

VOLUME 6
EPISTLES OF
FAITH (2)



WILLIAM HUNTINGTON

Volume 6

William Huntington (1745-1813)

Epistles of Faith – Part II

Letter I

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON
Honoured and dear Pastor.

BEING desired, not long since, to hear a man preach who is deemed by many to be a gospel minister, an opportunity soon offered, and I attended him: but his discourse was not at all to my edification or comfort; it was untempered mortar, unfit for building up a spiritual house, and which never can cement one living stone to the chief corner. His doctrines were only the commandments of men. In short, his goings were to and fro in the earth, while I found no rest for the sole of my foot. What his name is, matters not. I suppose you will say, It is Legion, for many such there are, transforming themselves as ministers of righteousness, whom the apostle calls ministers of Satan, whose end is destruction. However, after service, I was asked, in the usual way, "Well, how did you like him?" I

answered, "Not at all," speaking my mind freely concerning him and his fruitless toil, for he knew riot how to go to the city. Which gave great offence; for they replied, that I had neither heard the discourse, nor answered them, with that candour which becomes a Christian. "Judge not," said they, "that ye be not judged." This rebuke, in words which the Lord himself spake, has caused Satan to buffet me not a little; and I have been tossed up and down ever since. But herein I am not alone: others also are exercised in the same way; because, like me, they do not understand the Saviour's meaning.

Forasmuch, then, as God hath furnished thee with an excellent spirit for chewing hard sentences and dissolving doubts, let me intreat thee to consider diligently these words, and shew us plainly what Jesus means in this his admonition; and in what sense they may, or may not, be applicable to such a case as I have mentioned; for I am persuaded that there are numbers who bring this scripture, and use it for no other purpose but to silence any one who contends for the faith of God's elect, and so leave room for hypocrites and deceitful workers to go on unmolested.

If our heavenly Father, of his own good pleasure, should give thee a word to speak in season to guide the meek in judgment, and teach them his way to the kingdom, it will be a comfort to one in the path of much tribulation, and may serve to put to shame and confusion the enemies of truth who hate and persecute my soul.

Thine in the faith and love of Jesus Christ,

A POOR DISCIPLE

July 10, 1790.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter II

William Huntington (1745-1813)

MR. HUNTINGTON 'S ANSWER.

Dear Friend,

I AM not fond of offering my thoughts, in a public pulpit, upon every text of scripture that is sent to me. I am in no sense master of the scriptures. I can neither seal nor unseal God's book. Christ is the storehouse, and the Holy Ghost is the key but I can neither bring treasure from the one, nor command the other: they do their own pleasure, and act in a sovereign way. The words of the wise are as nails, which are given forth from one shepherd; and, if any good is done, they are fastened by the master of assemblies. To him I am commanded to look for help, and a supply for the pulpit, who hath promised a mouth and wisdom, that all our adversaries shall never be able to gainsay or resist. I doubt not but it is in the power of a praying people to put a text into the pastor's mouth by faithful prayer, and to obtain from God by him both understanding and satisfaction. Persons who go thus to God, instead of the preacher; who acquaint him with the secret, but keep the minister in the dark about it; know for themselves, when the work is done, that the hand of God was in it; and it serves to convince them that the Lord has sent the workman, and that he works with him. Not but what I have sometimes

had a text sent me, into which the Lord hath given me light; and, if it has come when I have been unfurnished, and no other has been sent to displace it from my mind, I have judged it to be of him, and the freedom experienced in the delivery of it has served to confirm it. But I do not like to confine my mind to preach to a whole congregation from a text that may, at such a time only, concern an individual. Nor could I ever endure any person to tell me, that a sinner of such a complexion, or an erroneous person of such a sect, was coming, or come, to hear me. Just as if I should leave my subject, neglect feeding the household, and go to casting pearls before swine. The arrow always flies best, and does most execution, when the bow is drawn at a venture. Besides, personal dealings are perceptible to a discerning flock, and often set them to inquiring who the preacher was scolding at. Such informers are very troublesome and disgusting to ministers: they betray great weakness and ignorance; and make too free with the ark, forgetting that the excellency and the power are of him who makes a man know what are his thoughts. If God has any thing to say to a sinner, he will be sure to speak to him either in a way of judgment, or in a way of mercy, without the preacher's knowledge of those who are present; and then it appears plainly to be of him, and not of man.

However, I have no objection to give my judgment on a text of scripture, either in private conference, or in answer to a Letter, if the point be essential, and the inquiry be modest. The passage you mention, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," is in the mouth of legions; and is generally used by them to stop the mouth of a faithful messenger, or an honest reprove: both which are highly commended in scripture.

By that text, the Lord doth not mean that I am not to make me of my judgment in trying those whom I bear, for I am commanded to take heed how I hear. I am to try the spirits,

whether they are of God. The first ministers tried them that said they 'were apostles, and proved them liars; and their judgment was right, and they were commended for so doing. Yea, Wisdom herself, in her own ambassadors, permits herself to be cited at the Judgment of her family, and is justified of her children.

"By their fruits," saith the Saviour, "you shall know them." Not by their outward life and walk only, for the Pharisees deceived the greatest part of the Jewish nation by appearing outwardly righteous before men, who were inwardly ravening wolves and, by this their deception, gained and made many proselytes; who, when made, were twofold more the children of bell than themselves. The fruits, therefore, by which we are to know them, are

First, The fruits of the spirit; love, joy; peace, patience, goodness, faith, &c. &c. For, if I am to try the spirits, whether they be of God; I am to judge whether the person I hear be a spiritual man, or a sensual one having not the spirit; and likewise, whether the spirit of truth be manifested in him, or the spirit of error.

Secondly, I am to try the fruit of his lips, and to form my judgment of the treasure and soundness of his heart by the soundness of his doctrine, for, if he brings not the apostolic doctrine, I am not to receive him into my house, nor bid him God speed, on peril of being a partaker of his evil deeds. My judgment, therefore, of him, must be according to truth; which is plainly this: "Whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son," 2 John 9.

Thirdly, I may demand of him, if I am doubtful about him, a reason of his hope, and he is commanded to give it; and, if he does, he must inform me of the powerful operations of the Holy Ghost upon him at his conversion. A change of heart by

the Spirit is a gospel experience; and it is experience that worketh hope. Thus I am to know, not only the speech of him, but the power; "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." 1 Cor. iv. 19.

Fourthly, If I am to know the power, as well as the speech, of a preacher, I am to inquire into the fruits of his ministry; whether God owns it, and blesses it, by clothing his word with power to the conversion of souls; which is bringing forth fruit unto God. Converts are called a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. And, if conversion and establishing work goes on in his hands, and his converts are proper children, born of the Holy Ghost, of a savoury experience, and sound in faith, God has set his seal to his mission and commission; it is clear that he stands in God's counsel, and causes sinners to hear the word from his mouth, because he turns them from the error of their way, and the evil of their doings, and that God works with the workman: and my judgment must be, that he belongs to the Lord's fig-tree, and bears good ripe figs, and is in union with the living Vine; for men, at conversion, do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. But, if he be a stranger to the power of God on his own soul, and has no power with God by faith and prayer, and no power has attended his ministry; it is clear that God has neither sealed his soul, nor set his seal to his ministry. He is an impostor, and a preacher of the Letter: he is neither a saint of God, nor a servant of God; and his unprofitableness is a proof to me that he was never sent by him. The judgment, therefore, to direct me, is this: "He ran, and I have not sent him," saith the Lord; "therefore he shall not profit this people at all."

By these fruits I am to know them, and not by an external reformation only; and am to judge and speak according to the oracles of God, my own experience, and the testimony of my conscience, so that I may neither justify the wicked, nor condemn the just; and then I act agreeably to the Saviour's

positive command, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment," John vii. 24. I am to judge of his life and walk also; that his conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ; that he lets his light shine before men, that they behold his good works, and that he glorifies his Father which is in heaven. By these fruits we are to know him, and of these things we are to judge, and not to judge him in meats, nor in drinks, nor in respect of an holy day; nor yet to judge his doubtful thoughts. "Let no man judge you in these things," saith Paul. But of the aforementioned things we are to judge and to speak according to the scriptures and our own conscience, without partiality, and without hypocrisy: and not like those hypocrites who could discern the face of the sky, and of the earth, but could not discern the signs of the times, nor even of themselves judge what was right, Luke ii. 56, 57.

The above right of judgment is a divine grant to every child of 'God, let the preacher call himself what he may; Bishop or Pastor; Dean or Doctor. Our teachers are not to be hid in a corner any more; our eyes are to see them. "Let the prophets speak, two or three; and let the others judge," 1 Cor. xlv. 29; whether he speaks as the oracles of God or not; and his word is to be received or rejected according to that rule, without any regard paid to his age, learning, or dignity; for there are accursed sinners an hundred years old, and many Letter-learned fools and seducers; and there have been false apostles. The preacher who rejects this, and would dispute us out of this right, or reprove us for using it, ought to be suspected of being destitute of the Spirit, for the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, 1 Cor. xiv. 32. Thus are we to judge of the preacher's experience, doctrine, power, usefulness, conversation, life, and walk; for, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man," 1 Cor. ii. 15. Paul himself submitted to this: "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say," 1 Cor. x. 15.

We are to judge likewise of the conversion, the soundness in faith, and the reformation, of every one that offers himself, or herself, as a member of the church, and receive or reject them according to the rule of God's word, and the best of our judgment; and we are to judge them also after they are in the church. "W 179c hat have I to do to judge them also that are without [the pale of the church? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth," 1 Cor. v. 12, 13.

We should likewise form a private judgment of those whom we visit or associate with, that we do not herd with infidels. "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord," says Lydia to Paul, "come into my house, and abide there," Acts xvi. 15.

Hence it appears, that pastors are to be sufficiently proved, not hastily called; and the judgment of a plurality of ministers is to be called in, as an addition to the judgment of the church nor are hands to be laid suddenly on any man; nor is a raw, green disciple, or a novice to be set up at all, nor a fool to be heard at all. Thus far, according to the best of my judgment, a child of God may warrantably judge. It remains, therefore, that neither of the above are the senses of the Lord in the text, for one text never contradicts another.

Rash judgment seems rather to be intended, touching the final Mate of a person, delivered in an angry manner, without being properly guarded with ifs, buts, unless, except, and peradventure. God only is the judge of quick and dead; and to him alone it belongs to justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

False, or wrong judgment, must also be intended. He that says to a wicked man, "Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse; nations shall abhor him," Prov. xxiv. 24. This is justifying the wicked, which is an abomination to the Lord.

Judging according to an external show, without any regard to a change of heart, or soundness in the truth, is intended also. Judge not according to appearance." saith the Lord.

Judging a sinner's state to be good because of his adherence to human traditions, and the commandments of men; or to judge a saint in meats, drinks, holy days, feasts, and fasts, is forbidden in the book of God also.

Giving way to natural affections; being zealously affected by a person, but not well, so as to let the feelings of nature sway a person from truth and conscience; is called judging after the flesh, John viii. 15.

But that which is chiefly intended in the text, appears to me to be, the wicked judging the righteous; which they have ever been forward to do: as the Jews, who called Christ Beelzebub, who excommunicated the confessors of him, and declared them accursed, and ignorant of the law, that followed him. Such person judge after the flesh, and in the malice of Satan. They cursed those whom the Lord had blessed; judged those that were spiritual, who could not be judged of any; and condemned them whom the Lord had justified. These must be an abomination to God; and with what measure such mete, it shall be measured to them; and with what judgment they judge, they shall be judged. The curse of the law is a divine sentence in the lips of the King, whose mouth transgresseth not in judgment. But this sentence ill becomes the lips of fools. And, as for the children of God, they are commanded to bless, and curse not. The Judge of all the earth hath done, and will do, that himself; and tells us, that they who are of the works of the law are under the curse; and those who preach any other doctrine than Paul preached, are already cursed; and those who curse the saints, the Lord himself will curse. The above seem to me to be the senses of the scriptures touching such judgment as is strictly forbidden.

But, to form a private judgment, or speak my judgment, of a preacher, whether he be sent of God, or unsent; and of his spirit, whether it be the spirit of truth, or a spirit of error; and of his doctrine, whether it be of Christ, or of men; whether it be a true messenger, or an impostor; a minister of the Spirit, or of the Letter; a sound teacher, or a seducer; a gatherer, or a scatterer; a saint, or a sinner; a child of God, or of Satan, is a divine grant to every disciple of Christ, that he may not be deceived, nor seduced from the simplicity that is in Christ, nor from the truth of the gospel. And to this end is the Holy Ghost to guide us into all truth, that we may not be deceived. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Take heed that no prejudice or hatred be secretly indulged against a minister, or professor; and thou speaks to the wounding his reputation through hatred, without any regard either to truth or conscience; for no christian, nor character, can stand before envy. Nor are we to make a man an offender for a word; much less, lie in wait for, or hate, them that reprove us in the gate. A man may err in speech, who errs not in judgment. A sound speech may sometimes be dropped from an erroneous man. We are not to condemn the former for a word, nor to justify the latter for his speech. Aaron spoke wrong, when he told Israel, the golden calf brought them out of Egypt; and Satan spoke the truth, when he called Christ the Holy One of God. Yet Aaron was a saint, and the devil a liar. But Satan's speech is not to be rejected, nor are Aaron's words to be credited. The terror of Christ extorted truth from Satan, and the fear of a tumultuous multitude drew a falsity from the mouth of Aaron.

Furthermore: remember every real minister of Christ in your prayers, and esteem them in love for their works' sake. Nor be puffed up for one, against the other: this is commanded, and

commended. And, on the other hand, receive no man into your affections, nor into your house, who brings not the doctrine of Christ, nor bid him God speed: for they who do, are co-sharers in all the iniquity and mischief that he commits. Be not a partaker of other men's sins. Keep thyself pure.

Farewell,

Thine to serve,

In the gospel of Christ,

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter III

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. RINGER, AND HIS COMPANY, SILVER STREET,
SOUTHWARK.

Sir,

You need not be at any trouble to procure me the book you talked of: the whole works of those two false witnesses are in my possession.

It is, doubtless, my duty to endeavour to undeceive the deceived, and to convert the sinner from the error of his way; and to submit my endeavours to God, and leave it to his sovereign will and pleasure, whether to make his own word a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. I am fully persuaded that, if God sends a strong delusion, that a man may believe a lie, and he damned, all attempts to recover him will prove ineffectual; nevertheless, I shall be unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved. It is not a matter of indifference whether a man believes truth or falsehood; seeing Christ declares, that nothing should enter into the heavenly Jerusalem that loveth or maketh a lie. And I must tell you, sir, that you are, at this time, given up to believe a lie. You feed upon ashes: a deceived heart hath turned you aside; so that you cannot deliver your soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? Isa. xlv. 20. The unerring Spirit of God, and the scriptures of truth, are our infallible guides. He that speaks not according to God's word, has no light in him; and he that teaches any other gospel than that which is revealed in the scriptures, is to be held accursed, whether man or angel,

The doctrines of Muggleton and Reeve are, in scripture style, damnable delusions; and that of the mortality of the soul, and of the death of the soul of Christ, is an infernal lie. I shall attempt a full confutation of this point, and prove these two witnesses to be joint liars, from their book intituled, "Joyful News from Heaven; or the last Intelligence:" hoping the title will prove true, and that we shall have no more such false intelligence delivered in the name of the God of heaven.

Does Christ's saying, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again," prove the mortality, or death of his soul, as these men have asserted in page the first?

"Moreover, because many of the blessed ones are not fully satisfied concerning Christ's soul dying with his body, therefore I shall write somewhat from his own words spoken upon that account. John the 12th, it is thus written: "Except a corn of wheat fall in the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Page the 2d. "So likewise, had not Christ's divine life been wholly dead and buried in the heart of the grave, with the body of his flesh, what spiritual advantage of a glorious increase to himself, through the spirits of elect men and angels, could have been attained to in the least?"

