

EXTRACTS
FROM THE
LETTERS

OF

ELIZABETH, LUCY, & JUDITH USSHER,

LATE OF THE

CITY OF WATERFORD.

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SECOND EDITION.  
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Dublin :

PRINTED BY J. JONES, SOUTH GT. GEORGE'S-ST.

1815.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages contain Extracts of Letters written by three sisters, the descendants of two ancient and honourable families, whose rank in life had placed them in the gay world, and furnished them with opportunities of participating in many of its more refined dissipations : but whilst young, and esteemed accomplished, they were strengthened to withdraw from these fascinating pleasures, the love of Christ having touched their hearts, the love of this world was thereby stained in their view : thus yielding obedience to Him who called them to glory and virtue, they had the eyes of their understandings enlightened to behold the superior excellency there is in the Truth, and were at seasons favoured to enjoy its enriching heavenly influence ; and as they became further dedicated, could measurably say with the Psalmist, in the feeling language of the heart, “ The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer ; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust ; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. For who is God, save the Lord ; or who is a rock save our God ? It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way

perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds feet, and setteth me on high places.”

They were religiously disposed from their childhood. It was the practice of the family collectively to read the Scriptures every morning, there is no doubt this was a blessing to them, the Lord graciously condescending often to favour with his presence at those seasons, and there is reason to believe that a day seldom passed in which they did not peruse those sacred records in their retirement, and He who hath the key of David,* being pleased to unfold the mysteries of his kingdom, they were instructed that there was nothing too dear to part with for His sake who rewards his faithful followers with soul-enriching peace.

Some lines concerning a younger sister are added at the conclusion of this volume.

Some years are now passed since it pleased the Lord (who gave,) to take away, the writers of these letters, at an early period of life; and such is the instructive tenor of them, so fully do they evince the power of religion and its purifying operation on the passive mind, that the friends and remaining children of the surviving parent prevailed upon her to submit them to the public eye.

The sale of a large edition, and the demand for a second, evince that they have been acceptable; and there is some reason to hope they have been useful.

* Rev. iii. 7.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS,

&c.



ELIZABETH, the eldest sister died of a consumption at Bristol Hot-Wells, in the early part of the year 1796, at about twenty-four years of age.

She was educated in the communion of the Church of England; but not satisfied with it, she frequented some meetings of other Christian societies, in the hope of finding that instruction and comfort her soul greatly desired. She was deprived of a very affectionate father at about the age of seventeen. A few years after one of her sisters being ill in consequence of a hurt, was ordered to Bath, where her mother and three sisters accompanied her,

and staid the winter. During this period Elizabeth went to Bristol Wells to visit an aunt, with whom she afterwards resided, who was a religious person, and had withdrawn from gay life, and a conspicuous rank in which she was placed; as also from the established worship; she attended different dissenting Meeting-Houses; to one of these Eliza accompanied her; when these words reached the witness in her mind, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," &c.

At this time she wrote the first letter to her mother at Bath, and went thither herself after; when the sweetness of her countenance was *remarkable*; she seemed a changed creature, given up and united to Him, who in adorable mercy had not only *convinced*, but *converted* her. She was become, not through John's elementary Baptism of water, but by the one only effectual Baptism, that of the Holy Ghost and of fire; not in words but in truth; a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of God. When her family returned to ———, she desired she might remain at

the Wells with her aunt, which seemed extraordinary, as a short separation was usually trying to her; but she expressed a fear of returning to her gay acquaintance, whilst in the infancy of religious experience, lest through weakness and instability, she might be tried beyond her power of resistance, and so lose an immortal inheritance. As soon as her heart was convinced that her former dress was contrary to Gospel simplicity, she put away all the vain and superfluous parts of it, requesting she might never be pained by seeing them. She remained in England about two years, growing in grace and favour of the Lord.

A neglected cold fell on her lungs; her mother and sister Lucy hastened to her, and, about two months after were witnesses to her close. A few days before her departure, when she appeared to be asleep, her mother remarked to her sister, she considered it a favour that such a covering of peace was granted them under the prospect of losing such a precious and beloved friend, when Elizabeth raising herself, said in

a lively manner, "Peace, O Virtue, Peace is all thy own!"

Near her close, being in much bodily suffering, she exclaimed, "I will bear the cross, for never sorrow was like His sorrow,"—and this, it is believed, was her last expression.*



* Just as the spirit quitted its enfeebled tenement, Lucy was sitting by her bed side, and the curtain being drawn between them, she was not sensible the change was so near, but was impressed with this language which she thought she should then have uttered, but through diffidence withheld it, "Open ye the everlasting gates, and let the righteous enter in."†

† See Isaiah xxvi. 3.

LETTER I.

To her Mother.

1794.

“ AND now, my dear mother, I want to unburden my soul to you, if I may so express myself, who know as well as I, that the ways of the world are not right, and will neither make us easy here, or happy hereafter ; but as to this *you* can better teach *me*. What I have to say is, I am determined, (let the world say what it will) to live according to the dictates of my conscience, and as one who knows not the moment of death : do not, my dear mother, by my writing more seriously than usual, think I am one bit better : indeed I am not ; I only see how long I have been upon the brink of ruin, and wish for that content

and happiness of mind which I now believe can only be found in religion.

I know if it please God to keep me in the state of mind I am now in, I shall enjoy more real happiness by avoiding every place that will tend to make me forget God. I see now that I have lived to myself; that I have been very wrong; that if I die as I am, I must inevitably perish. May *He, who alone can*, make your Eliza what you would wish her to be, and what she ought to be! &c.

LETTER II.

To her Mother.

1794.

I AM sorry to hear you are going to—— where, it grieves me when I think they have so much the form, without any of the power, and inward delight, of which religion gives the soul that resolutely determines to seek the Lord until he is found; as they that seek him will find him. He waits to be gracious— when I think, my dear mother, how long he was calling me before I answered, my heart is all gratitude; I am astonished at his persevering goodness, that he did not leave my heart hard, as he has done others, who would not listen to that still small voice: for you know we read in scripture, that his “Spirit shall not always

strive with man." O my dear mother! that you and I, and all that belong to us, may be found in the narrow path, that leads to endless happiness, is the greatest wish and constant prayer, of, &c.

LETTER III.

To her Mother.

1794.

MANY thanks to my dear mother, for the few lines concerning our best interest: you say you wish to be as happy in your mind as I am; you will find it in Christ, if you press for it, if you can resolve to let go every hold that keeps your soul fettered as it were to this world, then read the promise that is for you in the 6th chapter of the 2d of Corinthians, the two last verses. We must be convinced that we are in error, which is very clear in the epistle of Paul to the Romans, "for by the law we cannot be saved; let us then fly for refuge, and lay hold of the hope set before us; even a Saviour, who is more ready to answer us than we are to desire it:" Come to him, he bids you come boldly, and do not doubt in the least, but

that what he has promised, he is able also to perform.

O that he would enlighten our minds to understand the Scriptures!

You desire me to write on the subject nearest my heart, for where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also; you will not then be surprised if the greatest wish I have is, that all my dear friends would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might be saved; but particularly that you my dear mother, and the nearest to my heart, would implore the Lord, and not let him go until he bless you: then you will find his ways pleasantness, and all his paths peace; you will enjoy a happiness the world cannot either give or take away, and you will be of that number who are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, and He will not be ashamed to confess you before his Father, and his holy angels. I am little able to talk of the things of God; but I trust that He who can best teach you, will answer your prayers and mine, and enable us both to understand his divine truths.

LETTER IV.

To her Mother.

1795.

YOU say you fear you feel too little condemnation for sin; sin in ourselves, is our greatest burden, the only obstacle that keeps our souls at a distance from God; but blessed be his name, he first draws, encourages, and enables the poor sinner to trust in his love, shews him that without him he can do nothing; but when he is accepted in the Beloved, then he is brought into the light, and sees that he is black, as the Church expresses herself in the Canticles, 1st chap. "I am black, but comely," [in Christ] black for the Sun of Righteousness has risen on me, and discovered to me what I am; then is the Saviour truly

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precious, the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely; if we knew the tenders the Saviour is willing to make of his love to us while in this body of sin, we should be more anxious to press on by fervent prayer, night and day: we love to refresh our bodies when weary, but, Oh! how much more delightful, how truly satisfying, to bathe and refresh our souls in the fountain of his love, the streams whereof make glad the whole city of God!—His love is *infinite, unsearchable*, an ocean without bottom or shore. You say you wish to know you are born again, and the next line tells me that you are, by saying, that you will be ever with that dear Lord that has all your affections. I wonder how you would explain those words; for my part I think it is being born again, born of the Spirit, when we can from our hearts say, he has all our affections, “Jesus’ love has broke my heart:” the natural man is enmity against God,—I once saw no comeliness in him, but now all is vanity but Christ: we can say, “What is all the earth to me if stranger to thy peace?” The knowledge

of these truths only, is not enough; it is only so far as they are *felt* and *experienced* in the mind of a believer, that they communicate peace and happiness to the soul.

LETTER V.

To her Mother.

1795.

THE two dear girls' letters delighted me: what a favour to have so many in a family candidates for heaven! Dear mother, you and Lucy are wanting some strong earnest that you are children of God: think for a moment that you love him who has died for you; don't you depend entirely upon him? Remember you love him because he first loved you: let us but believe, and we shall find him precious.

LETTER VI.

To her Mother.

1795.

DEAR mother, what *need* have we to pray, that we may be disengaged from this world, and the nearest friends we have in it: if my mother, my aunt [then ill] and my Lucy are taken from me, I have not a tie besides. May my Lord resign me to his will! Of myself I can do nothing, I must trust him; and indeed at this time of trial he sweetly supports and comforts my heart and spirit with his love: all these things must pass away, but who or what can separate from Him our souls' love? My aunt is a little better this day than yesterday; who knows but our compassionate Lord will again restore her health, most valuable to those who know her best.

LETTER VII.

To her Mother.

1795.

MY dear Mother, I have shed tears of joy over your letter; may our hearts be filled with gratitude and thankfulness, that while we were living without hope, and without God in the world, we are brought into the light of the glorious Gospel, and called to partake of the blessings our Saviour has purchased for us; and that it is evident not for the smallest good in us, because his pure eyes see our manifold infirmities, but of his infinite mercy; and a kingdom has been prepared for such as resist not his power, before the foundations of the world.—My dear mother, I do not think you are deceived; nothing but the love of Jesus can spoil us for this world; his love constrain

eth us to follow him through evil as through good report; he loved us before we loved him, and can we doubt of his love one moment when we think and read of his great sufferings for your and my sins, and of all who are willing to be saved? O let us try to get above this ensnaring world; our dear Lord will enable us through faith to overcome it, if we perseveringly go on trusting in him for strength, knowing only such as persevere to the end shall be saved: and, indeed, I cannot see this world has any attractions for those who live as always in his sight, enjoying the smiles of his reconciled countenance, and feasting on the bounties of his love. I have learned that Jesus loves [that] we should tell him all our wants, and he loves to supply them. O what a privilege! we need only leave our petitions with him, and trust in his promises; but then we must through his assistance, conform our lives to his will, or it would be foolish to expect a blessing: I desire to be entirely moulded to his mind; for I am his, and nothing can separate unworthy me from his love. And will my sweet Lucy and

Judith come and partake of that good part Mary chose, which never can be taken away? The very thought and hope delights me, that when a few years are past, we shall all be in the enjoyment of unutterable bliss. I must leave room for my dear aunt to add a line, with just leaving you one comfortable thought, that if the world hate you, it hated our dear Lord first; he says in John, because "I have chosen you out of the world," &c. and left us an example that we should follow his steps.

LETTER VIII.

To her Mother.

1795.

