and joy. And it hath been given you from the word of inspiration to know and apprehend, that upon the consideration of the fall, the Father willed their redemption from all the miseries of it; and the God-man, Christ Jesus, the Head of the elect, engaged to be their Redeemer; and he hath wrought out and obtained eternal redemption for them. You have also learnt from the word to understand that the Holy Spirit is engaged to reveal the Father's love and the Son's salvation, and make the revelation thereof effectual to the heirs of glory. Yes, say you, all this I steadfastly believe. What lack I yet? I reply, to keep clearly in view your interest in the Father's love and the Son's salvation, and to be established in the truth as it is in Jesus. You say, I see clearly it is even so; how am I to attain it? By the Lord's blessing, I will endeavour to shew you.

In the first place, with respect to your keeping clear views of your interest in the Father's love and the Son's salvation, this will be the best and most effectual way to be seeking after, and pressing to obtain daily communion with God. You most certainly find times, when it does your soul good to think of Christ, to meditate on him; you perceive a glory in his person which puts down in your esteem all on earth and all in heaven. This I am sure you cannot deny; neither can you that such views of Christ draw your

whole heart, and fix your whole mind on him as your beloved, as your all. This is supernatural; it is alone from the Holy Ghost. This is the Spirit's taking of the things of Christ's person, and shewing the same to you. At other times, your mind is swallowed up in meditation on the union of Christ's person to your person, and you admire it as ineffable grace; as the foundation of communion betwixt Christ and you. What is this, but to have communion with Christ, in views of this unspeakable grace?

At other times, your mind is altogether engaged with Christ, and in thinking on him as a Saviour. His love, incarnation, righteousness, sufferings, sacrifice, blood-shedding, and death, engages the whole of your spiritual attention. You see he is most exactly suited to you, and his most precious salvation to your case. Under these views your heart goes out after him, your faith apprehends him. You say, he is just such a Jesus as I need; he is suited to all my sin and corruptions, to all my wants and necessities. He shall be my Jesus. I will have no other Saviour. I renounce all but him, I will cleave to him alone. Your mind thus opened to behold him, and thus engaged to him, you receive him into your heart as all your salvation, and all your desire. And as led to look on the everlasting perfection of his righteousness and sacrifice, you believe thereon, and rest therein for the whole of your salvation. And if any ask how you are? Your reply is, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." And in the knowledge of these truths, you perceive all the everlasting love of the Father, flows forth towards you in Christ Jesus. You find he shines on you in his Beloved; you feel your heart again and again refreshed, warmed, comforted, and revived with his heavenly love and presence. Thus it becomes habitual to you to believe that God loves you in his Son, that he hath accepted you in the Beloved, that he rests in his love, and rejoices in you, and rejoices over you to do you good. And as you believe this, the joy of the Lord is your strength; and in the belief of it, you have fellowship with God in the apprehensions of his love to you in Christ Jesus. And as you survey the love of God in Christ, you are more and more swallowed up in admiring and adoring thoughts thereof.

Now I look on this as communion with God and Christ through the Spirit. And it is hereby you are established in the doctrines of God's everlasting love, and Christ's finished salvation, and of your personal interest herein. And thus the Lord, in this very way fulfils his promise, and you are a partaker of the grace of it; "And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name," saith the Lord.

My dear Sir, it is an unspeakable blessing to know our interest in Christ, and to be established in Christ. But we cannot know the one, nor be partakers of the other, but by believing. It is in believing on Christ, we know our interest in him. And it is in believing in him, we are established in him; and though these truths are of eternal importance, and are everlasting realities, yet they are so simple and so freely and fully stated in the word of God, that he who runs may read them. Our misery is, we are too prone to overlook them. When we take them in, we are not always kept in a simple belief of them. We think we ought to know something beside the finished salvation of Jesus; we think it is necessary to attend to other things. Thus too, too often, very many of the Lord's people lose the very subject which alone can do their souls good, and in which their whole salvation is contained, and hew out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water.

This is evidently the case of the present generation of professors; they do not deny Christ and his salvation, but they do not know enough of him to be wholly taken with him. They do not know enough of his righteousness, of his blood and death, to rest wholly on it for their everlasting salvation. They do not know enough of the person of Christ, as to trust on him for everlasting life. And such as call themselves ministers of Christ, do not preach so much of him, as is calculated in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to bring the people out of themselves, to close with him; and off themselves, that they may live freely and fully upon him. The truth is, if you do not know more of Christ than of yourself, you cannot but be full of discouragement. Until, in the light of the word and Spirit, you see more virtue and efficacy in the blood of the Lamb,

than you see of guilt and pollution in your fallen nature, you will never go off self. The thing is impossible. Therefore, the Lord God, who knows all the sin, guilt, and pollution which is in fallen nature, and who hates it with an invincible hatred, proclaims and speaks of Christ and salvation in his word, more than he doth of sin. He expressly declares, "he delighteth in mercy;" and saith, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." If you believe this, you have your acquittance. If you rest your soul hereon, you are eternally safe.

S. E. PIERCE.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

Chard, May 11, 1808.

MY VERY GOOD FRIEND, MR. TREGO,

I RECEIVED yours, and what shall I say? What is on the other part of the paper, was wrote to another friend. But I conceived it necessary to write it over again. When I had done this, I was unwilling to waste it. And the truth is, I have been last week, and this week, so taken up and engaged in writing letters, that I am quite tired out therewith. I thought, therefore, a man that hath a friendship, if you will excuse my writing to you at this time, only just to say, I have received yours, and in reply have to say, the people are not willing for me to be absent more than four Lord's days, and I have already promised them to my friends at Truro. If it would do for me to be with you a few days in the week, either going or coming, I will. You are very much mistaken in me. I should not be capable of speaking in the meeting so as to be heard. What can you expect of me at my time of life. Old age is coming on me very fast; I am almost entering into the sixty-third year of

my age ; the voice is low, the pulse is low, I shall soon go down to the house appointed for all living. You have all I ever said in my writings ; you have all I could say were I going to stay a thousand years longer ; you may think otherwise. But I am well assured of what I write. Will you, therefore, say to Mr. Tapley, it is out of my power to visit Mary Church. Will you please to present my best respects to Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and I most heartily thank them for their kind invitation, and nothing would be more acceptable to me, if I should visit Plymouth.

I mean to set off from Chard for Truro, the first Monday in July. If you can strike out a plan for me to visit you, exclusive of the Lord's day, either going or coming, do so. If not, it must be dropped. I must give up going to Rittsford, because I cannot venture on horseback, as I cannot hold the bridle with my left hand. My respects to Miss L——, and say, she is better where she is. I have my reasons for it.

My dear friend, you will accept of my sincerest thanks for all your favours, which I have a grateful sense of, and for which I most highly esteem you.

My love to all the friends. I should be very glad to see them, but am straitened in time. When I write to London, I will mention about the books. I am glad to hear so good an account. The Lord be praised for it. I should be very glad to omit going to Truro, but it must not be ; therefore, willing, or not willing, I must comply. If I were to set off from Exeter on Tuesday morning, and be with you until Saturday morning, would it be pleasant ? And were I to come from Truro to you back, on Monday night, and stay so as to get by the coach to Exeter on the Friday night, would that do ? Think of this, and also if you would like to come to Exeter to meet me ; or which is better, go into Cornwall with me. You will let me hear again from you.

I am your's, as deeply indebted to you, as much as, perhaps more, and so I think, as you can possibly be unto me.

S. E. PIERCE.