How can any of God's blessed ones give credit to, or be satisfied with, such lies as these? Does Christ's saying; "I lay down my life," imply an extinction, or an annihilation of his soul, that it should be dissolved, fall asleep, or die, so as to be buried with his body in the heart of the earth? In no sense whatsoever. The soul is a spirit, and is spiritual, and therefore it cannot be mortal. Nor is death an extinction, or a dissolving the soul into nothing; but it is a dissolving of the union between the body and the soul; as it is written, "The body, without the spirit, is dead" At death, the body goes one way, and the soul another. The soul of Christ went into the hands of his Father, while his body was hanging on the cross: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And, having said thus, he gave up the ghost to his Father; while his body went into the hands of Joseph of Arimathea, who begged the body of Jesus, and laid it in his own sepulchre, Luke xxiii. 52. At the Lord's resurrection, a reunion took place: the body of which, without the spirit, was dead, being put to death in the flesh, was quickened by the Spirit, and re-united to the soul of Christ. The body being quickened, raised, and re-united to the soul, the whole of the human nature, consisting of body and soul, appeared in union with the person of the Son of God, who is, "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according

to (the testimony of) the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. i. 4.

And as to Christ's divine life being wholly dead and buried in the heart of the grave, &c. that is a most dreadful absurdity. Christ, as God, is eternal life in the abstract. He told Moses, that he lifts up his hand, and says, I live for ever. He is the quickening Spirit, the Lord from heaven. The same divine person who said, "A body hast thou prepared me;" said also, "I lay down my life, and I take it again." The divine I Ant did not expire with the body, though the body expired in union with him; nor did his human soul go into the tomb, but into the hand of God the Father. He was put to death in the flesh, not in his divine nature; and quickened by the Spirit, which can never die. To talk of divine, eternal, or everlasting life, expiring, or dying, is a contradiction in terms. For, though he was the Lord of life and glory when he was put to death, yet immortal life and glory died not: that text proves the union between the Godhead and manhood of Christ; which union stood firm in death: he was no less than God's Holy One, when he laid in the grave; omnipresence did not leave the body, nor did omnipotence suffer it to see corruption, though the union of body and soul was dissolved for three days.

Nor does the soul of man, whether of a saint or a sinner, die, so as to be extinct, dissolved to nothing; or to be put to sleep with the body in the grave. The spirit of Adam was immortal breath in the mouth of the Most High, before it was breathed, as a living soul, into his body. His body was formed of the dust of the ground, but the breath of life was breathed into his nostrils from the mouth of God, Gen. ii. 7. One is manifested to be of heavenly extraction, while the other is altogether of earthly: and, at dissolution by death, the dust returns to the earth, as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it, Eccles. xi. 7. Adam's soul had life in the mouth of his Maker, before his body was taken from the dust; and the

immortal soul shall exist separate from it, either in heaven or in hell, when the body shall turn to its dust again. Stephen committed his spirit into the hands of the Lord Jesus, before devout men carried his body to the burial, Acts vii. 59; viii. 2; and I take it for granted, that you will not attempt to assert, that the Lord Jesus was the grave or burial-place of Stephen's body. The soul of the penitent thief was to be, on the day of Christ's death, with Christ in Paradise; Luke, xxiii. 43. Surely the thief's dead soul, hanging with the dead body on the cursed tree, could never be said to be with Christ in paradise. If you ask, what paradise is, into which the thief was to enter on that day with Christ? the Holy Ghost tells us, that it is the third heaven, where God resides. For confirmation of this; "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago; (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth:) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth: how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible to utter. Of such an one will I glory," 2 Cor. xii. 1-5. Here we have a vision and revelation of God, left upon record by the Holy Ghost, of a man going into the third heaven; but, whether the soul of Paul went alone to paradise, or in the body, he could not tell. Hence it is declared, that paradise is the third heaven; and Christ promised, that the thief on the cross should be, on the day of his crucifixion, with him in the third heaven. If the Saviour's divine life and human soul, and the soul of the thief, all died, and were buried in the heart of the grave; I would be glad to know what of the Saviour, and of the thief, was to be together on that day in the third heaven, which, the Holy Ghost says, is paradise. We are well assured that the third heaven and the grave are two distinct places; and that the third heaven will remain when the starry and elementary heavens, together with the earth and all her works, shall be burnt up.

God said unto Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The Saviour, quoting the passage, says, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." If, therefore, the souls of these three patriarchs are dead with their bodies, must he not be the God of the dead? which the Saviour says he is not. And, if he be the God of the living, and not of the dead, must not their souls be alive somewhere or other, as he is the God of these three men, and the God of the living only? Paradise is the third heaven; to which every overcoming soul shall go when it departs from the body; and shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, Rev. ii. 7. Into this paradise the soul of the Saviour in union with his deity, and the soul of the thief, went on the day of the Lord's crucifixion. In this paradise are the spirits of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of whose living souls he is the living God. Into this paradise the spirit of Stephen went, and the translated bodies and souls of Enoch and Elijah; for neither their bodies nor souls died, nor was any part of them buried in the heart of the earth.

When Lazarus died, his soul was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The grave is not called the bosom of the everlasting father of the faithful, nor the arms of angels; but place of dead men's bones, not souls, and of all uncleanness. A strange paradise, indeed!

The souls of all departed saints are gone into the third heaven, where the soul of the thief went. Their souls were not gathered with the wicked, nor laid in the grave; they were all gathered unto their own people, and are now called the spirits of just men made perfect. But, if they are all dead, and buried with their bodies, they are far enough from perfection. At dissolution by death, the soul of Rachel departed; it did not die with her body, nor sleep in the dust with it. Simeon's soul departed in peace, according to God's word: but, if it had died in or with the body, and been buried with that, it could not

have been said to depart; for, in Muggleton's sense, there is no separation or disunion. Nor could Paul's departure bring him to be with Christ, which he so much preferred, if his soul was to die for eighteen hundred years. Elijah prayed that the soul of the child might come into him again, 1 Kings xvii. 21. if the soul died in the body, it did not go out of it; and if the immortal soul was not departed from the body, and gone another way, it could not be expected to come back into him again. The soul is the seat of faith. The law of faith is written in the mind by the Spirit of God. To act faith is peculiar to the soul. Faith is a persuasion in the mind, wrought by the Holy Ghost; the act of it is a going out of self into Christ, and a bringing Christ into us: "Believe," saith the Lord, "that I am in you, and you in me" Such a soul passes from the deadly curse of the law to the blessing of life; he passes from death to life; he hath everlasting life; he shall live for ever, John vi. 58; he shall never die, John xi. 26; the Spirit shall spring up in him into everlasting life; the blessing of all life is for evermore, Psalm cxxxiii. 3. All these texts respect the soul; for the death of the body, by a separation of the soul from it, is decreed: "It is appointed unto all men once to die." But the soul acts faith even in the very act of separation. "These all died in faith." "Through faith and patience they inherit the promises," Heb. vi. 12; but, if dead, they cannot inherit them. They receive the end of their faith, which is the salvation of their souls, not the death of them; they are saved from death, not brought to it. The souls of departed saints receive an inheritance among them that are already sanctified, Acts xxvi. 18; but, if they are dead, they can receive nothing. They go to the saints now in light, Col. i. 12; not in death, nor darkness. When the heavens reveal Christ, he will bring the souls of the saints with him, 1 Thess. iii. 13; not fetch them out of the grave. The Comforter abides in the soul for ever; he never departs from Christ, nor his seed: but, if the soul dies, he cannot be an everlasting Comforter to it; nor can we receive everlasting consolation, as well as good hope, seeing death puts a stop to it. If the Spirit

is never to forsake the soul, it cannot die; for the grave is not the temple of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit, that now dwells with the saints, shall, in the great day, quicken their mortal bodies; not their immortal souls, for they were quickened, and raised from a death in sin to a life of faith, at conversion; and brought from under the ministration of death, to immortality and eternal life in Christ Jesus.

The grain of wheat that fell into the ground died: the Saviour's body, without the Spirit, was dead; and the grain that was sown in the earth could not have been quickened except it died, 1 Cor. xv. 36. Had he not died, he would have remained alone. Without redemption by his death, we could have had no part with him; but, as he died, he brought forth much fruit. Having raised his own body, he became the first-fruits of them that slept. And the resurrection of our bodies at the end of the world will be the whole harvest. His resurrection is an earnest and pledge of ours.

Nor do the souls of the wicked die, or dissolve, with their bodies; nor are they buried with them: they may die in a legal sense, in their sins, under the wrath and curse of God, under the sentence of death and damnation; and die away into an everlasting separation from the living God, and go quick into hell. "The rich man died, and was buried;" but his soul was not dissolved in him, nor was it buried with him; for his soul lift up his eyes in hell, his conscience was awakened, and the eyes of his understanding were opened, after the burial of the body, and he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Pharaoh, and all his multitude, Ezek. xxxi. 16, 18; Meshech and Tubal, and all their multitude, Ezek. xxxii. 26, 27; are already in hell: and hell hath opened her mouth beyond measure, to receive multitudes, with all their glory and pomp, since the fall of them; whose souls are not extinct, nor buried in their graves, but in hell; who see every tyrant that comes

there, and narrowly consider him; saying, "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?" &c. Isa. xiv. 15, 16.

If Reeve and Muggleton be two infallible witnesses, I know not where we shall find two more such, unless it be the Devil and the Pope: for they have contradicted the word of truth, and the God of truth; and are manifest liars, and false witnesses of God. When Messrs. Ringer and Harrald, and their Company, have disproved and overturned all those scriptures that I have advanced, which they shall never do, they may hear from me again. He that taketh from the words of Christ, either the Letter or the sense, shall have no part in the book of life; and he that addeth to them, becomes an heir of all the curses contained in that book.

There must be heresies, that the contrary part may be made manifest. We are forewarned of false Christs and false prophets, which, if it were possible, should deceive the very elect: and, if men are not satisfied with the truth, God sends them a strong delusion, which generally pleases them better; so that they who are not with Christ, may be against him; and they that gather not with him, may scatter abroad. No professor shall stand neuter here: the sun shall ripen the tares as well as the wheat, and weeds generally grow faster than corn.

Mrs. M. of Holywell Mount, who used to write in the Magazines under the name of Magdalena, swallowed down Muggleton's lies, and entertained his strange notions concerning Cain and his seed; till she told me, she denied the fall of angels, and the being of devils: but God delivered her up to Satan; and, after laying several months in St. Luke's, she was convinced, as well as many others, that there are such creatures as devils. And I should not be surprised if Mr. Ringer should share the same fate: I thought I saw an appearance of it when Mr. Best and I visited him. If you tempt

Christ, by forsaking the truth, it is no wonder if he permit the devil to tempt you. It is those only who keep the word of Christ's patience, that he will keep from the hour of temptation.

Strong confidence in false doctrine is one of Satan's strongest holds. Such a deluded sinner is shut up indeed, and none but God can bring him out. The wise man looks well to his way; but it is the fool that rages, and is confident. I do not want to know your speech, but your power. It is not the notions of Muggleton, nor even every word of God's own book, receive into the head, that will constitute you a subject of Christ's kingdom; his kingdom is not in word, but in power; in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Remember, I have admonished you this day. Adieu.

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter IV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.
My dear and valuable Friend,

THE time has been when I have spent many a joyful hour with you, even in the days of your first love; and have travelled many a delightful and pleasant journey with you; and have cause to bless God that ever he brought me acquainted with you; and particularly on your behalf, because he has to this day kept you witnessing, both to small and great, the things which you have heard, which you have seen, and which the hand of your faith has handled of the word of life. For my part, I often call to mind the sweet conferences we held together at that highly-favoured spot, Ewell Marsh; when the candle of the Lord shone so bright upon your head, when your glory was fresh in you, and his visitations preserved your spirit. I never shall forget the transporting and unutterable love and joy which filled your heart while you dwelt in that rural cot; when your dwelling and despicable apparel could scarcely be equalled by any of the saints, unless by the beggar Lazarus at the gate; or those who wandered in sheepskins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy, Heb. xi. 37. But, notwithstanding your despicable dwelling, apparel, and barley fare, I have often envied you. How did it fire my soul with an holy jealousy and spiritual emulation to be like you! I felt a little of that spirit the apostles did, on the account of Jesus making his disciple John his bosom friend. I at that time often coveted your state; and my language was somethin e17 g like that of Esau to his father, "Have you not another such a blessing for me, O my Father!"

I do not only recall to mind the great fight of afflictions we passed through at that period, but the joy and consolation we enjoyed, and the sweet counsel we took together, in the days of our espousals, and in the day of the gladness of Christ's heart: they were the best days that I ever knew.

I shall never forget with what confidence you asserted, even when in a state of abject poverty, and not a friend in the world,

excepting two or three journeymen shoemakers, &c. &c. That you should prophesy before thousands ere you died. And, though so poor and needy, yet, even then, you said, You should, in temporal prosperity, ride over the heads of many of your enemies that did then oppress you. And I remember that you renewed it again, at Thames Ditton, when still more oppressed; and said; That the day would come when you should lend to many, and borrow of none, as the Lord had promised you, Deut. xxviii. 12.

Happy should I be to sit under your ministry now, as I used to do; but this blessing is denied me. However, in this I enjoy a good conscience, that, when I had your ministry to attend on, I was enabled, through divine assistance, to embrace, and make the most of, all those precious seasons. And all the benefit I now receive, is from your writings; and this I account no small mercy your works have been very useful to me, and have, in a great measure, supplied the loss of your public ministrations.

It is true, I was not awakened under your ministry, but by reading the works of good old Bishop Latimer: yet, I owe my establishment in the faith wholly to your instrumentality; for it was the only means, in the hand of-God, of settling me, in my early days, in the great truths of the gospel; especially when we took sweet counsel together, on a certain spot of ground in a corn field, to which we were wont to resort.

Dear friend, I have one request to make; deny me not, for my spiritual sustenance, in a secondary manner, depends upon granting of it! that is, that you will continue publishing your Epistles of Faith, as they have been so peculiarly blessed to me; and, indeed, your writings are all the gospel that I have had for years past: and not only to me are your Letters blessed, but to many others also, in whose behalf, as well as my own, I make this request. I can publicly testify to the

usefullness of this work. Your epistles contain a choice fund of christian experience; and make a little body of divinity, which is both entertaining and instructive.

The matter comprised in Letters is not forced, and labouriously studied, as other works are. There are many who sit down, and force themselves to compile a subject, as Saul forced himself to offer an offering; while the heart is neither engaged in it, nor affected with it. It is the flowings and effusions of a soul under the influence of pardoning love, that refreshes the bowels of others.

Go on, my dear friend, in this profitable, delightful, and pleasing work; and let nothing withdraw thy mind from this heavenly exercise. While the cruse springs, endeavour to fill the vessels of your neighbours, by sending the oil over all the coasts of Israel.

I add no more; only request a line when opportunity offers; and subscribe myself, with much respect and esteem,

Your affectionate Friend,

JOHN PAVEY.

Kingston upon Thames, Aug. 1, 1790.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter V

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. JOHN PAVEY.

Dear Friend,

I RECEIVED yours of the first instant; the reading of which brought the former days of the Son of Man fresh to my mind, which, I believe, will never be forgotten by me while I am on this side Jordan. There was divine wisdom among fools, real happiness in misery, true riches in the depths of poverty, dignity in beggary, and the glorious King of kings was held and entertained in a hovel. I have often questioned, whether there ever was, since the days of the apostles, more of the power and presence of God with such a poor, despicable company, whose dwelling and assembling might with propriety be said to be among the tents of Kedar. I often call to mind my former song, even in the dead of the night; and my mind has frequently travelled and surveyed the whole round, even from the brook Besor to the hill Mizar. My soul has been filled with wonder, astonishment, and contrition, to see how short the triumph of those wicked ones was. How soon are they cut down like the mown grass, and withered like the green herb! The righteous shall see their fall, which is verified. We may seek them now, but cannot find them; for, in the term of sixteen or seventeen years, there is not one in twenty to be found in the land of the living. But we that did cleave (Into the Lord our God, yea, the whole of our little company, except Samuel Webb, who died in faith, are alive, every one of us, this clay, Deut. iv. 4. Many a time have they afflicted us, both professor and prophane; but who has prevailed?