NOTHING but grace will effectually turn the heart; till then all is restraint. I wish you would send——to the Wells. O that his heart might be touched; (at present he cannot be happy,) I think he would be a burning and shining light:—My dear Mother, I trust you will not be displeas'd that I caution you against sending Judith to——. I know she is a sweet creature, and with your example and instruction may be an excellent Christian; but she is human nature still, and I fear with those she will mix with, these good impressions will soon be effac'd; in one night a tender plant may be lost by a severe frost. Our dear Lord

knowing our poor weak nature well, prayed, [taught us to pray] that we might not be led into temptation. O may he direct you and me in every step we take, though ever so trifling; may he also continue to keep your mind peaceable and happy! The effect of being clothed in his righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever. What a sweet passage! "mercy shall compass him about;" all your afflictions come through mercy: the Lord is a wall of fire round about his people, a very present help in trouble. What a great comfort that we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. If I was not an ungrateful creature, I should make mention of the loving-kindness of the Lord from day to day; he directs, encourages, and instructs me with his love, "he is altogether lovely;" he will withhold nothing from you that may do you good if you ask it. May you enjoy communion with our dear Lord, which is the privilege of all true believers, and which they would not give up for all a thousand worlds could offer; for surely heaven has more happiness for an immortal

soul than earth.—In the 17th of Jeremiah I read this morning the curse that was to befall those that forsook God, was, their names were written in the earth; O that ours may be written in heaven!

LETTER IX.

To her Sister Judith.

1795.

I WAS greatly delighted with my dear Judith's letter: you have found a precious Saviour, the pearl of great price, and the angels in heaven rejoice over you; the Saviour loves you with an everlasting love, he will shew you what is in your own heart, that you may prize him more; at least I find he shews me every day my own nothingness, that being emptied of self, I may look only to Christ for a full and free salvation: it is not of works lest any should boast; but by grace we are saved through faith, which is the unmerited gift of God: there are unspeakable riches treasured up in Christ for us. O may we daily be enabled to come boldly as dear children, and

receive out of his inexhaustable fulness of grace and love, that we may grow up into him in all things: may he teach us how to live, think, act and speak for him who has done so much for us! My dear mother writes to me, ——— is coming: I expect him every moment. O my dear Judith, join with me in intreating our dear Saviour, to be *his* Saviour, and that he may be one of those jewels that make up his crown! I have time for no more, but to commit you to his care, who has loved you, and given himself for you; may he direct you and keep you, giving you strength for every trial; may his love prevent every discouragement, and be an earnest to you of future glory, &c.

LETTER X.

To her Mother.

1795.

I LOOK forward with pleasure to seeing my dear —— after so long an absence, though I am sure I do not think he will be so pleased with me. However the Lord is on my side, I will not fear; who knows, my dear mother, but his coming here may be for the better: when I think what has been done for me, I believe nothing is too hard for the Lord; our united petitions will be heard [if right] by him whose name is love, and who has no pleasure in the spiritual death of any. I am sorry for ——'s behaviour, but we know it is nothing new; we have many to entreat the Lord for. You say you are thankful for your illness at ——, therefore it is not right I should be

sorry, but trust the Lord will restore your health of body, and keep your soul in health.

I have been twice to see ———, will not that do? They were very curious, but I trust my dear Saviour will never suffer me to be ashamed of him: they wondered I did not go to balls; “don’t you go to any parties?” If you mean card parties, I said, I do not at all approve of them, but my aunt and I have very agreeable parties amongst some of the most respectable people here. My dear mother, I know very well, (I should say I know a *little*) of what you mean, when you speak of the corruption and ingratitude of the heart. I will give you a hint of a dream I had the night before last, which may be of use and comforting: “Live out of yourself, simply by *faith* on Jesus Christ, laying your sins and sorrows upon him;” a few words but very comprehensive; let us then look to him; it is only while we live upon Christ, we live at all; don’t you find you cannot mix with the people about you? You cannot drink muddy water and sweet together; it is precious to live near

the Saviour : in his presence is fulness of joy!
Oh, when will the time come when we shall
be in the enjoyment of him ; when we shall
see him face to face, then will our cup be full,
running over!

LETTER XI.

To her Mother.

1795.

I REJOICE that you are enabled to stem the torrent of persecution by and through Jesus, who will [would] bring you, through toiling and rowing, to land in his Father's kingdom, beyond the reach of men and devils, to enjoy himself, which must be heaven indeed. O may he give us to taste more while here of his hidden manna! that continually receiving from his fulness, we may have that which will cause us to glorify him. I find my soul is dead indeed, if my Beloved withdraws, or rather when the curtain is drawn over my soul :

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“ He is our life, our light, our love,
 Our portion, and our all,
 The circle where my passions move,
 And centre of my soul.”

You are the persons our Lord has himself pronounced blessed; he bids you rejoice and be exceeding glad. May we be vigilant to serve our Master, and pray for them that hate us! I want nothing but what my Jesus has to give, and he is always willing, and we might be always receiving, if unbelief did not prevent us opening wide the door of our hearts, that he might come in and sup with us according to his promise.—I think he is teaching me more every day, there is nothing worth having but himself, nor enjoying, but as we receive in it something of his love: don't you find it so? If we have him, we have more than tongue can describe, we have sweet peace within, that we enjoy by looking in faith through our interceding Saviour to our loving Father. What mere earthen vessels we are, empty and liable to be broken! what a blessing to see we are so,

that we may ask and receive, and be filled; that we may come up from this wilderness leaning on our Beloved! He will hold us up, and we shall be safe. But I must stop and recollect, this subject of a soul's love would fill my paper, and after all, I have said nothing: I must leave the subject to eternity, we can't comprehend, much less talk of it, though to *feel* it is heaven begun! And does my sweet Lucy give her idols to the moles and the bats: this is love again!

Tell ——— if you have no objection, that (from my soul) I wish she was what they call a Quaker; but that most of all, I wish her to be a Christian; a despised follower of a despised Saviour. *I* have acquitted my conscience already, and tell her from me, if she reject this Saviour, He will reject her, and the horrible consequence no pen can paint.—Need I tell my beloved parent, my heart is united to hers for ever in love by the strongest bands.

P. S. When you give my message give it in love: there is great harmony in love.

LETTER XII.

To her Mother.

1795.

To those who find religion a real good, retirement is delightful, as it enables us without interruption to seek for peace, and to enjoy the greatest privileges: communion with Him who condescends to be the Friend of sinners, and rejoices over them to do them good. O may we unfeignedly give him all our hearts, and commit the keeping of our souls to Him, who is able to keep them until that great day, when our Saviour, who manifests his love to us, will be our Judge! He who now intercedes for us.—We are reading an account of the numbers of martyrs that died in the flames in Mary's reign, all rejoicing they were counted

worthy to suffer for the truth ; let this encourage us, my dear mother, not to mind what the world may say : those will one day be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ : and remember for your comfort, your light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for you an eternal weight of glory. My two sweet sisters are afraid of the temptations of the world ; and since I have set them the example of mixing in it, it is but fair to tell them, I never knew happiness in the pleasures of it : they are toilsome and unsatisfying ; assure them with my love, were I to begin the world again, I would seek to walk in wisdom's ways, they are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

LETTER XIII.

To her mother.

1795.

WHEN we think on what a slender thread life hangs, not to have an interest in Christ is most awful! To you who believe he is precious, these are sweet words, "Christ in you the hope of glory." O for a stronger faith to rest entirely on his unchangeable love! an abiding sense of which would sweeten every cross and create a heaven within.

LETTER XIV.

To her Mother.

1795.

I HOPE you will inform me of your health, and the state of your soul, which I doubt not is soaring on the wings of love, and every day getting nearer and nearer in sweet communion with the Friend of sinners; those are the most delightful moments of one's life: by Lucy's and Judith's letters they seem indeed on the road, as they desire those evidences which, if they persevere, they will certainly receive; from experience I know they will have the inward witness, they are the children of God, and of course, all things will work together for good, both here and hereafter.—Blessed indeed are the heirs of God, joint heirs

with Christ! how different from the world in pursuit of happiness, who try many different ways for present enjoyment and recreations, and still are dissatisfied, finding only disappointment! while Christians have all one motive, one joy, one Saviour, and I would wish, one mind! all pressing towards the same mark, our dear Lord going all the way with them. O may we continue stedfast in the faith, and never be discouraged by the insinuations of the enemy! who would work with our poor weak hearts: but we have this delightful promise, "Resist the devil and he will flee."

LETTER XV.

To her Mother.

1795.

WHEN I think of what darkness and unbelief there is over the world, it fills me with horror. I tremble to think of ——— who do not see their want of a Saviour, and the wicked one will keep them blind as long as he can. O my dear mother, what reason have you and I to be thankful that we see we cannot save ourselves, that our righteousness is but as filthy rags! what a blessing to see the vile-ness of our hearts, that they are deceitful above all things! when we know the returning sinner will be accepted and pardoned for Christ's sake. I often think, if those that are in the midst of pleasure and dissipation, did but for a moment feel the joy of a believer, with what astonishment would they look back on their past choice! I do firmly believe they would go and sell all that they had, and purchase that pearl of great price.

LETTER XVI.

To her Mother and Sister Lucy.

1795,

THANKS to my dear Mother and Lucy for their joint letter: indeed I want words to express the true delight I felt on reading it. Is it not some of that love which the members of Jesus must feel for each other? He is all love, and the sap which belongs to the Vine, suffuses through all the branches: as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and sweet teaching it is! we love what he loves, and hate what he hates, so that we know the meaning of those words, He that is joined to the Lord in one spirit, he has, though in a lesser degree, the mind of Christ.—This month reminds me of the happy moments when I began to live: when we reflect what creatures we are by nature, divested of all good, and prone to evil continually, every moment adding sin to sin, until there is a list against us,

which nothing but the blood of Jesus himself could do away ; that he not only freely pardons us, but takes and carries us in his bosom, and gives us all things in himself, clothes us in white, and gives us to live upon himself, food convenient for us, and living waters, so that we do not thirst for perishing things ! when we consider that our hearts are drawn above, where we shall be in a few years, it is enough to sink us into nothing but love before him !—I have been much afflicted for months with pains in my jaw, but was much supported, as you are, by the presence of Him our souls love, and we shall have this peace while our minds are stayed upon him. What poor bodies we have ! O may our souls get more life ! then we shall think less of the body's death.—My dear Lucy's letter quite warmed my heart, and truly filled me with joy ; nothing indeed but the power of God could change our hearts : may he enable us to persevere, until we receive the end of our faith, which is the salvation of our souls. Meditating on future enjoyments greatly alleviates present distress : though per-

secutions for the present are grievous, yet they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to you who are exercised thereby; and though “the bud may have a bitter taste, yet sweet will be the flower,” only let us follow on to know the Lord.—My dear mother, may the Lord return all your love to me, unworthy me, into your own bosom : he loves you better than I can, and I am happy in believing you are in his hands, who will keep you as the apple of his eye.—Farewell my dear beloved parent, and my sweet Lucy, I bear you on my heart before my dear Redeemer; but what is better, He bears your name himself before the throne.—
Your’s in the sweet bonds of Jesus.

LETTER XVII.

To her Mother.

1795.

I AM obliged to my dear Lucy for her elegant work : may her dear heart and ours be stamped with the image of Jesus, as the paper is pricked into an Edwin and Angelina ; our hearts were as much a blank to any good impression, as that paper was, but our Artist is divine, both God and man. O may he keep you, my dear mother, from error, and give you the teachings of his good Spirit ! which always testifies of Jesus our Advocate, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ; and though it is most delightful to walk in the comforts of the Holy Spirit, yet we must not forget from whence they flow ; that they have been dearly purchased for us by Christ ; are the effects of the Father's love, given us through the agency of his blessed Spirit.—Oh ! what

manner of love is this that our God has taken upon him, in this wonderful manner to save poor sinners, and that he stands engaged in covenant for their good by these three offices, of Father, Saviour, and Comforter ! O may the Spirit of truth lead you into all truth ! Jesus says, " I am the way, the truth, and the life." I am sorry for the account of your poor health : what can be dearer to my heart than my dear mother's spiritual and temporal health ! O may He, who alone is dearer, give you both ! and if best for you he will give you health ; all his dealings with you are in love infinite, unchangeable ; may he give you and me, in the darkest hour of his providence, to see it so, that we may like Sampson get honey out of the lion's carcass.

LETTER XVIII.

To her Mother.