I reflect on my former meanness and poverty with more delight than if I had been one of the first rank and highest station in the world. I was obliged to trust in the name of the Lord, and he made all his goodness to pass before me, Exod. xxxiii. 19. The needy are grateful for little, while the affluent

are ungrateful for much. "The full soul loatheth the honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet" It is straits and difficulties that drive the praying soul to watchfulness; and "He that will observe these things, even lie shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

I doubt not that you all wished for my share of the enjoyment of God; but as for my hard labour, hard fare, vile raiment, coarse lodging, and family, none of you coveted that part of the inheritance: you were like Boaz's kinsman, who liked Naomi's land, to increase his wealth; but not her daughter-in-law, for fear of charges. When I rehearsed to you my (tally meditations on the word of God, and what I had experienced of his goodness, you eagerly eat it; but, when I invited Matthew, Edward Burridge, and yourself, to sup with me on barley-cake, you all tasted it, and then shit it out again; you could not swallow that: therefore it was best as it was; a double portion of God's presence, and the barley-cake, went together.

What I said of my future prophesying, &c. brought the eyes of several enemies upon me; especially at Ditton, where many eagerly expected that all my predictions would come to nothing, that envy might prove me an impostor. But God served them as he did the unbelieving lord in Samaria: he let them live to see the accomplishment of my prophecy touching the ministry; and then cut them down, that they might receive no benefit from it. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy;" and by it I was informed, soon after I was called, that trials and temptations were to prepare me for a future work; that I was to appear in the public ministry; that I should meet with much opposition in it, especially from professors; and that I should write my testimony, both of the grace and providence of God, which I thought, at times, was impossible; and therefore often imagined it must be a delusion. But I had an inward testimony that bore down all that the devil and

carnal reason could raise against it, from the want of learning, &c. And, as I believed it, so I told you of it; and not a word of it has fallen to the ground. I have seen the fulfilment of every part, except in one thing, and that bids fair for an accomplishment also. And I was confirmed in these things by sitting under the preachers who came to preach at Kingston Meeting, very few of whom knew what they said, or whereof they affirmed. I have sat by the hour, and seen them hover round the surface of the Letter, while the text refused to let one thought of their heart into its spiritual sense and meaning. The preacher and I were like two sawyers; he worked on the top, and I at the bottom. Three things have appeared conspicuous to me at once; the wisdom of God in the text; the ignorance of the preacher; and the sovereignty of the Lord, in hiding these things from him, and revealing them to me.

Sometimes I have been grieved, and have wept, to see the Saviour dishonoured, his gospel mangled, his enemies furnished with reproach and scandal, and his children disappointed and starved, through the daring presumption of a child of pride. At other times, when I have gone to meeting under a temptation to doubt of the reality of the good work in me, one of the above stamp has been permitted to appear, and to set forth every thing but the mystery of faith and a change of heart; and I have returned satisfied with the difference that I could perceive between a lamp of salvation and a dark lanthorn. But, of all preachers that I ever heard at that place, there were none that puzzled me like a certain thundering legalist. I was always affected with his zeal, and charmed with his oratory, though he was sure to smite me, and bring me into bondage; but then I seldom felt either the blow or the chains till I got on the road homeward: then the old vail gathered on; the Sun of Righteousness disappeared; my sweet views of the covenant of grace were all obscured; and I was left to grope for the wall like the blind, fast bound in affliction and iron.

The worst preacher that a new-born soul can possibly get under, is one of eloquence and fluency, tinctured with a fiery zeal, under the perpetual alarms of Sinai, his mouth filled with gospel "truths, and his soul bound with legal bondage. No comfort, freedom, life, joy, peace, or happiness, can live where he comes he is sure to slay all these, heaps upon heaps. This sort of thieves have robbed me many a time, while I have been praising and admiring the thief. Such drive many into despair, into desperate wickedness, and even into suicide. Had I known as much then as I do now, I should have spent the Lord's day more to my advantage; have enjoyed much more happiness than I did; and not have wearied myself in going so often from Jerusalem to Jericho, to fall among thieves. Blessed be God, the good Samaritan always healed me with his oil and wine; and I hope I shall continue to ride on his beast, and abide at his inn, for the future. Farewell. Excuse haste, while I remain,

Dear Friend,

Thine in the Lord,

Winchester Row, Paddington.
W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter VI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

Dear Sir, and Dearly Beloved of the Lord; who has given you an understanding heart in the spiritual meaning of his word; by the blessed operation of the Holy Spirit of power in your soul.

WITH all submission, I take the liberty of writing a few lines to you, to acquaint you, that I have reason to be thankful to the Almighty for giving that wisdom to you which you have communicated to the world by your publications. I live in a small country town, where the gospel is but imperfectly preached; though, I believe, in few country churches so well. Be that as it may, I have great cause to be thankful to my dear Redeemer, who has made me to differ, I think, from all the parish beside; for there is not one that I can find who is of the same mind, except two or three who are lately come to reside here. To tell you all the particulars how I came to differ, would be too much to insert at this time: but I am desirous that you should know, for I long for your opinion of the whole, because I think you will not flatter me I have related my experience to some dissenting ministers, each of whom gave me comfort, by not doubting but the work of grace was begun in my heart. With these, nor any other dissenters, have I been acquainted above four years. But the Lord had been gracious to me eleven years before that acquaintance took place; and, until within these three years, there was not a dissenting meeting within eight miles of me: but now there is one within two miles; to which I have often gone, and have heard, 1397 at different times, several ministers, whose doctrine was much the same as that wherein the Lord had confirmed me long before; which certainly was a great comfort to me. But one thing I have often lamented to them, namely, that I had not the gift of extempore prayer. They gave me some small comfort, by telling me, that they knew some men under distress of mind about the same thing, of whom they had not the least doubt but that they were

very gracious men. But I often think it is owing to the wickedness of my heart; for I am much pestered with wandering thoughts in using the form of prayer in my family, which I have constantly done twice a day ever since I was first convinced what a vile wretch I am by nature, and likewise once in the day by myself, when I have used such forms from books as I thought best suited my case, with some little additions of my own. But, for many years past, I have left off that custom when alone; and have endeavoured to make known my wants, and to give thanks for the many mercies I have received by using extempore prayer: but as my wants were often the same, such as humble cravings for the blessings and fruits of the Spirit, for a lively faith that worketh by the purest love, &c. So that they were almost become a form also: but I do not say always, for sometimes the Lord gives me power to enlarge, and then I have great comfort; but, to my grief, I have to say, with Job "O that it was with me as in time past!"

I come now to inform you that, upon conversing with Mr. Millage, of Woking, in Surrey, whose wife's sister lives near this town, whom he came to visit, we fell into discourse upon religion; and, except about the church-service, we agreed very well. Our ideas of the gospel, and hope in the Saviour, were the same. I had about that time heard something respecting you, sir, and mentioned your name to him, who knew you very well, and told me something concerning you, but what I have forgot; for you must understand my memory is very treacherous, being much impaired by a nervous complaint which I have had many years. But, what was then said made me desirous of seeing some of your works; and I believe it is near a year ago since I read your "Tidings from Wallingford," which I must confess I did not like, thinking you too censorious: but I then inquired more about you, and some said one thing, and some another. Some months after this, I took to reading some more of your works; and, the more I

read, the more I liked. But in reading one of them, where you are speaking of a child of God, you intimate, that he will be sure of the spirit of prayer, as I took it; which made me tremble. And, in another place, you tell some person, that he cannot be perfect, because he says he has wicked thoughts: which I knew to be my case, for they are a great trouble to me. And, as I had lately been reading a book, written by one Fletcher, which treated on perfection, the which caused me much trouble and distress, though, through mercy, I had got over that temptation. But this coming so soon after, it caused me greater trouble than ever; insomuch, that I was tempted to believe, for two or three days, that all my former experience was nothing but a delusion: and, as a proof thereof, I had not the power of the Spirit; if I had, I should have more enlargement in my extempore prayers. But in the same night I awaked; and such a ray of light darted into my soul, as caused me to give thanks, and to pray with such fervency and liberty as I never experienced before. And, the day following, on taking up one of your books, for the whole set lay before me, and I cannot tell you which it was, but I know it was the latter part of it, I laid it down, upon experiencing such a flood of godly sorrow, and shedding such a profusion of joyful tears, as I never had felt before. My soul being again set at liberty from these distressing thoughts, caused me to sing, pray, and rejoice, with joy unspeakable, the remainder of the day, without ceasing; and to long for the evening, because I knew there was then to be a social meeting at a private house in the town, at which I intended to be present.

I must conclude, wishing you every temporal blessing you may stand in need of: but, above all, that the Lord may continue to pour down his Holy Spirit upon you, and make you, as an instrument in his hand, the means of bringing thousands of poor souls from the error of their ways, and to stir up the Lord's people to be more diligent in making their calling and election sure. For my own part, I heartily thank

you; because you have been the means of quickening me, and making me more diligent in the use of the means than ever I was before. I am, sir, with great respect,

Your humble Servant, though unknown

And, O that I could with assurance say,

Your Brother in the Lord Jesus Christ,

A. B. SEN.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter VII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MB. A. B. SEN.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace, be with thee, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

MY answer, like Sisera's chariot, has long been in coming, but I am neither master of my time, nor of my talent. I often find a spring for an epistle, when I have no time for it; and frequently time upon my hands, but no spring for an epistle; when both meet together, it is delightful.

I am persuaded that all believers in Christ under heaven, who are of the household of faith, and citizens of Zion, are happy partakers of the spirit of grace and supplication; for this is promised to them all, and they are all fellow-heirs of this promise. The Spirit by which they are regenerated, renewed, or born again, is a spirit of supplication; and is to help their infirmities, and to make intercession for them, that they may pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also; and worship God in Spirit and in truth, for God seeketh such to worship him. But then the preparation of man's heart is one thing, and the answer of the tongue is another. With the heart man believes, with the tongue confession is made. God circumcises the heart, and he creates the fruit of the lip. The spirit of prayer may be where a gift of utterance is not; and a gift of prayer may be where the spirit of prayer never was. The fruits of the Spirit and the fruits of the lip are two things. There are supplications in the Spirit as well as drawing near to God with the mouth. There is mental, as well as vocal prayer, and the former discovers itself by a hunger and thirst after righteousness; by panting after the living God; by a holy longing; by earnest desires; by deep sighs for deliverance; by bitter weeping; by sorrowing after a godly sort; by looking & mourning for him whom we have pierced, and mourning for him. Thus the Spirit makes intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered: and these prayers shall prevail with God sooner than all the pompous eloquence, empty oratory, and human compositions, in the world. The heart shall prevail without the mouth, but the mouth shall never prevail without the heart. If the Spirit of grace and supplication comes upon a man, and gives him a gift of utterance at the same time, it is a great blessing, because it is a great easement, to a burdened mind. Such an one speaks that he may be eased, for he cannot pour out his soul before the Lord but by weepings or by expressions: and, where such a gift of utterance is given, it should be used, in order to brighten it. Timothy must stir up the gift that is in him; for, if this gift be not stirred up, and

constantly used, it will, in time, dwindle. David's tongue was his glory, and he bids his glory awake to praise his God. God calls for the fruit of the lip, as well as the bent of the heart. With the tongue we are to bless God. Ephraim promised, when his backsliding were healed, to render the calves of his lips, Hos. xiv. 2. Our mouth is to show forth his praise. Hannah spake in her heart; David spake with his mouth; and both, as well as the apostles, spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. This gift of utterance is often buried by a fondness of, or an habitual custom to, a human form; and sometimes it is damped by not relying on the Holy Ghost for assistance in prayer. Fervour, earnestness, a sense of want, a knowledge of what is freely given us of God, an understanding of the mind and will of God, as well as faith, and the exercise of it, are wholly the Spirit's gifts, and he distributes them as he will. If this wind blow not on the garden, the spices flow not out; therefore the Spirit's aid and assistance should be sought, and relied on: "Awake, O north wind! and come, thou South; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits," namely, the fruit of the lip, as well as the fruits of the Spirit, for both are his own. That it is the will of God that we should speak to him as the Spirit gives us utterance, is clear from the scriptures: "Let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance: for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." It is not only clear from scripture, but likewise from experience: because the new-born soul can find no human composition that will exactly suit its sensations. His form and his feelings never keep pace together. His tongue goes one way and his heart another: while the tongue runs away with the form, the mind is unemployed, the understanding is unfruitful, and the thoughts of the heart refuse to engage in the work. Nor is the Spirit's assistance called in, nor expected, nor relied on; and yet it requires spiritual power to bring the thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Most forms of prayer are compiled by prayerless men. Those in the

scripture that made many long prayers never prayed at all. Paul knew not how to pray as he ought without the Spirit's help and intercession; therefore he neither composed himself, nor enjoined any set forms for others; that is left to the Spirit. He tells us, indeed, that in the last days, when men should depart from the firth, they would have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof; and from such he bids us withdraw.

Peter, and the other disciples, desired the Saviour to teach them how to pray; and the Lord. laid down a wonderful platform, con twining the substance of all real prayer. But, when he intended to teach Simon to pray extempore, he let him sink in the sea; and then he prayed like a suppliant that would take heaven by storm, "Lord! save, or I perish!"

When business requires haste, and when life is in danger, or the soul at stake, people are apt to forget their forms and ceremonies. Fire and water are terrible things; and, when poor sinners get into them, they are sure to let God know where they are, whether they happen to have their prayer-books with them or not: and God often puts them into the fire, that they may either forget their forms, or be purged from their formality: " I will bring the third part through the fire; and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God," Zech. xiii. 9. This will teach a man to pray better than Dr Watts's Art of Peayer, or any other art whatsoever; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. A heart overwhelmed with trouble will set the lips to work: "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." The thief upon the cross, and the publican in the temple, were driven to complain by the bitterness of their souls; and both sped better than the Pharisee, though they did not use so many words. Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness made noise enough to reach the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth:

God heard the voice of the lad where lie was, and showed them a well, which was what they wanted.

The rigour of the Egyptian task-masters made Israel cry to God, till he came down to deliver them, Exod. iii. 7, 3.

A sense of an absent God, bodily afflictions, and Isaiah's denunciation of death, made Hezekiah mourn like a dove, chatter like a crane, and pray like an evangelist; "I am oppressed, undertake for me," Isaiah xxxviii. 14.

And it was the sorrows of death and the pains of hell that drove the Psalmist to it: " Then called I on the name of the Lord, O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul!" And from that time he continued as he began; "Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live," Psalm cxvi. 2-4.

The self-sufficient are satisfied with what themselves say; but the poor in spirit cannot be satisfied but with what the Lord does. The former is pleased with his own words, the latter with the Lord's works. Nothing makes an undissembled beggar at mercy's door an excellent petitioner, an eloquent pleader, and an importunate suitor, but a hungry mind, or a starving soul, which will not be satisfied either with pleas or compliments, nor with any thing short of the bread of eternal life.

Prayer, my brother, is the pouring out one's soul before the Lord, and showing him one's trouble. It is unburdening the mind of its grief, and casting our cares upon the Lord, who careth for us. It is a drawing near in the faith of an all-sufficient Mediator, and that with boldness; lifting up holy hands, without either wrath or doubting. It is letting one's requests be made known unto God with holy familiarity and freedom; being encouraged thereto by a throne of grace, a living way of access, a Mediator, the Spirit's assistance, and the unconditional promise of audience and relief; and that by a

reconciled God, who is our Father of mercies, and God of all comfort.

Prayer should be accompanied with humble concessions of what is wrong, thankful acknowledgments of past favours received, and earnest petitions for what is wanted, as far as God's promise in Christ, which is the warrant of faith, will tolerate us to go.

Prayer should be attended with pleading our base original; our utter unworthiness; the invaluable merits of Christ; the covenant, promise, mercy, and faithfulness, of God.

It should be attended with craving those things that will tend to God's honour and our soul's good; with an acknowledgment of his justice, should lie be extreme to mark what is done amiss; with an acknowledgment of his grace, mercy, and truth; and of his divine sovereignty, who makes us at all to differ 849 from the worst of men.

Prayer should be performed with fervour, earnestness, and importunity. It is called wrestling, striving, supplicating, entreating, and crying day and night; and should be concluded with reference, resignation, and submission, to the will of God in Christ Jesus, as the most competent judge of what is best for us.

Prayer should be followed with watchfulness, confidence through Christ, hope and expectation of being heard, regarded, and answered, and that for Christ's sake, who alone is worthy, and in whose name all prayers should be put up, and for whose sake alone answers should be expected. And, in our approaches and addresses, the new covenant characters of God in Christ should be considered, that of a God in covenant; a friend; a present help; a portion; and a Father, who is rich in mercy, plenteous in redemption, abundant in goodness and truth; who pardoneth iniquity,

transgression, and sin; who will not keep his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

Daily observations of the judgments of God abroad in the earth; of his daily care of his children; of the kind providence of God displayed; of various crosses and trials, and of hourly deliverances from them; and of the various frames and changes that pass on the heaven-born soul, serve to furnish the heart with matter for confession, prayer, and praise. So that, if we will observe these things, we shall not only understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, but we shall find observations enough to furnish our heart with thoughts, and fill our mouth with arguments.

Your second Letter arriving before I could finish this, obliged me to make the insolvent debtor's request, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." In the mean while, the Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; and the Lord give thee peace! So prays,

Dear Brother,

Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter VIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

Reverend and dear Sir,

BEING well persuaded of your skill in casuistical divinity, I resume to send you the following question for your investigation; it has very much puzzled my mind; and it is thisñ

When we are tempted to doubt of our interest in Christ, and "our state into question, from whence doth this arise? Is it temptation of Satan that causes us to doubt? Or does it spring from the corruption of our hearts, and infirmity of the flesh, which causes these misgivings within, when we are in a dark frame, and deserted by God?

Now it appears to me that it is our infirmity, from what I can gather from the experience of Asaph, in the Psalms. But, when read the account of Satan's tempting our Lord in the wilderness, to doubt of his sonship, I am led to think it is a temptation of the devil.

I find my mind much puzzled between these two things, and greatly at a loss which to attribute it to: whether it is the work of Satan, or the fault and infirmity of the flesh; and whether it is not dishonourable to God; and sinful, as well as distressing to our souls, and destructive to our peace and comfort.

An answer to these questions, dear sir, will greatly oblige one who does not ask out of any vain curiosity, but really from a

Point of conscience. I should be sorry to trespass on your time, purposely to satisfy an idle speculation. Your time is precious; and, doubtless, can be better employed.

I write in this Letter with reference to a sound believer, who has known what the bondage of the law is, and also the liberty of the gospel: one who enjoys familiarity with God, and freedom at a throne of grace, though, at times, he may be subject to some misgivings, in a fit of unbelief, when under the hidings of God's countenance, while exercised with a sore temptation, and buffeted by Satan.

That the brightest saint is sometimes subject to some little misgivings and scruples of heart, I have no doubt you will readily grant: but I want to know from whence these things arise, and the causes thereof, in a real child of God.

I can easily account for the doubts of a soul under convictions, struggling in the chains and bondage of the law; for his life is one continued scene of doubting, because he has no assurance of his life, nor ever had; but it is not so with one who has felt the pardoning love of God.

If you, my dear sir, think my petition worth a thought, and not beneath your notice, and can spare room to insert an answer in your valuable publication intituled "The Epistles of Faith," you will greatly oblige

Your old disciple,

DUBITANTIUR.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MY INQUISITIVE DISCIPLE'S QUESTION,
HIS UNSKILFUL MASTER SENDETH HIS
OPINION, GREETING.

Dear Sir,

I BELIEVE the brightest, and best of Christians, are at times subject to doubts and misgivings, especially those who have had a deep view, and a keen sense, of the deceitfulness of their own heart; which has appeared to be such a desperately wicked thing, that they can neither trust it, nor entertain a charitable opinion of the soundness of it, even when God has purified it by the grace of faith.

When Satan made an attempt upon the Saviour, he failed: he could not raise a doubt in his mind, because the latter of not got in him his darling daughter, sin, to cohabit with; therefore there could be neither conception nor production. In Christ was no sin: his human nature was an holy thing; therefore, when the prince of this world came, he found nothing in him.

The Saviour's human nature was not only free from all sin, Consequently, free from unbelief, one of the worst, if not the greatest sin, but the fullness of the Spirit was upon him also: and he was full of grace and truth; and did discover unparalleled love, and the fullest assurance of faith in God, all his days, together with every other grace. And though it is said, he "was heard, in that he feared," Heb. v. 7; yet it was not a sinful fear, but the grace of fear, that he exercised: "A

servant feareth his master." Christ was God's honourable servant, Isaiah, xlii. 1; and the spirit of the fear of the Lord did rest upon him, Isaiah, xi. 2, 3. Against this holy thing, anointed with all the fullness of the Holy Ghost, and full of grace and truth, which human nature was united to the person of the Son of God, Satan could do nothing. But then, you will say, how came Satan to prevail over Eve, who pronounced good, and who stood in Adam's image? "The woman," says Paul, "is the image of the man," and no doubt but she partook of the image of Adam in the best sense; and if the Holy Ghost was in them, as I firmly believe he was, yet they had no promise of his eternal abode; the eternal indwelling of the Spirit was secured to the elect in Christ, who is the better covenant head, and to his seed only, and that from eternity. Read Isaiah lix. 21. Adam and Eve had no promise of momentary support as we have, nor of being kept by the mighty power of God, this was to come through faith in the better covenant, and not by the law, for, "The law is not of faith," nor faith by the law. God has shewn us that no creature can stand alone; angels could not, Adam could not, nor Peter, though called by grace. In short, the Holy Ghost promised to us the image of God, the tree of life, and the heavenly paradise; the second Adam, and Jerusalem the mother of us all, were in truth in God's purpose, of which Adam and Eve, in their best estate, were only types. They were not created under the dominion or reign of all-prevailing grace. Both these were to come to them, not at their first formation, but at their transformation; not at their creation, but at their conversion; not by the law, but by the covenant of promise: these blessings were in the hand of the Messiah, and secured for them in him, before either Adam or Eve was formed.

When Satan came to Eve, he had no sin in her to work upon but the father of lies dropped his seed into her ear; and this lie was accompanied with unbelief, just as faith comes by hearing, and bearing by the word of truth. He told her, she

should not die. This lie was admitted to the door of her heart; and Satan immediately backed it with a promise of her being like God. Thus falsehood and pride leavened her mind, till infidelity was conceived: then she believed Satan's lie, disbelieved the Lord's sentence, and ate the fatal fruit; and, when her eyes were opened, sin, which lay at the door of her heart, got into her conscience and made shocking work there. Thus lust was conceived, which brought forth sin; and sin, when finished, brought forth death.

As for us, we are all concluded in unbelief; which appears to be the devil's shield and bulwark, with which the strong hold on a sinner's heart, in which he reigns, is fortified; and though the Holy Spirit casts him out of the stubborn will, the mind, and the throne of the heart, by his divine power, which subdues the will; and by faith, which influences and persuades the mind, and by shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, yet the old corruptions remain; a divine nature is received, but the carnal nature is not rooted up. Sin is dethroned, but not cast out; subdued, but not destroyed: its reign is destroyed, but not its being; grace reigns, but not to the utter, extirpation of sin; nor will it, till it issues in glory. A principle of grace is God's seed produced by the operation of the Spirit: and, under the influence of the Spirit, a new man is put on; but the old man is not wholly abolished, because self is daily to be denied, and the old man and his deeds are daily to be put off. Thus the new man and the old one, like the twins in Rebekah's womb, exist and struggle together in every believer, more or less. Faith is the hand of the new man, and unbelief is the cursed sinew of the old one. The Spirit manages and maintains his work of grace, and the devil does all he can to stir up and animate the remaining, sordid dust is the serpent's only meat. Under the influence of the Spirit grace reigns, and we are happy; but under the motion of the devil corruption is stirred, and we are miserable. The groundless doubts and misgivings of real believers spring

from unbelief therefore must be sinful; and they are produced by a conjunction between the devil and corruption. All sin is conceived under the operation of the father of lies. Ananias and Sapphira conceived by this father; it was Satan that filled their heart; and the same father was at work on Peter, when the Lord said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." That the groundless doubts and fears of the saints are sinful, appears plain from the Saviour's rebuking them; besides, it is calling the truth and faithfulness of God in question; nor are they ever attended with the approbation and comfortable presence of God, which is a manifest proof of the divine displeasure at them. It is the unremitted practice of Satan to tempt to sin, and especially the children of God; and if they fall into sin, they fall into the condemnation of the devil: for he turns accuser, and condemns them for it. Fresh guilt obscures the light of God's countenance, or hides his face; and, when light is withdrawn, Satan's works of darkness go on. Guilt contracted weakens the exercise of faith, and damps the joys of faith. While under Satan's accusation, unbelief contracts and bars the heart, and then doubts and fears rise up: but, when God shines again, Satan is discovered; and, when guilt is purged, the accuser is silenced. Pardoning love enlarges the heart; faith; working by love, subdues unbelief; while doubts and fears all vanish. Young believers are very apt to be pestered with doubts and fears, because their faith is weak: their light is dim; they see, but it is out of obscurity, and out of darkness; and Satan is ever to be busy with the weak and feeble. Blessed be God for ever! Jesus died for the sin of unbelief, as well as all other sins, and to us it shall not be imputed in a judicial way. "Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Thanks be to God for his unspeakable mercy. Amen and Amen,

Your willing Servant,

Sed Casuistus valde inexhertus,

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter X

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

Sir,

KNOWING that the Lord hath made you instrumental in establishing and refreshing the bowels of his saints, and has given you good understanding in the scriptures of truth; I have taken upon me to write to you, to beg your thoughts on Heb. vi. 4-6. The words are these: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Pray send me word how far, and in what manner, a person may be enlightened; In what sense he may taste the heavenly gift; and in what sense he may be partaker of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good

word of God, and the powers of the world to come; and yet fall away, so as never to be renewed again to repentance.

I know a person who says, that the word if, implies, that it is impossible for any one to be a partaker of the above-mentioned privileges, and yet fall away, and perish for ever; but that assertion does not give me, nor several more who are desirous of knowing, satisfaction.

I rather think it is something similar to Luke viii. 13, "They on the rock are they, which when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Pray, explain to me the difference between the joy of the elect, and the joy of apostates, which is false joy; and the difference of their faith, for it is said they for a while believe; and how true faith operates on the elect, in distinction from false faith on hypocrites: for I want to know which of these I belong to; for I believe the end of the one to be glorious, and the end of the other to be miserable beyond conception; and so I think every one will find it that dies in such a state.

I have seen your writings, though I never heard you preach: and I find the Lord uses you as an instrument in his hand of bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, and of building up others already called; and I hope he will continue your usefulness. I assure you, sir, that I ask not this favour to gratify a vain curiosity; for there are several, as well as myself, who desire to know whether their experience be genuine or not. And, if you should think proper to send your thoughts upon the above mentioned passage, may the Lord be with you, and guide your thoughts and pen, and bless it to the comfort of our souls, that we may find it a word in due season. This is the desire and prayer of

Your willing Servant to obey,

GEORGE CHAPMAN.

Lingfield, June 30, 1790
William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. CHAPMAN, DORMAN'S LAND, LINGFIELD.

Sir,

I RECEIVED yours; and, in compliance with your request, I send you my thoughts on the subject: but at the same time, I inform you, that none but God can give you an answer of peace. The priest's lips are to keep knowledge; and we are to require the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts, Mal. ii. 7. Which great high-priest, prophet, and apostle of our profession, is the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom we are to go, and of whom we are to seek wisdom; who giveth liberally and upbraideth not; and there is none that teacheth like Now for the words;

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened." A man may be enlightened, as Balaam was, who saw the vision of the Almighty, fallen into a trance, but having his eyes open. The Lord came to him first at Pethor; and he afterwards saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, with his drawn

sword in his hand. He saw likewise the safety of Israel, under the blessing of God; the immutability of God and his counsel, that he is not a changeable being. He saw that Israel should never be reckoned among the nations, but remain a distinct people, even when dispersed throughout the world. He saw the destruction of Amalek, &c. &c. and the blessed death of the righteous, and wished that his last end might be like his. The eye of a man's understanding is one thing, the eye of faith is another. By the former, the rich man in hell saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom; by the latter, the patriarchs saw the promises afar off, and embraced them, and applied them. By the former, a man sees the blessed state of others; by the latter, he sees his own state. Balaam saw God for others, but not for himself. Job says, "I shall see him for myself, and not for another." Balaam never saw the desperate evil that there is in sin; nor the spirituality of the law; nor the Lord as a Saviour, but as an angry judge with a drawn sword, in which character every eye shall see him in the great day. The Lord shone into Balaam's head; he shone into Paul's heart: he opened the eyes of Balaam, but he opened the heart of Lydia. Balaam saw a sword; Paul saw an atonement. Balaam saw a judge; Paul saw a Saviour. Balaam and the Egyptians saw God for Israel; Job saw him for himself.

If thou art enlightened, thou hast seen sin; but hast thou ever been and felt the killing evil of sin? Thou hast been enlightened to see the word, which is a light shining in a dark place; but has the day-dawn and day-star arisen in thy heart? If enlightened, thou hast seen the spirituality of the law; but hast thou seen and felt the dreadful havock it makes, by working wrath in the conscience? and has the sight and sense of this made thee fly to Christ for refuge, in whose face we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God? If the light of faith shines into a man's heart, whatever that man sees, he applies sooner or later. By faith he sees the promise, and by faith he applies it By faith he comes to Christ, and by faith he

receives him. He views the atonement, and pardon is the effect of the vision. Imputed righteousness is revealed, and peace is the fruit of it, as soon as applied. Eternal life is the gift of God, and by the gospel it is brought to light. God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; faith applies the word of reconciliation; while friendship, and fellowship, are felt and enjoyed.

"And have tasted of the heavenly gift:" By which is meant, not Christ, nor eternal life, nor the gift of faith, nor repentance, for these gifts and calls of God are without repentance; Lilt. I think a spiritual gift, such as the Corinthians were zealous of I Cor. xiv. 12; is chiefly intended; a gift of prophecy, or a ministerial gift to preach, attended with a reformation, zeal, and a gift of utterance: which things have a relish in them to a carnal heart; yea, they taste a sweetness in them, because they procure much applause from men, which is the sweetest morsel that can be given to an unrenewed, unhumiliated man. He delights in his gift, because it procures him the praise of men; he tastes the former, and fills his belly with the latter, for he loves the praise of men more than the praise of God; but this tasting differs widely from what is called eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, which is peculiar to believers, and by which they live for ever.

And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost" Not that the Holy Ghost ever took the possession of their hearts, so as to become a spring of living water there: for the above-mentioned persons were not partakers of eternal life; nor had they received the first-fruits of the Spirit, nor his testimony in their conscience; nor his grace in their heart; nor the impression of his ratifying, confirming, sealing power, by which the saints are assured of their interest; and which things accompany salvation; and are so many foretastes, pledges, and earnest, of future glory. They are made partakers of the Holy Ghost in no other sense than Balaam or Saul was; the

Spirit of God came upon both, and they both prophesied. This is a spiritual gift; and there are divers gifts, but all of the Holy Spirit. It is he that divides them to every man severally as he will; he gave utterance both to Saul and Balsam, and it was by him they spoke, or prophesied, I Cor. chap. xii.