1795.

MY dear mother, I am *not* prejudiced against any sect, indeed I am not: my Lord has enabled me to love all that have the mark of the Lamb on their foreheads; all that love the Lord Jesus, must have been first loved by him: and shall I not love those whom Jesus loves, brethren and sisters for whom Christ died, all one happy family whose names are written on Emanuel's bosom? O yes! my heart warms to them, and would bring others if I could, to join them; but human means are only means; but he says, if ye love me, keep my commandments, we shew our faith by our works, the very thought is sufficient to make me blush, I do so little; your letters shew the sweet frame of your mind, and my dear Saviour has promised to keep him in perfect

peace, whose mind is stayed on him, and I trust he will bring you to his banqueting house, and his banner over you will be love.

Tell my dear Lucy, I am obliged for her elegant work. I have seen several pieces from Italy, and I think hers preferable, I send her something, though in a different way, but before she looks at it, I request her to read a few lines I send with it: the worst of these amusements is, they engage too much time and thought; while our hands are at work, we should endeavour, at the same time, to delight our hearts in thinking of the love that bought us.

LETTER XIX.

To her Mother.

March 31, 1795.

WHAT soul can be truly happy until in the perfect enjoyment of its Saviour! I have no idea of any thing here deserving the name of happiness but what faith realizes; only so far as we live upon the fulness of Jesus we live at all; for don't we find there is a spiritual, as well as natural life? All have not the former, only believers in Jesus; these know what the hidden manna means, which is the life of their souls, this tree of life, of which they eat and live for ever. Don't think me prejudiced, my dear mother, for or against any sect; my heart does feel a sympathy to all of every denomination that love the Lord Jesus; those that live nearest him, live nearest the truth: some of all professions are apt to get into a cold, formal

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state, there is nothing I so much dread for myself as this : may our dear Lord keep us alive and zealous for his glory, having our lamps lighted ; and to his dear name be all the glory and praise !

My beloved mother, you cannot think what sweet subjects you are at times of my thankfulness, that you and those nearest my heart are heirs of glory ; and shall I too be admitted ? What mercy ! what unutterable love ! O how many sweet creatures there are that have not the mark of the Lamb ! may *we* be humble and thankful. I often think of dear ———, you remember he always was my favourite, perhaps from his name and likeness to one I love, and whose memory will ever be dear to me.* Farewell ; may you have the presence of Jesus, to support and comfort you in all your trials and bitter cups, my dear mother, whom I love in the truth.

* Alluding to her father.

LETTER XX.

To her Mother.

May 30, 1796.

My ever dear mother has already received accounts of my illness; the means used have been instrumental to my recovery, through him who knows how unfit my soul is for glory. O may he hasten to prepare me for himself! Nothing short of the enjoyment of God can satisfy, when he in infinite condescension, shews even a little of the love he feels for poor worms; though he afflicts, yet still he loves the same, it is because he loves he chastens: my sickness has been so sweetened, and his presence so comforted me, as brought to my mind a verse, I believe in Hosea, where it is said, "I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her," [to the Church] after mentioning her

great sins.—O what a God full of love is our God! the more fully we believe in his love, the greater is our happiness.

My cough is indifferent: it will be a comfort to hear from my dear mother, I cannot think of you but my heart glows with love for you, and longing desires to see you; but this, together with yourself, and every thing else that relates to us, I commit to him who alone does all things well. It is with difficulty I have written; may every blessing from our loving Jesus be with you all.

LETTER XXI.

To her Mother.

June 16, 1796.

MY darling mother, my last not being satisfactory as to my health, I sit down quietly to tell you, I am better this day than yesterday. I am very changeable, not like my precious Lord, whose love continues every day alike. I cannot say, from my feelings, or my physicians' authority, that I am getting better, though some days more comfortable. My dear mother, if you love me, don't be grieved for my illness; sure you don't love my body better than my soul; the latter has been taught many sweet lessons by it; it is only on your account I suffer any anxiety, being the means of adding sorrow to sorrow; besides you, and my dear family, I have not a tie to any thing below, though I don't know that I am in present

danger, yet I cannot conceal the pleasure my soul feels in knowing I am in my Saviour's hands, to do what he will with me.—If we but meditate on future joys, all which flow from the infinite fulness of Jesus filling the soul, and encreasing it every moment with delight, such as we cannot fully know till we are in the enjoyment of it, who would wish to stay ?

“ May we have patience here to wait,
Till Jesus us to bliss translate.”

I own I would wish you to come here if you would not be distressed by it: surely it is a selfish wish to see her who lies nearest my heart of all earthly attachments, but I now give up the hope, preferring your comfort to every thing in this world.—My dear mother, *mind*, we are all in his hands, who will make us more than conquerors through him *that loved us*.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS,

&c.



LUCY, the second sister, was taken ill of a consumption, and died the latter part of the year 1797, aged about twenty-one years.

She was very pleasing in her person, of a meek spirit, and religiously thoughtful, yet partook of what she, at that time, deemed innocent recreations, and in the way she was educated, what were esteemed polite accomplishments, such as music, dancing, painting, &c. ; but as she became convinced, that to purchase the pearl of great price we must sell all that is vain and superfluous, all that divides and separates the heart from the one great and only good ; she relinquished these inferior pur-

suits, which faded as shadows at the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in her soul.

She was dissatisfied with the forms and repetitions of the established worship, and longed for right direction to worship God in spirit and in truth.

About this time she became acquainted with some of the Society of Friends, and with her mother, accompanied them to their meeting: when in silence, that is, *outward* silence, she was convinced that Friends were united in the one precious principle; and these words were intelligibly sounded in her spiritual ear, "Join thyself to these people," which divine intimation she readily obeyed, and submitting to the yoke of Christ, she cheerfully endured the refining power that was to judge every thing her dear Lord's controversy was with, and nail it to the cross. At this time these words were frequently impressed on her mind, "The valley of Achor shall be the door of hope;" not remembering such words, she took her bible and opened it at that passage, and found it was there the Babylonish garment was to be

burned: she consulted not with flesh and blood, but set fire to all her fine clothes, a great part of which were her own work, and beautiful, besides others that had been bought; she left none of gold, or silver, or costly array, making of them a fire sufficient to warm water to wash her hands. The peace of her countenance afterwards evinced, that the sacrifice required was accepted, and the outward purification seemed emblematical of the purity of her mind. She had strong and lively feelings, and though young in years, was deeply taught by uncommon baptisms, tending to her further refinement.

Her sister Judith took notes concerning her, after she had taken to her bed, of the illness of which she died, from which the following is extracted:—

“ She had been for some time deeply exercised, but at this season her mind seemed to be sweetly relieved, and covered with divine love, which flowed to all around her. She called me to her, and said, the way before her was dark, and she knew not whether to look for

life or death, but was resigned to the event, saying, she believed if it was the Lord's will to take her, it would be to himself; expressing in much tenderness of spirit, that if her life was prolonged, she hoped it would be entirely dedicated to his service, for what else was worth living for; and with great earnestness expressed her desires that I should be faithful unto the Lord, and not withhold any thing he may require; likewise, that she had often felt much interested for me, and had received this comfortable impression, that the Lord would give me change of raiment. One evening being so ill as to think she could not hold out long, and getting me to sit by the side of her bed, she gave some directions about the disposal of her property, and with her love given to her sister Susan and her dear brother John, she desired (as near as I can recollect) they would keep much inward to the Lord, who would direct them. I cannot remember all she said at that time, being much tendered and-enlarged by the overflowings of divine love. She expressed great resignation

to whatsoever was the Lord's holy will concerning her; adding, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him," and said, she thought she felt resignation in me also, in which I was wonderfully supported about that time, for though I did not think I could love her better, yet such were my feelings, that had the Lord demanded it, it seemed as if I could part with all that was near and dear to me in this life, in acquiescence to his will.

"A few days before dear Lucy's departure, she called to her mother and said, she remembered in a particular manner, what a powerful impression the last testimony of Mary Ridgeway's that she heard at meeting, had on her mind; that it seemed to have passed away, but then revived, and she felt easy to repeat so much: 'Ye are they that have been with me in my trials and in my temptations, and for you my Father has prepared a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.' At another time she said, 'Oh! what an awful thing to appear before a God of purity!' Her bodily pains seemed excessive, yet she never complained, but with

a sweet countenance, often said, 'It is not of any consequence, if it does the work of purification it is a favor.'

"She said, she remembered at the only meeting for discipline that she sat, an Epistle was read, where, after much encouragement was expressed to the young, there was added a desire for those who should be cut off in their bloom, that their conduct and example might be such that would leave a savour behind ; and at the same time she believed she was of the number that was to be removed, and did ardently crave, that the latter part might be applicable to herself."

She was admitted into membership with the society of Friends about a year and half before her decease.

LETTER I.

To her Sister Elizabeth.

April 20, 1795.

SINCE I wrote last to my dear Eliza, we have enjoyed a delightful season of spiritual refreshment, in which the great Shepherd has been pleased to send us pastors after his own heart, who have rightly divided unto us the words of life, and administered to us freely, what they had freely received from him, according to our several cases and necessities. May we be totally devoted and given up to him, and count nothing too dear to part *with* for his sake, who remembered us *in* our low estate, and has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, and has guided our feet into the paths of true peace. You will, I fear, think those ministers were informed of our situations, and spoke from outward knowledge,

but be assured it was not the case, no person could tell them our thoughts; O no! they have their knowledge the same way that Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ, for which our Lord pronounced him blessed in these words, "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for *flesh* and *blood* hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven, for upon this rock (even revelation,) will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:" Paul also, in his first epistle to the Galatians, fully shews, that the gospel which he preached, he received not of man, nor was he taught, but by the revelation of the Lord Jesus, surely he could not have meant the outward appearing of the Lord Jesus by the way, that might have converted him from the errors in which he then was, and have opened his eyes and his heart to receive and see him in his far more glorious appearance, even that true light that enlighteneth *every man*; this glorious privilege is not confined to apostles or ministers, but he vouchsafes to teach all his depending children who come to his school with hearts

emptied of self and self-righteousness, and under the humbling feeling, that without him they can do nothing; and therefore, give themselves up into his forming hand, to be made either vessels of honor or dishonor, in his holy house: so that he will but sanctify them for the Master's use. O may we not shrink, my dear *Eliza*! but follow the Captain of our salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings; who though he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet took upon him the form of a servant, and became of no reputation, humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross! May I, the least and most unworthy of all his creatures, who am not meet to be called a disciple, take up my cross daily, and deny myself every thing that I feel contrary to the mind of my gracious Master: for I do believe the cross is much harder to be borne in little things, (if they can be called so, when they separate us from Him who is the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely,) than in those things which are evidently wrong to all sorts of Christians: it is

dreadful to our natural part to appear singular in dress or language, yet I believe it must be your Lucy's lot if she follow the path pointed out to her, as I believe it is required of me to bear a testimony for truth, and to magnify my Saviour openly ; not that any thing I can do of myself can be acceptable in his sight ; for if I should do all, I should be but an unprofitable servant : but I trust he will work in me both to will and to do, and to Him shall be the honor and the praise for ever. It grieves me to hear of my aunt's indisposition ; were you not with her I know not what she would do ; you must certainly be a great comfort to her in her present situation, stretched upon a bed of languishing, but I trust the great Physician who has laid her on it, stands by her, and gives her the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness, and that the present dispensation will tend to brighten her, and that she will come forth as gold seven times tried, and as a corner stone polished after the similitude of a palace : assure her of my most affectionate duty and love.

My grandfather and grandmother are reconciled to our going to meeting and leaving the public worship, and appear as affectionate as ever to us, so fully has that promise been fulfilled which has been often sealed to me, "I will make darkness light before thee, and crooked things straight, these things will I do unto thee, and not forsake thee."

To Him who has hitherto preserved you my dearest Eliza, I recommend you; may he still watch over you for good, and may you, under his divine care, grow in grace, and go on unto perfection, until you attain unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and be daily weaned from instruments, till he shall be your all in all, is the breathing of my soul for you, &c.

LETTER II.