"And have tasted the good word of God." As Herod, who heard John gladly; and the Jews, who rejoiced in his light for a season; and the way-side hearers, who heard the word, and anon with joy received it. They were pleased with the sound, amazed at the light and understanding of the preacher, admired the fluency of his speech, and were charmed with the heavenly tidings that were brought forth; and all this time they found no opposition, either from the law, conscience, Satan, or the carnal enmity of their own hearts against these things: therefore they received the word with joy, and sprung up into a warm, zealous, joyful profession; but, when temptation and persecution came because of the word, they withered away as suddenly as they sprung up; which fulfils the saying of the wise man, "An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed." It is not enough to taste the good word of God, Ezekiel eat the roll; John eat the little book; Jeremiah found the word and eat it, and it was to him the rejoicing of his heart. "My word," says Christ, "is spirit, and my word is life;" but he says of the Jews, "I know you that my word hath no place in you;" it is not in your heart, affections, or conscience. They did not receive the truth in the love of it, nor the love of the truth, and therefore it is no wonder if strong delusions were sent, and they were given up to believe a lie. In short, these persons could have no more than a natural faith; and as to their joy, it sprang from natural affections; for as to the love of God, the root of the matter, they had not: it was for want of this root that they withered away.

"And the powers of the world to come." By which I understand the power of working miracles. There were in those days numbers of persons who had spiritual gifts; such as gifts of healing, working miracles, speaking with tongues, &c. &c. And the Saviour owns, that many will say to him in that day, "We have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and done many wonderful works," whom he will never own for his people: for it is not what the man does for God that saves him, but what God does for the man; not man's wonderful works, but God's free grace. This power of working miracles may be called the powers of the world to come, because it is a divine power sent from heaven, and that from God himself, who displays his power and glory there; and by these wonderful works he displays the same, in a measure, on earth. These miracles produce amazement, astonishment, and wonder, in the beholders that see them performed: on which account they may be called the powers of the world to come: for in that world every thing will appear miraculous, wonderful, and astonishing, beyond all conception. Moreover, it was common among the Jews in days of old, to call the days of the Messiah the world to come; and Isaiah foretelling many wonderful things of a miraculous nature that were to be performed by him, such as making the lame lean like an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, &c. These miraculous operations were, by the Jews, called The powers of the world to come; and these miracles were wrought by many that will not be saved, as hath been shewn.

True joy springs from the manifestation of Christ to the heart "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." This manifestation produces pardon and peace, the experience of which worketh hope; and such a soul rejoices in hope of the glory of God. "And hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart;" which is the root of all real joy. Did you ever know what it is to abhor yourself in dust and ashes? Did you ever mourn

in private under a sense of your lost estate, and the wrath to which sin hath exposed you? And were you ever bowed down under the intolerable burden of guilt, and the fear of death? If this ever were your case, to whom did you apply? how did you get rid of your troubles, or where did you leave your burden" Christ says, "I will give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." If this is your experience, your joy is the joy of the Lord.

The faith of those who for a while believed sprang from a conviction in the mind of the supernatural power of Christ displayed in his miracles: "When they saw the miracles that he did, many believed on him;" but, when these performances were over, their natural convictions sunk; and, as persecution attended their profession, their natural confidence failed, and they fell away. The faith of God's elect purifies the heart, by bringing the atonement home: it lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and puts it on; it leads the soul to Jesus, and works by love to him; attends prayer, and brings answers from God; it is very busy under a sermon; it mixes faith with the word; and applies the promises; while God fills the soul with joy and peace in believing. In short, if thou art a real believer, thou hast had a share of persecution and temptation to try thy faith as well, as they; and if these have not withered thy profession, it is a plain proof that thy faith is not natural. Farewell. While I remain.

Thy willing Servant,

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. J. B. Dear Friend,

You need not have made any apology in yours, as the troubled minds of sensible sinners are my peculiar province. I am authorized and commissioned by the God of heaven to transact business and negotiate affairs between the King of kings and self-condemned rebels; and to recommend the great physician, and hold forth the balm of Gilead to wounded spirits; and it is both my delight and my food to see the king and the rebel, the father and the prodigal, the physician and the patient, meet, close in, and unite together.

Whatever use a birth from Christian parents, or a religious education, may be of, it by no means secures salvation, nor gives us any right or title to it; for that is wholly of God, and is owing to his sovereign, free, electing grace. The miracles and ministry of Moses, manna from heaven, and the visible presence of God in a cloud by day, and a flame by night, for the space of forty year, together, was not sufficient to keep Israel from idolatry, rebellion blasphemy, fornication, and magic. Those that escaped the sword, who did not provoke, who mixed faith with the word, who ate of the spiritual meat, and drank of the spiritual drink, and who entered into rest, were those who found grace in the wilderness, even Israel, when the Lord went to cause him to rest: and those that found grace were loved by him with an everlasting love, Jer. xxxi. 2, 3; which was the self-moving cause in God of their eternal salvation; and it must be attributed to it, and so be resolved into the good pleasur 1dde e of his will.

If God gives a man up to the freedom of his own will, his will is soon subjected to the will of Satan, and, while led captive by him, he will be sure to resist every conviction that may arise either from the light of the law, or from the light of nature; and, if he sets about a reformation, Satan has no objection to that, but rather promotes it, if convictions are not given by the Spirit; yea, and lifts him up to be proud of it, if he can but get him to rest carnally secure in it; for he knows that he can return again to his own house whence he came out, unless the Holy Ghost take possession of it, and convert it into a temple for himself. But, if convictions are given by the Spirit of God, the apprehended sinner being effectually taken into custody, the hand of God holds him fast; Justice pursues him with unremitted rigour; while his atrocious crimes, the just charges of heaven, and the tremendous sentence of the law, chase him out of every starting-hole, from under every hiding-place of falsehood, and out of every refuge of lies, and stare him full in the face till wrath possess him within, and terrors beset him without. A sinner, thus convicted, never escapes his pursuers till he has fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope that God has set before him. But convictions from the law, or from a natural conscience, often abate as soon as a few dead works are performed, or a few human services attended to.

Your external reformation, and setting yourself up for a life of purity and holiness, is the resting-place and fatal delusion of one half if of the preachers and professors in Great Britain: their own free-will stands instead of sovereign grace, their own performances instead of the merits of Christ, human endeavours instead of the spotless obedience of the Saviour, external conduct instead of the regenerating operations of the Holy Ghost, a form of godliness instead of the power, and the doctrines of men instead of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ. As to holiness, my friend, there is no one doctrine under heaven that is more abused, less understood, or that uninspired men are more at a loss about, than they are about

that. Some make it consist in the circumspect life and walk of a professor, others, in the performance of family, relative, and church duties, and others, in obedience to the Letter of the law; the latter of which is often confirmed by this text, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord" But all this is no more than moral, ceremonial, negative, or holiness in skew: the new man is created in righteousness and true holiness, which the apostle opposes to all this. There is none holy, in the strictest sense, but one, that is God. It was his appearance to the ancients that made any spot holy ground: his residence in Canaan made it the holy land; his dwelling in the temple made it the holy place; and choosing the city of Jerusalem made that the holy city. But, when he left the temple, it was a den of thieves with a witness! and, when he left Jerusalem, it was called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified. That which makes men holy is God's saying, and performing his promise, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them," 2 Cor. vi. 16. The Holy One of Israel dwelling in the believer's heart by faith, Eph. iii. 17, is that which makes the saints of God holy, for their bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.

A man that has the righteousness of God on him, and the Holy Spirit of God in him, may be said to be a new creature, created after the image of him that created him in righteousness and true holiness. All holiness short of this is only the varnish of a hypocrite; it is prostituting the greatest of names to the vilest purposes of deception; and can no more make a man a holy man, than the hypocrisy of the Jewish Pharisees could make the temple a holy place; whose devilish deception and villainy changed its sacred name into that of a den of thieves.

Inherent holiness, and practical holiness, are terms that are commonly made use of by sensual men, whose aim is to deceive the simple, debase the ministers of the Spirit, and bring the grace of God into contempt. There is no internal

holiness but in those who are born from above, and whom God chastens for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii.10. nor is there any real practical holiness, but where the Spirit of God dwells and operates, leading men, and directing their work in truth, and working in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Such souls walk in the Spirit, they serve God in the newness of the Spirit, and worship him in Spirit and in truth.

Men of worldly wisdom are, in the general, the farthest of all men from real religion, and the greatest enemies to it: hence we are thus cautioned; "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," Col. ii. 8. However, God, in the multitude of his mercies, hath delivered thee from those fatal delusions; and has favoured thee with many blessings, comforts, and happy seasons; "But these are all fled!" This is dreadful news! If jubilee days and comforts are all gone, thy case must be deplorable indeed; but, deplorable as it is, thy heavenly Father hath served me so times without number, and does to this day. We cannot command the comforts of God, nor have we power to detain them; the Lord gives them, and the Lord takes them away; and a sore affliction it is to be without them, but I am often obliged to bear it, for I know of no remedy but faith, hope, and patience; these must keep their standing till those joyful seasons come round again: God will afflict the seed of David, but not for ever, 1 Kings xi. 39.

I do not think, nor believe, that any person who ever was filled with love to God, and liberty by his Spirit, is capable of thinking much less entertaining, either hard or blasphemous thoughts against God; I believe these cursed thoughts are produced by a conjunction between the devil, who buffets us; and sin, that dwelleth in us. I have been plagued with these things, without intermission, for fourteen months together;

and, when my deliverance came, Satan only departed for a season: but so far from entertaining them, I would sooner have entertained every murderer, highwayman, thief, and pickpocket, in Christendom. When the hour of temptation comes on, this sore runs, this plague of the hear! rages; but, when Christ comes, and rebukes the devil, we are whole of this plague, this issue of blood is stanch'd. "Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

A person cannot long doubt of the being of a God who is perpetually buffeted by an evil spirit, who is such a desperate rebel against him. The very being of a devil proves the being of a God; for, if there be no Creator, who made Satan? Not himself; for, if he had, he would have been glad to have unmade himself long ago, seeing his own existence is no less than a hell to him. Satan does not make use of sound logic in tempting thee to open thy mouth against a being that has no existence. However, thou art in good bands: Jesus Christ is a safe ally; he has promised to succour the tempted, and he knows how to deliver the just out of temptation. And of this be assured, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against the bulwarks of Zion.

Ever thine,

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.
Reverend and very dear Friend,

I JOIN my request to that of your affectionate friend John Pavey, That you continue publishing Epistles of Faith; because I believe, and am sure, that they have been the means, under God; of answering cases, or speaking to circumstances, and those not a few, which never were proposed in form to you, but are well known to him whose Spirit acts as a sovereign in directing your unsolicited, and consequently unexpected, communications, to accomplish his pleasure, in reproving, correcting, instructing, and establishing, some whose inclination, ability, or opportunity, might never enable them to seek such special assistance; but whose necessities will be like your own, so long as face answers face in the glass.

I was a little put to it last month. A friend sent to borrow a chafing-dish; and not being worth one, nor yet willing to seem deaf to my friend's request, I ventured to send the annexed, as the best substitute then in my possession; and who can tell but it may serve him to plead also on some future occasion? Believe me to be, so far as I know myself.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate

S. W.

P.S. It has pleased a gracious Lord to enable and incline us to open Little Providence Chapel, under my unworthy roof, in lieu of that now discontinued on Friday evenings. Preaching s: will therefore be regularly continued, at my house, if God please, on Tuesday evenings, and on Friday evenings. But, when you are at liberty to 823 visit us, the evening shall be such as shall be most convenient to you. And I will expect, without farther solicitation, that you will become my constant remembrancer to the Rev. Mr. Huntington on this account, and desire him to remember us before the throne; and then he will also visit us as oft as convenient, and consistent with his other avocations.

TO A DEAR FRIEND, WHO SENT TO BORROW A
CHAFING DISH.

HEAT, rage, and fury, passion, fume, and pet,
Storm, tempest, hence! begone! I dare not fret.
My Lord is near; and bids me take no care,
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.

Let those provide a group of chafing dishes,
Whose chief concern respects the loaves and fishes.
What eat, what drink, or how to keep me warm's
On these accounts I feel no great alarm.

My Father knows my wants, my every need
He'll clothe my back; and he'll my belly feed
With food convenient, be it cold or hot.
'Tis children's bread; 'tis not the Gentiles' lot.

Let Satan roar; while Judah's Lion keeps
The Church of God, He slumbers not, nor sleeps,
Cloth'd in his robe, and sprinkled with his blood,
All things must work together for my good.

Rather than starve, a widow shall sustain
Those whom the Lord's engaged to maintain:
Ravens shall cater, bread and flesh shall bring,
If so commanded by my Lord the King!

Nor shall we need to carry scrips or purses,
Which oftentimes are only fill'd with curses,
If unbelief be truly put aside,
And precious faith reports, "God will provide!"

May such be my experience! such be thine!
For chafing dishes we shall not repine.
Our bread is manna, and our flesh is Lamb!
"Eat, drink, my friends!" So saith the great I AM!

HALLELUJAH.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XIV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. W.
Dear Friend,

I WILL, at this time, in a strait betwixt two, between the bed
and the pulpit. I am not bad enough to cleave, with full

purpose of heart, to the pillow; nor am I strong enough to abide steadfastly by the cushion. I have got something of rheumatic pains in my head, stomach, knees, &c. and I can find no temporal remedy that can give relief. The sovereign influence of the covenant head, the sounding of mercy's bowels, and the exercise of faith, would set both my head and knees to rights; but the wayfaring man has not turned aside, nor tarried a night with me, for some time. I have been, for many nights and days, seeking and feeling after the great physician; but all the answer that I can get is, Wait, You must come, or, You must call again. In the pulpit I feel neither sick nor sorry: but my sermon and my health, both end together; for I have no sooner concluded, than I cry, hey head! my head! The flock go off with their health recovered, and their youth renewed; but I go groaning home. "So then, death worketh in me, but life in you." In this dilemma, I act as other sick doctors do; I give advice, but take none; I can prescribe to others, but can make no application to myself. There is something within that tells me he will return again, and that I shall thrive as the corn, and grow as the vine. So that I am not left without a witness, nor has my master left himself without a proxy. But, when this prophecy is fulfilled, I shall be brought into another strait: if I flourish in this study, I fear I shall wither in the pulpit. When the fleece is wet, the floor is often dry, and how can I eat my morsel alone, and see the family dried up like a potsherd? This has often been the case: therefore I wot not which to choose; my present languid frame of body and mind, under which the household is banqueted; or my future feast, while they keep Lent.

What little I can do at present, must be near home. I can by no means come to Peckham till I get rid of my present pack and package. I shall add no more, but a caution to you, and to all the friends of religion, never to speak or write against any sort of furniture that has passed under sacred consecration; for it appears to me, that every good man is bound, by the eternal

laws of charity, to keep a chafingdish for the use of himself,
and his neighbours. I am, sir,

With all due respect,

Your willing Servant,

In the service of the Sanctuary,

W. H.

Winchester Row, October 14th, 1760.

HEAT, rage, and fury, passion, fume, and pet,
Encompass'd Jesus when he paid my debt!
This tragic scene completes redemption's plan,
And holy passion ransom'd ruin'd man!

Meekness and pity cope with burning ire;
Vindictive Justice will contend by fire!
Vengeance and mercy, each their part perform
We find the shelter, he endur'd the storm!

WHEN Christ and sinners first in union meet,
They rest together, and they both have heat.
I'll never say to heat, Depart! begone!
While Wisdom asks, "Can one be warm alone?"