To her Sister Judith.

August 28, 1795.

I THANK you my dearest Judith, for your best of wishes: indeed it is impious to doubt, what did our beloved Lord die for, if not to save us from sin, which is the only thing that can separate us from those blessings, which eye hath not seen or ear heard, &c. What a happy day will that be, when this body of sin shall be destroyed, and we shall be admitted into the glorious liberty of the children of God! I trust I shall be delivered in his own good time from all my enemies, and that I reckon my greatest. There is nothing too hard for the Lord, we cannot ask too much or more than he is willing to give:—let us then come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need; and may you

and I, my love, be among those happy few who shall unto all eternity follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and shall wash our robes and make them white, in his most precious blood.

LETTER III.

To her Sister Judith.

1795.

YOU are not as happy as I could wish in your present situation, but you must try to reconcile yourself to a short separation, knowing that you have the best of parents always with you, who has promised, that you shall not be tempted above what you are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. Another delightful idea is, that “By grace ye are saved, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;” so you see we are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. Have you not encouragement to submit (as I am sure you do) your temporal, as well as your everlasting happiness, into the hands of Him who careth for you ?

LETTER IV.

To her Sister Judith.

Sept. 9, 1795.

WHAT a happy spirit that is which dear Eliza was directed to in a dream! *to look simply to our beloved Lord in every thing, not to ourselves or our own works*; if we fall, to lean upon him to rise again, knowing and depending on his strength: though we fall, we shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth us with his hand.

What wonderful kindness has he bestowed upon me, blessed be his name, that my many falls and yieldings to temptations did not provoke him to cast me off for ever, but has brought me here, where, without a church, without a minister, or ordinances,* I have felt



* Alluding to the Church, as by law established,

more peace than ever I did before ; it would be the highest ingratitude not to acknowledge the debt I owe Him, the giver of every good and every perfect gift: May I, in the whole course of my life, be it long or short, live to his glory, and never grieve his Holy Spirit, as I have done continually. What a shocking thing to see so many running on in the broad way to everlasting destruction, who at the same time think themselves perfectly safe, expecting the mercy of God ! without considering we can build on no other foundation than that which is already laid, even his Son Jesus Christ. Have you read Cowper's Poems? they are wrote in the spirit of Christianity; I cannot forbear giving you a sample of them :

“ A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise,
 Hence the completion of his future days;
 Hence a demeanor holy and unspeck'd,
 And the world's hatred as its sure effect.”

LETTER V.

To her Sister Judith.

Sept. 25, 1795.

OUR dear —— expects soon to sail for Gibraltar. In his way through Bristol he spent a little time with Eliza, who took him to hear a gospel minister, who I have no doubt said something adapted to his state. Who knows when it may occur to his mind with double force? And though the seed may be for a short time hid, and as it were, a grain of mustard seed, it may yet take the deeper root, and bring forth the more fruit, to the glory of our dear Saviour, who came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. And should we not be the most ungrateful creatures in the world, did we not love and delight to serve our dear Lord, who has been so kind as to call us when we were rebels and enemies; to call us to what?

Lesbiana Conness Pope

To be heirs with God, and joint heirs with Christ! And when called by him, why not follow him through evil, as through good report? Oh that we may never draw back, nor be of that unhappy number in whom he has no pleasure!

LETTER VI.

To her Sister Judith.

1795.

I CONGRATULATE my beloved Judith upon her safe arrival at ———, and trust the journey and change of air will be of use to you, but indeed bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of this life and that which is to come. I am more and more convinced every day, that all the illness I suffered at Bath, and last winter, was through divine mercy to keep me from the vain and giddy world; and though I did not feel much attachment, yet I was ashamed to take up the cross, and dare to be singular; but glory to Him who has in some degree enabled me to come forth from the wilderness, leaning upon my beloved. O may I never again doubt! but cast all my care upon him who careth for

me, and never fear the cross; for he has promised, he will make the yoke easy and the burden light: he alone can and will sweeten the bitter cup of adversity: he has promised, that if we acknowledge him in all our ways, he will direct our paths, he will be our guide unto death, and after death our portion and happiness everlasting: O may we never stray from such a Shepherd, who gathers the lambs in his arms, and gently leads those that are with young! May you and I, my dear Judith, ever remain in the enclosed garden of the church, ready to answer the slightest call, even as the putting forth of the Beloved's finger through the hole of the door, let the way be ever so narrow or contrary to flesh and blood; and as our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, may we seek direction from him, knowing, that in his own time he will be found of them that diligently seek him.

You did not answer that part of my letter upon waiting in silence upon the Lord for divine teaching, which was a disappointment to me, as from that I have more real comfort

than ever I had through the medium of another; I wish every one to know and practice it, there is no other way in which self is so humbled, for it is only in the silence of all that is fleshly, that the small still voice is to be heard; even when walking or working you may retire inward and enjoy sweet communion with the Lord; and it is not, lo here, or lo there, for the word (Jesus Christ) is in thy mouth, and in thy heart. My mother had a letter from dear ———. I feel happy in having fulfilled my duty by writing to him, and having told him all my mind, which letter he acknowledged, and said he was very much obliged to me for my good advice. O may the Lord be his preserver, and enable us to submit to his divine will, knowing that whatsoever is by his appointment is best! May we all meet round the throne of the Lamb, where no enemy can assault nor snare allure, where this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, &c.

LETTER VII.

To her Sister Judith.

Nov. 14, 1795.

I AM sure it will give my dear Judith pleasure to hear of the safe arrival of dear ———: thanks be to Him who has preserved him, and brought him through so many dangerous storms which have been fatal to so many. I think we have always something or other stirring us up to gratitude and love, not only in these outward mercies, but in the more immediate and inward tokens of his love, which are incomprehensible, when he, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, condescends to dwell in the hearts of the meanest of his poor despised people. You, my dear Judith, seem in a great degree to enjoy the love of our dear Redeemer: it is a most peculiar mercy to have your heart and affections, especially at so young an age,

so firmly attached to him: he only could preserve you in the midst of so many trials, and I doubt not, he will still watch over you with an eye of love, and preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom: and may you and I, my dearest Judith, devote our lives to Him whose gifts they are, and finish our course with joy, being ready to meet our Lord at any hour that he shall please to call.

LETTER VIII.

To her Sister Judith.

Nov. 21, 1795.

THOUGH I am sure I can never feel half gratitude enough to my condescending Redeemer, for his great goodness in bearing so long with me, yet, glory be to his name, that I can say with truth; Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee! whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee! at least I think so, and hope there is no fear of my being mistaken. O may he preserve me, and I need not fear what man can do to me! I do expect troubles for following him, but do not fear them, as he has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and remembering that we suffer for his sake, happy are we, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on us. I think I

would not wish to shun so glorious a cross. The bible, my beloved Judith, is only our outward rule, and is no doubt the book of books, but there is "a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place:" this we may have without a word being said outwardly, and is to be found by retiring into the temple of God, which we are; as he saith, ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost; and there he will not fail to manifest himself unto us, as he doth not unto the world; for he is not in the boisterous wind, nor in the earthquake, but in the small still voice; and though we can receive more comfort in thus waiting upon him in outward silence, yet he does not refuse it to us when we are engaged in business, as we turn our minds inward and seek his direction, even with an aspiration, we shall feel our doubts vanish and our souls strengthened, and be enabled to follow our dear Lord whithersoever he goeth; this is what the prophet meant when he said, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, beside thee, O God! what thou hast prepared

for him that waiteth upon thee :” in short, there are more promises made to quietly waiting than any other duty. “ They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” The Psalms are full of the same : and I can say from certain experience, that I have received more happiness from this waiting on my heavenly Father, than I can express with pen and ink. One night when doubting on my not receiving an immediate answer that my sins were forgiven, and fearing they separated me from him, these words were in the strongest manner, sweetly applied to my soul, “ I have blotted out thy transgressions, and as a thick cloud thy sins.”

Try this method, and may you feel the comfort of it.

LETTER IX.

To her Sister Judith.

Jan. 11, 1796.

SINCERELY do I sympathise with my dearest Judith, in her very unpleasant and trying situation; but you have this comfort, that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and that it is when he brings us into the low valley of humiliation, he gives us of his best cordials; it is then he brings us into his banqueting house, and his banner over us is love: and, fear not my dear sister, for you will be delivered from all your adversaries, inward as well as outward; they will, I trust, rather be of use to you, and draw you still nearer to Him, in whom are hid all the treasures of the God-head bodily. I would caution you, my love, from imbibing from your favourite Hervey the idea of imputed righteousness; remember, “without

holiness no man can see the Lord." If actual holiness is not expected, of what use was our Lord's sermon on the mount, when he says, "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven?" for not to the willing only, but to the obedient is the promise made. He says in another place, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you:" "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;" for "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," and if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed: What is he to free us from! He is called Jesus, for he is to save his people from their sins. I fear it is a very dangerous belief, and makes some too secure in what is no where promised, that it is not possible for them to fall off, making them too easy and careless, not considering, that he did not come to save his people *in* their sins, but *from* their sins, that they are to take up their cross daily, and follow him, and that not imaginary, but real holiness is what he meant when he said,

“Be ye holy for I am holy:” but think not my Judith, that I mean that our works can save us, for very far be such a thought from me; for in *us*, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing, but we must take care to distinguish between those works wrought in our wills, and those wrought in us by Him who condescends to dwell in us, and makes the hearts of his people his temple. The life of a Christian must be a continual warfare; there must be a perpetual variance between the old man and the new; but, blessed be the name of the Lord, he will never withhold his gracious assistance from those who seek direction and strength from himself only. My mother has I believe, told you how much mistaken you were, when you thought we were enjoying peace and quietness; our portion outwardly is very different; but glory be to him, we have a comfort and happiness that the world knows not of, and that it can neither give nor take away. How do I pity those, little do they know what they lose, who are pursuing vain phantoms that elude their grasp, and only

lead them farther on in the path of error and vanity, and make their way back (if ever they return) more difficult. I long much to see you and enjoy your much loved society. O may you be kept as in the hollow of the great Shepherd's hand, and be led forth beside the waters of comfort, and be brought to us safe! that we may altogether feed beside the Shepherd's tent, and may know him to be our teacher and never-failing friend in every time of trouble.

LETTER X.

To her Sister Elizabeth.

May 18, 1796.

KNOWING what anxiety my dearest Eliza is in, until she hears from us, I cannot be easy without telling her, we are all as well, as she can expect after so recent a wound.* My beloved mother indeed suffered much in mind and body, but has experienced the everlasting arm of Omnipotence as a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, and as a great rock in a weary land; she is able to sit up and take nourishment, and I trust, in a little time, will be enabled to leave her room. I believe it will

* This letter was written just after hearing of her eldest Brother's death; having some short time before heard of the death of another brother, both in foreign lands: these circumstances are alluded to in a subsequent part of the letter where the expression treble stroke is used.

be a great alleviation to your sorrow to hear, we have had a letter from dear ——; he says he is perfectly well, and the climate is more healthy than formerly. O may he yet be spared to us! for a treble stroke would be hard to bear. Indeed, my beloved Eliza, I have great hopes that our dear —— has been mercifully accepted, and the work has been cut short in righteousness; nothing is too hard for the Almighty; and he had a good heart, and has, I have reason to believe, at times felt the drawings of divine love in his soul; my dearest parent has the consolation to think she told him sufficient to ease her heart on religious subjects.

For all our sakes, my dearest Eliza, take care of thyself; outward comforters avail but little, but in retirement and silent waiting upon the Lord strength is to be renewed: in quietness and confidence shall be thy strength; it is only in silence that the inspeaking small still voice is to be heard; for the Lord is not in the whirlwind, but in the small still voice: this I believe appears strange to *you*, as it did

to me at first; but Oh! try for yourself. Taste and see that the Lord is good. My dearest Eliza, I can write no more, but that we all unitedly, in the bonds of gospel love, desire, that you and my dear aunt may be kept in that peace that passeth all understanding, and which those only can enjoy, whose minds are stayed upon the Prince of Peace.

LETTER XI.

To her Sister Judith.

8th Month 11th, 1796.

IN a measure of that love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods of affliction drown, do I salute thee; though absent in the body, yet as present in the Lord, in whom all his members by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, encrease with the measure of God. O, my beloved sister! what a privilege is it to feel the united influence of gospel love, supporting and strengthening us, and enabling us to bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ; this is the law of love, which sometimes brings me into suffering with thee, as being myself also bound with thee in those testimonies of Jesus, which must be very trying to thee, and my desires are for thee to the God

of all our mercies, that he will preserve, keep, and watch over thee for good, and that he will favour thee and me with a knowledge of his will, and with ability to do it.

My dearest Eliza, thou already knowest, is going, I believe, as fast as possible ; the thread is almost worn, but her immortal soul seems fully prepared, and ripe to enter into the joy of her Lord. She does not seem (except at times) to be so sensible of her situation as at the beginning of her illness, when she told me she did think her sickness would be unto death ; as she seemed awakened one morning as with a person saying those words, "Thou shalt see the King in his beauty ;" which seemed as a message to her from heaven, it left such a sweetness on her mind. She is much drawn into stillness and waiting on the Lord. She told me that some time ago, she felt desirous to be baptized in the Anabaptist way, when she felt it clearly revealed to her, that the only baptism necessary, was that of the Holy Ghost, and that as she received *that*, John's baptism of water, she did not want ; this she told me was before

she knew any thing of Quakers. Is it not an evident proof, if we wanted one, of the tender love of our heavenly Father to his truly devoted, depending children! How does he give them light in their dwellings; while the proud, hard-hearted Egyptians are suffered to grope for a season, in darkness that may be felt!

Dear Eliza has not been able for this last week, to sit up longer than five o'clock, and this day was obliged to go to bed before one, so thou mayest judge how her poor body is worn down; she cannot get rest or ease from extreme pain in her chest, side, and stomach, but by laudanum. These dispensations must be very trying to so weak a frame as my beloved mother's: May the eternal God be her never-failing refuge, and his everlasting arms be her support! is the prayer of all that is feeling within me. There is little in my power to do for her, as I firmly believe all her consolation is, and must be derived from the Comforter himself. We go to meetings when our attendance on Eliza will admit of it. Hannah Stephenson, a minister, sat with us, and spoke comfortably to us,

though she had a prospect of a fiery trial awaiting us beside this great one. We look forward to what a comforting consolation it is, that no affliction for the present appears to be joyous, but grievous, yet afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of holiness to those who are exercised thereby. Give my dear love to Susan and J. —, tell them I trust to hear of their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ; for the right knowledge of him is the root of immortality. I think I may say without asking them, that my mother, aunt, and Eliza, unite in love to thee my precious Judith, with her who feels herself doubly united to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord, and is thy truly affectionate sister,

LUCY USSHER.

Salute those of the household of faith that are particularly dear to me, in my name,

LETTER XII.

To a Friend.

IMPUTE not, O my endeared friend! my long silence to a want of that gratitude and love which fills my heart toward thee, whenever I am capable of any feeling from the right source; but, ah! my way has been so much in the valley of the shadow of death, that all communication, even with thee, who at seasons seems as bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, was quite cut off. I have not found liberty to open the state of my poor tossed mind to any one; but to thee, I believe I may say, that my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: I did hope to have seen thee, and that thy sympathising heart would have afforded suitable instruction or reproof. I look not for consolation or encouragement, but "let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me, it shall be as excellent oil

which shall not break my head." O were I to tell thee the various plungings of my spirit, it would far exceed the bounds of a letter! nor do I think it would be expedient to do so, knowing that patience must have its perfect work, and He whose name is Wonderful, will not lay more upon me than he will enable me to bear: when I look forward, I think my natural strength must fail if the weight of suffering should continue much longer; but I feel the grain of faith is mercifully afforded, though secretly, to my drooping soul. And shall I not leave myself in his holy hands, to do with me as he pleases? O yes! my beloved friend, for surely I wanted emptying; under the sense of which it has frequently been the language of my heart in times past, O turn thy hand upon me, purely purge away my dross, and take away all my tin!

Dearly farewell,
Thy truly affectionate afflicted,

LUCY USSHER.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS,

&c.



JUDITH, the third sister, died of a consumption after a short confinement, early in the year 1798, aged eighteen years and about three months.

This precious child had by nature somewhat more to subdue than her sisters, but being daily favoured with the touches of divine truth, and made sensible of its attractive loveliness, she hesitated not, but gave herself up to its powerful influence, knowing all she could do was to be as passive clay in the hand of the great Potter: by thus submitting, the Lord in whom she delighted, worked mightily for her deliverance, and subdued all things unto himself.—Her baptisms were deep and incommunicable; she dwelt much in inward retire-

ment, and her words were few and weighty.— She bore her last sickness with unremitted patience and meekness; she often said, there was no cloud before her. Two days previous to her decease she was obliged to take to her bed, when she sweetly said, had it been permitted, she hoped to have been of the number of those who were not confined to bed, that she might not give trouble. The next morning her mental faculties were much impaired, she seemed to lose the recollection of those about her, until one of her brothers came into the room, when she called out, “Oh, ——, all is peace, sweet peace!” Before her departure she seemed long engaged in supplication but these words only were clearly understood, “It is all grace, free grace and mercy!” After which, with upraised eyes and hands, expressed she saw an angel; when quickly her sweet spirit took its flight to the mansions of eternal rest and peace.

She was admitted into membership with the Society of Friends about eighteen months before her decease.

A covenant with God made by her when about thirteen years old :

“ O Almighty and incomprehensible Being ! I am now about to fulfil what has been long foretold by the prophet Isaiah, “ One shall say, I am the Lord’s, and another shall call himself by the name of Israel ;” I do here before thee this night, O my heavenly Father ! subscribe with my hand that I am thine ; and I do, from the bottom of my heart, desire no portion but thee my God : deny, or give me what thou pleasest, but never let me be without thee, and I shall have enough ; in thee is centered all my happiness. I do from this moment renounce all the pomps and vanities of this false, wicked world ; but, Oh ! what have I to renounce, but what would for ever make me miserable !

“ Let angels and archangels be my witnesses ; if ever I am so base as to break this my covenant, let my name witness against me,

1793,

“ JUDITH USSHER.”

LETTER I.

To her Mother.

1794.

I MUCH wish to be with my dearest friends, to retire oftener, and to have more communion with my God ; that God who will never leave us if we look up to him at all times and places : O that we may cleave to him with our whole heart, that when temptations arise we may not be like the ruffled sea, but that we may look with fresh confidence to the rock from whence we are hewn, and receive fresh strength ! may this be all our case.

LETTER II.

To her Mother.

1795.

I REJOICE that my sweet Lucy enjoys such true happiness in our dear Lord; may she be kept by the power of God unto salvation; may he keep her from the poisonous snares and temptations of the world: It was he who drew us, blessed be his name, from the yawning gulph which leads to everlasting misery, to know Him that is true, and Jesus Christ whom he sent to perform for us, what, by reason of our sinful nature, we could not, by thought, word, or deed, perform for ourselves; that by faith in his perfect righteousness and meritorious death, we may have a key to the blessed mansions of eternity. What a delightful, but much neglected book is the bible! how should it be valued by the children of God! in it are promises to support us in the midst of temptations,

and under the rod of adversity, and to keep us humble when providence with his liberal hand disposes his favours more profusely. May we know, at least in some degree, to value such a God, who of his great mercy, has, in this our pilgrimage, given us such innumerable, great, and valuable blessings, that we may not only from these, but from his more immediate promises, firmly believe, that he will never leave us nor forsake us. When I look back on my past life, and consider the great mercies of my God, my heart exults with fearful joy; with fear, lest before I finish my course, (knowing that in myself I am a poor weak nothing,) I should in the least draw back, for then my God would have no pleasure in me, and I could no longer call him, my Abba. O that my Lord may keep me from such an end, for in him alone is my righteousness, so in him only have I any strength! O may He who has begun a good work in me, never cease continuing it until it is perfectly completed! May you and I, much beloved friends, when time shall be no more,

ГЛАВА ПЯТАЯ
 Глава пятая

meet in that boundless immensity, and join those happy souls that eternally sing hallelujahs to the Lamb, who has washed us in his blood, and through whose most perfect righteousness we only can and will be admitted there. My dear mother, what shall I say? I am grieved, I tremble, for my poor ———: O that our prayers may go up as incense before our heavenly Father for her everlasting welfare! that the blessed Spirit may with its enlivening influence, draw the veil from off her understanding, and shew her her wretched condition, and at the same glance, a dear and dying Saviour, who will, if she does not resist his visitations, wash her in his sacred blood. I conclude with a line that often occurs to me, particularly when in company with those with whom I am surrounded,

“They build too low, who build beneath the
skies,” &c.

LETTER III.

To her Sister Elizabeth.

1795.

WILL my dearest and most beloved Eliza accept of a few lines from her Judith, who not only loves her with the strongest ties of sisterly affection, but feels united with it some of that love which the children of our heavenly Father feel for each other? I find I am as utterly unable to do any thing for myself towards my eternal salvation, as a poor helpless infant; that even the thoughts of my heart are evil. He well knew what was in man, who said, the heart is desperately wicked, who can know it? O then, what inconceivable love was that, which made our dearest Saviour come in the form of a servant, clothed with flesh! He who hated the least shadow of iniquity, to bear the heavy weight of our sins upon him! O delightful

thought ! that though our sins be as scarlet, yet washed in his most precious blood, they shall be like wool ; or red as crimson, they shall be white as snow : still, my dearest Eliza, I want that strong witness in myself, which is promised to all God's children, for which I wait with patience till his appointed time ; for I have a strong hope, that He who has begun a good work in me, will not leave it until he has perfectly completed it. I often think how gracious the Lord has been in drawing our poor sinful souls to him, who were gone astray like poor lost sheep from the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls ; and though the means seemed grievous at the time, (for I am sure it was brought about by my illness,) it will teach us for the future to kiss the rod with cheerfulness, not only without repining, but with glad hearts, knowing that every thing shall work together for good to them that love God. I do love him, for he first loved me, and I would not give up the comfortable feeling of his love for all the false pleasures of this world, even were they all united. I feel much obliged to

you and my dear aunt for your tender concern about my going to——, for fear I should be drawn away by the people of this world; were I to trust to myself, I might fear, but not more there than here. I throw myself entirely on my heavenly Father, for of him cometh my help: none of us can know who may be made use of as an instrument to draw some poor soul to think seriously of their want of a Saviour. May we go on from grace to grace, from faith to faith, till our bodies are laid in the peaceful grave, and our souls are exalted to the mansions of eternal bliss, which were prepared for us from the foundations of the world.

LETTER IV.

To her Mother.

1795.

O MY dear mother, are we not poor, weak, frail mortals in ourselves! for my part, every day I live, I feel the great depravity of my nature, which without the interference of divine love, would for ever lead me astray, but all praise and glory be attributed to that God who has led me to that fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, where I may wash and be cleansed! I long much to be with you, yet may the Almighty's will be done: I have every reason to be thankful, for his arm has been extended to preserve me unstung amidst thistles. You who were in —— though for a short time, must know my very unpleasant situation, better than my pen can describe, and though this is but a small village, its inhabitants are alike engrossed, having their

thoughts groveling in earthly vanities, when they know not the minute their tottering cottages may be rased, and the unprepared possessors be compelled to quit their beloved abodes. The Lord be praised, who though he afflicts, does not shut up his bowels of compassion from us. Last —, being —'s day for seeing company, I had more time for retirement; and in the evening on opening my bible, this promise in the 54th of Isaiah (with others in the same chapter) was comfortably instilled into my soul, "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires, &c. &c." I do every thing I can that I think may be the means of drawing the hearts of — — to Him who is ready to receive them as his adopted children, if they will not be deaf to his kind entreaties.