O sacred flame! be thou my ardent wish,
The golden censer, or the chafingdish!
'Tis these shall make my languid incense rise,
And send her rich perfumes above the skies.

'Tis hallow'd fire prepares the gospel feast,
And every saint that's made a royal priest.

The starving soul must meet with sordid fare,
Unless some burning, shining light, be there.

'Twas holy fire that cook'd the Levite's lot;
That lit his lamps, and kept his offerings hot.
The gospel net still takes the mystic fishes:
Who serve them up, must have their chafingdishes,

A lukewarm state is neither good nor safe;
The holy spouse in jealous flames could chafe.
Let none this hallow'd furniture traduce,
The chafingdish is not enough in use.

Let the King hear us when we call!

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

My very dear Friend,

I HAVE had the satisfaction of knowing you now upwards of twenty years. At our first acquaintance, you were an exact portrait of Job's wild ass's colt; and never was I more surprised than when I first saw you in a pulpit! But I perceived

that God had sent out the wild ass free, and loosed the bands of the wild ass. The Lord having at that time quickened my soul, I knew the voice, felt the power, and divine union took place, which I hope will ever continue.

I have perused most of your writings, but find few exceed the enclosed, which you sent me when I lived on Hounslow Heath, and which I wish you to publish in your present Epistles of Faith, and that without any correction or human decoration, unpolished, unembellished, and I say unadulterated; that your readers may have the satisfaction of seeing an original.

As the Letter is without date, according to custom, I cannot certainly say how long it was ago; but I think it must be upwards of fourteen years. My reason for desiring to have it published is, because of the simplicity of it. A few days ago, I was looking over the many epistles I have received from you, and I found a savour in them, therefore wished others to partake of the savoury meat, not willing to eat my morsel alone.

Your room is still vacant; but Jannet, of late, has talked of letting the lodgings, as they are so seldom occupied. You know it has been otherwise formerly: but times are now altered, therefore we must expect to meet with many disappointments.

You see I write without any of those compliments which the clergy in general expect, without adding even the title S. S. But conclude in joint affection, attended with our best wishes,

JOHN & JANNET CHAPMAN.

Petersham, near Richmond, Oct. 6, 1790.
William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XVI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. CHAPMAN.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

I RECEIVED yours, and will comply with your request, The Letter shall be printed without any embellishments or alterations, any farther than is necessary to make it imitate common sense.

It is but seldom that places of pleasure, like Richmond, produce much of an harvest for God. The seed sown there has fallen chiefly by the way-side, on stony, or on thorny ground. That field has not, as yet, appeared white, ready to harvest; nor is there any likelihood of it, especially while the Lord's day is the only day in the week for business. I have long laboured there, and to little purpose. You know I must preach the gospel to other cities also, for therefore am I sent.

As another door is opened unto me in Southwark, it will not be in my power to visit you often at Richmond. Besides, for the time, you ought to be teachers yourselves, instead of needing one to teach you again, who have long since known the first principles of the oracles of God. You are not become such as have need of milk, you are able to digest strong meat; which

is a proof of your being of full age, able to admonish one another, and to hold forth the word of life, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

My lodgings cannot be let. Any thing devoted or consecrated to the priest's use, according to the ancient laws, might be redeemed, by paying the estimation of the priest; but it could neither be let for hire, nor sold. Corban, it is a gift: therefore your spouse cannot be Profited by letting of it.

At present, my tabernacle is weak; various infirmities are creeping on: however, it is better to bow down to the sickle, than to bow down to the slaughter.

My respects to your spouse, and to all that love our Lord Jesus Christ, at Richmond; and believe me to be,

Dearly Beloved,

Yours in the hope of the gospel,

W. H.

Winchester Row, Paddington.
William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XVII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. JOHN CHAPMAN, HOUNSLOW HEATH.

Dear Brother in the Lord,

I AM surprised at your kindness in offering to give me a meeting to-morrow at Kingston. I have never merited any such favour at thy hands; but the Lord is good, and, I trust, has in some measure given us to drink into one Spirit, though I know I have the least share: for really I see myself worse and worse; and if God's wills and shalls did not hold me up, my ifs and buts would sink me into irrecoverable ruin. God hitherto has, and yet will, choose me in the furnace of affliction; and I well know it must have its sevenfold heat before I shall leave self behind. If I sin out of the fire but one week, down goes Christ, and up comes self; and I know, I well know, the meaning of these words, "A child, left to himself, will fall." I never go to a pulpit twice without chains; and I should soon lay both upper and nether millstone to pledge, if God did not, as our proverb is, lay more sacks on the mill.

Dear Brother, I have lately found very strange goings of God on my soul, much knotty work; and indeed, if God had not given me a particular call, and enabled me clearly to try, and make my calling and election sure, I should almost have doubted of my soul's interest in the covenant of free, self-abasing, and God-exalting, grace.

The people of Richmond being so dead, and so few that ever had life, it adds to my burden. I once preached to them from the vessels of gold, and silver, and of wood and earth; and there is, I fear, least of t c48 he former. To labour for matter in the fire, and, after all, to preach it in vain; to preach deliverance to captives, till they drop into hell in their chains, is truly the burden of the word of the Lord. And yet the Lord does seem to bless my labours here at Ditton: and the devil is always quarrelling about it; and will be at war; for he well

knows, to my shame I speak it, that I was faithful to the unrighteous mammon; and, when he lost me, he lost a staunch friend, being a ringleader; and now a weak destroyer, or at least a disturber, of his kingdom. But, blessed be God for it! I never desired a cessation of arms, nor by any means conditions of peace; and I believe I shall suffer much for Christ's sake, and that we shall fight every step of our way. Well, be it so, since the woe is to them that are at ease in Zion; you will say, it is hard work to run and fight too. True; but it is harder work to run, and fight, and carry the cross too. Put we are always most healthy under the rod, and strongest when well loaded. I am sure every saint looks like an angel in my eyes, but myself. Surely I shall ever find work enough to obey any one of these four scriptures; "Thy will be done;" "Give me thy heart;" "Deny thyself;" "Only believe." Alas! who can do this, that is so poor in grace, and yet so proud in spirit! My dear brother, it is a great thing to be a Christian; the way is narrow; and how many have been striving at the strait gate to get in, without the key of experimental knowledge! May he who keeps the key of David make us wise to salvation, and unlock these three gates to us: David's gate of righteousness, which we enter by justification; Isaiah's gate of liberty, by knowing and keeping the truth; and the gate, or door of mercy, by knowing Christ, and by knowing we are justified in, and made free by, him! Then we are free men of Salem's city; and are in the covenant of peace, and citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and shall go no more out of the city, to have no more curse, to see no more sea of God's wrath, and to have no more night! Truly this has been my soul's experience; and I daily weep before God for the continued enjoyment of it, or else to come home to the full enjoyment of what this is an earnest of. O the Lord's goodness to such a wretch! One would think I should be all obedience, all humility, all love! but, alas! I appear as far from it as dreadful perdition is from the throne of God! but I cannot give up hope.

I believe the scheme of my enemies, in trying to carry me home to my own parish, like a vagabond, will be the very means that God will use to settle me a parishioner here. Surely, from first to last, I am a miracle! but yet a rebel! O Lord, forgive! My best love to your spouse, and fellow-servant. I wish you the enjoyment of the dearest of all friends, and the sweetest of all names; wishing you and yours may be saved. Amen, and Amen!

W. H.

Thames Dillon, Tuesday Morning.
William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XVIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

Sir,

I HAVE frequently had a great desire for a little conversation with you, and which may yet be; out shortness of time with you, and distance of place with me, have been an hindrance: besides it is not fitting your time should be occupied with hearing the loquaciousness of a fool, or the ravings of a madman. I know to me ward is vain all human help; yet something may be a stay to my patience, if I had any left.

From what I have read in Luther, and heard from you, both have tasted of my bitter cup; which opens a door of hope, if there is any left. What Job was outwardly, that I am inwardly. My case is similar to that of Francis Spira, the cause excepted. I am distracted, almost dead, and on the verge of desperation! My heart is broken, not only broken, but pulverized ! My memory is almost gone, the executive power almost annihilated; and my conscience a wild beast, a roaring lion! Oftentimes at death's door, yet alive! Full of murder, theft, and all evil concupiscence, I cannot think a good thought, nor (I now find) never did! Heretofore I have grappled with atheism, deism, and sadduceism: now a more bitter exercise awaits me. Divines divide God's punishments into judicial and corrective. Query, Which is mine?

My purpose is some time to wait on you; and this is done to save time. That your courage and usefulness may be doubled, (these times require it) is the wish of

Your unknown,

Humble Servant,

P: J.

June 7, 1788

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XIX

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MY UNKNOWN CORRESPONDENT.

Sir,

You are welcome to have a little conversation with me at any time when I am disengaged from preaching, if you give me timely notice.

I see nothing in your Letter but what is common to God's elect when first apprehended by divine justice. When the law is set home on the heart, sin will take occasion by the commandment to work in the alarmed soul all manner of concupiscence; for without the law sin is dead, Rom. vii. 8. When Justice arrests the sinner, and applies the law, the terrors of the law awake the slumbering enmity and unsuspected corruptions of the heart: "I was alive without the law once; but, when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Our ghostly enemy also is sure to be busy with such a case: he can never hold possession of his palace, and his goods, in peace, but only where the understanding is veiled, the conscience seared or stifled with dead works, the corruptions of the sinner fall asleep, and his soul in carnal ease and security. When the eye of Justice flashes convictions, the adversary is discovered; when the terrors of the law stir up and discover the desperate enmity and evil of the heart, his possession is disturbed; false peace and carnal ease are sure to be routed. Every sinner under heaven shall most certainly pass through this fiery trial; if it be not done in this world, it will be done in the next. They who are not

alarmed or awakened in the land of the living, are sure to lift up their eyes in hell, where justice, law, terrors, c40 guilt, corruption, and fiery darts, will not seize them, but hold them fast for ever. On which account the Psalmist called the first terrors of his mind the pains of hell; signifying, that they are peculiar to, and the everlasting portion of, souls there. But the elect have it in this world, that they may escape it in the next; "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

I have grappled with all those evils which your Letter contains; and they are all to be found dispersed here and there in the scriptures of truth, as some of the most perilous footsteps of the flock, and left upon record for the encouragement of such as we. Yea, saith the apostle, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting," 1 Tim. i. 16.

As your day is, so shall your strength be. Judgment shall return unto righteousness, and then wilt follow that. Moses himself was no stranger to this horrible pit; he had been plunged into it, and called out of it: "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men," Psal. xc. 3. Remember, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The thirty-third chapter of Job contains almost the whole of your case; in which God points it out, speaks to it, gives instructions about it, and lays a foundation for hope of deliverance. Be strong, and quit yourself like a sinner in earnest. Be as importunate as the widow with the unjust judge, who fairly tired him out. Let the publican's petition be your constant plea. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? I tell you, he will avenge them speedily." Consider also, that our sins were condemned in Christ's flesh; our old man was crucified with him. Hence it appears that Sin is a condemned

felon; the old man, by the death of Christ, is dead; and as to the devil, he is not only cursed, but bound hand and foot. All these can do nothing without the Lord's sufferance: nor can they render thy disease incurable; it is the Lord himself that wounds, and it is he that heals: his blood cleanses from all sin; and he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.

Sit under the most spiritual and experimental preachers that you can find; and expose both your conscience and your sins to their sword, like the Psalmist, who wished to know the worst; and desired not to be deceived, but said, "Search me, O Lord, and try me." "There are," saith the wise man, "that speak like the piercings of a sword; but the tongue of the wise is health."

I shall add no more, but my petitions in your calamity; and, in God's due time, you will see what prayer can do.

Your willing servant,

In the gospel of Christ,

Winchester Row, Paddington.

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XX

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. HUNTINGTON.

Dear Sir,

HAVING met with much opposition in my mind against attempting to commit to writing my experience, I could not, for a time, comply with your request; but having been enabled to see that the opposition came not from God, I am determined, with the Lord's help, to acquaint you with some of the most remarkable occurrences, neglecting the whole train of deliverances I have experienced in a way of providence; which, if written, you would conclude that the Lord had been with me from my mother's womb.

I have often thought, of late with great satisfaction, and I believe it has made your ministry, in the hands of God, savoury to me, how plainly the Lord has revealed it to me, that you are his servant: for I had sat for near ten years, under what was called the gospel; under R. H. and under J. W. and never knew truth from error, law from gospel; nay, I did not know calvinism from arminianism. But I had not. been under your ministry many months, before I discovered, and said to several, if what you said respecting arminianism was true, I should be damned. But it was not what you, nor all the world could have said, naturally speaking, without the Spirit's power, that would have delivered me from it: for though I saw that I could not be saved that way, yet I found afterwards, that a work of the Spirit was as much beyond what I had come through, as the heavens are above the earth; for what I had

heard served only to convince my judgment, that it requires an application by the Spirit of God 2000 to bring it home to the heart. I began, at times, to be satisfied, from what I had experienced, as I thought, and from the Lord's hearing my prayers, and delivering me: and not only in this, but in having my prayers remarkably answered at other times; so that I concluded I was certainly in a saved state. And I had, from this last trouble, not only left off going to the playhouse, to which till this time I was much addicted, as often as three or four times in a week, but the very root or desire was cut for this, and from every thing else seemingly excepting godly company and godly conversation; and I could now so talk about the doctrines of the gospel, that many, as well as myself, were deceived, and thought I had a saving knowledge of God; nay, by some, I was looked up to as a very remarkable one. But you will see, in the sequel, that when the Spirit of the Lord began to operate, all my seeming comeliness was turned into corruption, and my soul stood naked and exposed to the wrath of the Almighty; and that you were the instrument, in his hands, of bringing me first into, and afterwards out of, my trouble.

I am now enabled to see how rightly the Lord has timed every thing, how every thing has come suitably to the state I was in, and how all things have worked together for my good: for, just when my mind seemed ripe for the truth, and I began to be dissatisfied, and to think there must be something more in religion than what I knew, I was brought under your ministry. And, though I believe I had heard almost all who are called gospel ministers in London, I never so much as heard of your name till within these three years; but, as soon as I heard you, I understood enough to make me miserable, and I never found any rest after I did hear you till I was delivered. I began to argue in favour of arminianism, and against the truth of the Lord, for I found my false hope was destroyed; and I was filled with a great deal of bitterness in my mind against you, though

we then had never spoke to each other. However, the arrow stuck fast.

It happened about this time, that I had several dreams and visions of the night, indicating what was coming upon me; two of which I will relate. I dreamed that I was walking a considerable way, in great perplexity, through many waters, some places shallow, and others very deep. As I had just passed a church, a relation of mine, who had often come with me to hear you preach, overtook me; and, all on a sudden, I saw a great light, like the sun in his meridian splendour; and I heard a voice, saying, "Put off your shoes, for the place whereon you walk is holy ground." I did so immediately, and went on my road joyfully but I then lost sight of my relation, and saw him no more; and, what is remarkable, this very person came but once or twice to hear you after my trouble began, and has now given it up entirely, and, I believe, through fear of falling into the horrible pit wherein he saw me plunged. The other dream was this: I saw myself arraigned at a bar for a crime which I thought was not my own however, when my trial began, I was convinced that I deserved to suffer; but, after remaining a considerable time at the bar, in great anxiety, Justice itself came, and delivered me; and I understood that another had answered for me, and made atonement; and I came away greatly pleased, and happy in my deliverance. But, in my way home, I perceived a man slain and terribly mangled; which circumstance left a lasting impression on my mind.