I feel much for my dear —; may she think seriously before her precious soul takes flight into unknown regions: may God in mercy retard it in its aged castle, until the north wind blow, and by its powerful influence

make her sensible of her wretched condition ; then may the south wind, breathing its benign influence, calm the severity of the former, and discover a royal advocate, who is ready to do all, the most undone sinner can want or expect. May my dear —— also imbibe advantage by her correspondence with our beloved Eliza ; may she be convinced of her state, and of the great peace and happiness which the sons and daughters of Jehovah enjoy : but I rely on the mercy and power of Him who has drawn the hearts of so many of our very undeserving family to himself. Have you heard any thing of our dear———? may God keep him as he has done hitherto, from danger, and grant that he may yet be one of those diamonds which compose our royal Master's diadem. Some branches in the vine shoot up with great velocity, while others with less speed advance, I trust with equal firmness ; your Judith has been one of the latter. I acknowledge I have not as yet experienced the great comfort of silent waiting on my dear Lord, which you were so kind as to recommend me by experience, and by giving

me a desire of it; but consider, my dear friend, your outward tranquillity and quiet state, while I am exposed on all sides to thistles and briars, from which, without the aid of an invisible, but supporting arm, I could never escape unhurt; but I must not repine, and as He who said, they should not be ashamed that wait for him, cannot lie, I will wait in faith.

LETTER V.

To her Mother.

1795.

I AM sorry your health still continues poorly. I trust in the great Physician that if it be his will to afflict the body, he will of his great and never ceasing mercy, instil the more solid comfort into the soul, and patience to endure his chastening, which is all sent in love. Read from 5th to 8th verse of the 12th chap. of Hebrews, and 11th verse of ditto, there is comfort both for you and me; may we receive it as such. O may you and I my dear mother, go on from faith to faith, from grace to grace, overcoming through the strength of our dear Almighty champion, all enemies both spiritual and temporal! though our bodies may be sore pricked with thorns and briars, and our hearts grieved for all remaining sins; let us with humble faith rely on the promised word for help, remembering that he that loveth us will love us to the end, and the more he chastens, the more strength he gives to endure, &c.

LETTER VI.

To her Mother.

Oct. 21, 1795.

WHEN I received your last letter my mind was eased of many uneasy fears, which arose in it by reason of the long silence which had prevailed; it also administered comfort to hear by it, that you enjoy the greatest of peace, by drawing from the fountain head of bliss, true and solid happiness, which is there only to be found.—My dear mother, I am quite afraid of ———, her whole time and attention is given up to novels; they are her study even before breakfast: I asked her the other evening what she thought of people being born of the spirit; her answer was, she never thought about it, that if she did all the good she could, it was all that could be required of her; when I try to bring up the conversation, she immediately evades it. I have no hopes but in Him with whom nothing is impossible. Every blessing attend you, even to the utmost.

LETTER VII.

To her Mother.

Nov. 5, 1795.

I THINK I cannot leave this till our return from —; but protected by my dear Lord, I shall be safe wherever his divine hand shall direct. I have long found that we cannot always do the things that we would; but I must not, I will not repine; the Lord's will be done. What you say of dear Lucy gave me great pleasure: may that holy Inspirer who has drawn her heart, still keep it fixed on that object who is the most lovely among ten thousand, and keep her disentangled from the snare of Satan and the world, whose delusive pleasures I sincerely hope may no longer have any charms for her. May she prefer imitating the industrious bee, to decorating herself in the gaudy plumes of the butterfly. We must trust almighty power for the safety of dear —, He who holds the winds in his fist, and the waters in the hollow of his hand, is able, and I trust willing to protect him.

LETTER VIII.

To her Mother.

Jan. 29, 1796.

I LOOK forward with delight to the time when I may have the company of my nearest and dearest friends. You know not whether I may not sometimes accompany you to meetings. Always, my beloved mother, since unrestrained by you, you were not unacquainted with what my desires were before I left you, which are now greatly increased. I am not ignorant that persecution awaits me from every quarter, from what you tell me of yourself and my dearest Lucy; but leaning entirely on my Beloved, and armed with his strength, though in myself entirely helpless, I shall be enabled to share it with you, and pass through this world, regardless of the gilded, but poisonous pleasures it offers, while pity predominates in my heart for those, who are still heedless of a superior bliss, making my Saviour's will the rule of my actions,

while his blessed spirit is the guide of my ways, and the director of all my paths.

I am obliged to you for the texts you have pointed out to me, they are really delightful, and when by faith presented to ourselves, convey true comfort; I would add the epistle of James.

LETTER IX.

To her Mother.

Feb. 2, 1796.

I RECEIVED my dear mother's letter, and though I sensibly feel for your situation, it gave me pleasure to find that your heart and affections are so irrevocably fixed where your treasure is, that the scorning and malicious slanders of a town, blinded by its follies, are insufficient to shake your faith, grounded on a foundation more lasting than the hills or mountains. How do I pity the wretched state of our acquaintance! My heart is depressed, and my spirits languid; methinks I hear my tender parent, ever anxious for my welfare, requesting me to disclose to her the reasons; consider for a while, and your momentary fears will vanish; you that wade through such hot persecutions to attend to the voice of our Lord wherever he

calls, must feel for one who would accompany you rejoicing, but who is forced to act contrary to the will of her dear Master. Am I not as one that turns aside from his flock when desired to follow their footsteps, and to keep close to the Shepherd's tent! Here I am in the midst of worldlings, when commanded to come out from among them, and to separate myself from them. My Sunday, which I would be happy to devote entirely to my own good, I am obliged to spend with people who seem ignorant how to hallow it, and to hear the sacred name continually profaned. When that day is thus spent, you may nearly guess how the rest of the week revolves; cards and novels, the two prevailing amusements; the latter I am unavoidably obliged to hear, the consequence of which, not seldom, draws a flood of tears from my eyes, for some silly sentence too often obtruding upon my thoughts, naturally prone to evil, when I would have them fixed far above the world and its mean enjoyments: with the Psalmist I can truly say, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of my Lord;

my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."* May you and I, my highly favoured parent, regardless of any name by which the vain world would brand us, follow their example, by making all our actions coincide not only with our Saviour's express commands, but wherever we can discern the least indication of his will; and when we have done all, he must be "the Lord our righteousness."



* I have studied the chapters my dear mother particularly mentioned, and though personally unknown, think your new acquaintances a happy set of people.

LETTER X.

To her Mother.

February 12, 1796.

I THIS morning received my dear mother's letter, which, like the preceding ones, was dictated by that affection which surpasses the fondness of a parent to the darling of her heart, when unenforced by a stronger spiritual tie. Your advice is always salutary, because directed by that influence which cannot err; but be assured, my ever valued friend, that what I cannot reconcile with the word of truth, will be unable to influence my conduct: pardon my blunt assertion, you have encouraged me to make it, our souls cast anchor on the same immoveable, sacred rock, and the comfortable gospel truths, are, I trust the firm belief of us both, besides I know not whether even in outward forms we differ; as I have many ques-

tions to ask you on that subject, I propose deferring it till we meet. Let the world say what they please, if the Lord will, I am resolved I will adhere to the scriptures as far as I can discern his will; and that where his word is simply and truly preached, without being mixed with the doctrines of men, there I will resort, be they ever so branded with the most infamous of names, and esteemed the dregs and refuse of the earth. Our blessed Lord has taught us, both by word and experience, that we cannot serve both God and mammon, and that a man's enemies are those of his own household. I thank God, some of the principal, most beloved of mine, are fellow-travellers in the same narrow road to Zion; but I know I have many enemies to encounter, and having many sweet and precious promises of divine succour from above, I will trust and not be afraid.

I have now, unembarrassed, laid before the friend of my bosom some of my real sentiments, to whom I shall not only be ever ready, but shall esteem it a great favour to be permitted

to throw open the door of my heart, that there unveiled you may view its contents, being assured you will continually discover to your Judith, every thought, whether great or small. I look forward with great delight, to when I need not have recourse to my pen to converse with my invaluable friends. Remember me to ———: O that they would now in this day of salvation, hearken to the word of life, believe its reviving truths, and accept of the free salvation offered by the wounds of a dying Saviour, that when they depart this life, they may fall asleep in Christ, and awake to joys unknown!

LETTER XI.

To her Mother.

March 2, 1796.

NEXT Tuesday I trust I shall be restored to friends rendered dearer than ever by a long and painful absence, and unspeakably precious by ties superior to those by which nature has united us: yes, my ever valued parent, if that God who superintends the goings of all mortals will now favour.

Yet think not I shall leave this place without a sigh,—pity strengthened by love for those with whom I have so long lived, has stationed itself in my heart: what words, when present could not do, may, if aided by divine grace, be effected in a few lines. There are many here whose blindness I pity, while I despise the baneful pleasures they pursue.

LETTER XII.

To her Sister Elizabeth.

July 7, 1796.

SINCE I received your letter, my dearly beloved Eliza, I have often felt an inclination to salute you with my pen, and I have as many times deferred it. Ah! is not this too often the case, even in circumstances of far more weighty consideration, which being from time to time delayed help to weaken the poor mind, and at last lies dormant? when, on the contrary, if the inward monitor was immediately and implicitly obeyed, though to try our faith it may sometimes lead us through the dark valley, where there is nothing to be seen on either side, yet at the end, what sweet peace, even that which passeth natural understanding, would the tried, but obedient mind, be favoured to enjoy! Excuse any past deficiency, and receive

this from a sister who sincerely loves you, and who I think sensibly feels for you, during the complicated trials with which your heavenly Father sees meet temporarily to afflict you. Remember, my dear sister, that though no affliction may for the present appear to be joyous but grievous, yet at the end it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, unto them who are exercised thereby: many are the trials and the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord in whom is their whole trust and dependance, will, in his own time deliver them out of all. May my Eliza feel under the chastening rod of her tender Father, which is sent in love, the great I Am's supporting staff secretly strengthening and comforting her precious soul, is the ardent but feeble breathing of my soul for you; for he is the staff of living bread, with which I believe he will feed you himself, and give you of the living waters of the heavenly fountain to drink, in great measure, and will never leave you nor forsake you. I trust that seeing my beloved mother and Lucy, and their dwelling with you for a time, will be

made a means of comfort to you; for truly I find their company salutary and delightful unto my poor mind, which has of late been much tossed on many hidden as well as visible things, the prospect of a separation from such truly valuable friends, has for some time been very painful to me, and unless a portion of inward strength is secretly handed unto my soul, I fear I shall not part with them with that resignation unto the divine will, (by whose immediate appointment, I believe we are thus to be separated) with which I desire to be supported, through all the appointed or permitted trials which may fall to my share, while passing through this tribulatory life; and may we under every dispensation be enabled to say, "Father, not my will, but thine alone be done." I do not wish to tire my beloved Eliza, therefore I will abridge this letter: Give my dear love to my aunt; may you both feel that He who is the pure light of the spiritual soul, your secret supporter and never-failing help in every time of need; your trials may be great, but I believe they never will exceed the strength administered to

bear them with Christian patience. My pen would run on, but I must retard its progress, with committing you to the care of Him who careth for you:—From your unworthy sister, who loves you more than in an affectionate manner,

JUDITH USSHER.

P. S. I have by writing you these few lines, eased my mind of a burden with which I have been long depressed.

LETTER XIII.

To a Friend.

July 12, 1796.

I TAKE up my pen to salute my dearly beloved friend, who I was in hopes of seeing this day at meeting, and afterwards spending an hour with, but from outward circumstances, and from what I can gather from inward feeling, I shall be, I apprehend, in my place by staying this day. Though apparently separated from you, my mind often pays you a secret visit, and sweetly remembers the few minutes that I was favoured to spend in your company, when last in town, which were too sweet and salutary to be soon forgotten.