On Monday, August 31, 1789, betwixt nine and ten o'clock in the evening, I was sitting reading a book of yours addressed to Caleb Evans; and, while I was reading it, an uncommon light darted forth, somewhat in the manner of a flash of lightning, which seemed to strike me across the forehead, and directly it sunk into my inward parts, and I felt it within me as plainly as ever I felt any thing in my life. Surely it was the

candle of the Lord searching all the inward parts of the belly: for my soul was like a bird shot, it sunk in a moment, and my countenance immediately fell. This supernatural light fastened a conviction within me, which convinced me that all my past experience was nothing but a delusion; and that I was a hypocrite, and in spirit a Pharisee of the Pharisees, in the sight of God; and had taken up a profession of the gospel only upon reason, and through fear, without experiencing the power of it. But the light which I had now received shined so bright in the reading of the word, and examining my experience, to try to support my spirit, that I wondered how I had read the scriptures before, and how it was possible I could have been so much deceived. I betook myself to my room in the greatest horror imaginable; and this text came to me; "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" I thought this came from the adversary, and was meant to deceive me, as he had done before; therefore it afforded me no comfort: and immediately the following text came to me; "The heaven shall be brass over thy head, and the earth iron under thy feet." I looked out at my window, and to me it so appeared. I dropped immediately on the floor, crying, "Lord, save, or I perish!" and, if ever words were spoken from the heart, these certainly were.

I kept reflecting on my past experience; but the light which was within me convinced me there was a wrong motive at the bottom of all my profession: and such sins were brought to my remembrance which I had not so much as thought of for years; the appearance of which convinced me that my soul was naked before God, anti exposed to all the curses of his law, for the covering which I had clothed myself with was all burnt tip.

I arose from the floor, and hurried to bed, to drown or forget my trouble, but continued saying, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner!" till I fell asleep; and a sinner I did appear black

enough, God knows! When I awoke the next morning, my trouble and horror were so great, I could not act in my business, though, before this trouble came on, it had been my greatest pleasure: and during my five months distress, my business, or property, did not appear worth one moment's consideration; nay, it was of so little esteem, that I would have given it to my brother, if he would have accepted it. And though, in one of my matters, I was apprehensive it would be put into the hand of the Lord Chancellor, yet nothing had any weight with me but the welfare of my soul. And such was my grief; that though I wished, and tried to hide it from those around me, it was impossible, for I was obliged to confess, and that to many, that I was a wretch undone, for it appeared to me that I had sinned against light and knowledge, and that there was not such another sinner in the world. To add to my distress, the next night I dreamed I was in a garden with two friends, for one of whom I had a very great regard. In the garden there was a tree whose top I could not discover. There descended a beautiful bird, which both my friends tried to destroy, but I was very much displeas'd, and earnestly wished to have it. One in company aimed a stroke at it. with a sword, when it mounted immediately; and, the moment it was out of sight, I heard a noise by the side of me; and, turning round, saw the earth cleave asunder with a confused noise, and swallow up one of my friends, together with myself; and I cannot help thinking, that what I then felt, when sinking, bore a resemblance to what condemned spirits feel in hell. After having fallen a great way with the horrid sensation, I found myself in a large grave, where there were many dead bodies; and one I particularly noticed had a crown on its head, which I understood to be the body of King David. I saw my companions no more, but remained alone among the carcases; and, after I had survey'd them a while, and stumbled over some of them, there appeared a person unexpectedly, and conducted me out. The next day after, the sensation which I felt when I fell kept me in all the horrors

imaginable. I believe I was shewn David in the grave because I was to experience some of the horrors which he felt; and under the heaviest troubles I have had a gleam of hope, from having some part of his Psalms brought to my mind, the following passages in particular: "Let not the pit strut her mouth upon me;" "The snares of death compassed me about, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me." I knew this was my case; and I thought that, if David went so far, and had deliverance, it might be the same with me. My last dream was verified, for I grew worse and worse, and continued sinking deeper and deeper into despondency; insomuch that my relations, and some of my acquaintance, amongst whom I had been brought up, came to me, and said, if one who had lived as I had done was lost, what must become of tire world? And others said, they knew I had a good heart; but this, instead of affording me comfort, as I believe they meant it, only grieved my spirit, for I knew my heart was deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and though my life had been remarkably moral, the light which shone within me convinced me that my mind and conscience were both defiled, and that in every thought, word, or act, I had committed sin.

On Sunday, Sept. 6, 1789, I came to hear you preach. Your sermon seemed exactly suited to my case; and particularly several texts you quoted, and enlarged upon. One was, "It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth." Another, that the Lord would rend, and afterwards return, and heal. These, as well as the greatest part of your sermon, were so applicable to my case, that I thought I felt deliverance coming; but as I knew that, if I was set at liberty from all my trouble in the chapel, I should disturb the whole congregation, I therefore prayed that I might be delivered at home. But this very prayer Satan handled as an accusation and aggravation of my trouble through my whole distress; under this idea, that I had thought lightly of that pardon, which was worth more than the whole world, and of which I was then sensible; that I had

now let slip the day of grace, and should never find repentance. I seemed to be got almost beyond the reach of mercy, and had neither power nor spirits to keep myself decent; but was so harassed the moment I began to do One thing, that I was driven to another; insomuch that one of my relations said, I must privately have committed murder, otherwise I could not be so unhappy. My distress began to affect my body, and was like a fire burning within me night and day; and, as in Deut. xxxiii. 2, "From his right-hand went a fiery law;" so I felt it raging in my conscience, and calling for righteousness and obedience which I had not.

One morning, my thirst was so great, that three quarts of liquid in an hour did not allay my thirst: and, what added most to my grief was, I could not pray, though there was groaning and seeking after God in the spirit beyond any thing I had ever felt; for, if I attempted to pray, a power superior to my own drove me from it. Through fear and horror, I went from place to place, groaning under the continual apprehensions of eternal destruction; a terror to myself, and to all around me. I was tempted to try to get rid of all thoughts of religion and a future state. I went so far, that I could not bear religious conversation, but used to get away from it, and hide the bible, and other religious books. But this would not do: I got worse and worse, and was compelled to search the scriptures, and that more than ever, for something to ease my troubled mind; and was compelled also to come and hear you, for there was no one else, at this time, from whom I received any ease. I often experienced relief while you were in your prayer; and indeed it seemed as if the Lord put words in your mouth, purposely to suit my case; but, as soon as your prayer was over, you were led in your sermon to draw the line between a professor and a possessor, or a hypocrite and a real child of God; and you discovered my very thoughts, insomuch, that I was clearly convinced I was nothing but a Pharisee, not a child of God.

About this time a professor asked me my mind respecting you, and how I could ever go to hear you, after I had been brought into so much trouble under you. I was enabled then to say, and that in confidence, that if any in London were right, you were; and I had light sufficient to see that he was in as bad a state as myself, only his eyes were holden, that he could not see it. Several persons brought promises from the word of God which were suitable to my case: but I told them I could not believe; could see the safety of those who did believe in Jesus; but, if they would give me the whole world, I could not believe.

The Lord, for some time, had prospered every thing I put my hand to; and my getting something of a name among the people with whom I dealt, lifted me up. But these very people, whose esteem I so much prized, were to see me in my desperate condition: for one day, in all my trouble, I went to 'Change; and what I went for, I know not; but, from my appearance, they concluded I was mad; and from this I became the talk and jest of them all. I was at last obliged to take to my bed, which I kept for eight days together: and it is amazing how manifestly the Lord supported me, for I would not take any thing that was recommended, either as food or physic. Satan often came as a familiar spirit indeed, for I was not without his temptations and arguings the whole five months. That text in Isaiah, "Tophet is ordained of old, &c." lay much on my mind; and it was so impressed on my spirit, that I have had my soul, as it were, carried down amongst the fiends, and thought I could see the very place and manner of their punishment. Satan had such possession of my heart and tongue, that he made me do what I never did before, namely, curse and swear. When he began his temptations one morning, I said, "Here I am, only created to live about twenty-two years, have always been harassed by Satan, have called continually to be delivered from sin in vain, and am now going to hell," for I thought it impossible to live the day out. "What a

*** being must God be!" I felt a trembling seize me the next moment; upon which I said, "Now all is over, I have now committed the unpardonable sin!" In my desperate fit, I thought of a sword which I used to keep by my bedside, and said, "That will soon make an alteration, for bell cannot be worse than what I feel." I got out of bed in a moment; and I believe, if the Lord had not moved my sister to displace it, under some apprehensions of this kind, I should have killed myself; for, when I found I was disappointed, I smote my hands against the bedstead, and beat off? part of the flesh, in my rage. But, what is amazing! under all my trouble, whenever there was a little cessation, which was never long, I feared that I was coming out the wrong way, and prayed earnestly to God, if it was so, to plunge me deeper, if necessary, so as not to let me come forth any other way than his own, and with a saving knowledge and experience of Jesus Christ. My spirit, at such times, was seemingly absent from the body, (not in my sleep, but when lying iii my bed awake) roving in the air; and I thought I could sec; the world under me; and the language of my heart was, "O that I knew where I might find him! it might be, that I might find mercy!" But, after this, a gloomy horror seized me: and there seemed, at times; a carelessness of what became of me. The adversary suggested, " Perhaps the doctrine of universal salvation may be true thus far, that, after the reign of the saints one thousand years, the wicked might be delivered." I searched, to find out whether the words, ever and everlasting, might not mean a term. I also inquired what the Hebrew words were, and procured the best of dictionaries. But, the more I searched, the more the light which was within convinced me it was not as I then wished. This, and many other particular errors, the devil tried, at different times, to draw me into, it seems, to make me stop or rest 1bfc short of Jesus Christ; but, blessed be the Lord, as fast as I caught hold of any thing of the kind, he cut it off, and drove me from my false refuges, sometimes by your preaching, and sometimes by texts of

scripture, and plunged me deeper and deeper. It was given out by some, that religion had driven me mad: my relations and friends said the same; and one spoke very desperately against you. It pleased the Lord, however, at this time, to strike one of the family, who is no friend to religion, with actual madness, (such I never was;) which stopped the mouths of some.

After I had uttered the words before hinted at, I came to hear you; and your text was, "Curse not the King; no, not in thy heart: nor the rich in thy chamber, &c." I was then most completely miserable; and said, "O that I was any other person in the chapel, or any other creature upon the earth! then there might be room for hope: but there is none for me: I have sinned the unpardonable sin!" When I came out, I asked a member of the chapel, whether he thought that any one had ever uttered such words, and yet was saved? He said, he was assured that the Lord never permitted his people to go so far. I said no more, but went on; and begged of God, if he would not pardon me, to cut me down before I got home. But, O the goodness, patience, and wonderful mercy, of God! for, though I had thus tempted him, he permitted me, though I trembled through fear when I drew near, to get safe home: and afterwards, in my sleep I had the following vision. I saw a hand stretched forth, with a book in it; and heard a voice saying, "Your name is written in the Book of Life." I asked to see it. The book opened, and I read my name with John Bunyan's on the same line: and I can now well remember the hand-writing; it was as legible a hand as I ever saw. After I had read it, I asked, if there were none, whose names were written in that book, who would be lost at last? The voice answered, "Look at the end of the line." I did, and perceived the two capital Letters, B. L. I asked their meaning, and was answered, Everlasting Life. Upon which I withdrew.

When I awaked in the morning, I found a calm on my spirit to which I was not accustomed, and which I attributed to the vision: but it was suggested to me, that such whose names were written in the book of life were never acquainted therewith; and immediately that text of St. Paul's came to my mind, wherein he makes mention of some whose names were in the book of life but I found that visions would not satisfy a soul under strong convictions, any more than the Letter of the word without the application of the Spirit.

Soon after this, in hearing you, (and I came that night not knowing that I ever should get back again,) I saw on a sudden a brilliant star over your head, and felt a sensation of joy; but something within said, "That is not for you; it is only a manifestation for him;" and I found this gleam of comfort gone. But, from this, and the vision before, my soul seemed somewhat supported for a time: and, when I went to bed, I entreated the Lord, that, if he intended to pardon me, he would manifest it to me that night. And the very manifestation which I wished for appeared: for, in my sleep, I was in an open country; the heavens seemed to be opened; and a bright light, beyond that of the sun, shined on me. Whereupon I was filled with joy; longed to leave this world; and threw myself down, in hopes of leaving my body there, and that my spirit would ascend; but something told me, that would not be the case yet. But, when I awaked in the morning, I found it fulfilled. And indeed, as I found my dreams and visions of troubles fulfilled, so also have I since found my dreams of comfort fulfilled.

The star which I saw over your head, sir, continued with me for some time, both in reading the word and in prayer: and it appears to me, that the day-dawn and day-star had begun to shine in my heart; for the wrath, desperation, and rebellion, of my heart, were soon gone; and what I felt in my spirit was pure, peaceable, and gentle; and the joy, satisfaction, and

love to God, which I received and felt under the word, are beyond all description! for, as I cannot find words to express my trouble, so neither can I find language sufficiently expressive of the joy I experienced at my deliverance!

After my happy deliverance, I tried to bring those sins to remembrance which lay so heavy on me during my trouble: and I believe the devil tried to get me back into my old hole; but the door, was shut, and my sins were gone. The Almighty, who pardons like a God, gave me such views of the covenant of grace, and of my interest in it; and such a feeling sense of the forgiveness of my sins, attended with such a love to God, his people, and his ways; that, were it always to be with me as it then was, my business must be managed by others, for that, as well as every thing else respecting time and sense, appeared not worth notice. However, I have since found my affections catching at these things, and have longed for a return of this sweet frame of spirit. But, blessed be God, his word is fulfilled: though we are not taken out of this world, he keeps us from the evil of it. The Lord has permitted my faith to be tried pretty much since my deliverance; but I found that, by these things, I got more established.

I remember, when I was first delivered, your mentioning, that what we felt in our first love would not last always; but that there would come a day of adversity, to balance the day of prosperity but, had all the world said so then, they could not have made me believe it, my love, joy, and peace, were so great! But though, at the dawn of day, the darkness makes the first light in the east appear beautiful; yet, when the sun arises, and shines in its splendour, there is a more glorious appearance: so it is with a Christian in his first love; there is great joy. But it appears to me, that an established Christian, who is enabled to quench the fiery darts of Satan, and live more by faith than sense, shines like the sun in his splendour, and, if I may so speak, gives more glory to God, and has more

satisfaction himself; for afterwards here is that confidence in God which nothing can shake. I speak from my own experience. It appeared now in reality, as Paul says, that old things had passed away, and all things were become new. And the change was so great, that it seemed as if I had got into a new world; and, instead of death appearing awful and dreadful, I have envied those, in that respect, who have, according to the nature of things, seemed to be nearer the end of their race than myself.

Thus, Sir, have I given you a short account of the Lord's dealings with my soul. I find it impossible to give you the whole. But I entreat your prayers, that God would be pleased to keep me always humble. I remain, sir,

Your sincere Friend,

And

Son in the Gospel,

J. A.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. J. A.

Dearly Beloved,

I RECEIVED yours; and shall take the liberty of printing it, as I know there are many, who are struggling with the terrors of the law and their own corruptions, who will be glad to compare notes; especially such who have made a long and shining profession, and lived in daily expectations of heaven, till convictions have seized them, and brought them to the verge of hell, where their whole work has been burnt up. "Every man's work," saith the apostle, "shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built upon the foundation, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

If the fiery law, the fire of wrath, and Satan's fiery darts, were to lay hold of every professor in our day, as they laid hold on Paul, the fire would be much larger than the dreadful fire of London, and a deal of wood, hay, and stubble, would be consumed, 1 Cor. iii. 12. Profession would be like the garden of Eden before the flame, but behind it a burnt mountain, or a desolate wilderness, Joel, ii. 3. However, "By fire and by sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many," Isa. lxvi. 16. Blessed is the man whom the Lord bringeth through fire, and through water, and out of a wealthy place. An experience of the terrors of the Lord makes men dread the thoughts of looking back; and a foretaste of heaven, at his happy deliverance, allures him, and draws him on. Thus both assist him on the way.