I could have staid, and in the evening I scarce knew how to part. There is much to be felt from the influence of other spirits, which I have of late been led to consider as parti-

clearly dangerous unto me, in my present state, and of course, requires a continual guard over thoughts, words, and actions. Ah! how weak and unstable am I, to be placed in so perilous a situation; may I then be enabled to get up into my watch tower, and remain there during all the various vicissitudes of this wintry season; for surely the Lord is a strong tower of defence unto the weak and weary soul that flies to him for refuge from its destroyers, as David did from the hand of Saul. I have renewedly likened my present travel to the Israelites' journey through the barren wilderness, to which my feelings incline me to believe it bears some small resemblance; but, ah! saith my soul, may it not through disobedience be cut off there, but pass forward without murmuring, and be content to dip deep in the baptizing waters of Jordan: and even, if it is seen meet by the great Master, that it should pass through the furnace, so that it may be cleansed from all dross, and the filth of the flesh, with which I feel so encumbered, that my soul secretly mourns, and feebly breathes unto

its beloved, for the refining influence to pass over it, that it may be fit for the Master's inspection, and in due season enter the promised land. While my fears are continually, in some measure, raised for myself, and the watchman, as it were, sounding the alarm in mine ears in this land of spiritual drought, my soul is at seasons, secretly exercised for my beloved—and——, (who, though separate, I think their situations pretty equal) lest the ever watchful adversary of their souls' happiness, should beguile them as he did Eve, and take the word of life out of their hearts, and plant therein thorns and briars: Ah! that on the contrary, they may be as engrafted branches in the heavenly vine, bringing forth much goodly fruit to the praise and honour of Him who is the head!

I received a letter this morning from my beloved mother; she seemed thankful to our blessed Lord for a delightful voyage of seventeen hours; they were then going to a little meeting, it being first day: she said, I must not expect favourable accounts of our dear Eliza, which indeed, from the commencement of her

Illness, I had but little reason to hope for, knowing the sweet frame of her mind, I think I could in some measure, patiently resign her unto her dear Lord, with whom, I believe her precious soul will, on its exit from mortality, ever after reside, &c.

LETTER XIV.

To her Mother.

July 15, 1796.

MY dearly beloved mother's letter, conveying the pleasing intelligence of her safety, and my dearest Lucy, was truly acceptable unto me. I trust you have by this, concluded your journey with equal cause for gratitude to the great unerring Disposer of us, unworthy worms. May we be sensible of his favours so unmerited, and render unto him his due tribute of grateful praise! Ah! how sensibly am I grieved, when my thoughts are engaged in a retrospective view of the infinite mercy of our heavenly Father unto my soul, in redeeming it from the bonds of Egyptian slavery, and his condescending goodness in renewedly feeding me with such portions of food as he sees best and most convenient for it, still to find therein, so much

of the adamantine nature which has not yet been penetrated by the softening rays of the sun of righteousness. May you be preserved, my beloved mother, through all the various trials that are in infinite wisdom allotted to you; yea, and though you may renewedly, have to pass, as through the fiery furnace, I do believe, you will be upheld by an Almighty hand. An inward comfortable persuasion has attended my mind, which, though I am fearful of mentioning, I believe I shall not find peace in my mind unless I write it to you; though the Lord may please to cause you to pass through the burning fiery furnace, and the flames so hot, that you may be encompassed with fear lest you should suffer in the best sense—yet fear not; as certain as he accompanied the three children, he will be with you, and not suffer those robes with which he has clothed you, to be either singed or scorched by the flames.

Ah! my beloved mother, what great fear has encompassed my heart, in communicating to
I

you these few words, knowing how very deceitful the heart is, lest they should have sprung from a corrupt spring ; but if I am not greatly deceived in my feelings, they were not of my own creating, or written in my own will. I fear you found our beloved Eliza worse, as to bodily health, than you expected, but her precious soul, raised above the cares of the body, and calmly resigned to the will of Him who makes all things work together for good, to them who love and fear him.

LETTER XV.

To her Mother.

July 23, 1796.

My beloved mother's letter gave me pleasure, so far as it communicated her agreeable journey, and safe arrival at Bristol; but when I heard of the many symptoms, which apparently threaten the approaching dissolution of our beloved Eliza, it then contained intelligence which was truly painful, but was not more than I was prepared for. It is my desire to be restrained from wishing to detain her precious soul from entering into that blissful eternity, into which, I believe, it will undoubtedly enter, richly laden with heavenly fruit, when time to her here shall be no more. May we each be willing, tranquilly to resign her unto Him from whom we have received

her; not only, because she may depart, but because it is the good pleasure of our heavenly Father to take her unto himself, for which blessed purpose he has, in early life, prepared her immortal soul. Though a separation from her would be a severe trial, and to you, my dear mother, a season of renewed affliction; yet as you are witness to the composed tranquillity and resignation which is apparent in her countenance, and which by her conversation, evidently denotes her angelic frame of mind, and readiness to depart from this state of mortality, and enter into the undisturbed regions of eternity, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest; where "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat," but they shall be led by the "living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!" What consolations must these weighty considerations, when weighed in an even balance, tend to impart to the feeling mind of my valued mother! May the Almighty arm of divine love continually surround, sup-

port, comfort, and strengthen you ; and may you, in the day of conflicting trials, secretly view the royal sceptre of divine approbation held forth, encouraging your precious soul to keep above the many waters which threaten to overwhelm it, is the secret and renewed desire of my soul, which feels at times so stripped and void of what is truly good, that it is almost led to question, whether it ever experienced the living operative power of truth at work therein : but at other seasons, I am almost willing to believe, these are in some measure, suggestions raised by my ever-watchful adversary ; however, it has undoubtedly felt in a very small degree, somewhat resembling the blind man, when he could but imperfectly distinguish "men as trees walking : " May I be willing renewedly to plunge into the waters of Siloam. Ah ! how is my mind bowed down under a sense of inherent corruption, with which it is encompassed : the language which I still use is become so great a weight, that at times I have remained silent, for want of power to express

myself; I know not whether a change therein, will be soon or late required of me, but from what I have long felt, I believe I shall be called on to use that which is most consistent with the simplicity of truth, while dwelling here: May I, when the command goes forth, in obedience thereto, be enabled to cast this burden at the feet of the great Shepherd of his sheep, and humbly to wait there for such portions of strength, as he sees meet to administer.

Respecting our beloved——, my grandfather is perfectly satisfied that you should have him to do as you please with him, and bring him up in any religious society most agreeable to you; as to the nomination, he seems quite indifferent, so that he lead an honest life. He also wishes to have him brought up to any employment most approved of by you; he says, he will not interfere, and desires me to say what I could to ease your mind. Have we not, my beloved mother, abundant reason, in a feeling sense of gratitude, to own that the Lord doth wonderfully turn the hearts of the children of men, so as to perform his gracious purpose to-

wards them, who endeavour simply to follow him in the path of truth? I doubt not but thy heart has been already warmed with it, in a more lively manner than words can express.

LETTER XVI.

To a Friend.

7th Month 27th, 1736.

I THINK I feel as if I had made a sort of promise to my beloved friend, that I would inform her when I heard from my dear mother respecting my precious sister. I now sit down with an intention to forward a few lines, hoping my past seeming deficiency, will not be regarded as a breach of that love which I undoubtedly feel for you, and is, I believe, all the good that springs from this heart, unworthy the sympathy of my friends. My dear mother and Lucy were favoured to arrive safe and well at the Hotwells, the third evening after their landing in Milford, where they found our dear Eliza as bad as they could have expected; a cough attended with much pain, spitting, night sweats, and a continual fever, are all symptoms tending to confirm our apprehensions of its being a consumption. My dear mother men-

tioned that the physicians have but little hopes, and that she has none: but through this disease which only afflicts the body, she carries in her countenance an angelic smile, which denotes her sweet frame of mind, the undisturbed peace which veils it as with a mantle, and her readiness to quit this vale of tears, when the heavenly messenger calls her from hence into the bosom of her dear Lord. If it is the determination of a Providence that cannot err, to deprive us of her at this early stage of life, when youth, and those christian graces which are the fruits of the Spirit of God, seem to arrive at their full bloom, may we but be resigned to the gracious will, and supported under the chastening hand, of a tender Father, and consoled when we consider into whose care we commit her immortal soul: for surely I believe the day's work is almost finished, and that she is ripe for that eternity, into which I doubt not she is about to enter. Oh! that we may each be preserved through all the probations and deep baptisms which necessarily attend these mortal bodies, and be enabled to

keep in our respective places, that so when the awful errand alights at our doors, that time to us here shall be no longer, we may with composure look back on our past lives, and forward with holy unintermixed joy! While I am ready to crave that our latter days may thus close, yet a hope scarce remains that I shall attain to such an end. Ah! did but my beloved friend know the state of this corrupt heart, I am apt to believe, pity, rather than love, would kindle in her soul for me. My mind has been for some time greatly depressed and brought very low, under a feeling sense of the great depravity of my nature, which seems engrafted therein, and like a subtle serpent, to entwine round my inward parts. When walking a few days ago in a garden, a lily attracted my attention; then how did the thought sink deep into my soul, that the soul that appears with acceptance in the presence of the Most High, must be clad in garments as pure and white as that lovely flower. How did I, and do I, fear I shall never attain to the being clothed with these unspotted robes, which I am persuaded

is the beauty of the renewed soul. Oh! when with a heart overloaded with breathings, I would look towards the mercy seat to be so cleansed, and washed from my great corruptions, by that power which alone contains efficacy sufficient to wipe off those stains with which I am polluted, I feel unworthy to hope for any thing from thence, and sighs are the language I utter; Daniel's pathetic complaint is what my soul has adopted, and is most expressive of my state, my "comeliness is turned in me into corruption, and I retain no strength."

Being prevented from sending this yesterday, I propose adding a few lines before I conclude. On retiring last evening to my chamber, and endeavouring to gather into an inward silence, my mind was for a while involved in darkness; when unexpectedly I felt that now was the appointed time, in obedience to the great Shepherd, I should no longer use that language which is far from being agreeable to the simplicity of truth, and which has long been, more or less, a burden almost intolerable for me to bear; then I was desirous, that if it was

the voice of truth I heard, I might on opening the bible, meet with some passage that would confirm it; but instead thereof, these words were impressed on my mind, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." When I arose this morning the subject again opened, and at the same time many besetting difficulties occurred, which I knew I had not power to surmount, unless the all-supporting arm succoured me in that time of need, and there seemed to arise a wish that the command had not yet been given, which I hope was accompanied with a fear lest I should move before the right time; but these, and many other words, seemed to be brought into my recollection, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams." My mind cannot be sufficiently bowed down in grateful acknowledgements for these unmerited mercies, of which I am an unworthy partaker: Oh! that I may be enabled continually to wait in child-like simplicity at wisdom's gate with mine in-

ward ear open, to receive her instruction, and hearken to her counsel; for surely she is a tree of that life to which I feel not entitled to approach. My dear Susan desired me to give her dear love to thee and dear ——:

In much love, I remain,
my valued friend's very affectionate

JUDITH USSHER.

LETTER XVII.

To her Mother.

8th Month 12th, 1793.

I RECEIVED thy affectionate salutation, my beloved mother, when last in town, wherein thou tenderly expressed thy solicitude for me, in the promotion of my spiritual welfare. Oh! that it may not prove ineffectual: but how little do I feel of that growth and stability in the best things which I painfully observed thy saying, my letter gave thee pleasure to hear of; for surely, I am apprehensive that could I lay open my heart before thee, the various feelings of which, I may truly say, I do not myself understand, thou would be more inclined to take up with me, a song of lamentation, than to hope thou hast in me, a plant growing up in the garden of the Lord; to feel myself enclosed therein, and He, who my soul

fervently desires to be unto me, the chief among ten thousand, a wall on the right hand and on the left, is an experience which I much wish for, but I know myself to be unfit to be made sensible of so great a blessing. Thou may have observed before now, an alteration which has taken place, since my last to thee, which, I humbly trust, was in obedience to the revealed will of the great I AM, manifested to me in the secret of my heart, which, when I endeavoured, though in much weakness to perform, strength was mercifully administered, to enable me to be faithful unto the little committed unto me. Oh! that we may, each of us, be continually kept in the simple track of entire dedication, and perfect obedience, for therein I am satisfied the soul is, at seasons, favoured with a degree of that undefiled peace which the world knows not of. The trials and conflicts of my mind, for some time past, have been greater than I believe it meet for me to mention even to thee, my beloved mother: I could almost wish to be as Elijah, hid from the world in a cave, yet having him for a companion

whom he alone sought for. Solitude and retirement are what I feel most easy to myself, if I can justly so stile any situation in my present state of mind, for the cloud that seemed to rest upon my tabernacle is departed, my inward labour is redoubled, and I find not that repose I vainly seek in my secret closet, the doleful habitation of my soul. I do mourn over myself, being in general so deeply clad in the sable robes of spiritual night, and at times so remote from infinite goodness, that I much fear a state of abstractedness therefrom, is approaching. Oh! that I may still rely on Almighty providence, and remain wholly trusting in him, that though he slay me, I may fall at his feet. I was pleased at the account thou gave me of thyself, that (even in the midst of thy great trouble, which causes, I doubt not, agonizing pangs to be felt at seasons, in the prospect of a separation from our precious Eliza,) thy grateful heart is made sensible of the unfailing mercies showered down upon thee, by an Almighty hand. Oh! when will the day come, that I can feelingly join thee in sacred melody; for, truly, my

Heart is so oppressed, that to retire from the face of visible things, into a deserted corner of the world, would be a situation most suitable to the barrenness of my soul; but if it be my allotted portion to pass through this vale of tears in the spirit of heaviness, I desire to be content, remembering the past times, when the fountain of life was livingly opened, and I made sensible of its refreshing draught. R. J. received a letter from ———; he says, “Give my dear love to E. U. and precious children, who remain as living epistles, written in my heart to this very moment: I know not that I am commissioned to say more, than that, I believe them to be particularly under the favour of heaven; and that He who loves his own from the beginning, loveth them unto the end, and that he will never leave them nor forsake them.”

Tell my beloved Lucy, with my dear love, that I think I can safely say, that scarcely a day passes without my having her more or less in my mind; and though I more and more feel, as if the liv-

ing fountain of life was drying up, yet that in a dejected hour, the remembrance of the sweet influence of her precious spirit, is salutary and refreshing unto me. My dear love to my beloved Eliza and aunt, in which Susan joins to thyself and Lucy, and

I remain thy unworthy, but I think
truly affectionate daughter,

JUDITH USSHER.

LETTER XVIII.

To her Mother.

9th Month 9th, 1796.

WAS it not my beloved mother's request, to hear from me once a week, it seems to me most probable, my pen would be at this time unoccupied, and while I take it up, I am feelingly sensible of my great incapacity, acceptably to offer thee any thing. However, this I am persuaded, that thine and my beloved Lucy's consolations, (for I think my spirit, though feebly, salutes you both in your very tribulated path,) are all derived from that unadulterated fountain, which issueth in due time unto the poor, tried, and weary soul, an inexhaustible stream. Thy sweet letter, my valued mother, even before I opened it, brought a peace to my poor mind to which I am mostly a stranger ; perhaps it is this

spirit which formerly discovered itself in the multitude, when they followed Jesus only for the loaves and fishes, that has fastened upon me; but I may truly say, that I am far from wishing to indulge it, rather desiring to feel the craving appetite of the corrupt will so mortified, as in all things entirely to give up to the turnings of the divine hand. A fast has been however, I believe in much wisdom, dispensed, the living bread handed in secret, being long withheld; may we therefore, now be preserved from kindling sparks of our own, or endeavouring to make a substitute in the absence of our beloved; for, I trust no sensual enjoyment, nor any thing less than the immediate presence of Him, whom we each desire to be in us, the Alpha and Omega, can yield our souls that for which mine in secret mourneth. Though Belial may, at such times as these, strive to turn our hearts from the King of Israel, yet let us, suspecting him in all our ways, turn a deaf ear to his malicious whispers, remembering that, "he savoureth not the things that be of God, but those which be of man," because thereby his do-

minion is exalted. From experience I may say, it is far from being easy, when best help is withdrawn, to shut out the transforming enemy ; it is then he works hardest, and with most prevailing strength in the poor soul, in blocking up the way from the entrance of the river of life ; can I but preserve an avenue for its return, I believe it will be by hard wrestling. Could I but indulge that hope with which thou endeavours to encourage me, that the darkness which hath been so long in my soul, is by the Lord, suffered to be there for this blessed end, to ground and settle it in virtue ; I should not only be content, but rejoice, I think in some measure ; however, let us rest in patience the appointed season, and not add to our afflictive trials, by an unsubjected will, but rather in all things, give ourselves up to the forming of our heavenly Father's hand, remembering we are but clay, and consequently ignorant of the means which may most efficaciously tend to the purifying our earthen vessels. While I write, I feel an un-

usual earnestness, that we may each be prepared and ready, with dedicated hearts, to step forward at the call of our great Master, in any line of duty and devotedness, however repugnant to flesh and blood, and acquit ourselves so as to bring praise to the great and eternal name, regardless of how much self is abased. But from what quarter arise these sensations? for the minute before, I was ready to acknowledge myself destitute of any that had in them the savour of life, it being my daily humbling experience, to explore the path of obscurity, being weary of myself and all visible objects. I have wished to pass along unnoticed, having my name blotted out of the book of remembrance, but this is not the will of Him, who prayed not that we should be taken out of the world, but that we should be kept from the evil of it.

The account of our precious Eliza conveyed some comfort to me, though she had to drink so deep of the cup of suffering, and little likelihood of the dear body remaining much longer with you. Bear up through

all, beloved mother and sister, with Christian fortitude, and may the arm of Omnipotence be your support; for I believe, nothing else could carry you through so great afflictions. I remain in that love, which at this time flows towards you, my valued mother and sisters, more than affectionate,

JUDITH USSHER.

LETTER XIX.

To a Friend.

10th Month 4th, 1796.

THY frequent kind enquiries and many messages of love, my dear friend, to one who not only feels unworthy regard, but even the notice of any whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, were acceptable: gratitude seemed before now to have prompted the dictating a few lines in acknowledgment thereof; however, if my long silence requires an excuse, let the distressed situation of my poor mind plead one, when I tell thee, that for a considerable time past it has not only been stripped of every sensible enjoyment, (were it confined to this, I think I should not repine,) but it has almost continually laboured under such an oppressive weight, the burden whereof has at times, particularly of late, seemed almost insupportable: that in the bitterness of my soul I have been forced to utter, "my God, my God,

why hast thou forsaken me?" even the purest friendship, or the society of the choicest of my beloved friends, I am incapable of enjoying; like the pelican in the wilderness, so my soul sits mourning in every corner; and with the prophet I have wished that I had in this wilderness a lodging-place, that thither I might flee; but this denied, in lieu thereof may patience be proportionably granted, so as to keep the poor soul from quite sinking, or striking on the quicksands of despair: faith is at so low an ebb at times, that it can scarcely be compared to a grain of mustard seed, and even that so hid in the earth, as often to cause the closest search to prove fruitless: the fountain of living waters being closed in myself, I have long rather preferred to sit mourning at the well's mouth, than seek for comfort from other springs; for I feel as if the waters from another's cistern could yield me no consolation: I remain much in external and internal solitude, and when with those dear friends under this roof, whose company I know not how to value, I have been as it were constrained to retire; but

when with them, I wish in some measure to disguise the deep distress in which my soul is involved, and which the hand of Omnipotence only can fathom. I knew not but that my mind might have received some relief by writing to thee my dearly beloved friend, but I find it too full for words to unburden; however I hope what I have said will be a sufficient apology for my not having handed thee before now a few lines, particularly on the arrival of my beloved mother and sister, who have been thro' infinite mercy preserved in tolerable health, though neither well; but their kind Master, into whose hands they resigned the helm of their vessels, while he led them through the sea of adversity, recruiting them with needed supplies of strength and provision, mercifully kept them within sight of the harbour of peace, where I trust they have since measurably been enabled, with grateful praise in their hearts, safely to cast anchor. Written in much love by thy very affectionate, and, Oh! that I might add, fellow-traveller towards a city which hath foundations,

JUDITH USSHER.

LETTER XX.

To a Friend.

1st Month 30th, 1797.

LITTLE did my heart conceive when I last parted from thee my dear and valued friend, the many and deep afflictions which awaited me, the severest of which originated within: Ah! how many months have now passed since the soul could rejoice at the voice of its beloved, or even distantly behold his feet upon the mountains: surely if his presence giveth life, the withholding thereof causeth darkness and death; then the soul that hath none in heaven but him, nor in all the earth it desireth beside him, cannot but mourn: Oh! then did I become a burden to myself and society; and sorrows so increased that the pit had almost closed her mouth upon me, when for a season, yea, a very little season, the clouds seemed to wear a less rigorous aspect, and in the seeming prospect of returning day, the soul was almost ready to rejoice in hope of again embracing its beloved;

but, Ah! how hath it proved, but the presage of a more dark and stormy season, wherein the heavens appear as brass, and the gates thereof like bars of iron, the sun which once measurably illuminated my path has been darkened in his going forth, and is no longer a lamp to my feet, and a light unto my paths, and the creatures yield no consolation; my bed seems to be made in the deep waters where the floods have overflowed my soul, and the weeds are wrapped about my head. In this sad desertion of Almighty goodness I have sought much for silence and retirement, where, though there has been a seeking and not finding the Beloved of souls, yet I have thought it is well to be found waiting for him in the way of his coming; the porter knows not at what time his lord may come, at midnight, at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; I have therefore wished to be kept watchful, if peradventure he may again remember his afflicted servant, though hope seems almost fled. I have, I believe with reason, dreaded the natural impatience of my disposition, which has been ready to conclude it vain to wait upon the Lord, seeing he hath

rejected me from among his servants, and cast me from his presence as a reprobate branch ; yet there has been a struggle for resignation, which has at seasons been so far attained, as to cause a language similar to this, “ though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Ah! my dear friend, hard would it be to relate the deep distress, through which this poor soul has waded, and in which it continues plunged. Though I find I have mentioned more than I intended, and almost chide myself, causing thee thereby to partake of my sufferings, yet I write not to give pain ; no, but feeling myself desolate and forlorn, the billows daily rising higher, and the inhabitant of this early tabernacle almost swallowed by the overflowing surges, I thought to write thee a few lines, (knowing thee to be a father in Israel, and encouraged thereto by thy writing to my beloved mother,) that if such a poor worthless worm was still retained in remembrance, perhaps the moment might arrive, wherein she who cannot plead for herself, might be pleaded for at the footstool of mercy, that faith and patience fail not.

JUDITH USSHER.

SUSANNA, the youngest sister, died of a consumption early in the year 1798, aged nearly fifteen years.

This dear child was sweetly taught in the school of her dear Lord; she was drawn into great simplicity, and evinced that truth leads into plainness. Her bodily sufferings were great, but He who thus was pleased to carry on the work of purification, supported her.

A few days, (if not the day) before her final removal, being with her mother, she expressed nearly this language: "Mother, I am not afraid to die, but feel comforted to be taken from the evil to come, which probably I should not have power to resist."

In a letter to her mother when at Bristol, is the following paragraph: "I am sure thine and dear Lucy's sufferings on dear Eliza's account, are very, very great, but I believe the Lord in his great mercy will support all those that trust in him alone."

The following lines were found among her papers, written in her own hand:—

“Many are the trials and the conflicts the spiritual mind has to sustain, before it can enter the promised land, but if it endure to the end, it shall obtain the prize.

“The foundation of God standeth sure, having this precious and unbroken seal, ‘The Lord knoweth them that are his.’ Strive manfully to enter into the strait gate, for many are the hindrances and besetments with which the adversary of the soul’s happiness will invade it, and endeavour to turn it into the broad road of eternal destruction.

“O bring more and more of thy children under thy yoke; make them think thy yoke easy, and thy burden light; make them follow thee and thy faithful ones for ever and ever. Have mercy and forgive the sins of thy children, and the out-steppings of thy chosen ones. Encourage, O Lord! I beseech thee, them that are heavy laden, help them through the waters of affliction, support them over all that it is thy

will to put upon them: Thou wilt have mercy and not sacrifice; Thou wilt have compassion on the children of men; O look down with compassion upon them, for thou art merciful, long-suffering, patient in mercy!"

FINIS.