Whatever thou dost, be sure to hold fast thy first love: thou wilt find it a slippery thing, which will need the strength of both hands. Keep it in the midst of thy heart; let it not go, for that is

the life of thy joys; the bond of union; the bond of all perfectness; the first-fruit of the Spirit; and the very soul and motion of the living creature in the wheels, that make it move like the chariots of Amminadab. It may be left, it cannot be lost. God's love to us is from everlasting; ours to him begins when his to us is discovered. He can command his loving-kindness; we have no dominion over ours. His love is the body;

I believe that divine dreams and visions are from the Spirit of God: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days, will I pour out my Spirit," Joel, ii. 23, 29 The blessed effects of Isaiah's vision were, that his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged. If pardon and peace be not the effects of the vision, the visions are no better than Balaam's, though his were from God; but they respected the safety of others, not his own.

I laughed at your catching at the bird, while others drew their swords at it. You read of the voice of the turtle being heard in the land when the tune of the singing of birds is come. Her cooing note is charming to a sin-sick soul, though many, whose words are like drawn swords, open their mouths against her. However, the bird is your own., and you know it is the voice of the turtle that sets the soul to singing. Blessed is the young man who remembers and fears his Creator in the days of his youth; while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. And the man who never embraced the good tidings of the turtle while it is spring with us, will hear her strange note another day, "When he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, when all the daughters of music shall be brought low. Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way," Eccles xii. 4, 5.

Above all things, aim at union, communion, and fellowship, with Jesus Christ. Without this, a profession is nothing but a galling yoke, an empty lamp, a sheep's skin, and a mere mask. By virtue of union with him, we feel his strength made perfect in our weakness; his peace is felt and enjoyed; and you know it is his own promise that, "The upright shall dwell in his presence." The professor who is a stranger to this union in times of trouble and temptation, is a vessel without an anchor, and in perpetual danger of shipwreck. The Lord path done great things for you, in delivering you from your melancholy; and where much is given, much is required. It well becomes the just to be thankful. Consider what an honour it is to be a son of God; it is an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. Farewell: be of good comfort, be strong, and be vigilant.

Excuse haste. Mercy and truth be with thee; while I remain,

Dearly Beloved,

Thy willing Servant,

In the Gospel of Christ,

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

My dear Friend,

As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him; and pay no regard to every Lo here! and Lo there! Such leaders were never strengthened, established, and settled upon the rock of ages; and therefore their ways are moveable. The burdened soul that is led to the Saviour, the dejected spirit that is settled on the rock, feels his heart fixed, trusting in the Lord: and he is not to fly like a bird to the mountain, but to stand fast in the Lord. His strength is to stand still, and see the salvation of God.

The secret leaven of legal pride, rooted and spread in the heart, and a set of gospel notions floating in the head, make a complete and profound Antinomian, let the moral conduct be what it may. His heart is at Horeb, and his head at Zion. His soul is bound, only the tongue is free; and what the tongue advances, the feelings contradict. The understanding takes part with the tongue; while an unpurged conscience opposes both, knowing there never was any divine application made to the heart: so that, in time, the accusations of conscience become too strong for the understanding, and, in order to obtain quietude within; such an one is obliged to bring the legal leaven out. Then light withdraws, and darkness succeeds; the holy commandment is turned from; and such a beginning in the dispensation of the Spirit withers away. The man that preaches to pacify a legal conscience, contrary to the light in his head, i said to rebel against the light; and only to speak a vision out of his own heart, and not out b27 of the mouth of the Lord.

The Saviour always deals with such in a conditional way: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" but, if not, they never were his disciples, only in show. And the Saviour's conditions shew that he knows their hearts; and

their forsaking his word makes them manifest to us. It is the Spirit of the Lord's mouth that quickens, influences, and instructs the soul; and it was the same mouth and Spirit that commanded and dictated the word of God; he, therefore, that speaks under a divine influence, speaks a vision out of the mouth of the Lord; while he declares to others what God has done for his soul, and revealed in him.

We have many in our day, who are called God's children; and who call themselves servants of Christ, and of his church; and who procure the titles of such, and are had in honour; who are no friends to the Redeemer, to his cause, nor to his family. But surely I know that it shall go well with them that fear the Lord, with them that fear before him. God may, in time, raise up from among yourselves one that may be enabled to admonish, instruct, and comfort the little company. Two or three have the promise of his presence to the world's end; and every private worshipper shall find him a little sanctuary in every place where he shall come, if he seeks him in sincerity, and in faith. I know, to my soul's comfort, in whom I have believed; and be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. The legalist rejects the Mediator of the new covenant, and finds the old Mediator nothing but an accuser; he accuses him before God And Moses's testimony accuses him in his own conscience, and his countenance accuses him before the saints: and thus, by perverting his way, he shall surely be known; and, in time, his conduct shall accuse and reproach him for an hypocrite, even before the world.

They that are partial in the law of faith, that are partial in the law of truth, and who corrupt the covenant of life and peace (which is the priestly covenant, or the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, in the hand of our great Melchisedec,) God declares, the Lord of Hosts declares, that he will make them contemptible and base before all the people. Read

Malachi, chap. ii. You have seen something of this fulfilled already; and he that will observe these things, shall see more.

Tender my kind love to your mother; and tell her, I am glad that God has given her a son who aims at a future inheritance. Give my kind love to Walter: and to all that rest in the Saviour, who are knit together in love; while I remain,

Dear Brethren,

Your willing Servant,

In Christ Jesus,

Paddington, Jan. 7th, 1791.

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

My Dearly Beloved Pastor,

I HAVE already given you so much trouble on several occasions, that nothing but the hope of receiving a word of

advice would now prevail with me to write again. But what will not a distressed soul do, and where wilt it not fly when the least prospect of gaining relief prevents itself? And, truly, I am now distressed out of measure. What to do, I know not; for, do what I will, sin gets the mastery of me: in consequence of which, I have lost all hope of salvation from it; being such a wretched, self-condemned sinner, that I cannot believe there is any mercy for me. My besetting sin none but God and myself, without you guess what it is, know any thing of. But, though my falls into it do not bring a public scandal on the profession I make, yet that text, "Happy is the man who condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth," is sufficient, for my conscience does condemn me. "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit." Oh! my pastor, "The spirit of man may sustain the infirmities of the body, but a wounded spirit, who can bear?" I think, dear sir, you are well, enough acquainted with the lusts and corruptions of nature, to gather, from the hints I have dropped, what my besetting sin is; and, if you do not think me too far gone, the favour of an answer shall be ranked amongst the foremost of the many favours undeservedly received by,

Your sinful, miserable Servant,

Sackville Street, Oct. 1, 1790.

O. W.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXIV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.
My Dear Pastor,

A WEEK having elapsed since the date of my last, without receiving an answer from you, I am necessitated to conclude you, at least, thinly me too far gone indeed; otherwise, I think you would have presented some foundation for hope, or administered some cordial or other to my distressed sin-sick soul. But, David. like, I look on the right hand, and on the left, but no man seems to know me. Therefore perish I must, unless the Lord, in mercy, put forth his hand, and snatch me from the pit, ere it shut it's mouth upon

Your lost, sinful Servant.

Sackville Street, Oct 8th, 1790.

O.W.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO O. W. Decor
Friend,

As I have two or three thousand hearers and correspondents, it cannot be expected that I can be at the beck and call of every one. Visiting receiving visitors, and answering Letters would more than take up all my time, without either reading, studying, or preaching. You know God is faithful to his word. If his children sin against him, he will visit their sins with the rod. If they backslide, they shall be filled with their own ways. If they sin through all the barriers of filial fear, and sin away their spiritual strength, the wise man says, they shall have no rule over their own spirit, but be like a city that is broken, down, and without walls. By whom, or by what, a man is overcome, by the same is lie brought into bondage. And it is but meet that he should feel the yoke of his own transgressions, and for a time be holden with the cords of his own sin, that he may be sick of his own ways, being filled by his own devices. A little of thy present exercise will serve to imbitter the works of darkness, to fill the vicious appetite with self-loathing, to cover thy face with shame and confusion, to make thy conscience sore, thy heart tender of God, and thy spirit more meek. I have no doubt but the Lord will heal thee in his own time; but my desire is that thou mayest be tried, and then thy deliverance will be more thankfully received; delivering mercy will leave the deeper impression, and a sense of undeserved love will leave a more lasting obligation on thy weak and unstable heart. God has got more ways to keep us from evil than one.

If constraining mercy will not allure, an army of terrors shall deter. If we sin away our liberty, he will lay us in irons. If we are not taught by the voice of love, we shall be instructed by a strong hand. If we will be nibbling at the devil's baits in a day of prosperity, we shall be given up to the buffetings of Satan, that we may be kept from performing his works in a day of adversity. If Paul is in danger of being lifted up into the pride of the devil, the fiery darts of the devil shall keep him humble. I think God has shut thy soul up in prison, that thou mayest be kept from evil, and not be suffered to bring a reproach upon him. When a man is laid by the heels, his feet cannot be running to mischief.

I have prayed for thee, and shall, if God permit, continue so to do; but still my desire is, that thou mayest be tried. Nor shall I pray for thy present deliverance, but for humbling grace, godly sorrow, &c. for, as thou art not fit to be trusted abroad, I think thou art much more safe in the house of correction. A man had better be employed in beating hemp than in picking of pockets. The former procures him a bit of bread, the latter a halter. The staff of life is better than a shameful death. I come to you with a rod, and yon justly deserve it. Kiss the rod, and submit to him that appointed it, and all shall be well.

While I remain,

Yours in the service of Christ,

But not of folly,

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXVI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. B. WELWYN, HERTS.

YOURS I received, and have considered the thing whereof you wrote unto me. Touching the authority of a minister, my judgment is this: If Christ was to send an angel from heaven unto me, I am fully persuaded that he would not come to be ministered unto, but to minister. I should err, if I thought him to be any thing more in office than a messenger of the Lord of hosts, a ministering spirit to me, and my fellow-servant in the ministry. "They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them which are the heirs of salvation." But unto the angels hath God not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. Nor hath he put the heirs of the world to come in subjection to angels neither. To us there is but one Lord, one ruler, one king. Christ hath no co-partners in his mediatorial empire. If the great apostle of the Gentiles was my pastor, he could not lord it over my conscience, only commend himself, or make an appeal to that court. Conscience is the principality of Christ; and none but antichrist would usurp authority, or offer violence there. Paul was a servant of Christ, and a servant of the Church for Christ's sake. If he follows Christ, I am to follow him; if he waits upon his Master, he is to be honoured with double honour; if he does the work of an evangelist, he is to be esteemed very highly in love for his work's sake; if he feeds me, I am to feed him; if I reap of his spiritual things, he is to reap of my carnal things; if he is as God's mouth to me, I am to be obedient by word and deed; but, if he cannot feed me, he hath no authority to starve me; if he cannot lead me on, he hath no commission to bring

me back; Let not the king hold too many horses, lest he bring my people into Egypt, Deut. xvii. 16. And a preacher is to have no dominion over my faith, lest he bring me into bondage. The pastor that loves the chief shepherd will feed his sheep and lambs. He is a pastor after God's own heart that feeds his people with knowledge and understanding. He is a scribe instructed in the kingdom of God who firings things out of his treasures, new and old. And he that gives a portion to seven, and also to eight, is one that deals the doctrines, promises, and blessing of the gospel, to the heirs of promise; and the commandments, threatenings, and curses of the law to the children of the flesh. The faith of such must be followed, Considering the end of their conversation. An under-ruler in Zion, is one who can describe the liberties and privileges of the citizens; and a real labourer in the Lord's vineyard, is one that has first tasted of the fruits thereof; and therefore can describe the union that subsists between the vine and the branches; and what clusters they are that God calls bitter, and what clusters they are that have a blessing in them. God gives you the character of those who are ignorant of Zion, and blind to the way of the vineyards, in the following words: "The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to this city," Eccl. x. 15. And their portion is cursed in the earth, who behold not the way of this vineyard, Job xxiv. 18. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Follow not these, lest thou learn their ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

The devil never does more mischief than when he gets into a pulpit, with a grave countenance, a large wig, pompous speech, and subtle oratory; when he feels for the soft passions and unsanctified affections of fallen nature; tickling them with magic art, and calling for a few crocodile tears, which can never take away sin: when he calls the real joys of saints levity, and the operations of the Spirit enthusiasm: when holiness is made to consist in nothing but outward

show, and a decent carriage; when the name Jesus is only brought forth just to serve a base purpose, and then dashed from the mind and memory of the audience by a long conclusion and application of dry morality. This is Satan transformed, and such are his transformed ministers, 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15.

Satan beguiled Eve by a serpent; and such scribes are called, by the Saviour, serpents and vipers, because Satan used them for the same purpose of beguiling unstable souls.

Thou art warranted to "go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge," Prov. xiv. 7. Wisdom will ever be justified of her children; but a vile person is to be contemned by every citizen of Zion.

The preacher that hath not the doctrine of Christ, hath not God, let him be who he will. It is an honour to withdraw from, yea, to be cut off and cast out of any church, when the preacher and the congregation have done with Christ, if the person withdraws, or is dismissed, with a good conscience. Jesus never revealed himself, as the son of God, to the blind man restored, till he heard that the Rabbis had cast him out. Many, in our days, who could find no rest in a dwindling congregation, nor any peace under a declining and degenerating ministry, have been comfortably received, as sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, when they have been separated, and come out from among them. The ministry that does not stir the soul up, settles it on the lees. If it does not enlighten you, it will blind you; if it doth not establish, it will stagger you; if it doth not enrich you, it will beggar you; if it doth not reveal Christ, it will obscure and hide him; if it gathers not to him, it will scatter from him; if it doth not quicken, it will deaden the soul. An uninspired preacher can be of no use to a starving soul, nor to a living soul; he cannot describe the case of the former, nor break the bread of life to

the latter; I long sought relief from these, but all in vain. He must be a star in the Lord's right hand that guides the benighted sinner into wisdom's ways. The ministry of the Letter can do no less than kill; it is the ministry of the Spirit that giveth life. The good Lord direct thee! So prays,

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXVII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV MR. HUNTINGTON.

Reverend Sir,

THOUGH at some distance from London, fame has not been silent about you, but has reached the neighbourhood in which I reside. About a year since, your "Naked Bow of God" came into my hands, which I read with pleasure, and, I trust, with improvement. Within these few days, a friend of mine lent me a book of your writing. "The Bank of Faith." The remarkable display of the various providences of God to you, filled me with wonder and amazement. But there is one place in it, page 164, which I cannot agree with. What I mean is, that concerning Dr. Priestley, whom you style irreverent, and suppose he will be served in another world as you served his

works in this. Now, for my own part, I think this language savours of uncharitableness; and does not coincide with the words of our blessed Saviour, who says, "Judge not, that Ye be not judged." I have always looked upon Dr. P. as a star which gilds with lustre our dissenting hemisphere. As I am no ways partial to sophistry, but would like to see the truth set forth in its proper colours; and, if I be in an error, should be glad to be convinced of it: therefore have sent this, to solicit an explanatory reason why you speak in that manner of the above-mentioned reverend divine. Forgive, sir, the liberty I have taken; and, if you can spare time from your great Master's work, to write me an answer, shall esteem it a particular favour conferred on

Your humble Servant,

J. W

Burton End, Haverhill, Norfolk,
Nov. 25, 1790.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXVIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. J. R.

SIR,

Yours was brought to my hand: and, as you have requested a reason of my assertion, I comply with your request. The text that you have quoted, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," is not applicable. "The spiritual man judgeth all things, but he himself is judged of no man." We are not to judge according to appearance, but to judge righteous judgment. We are to judge of a false prophet by his false doctrine. By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." "He that condemneth the just, and he that justifieth the wicked, are both an abomination." The latter is wrong judgment, the former is right. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And, for my own part, I never heard nor read that ever Dr. P. pretended to have been born again of the Spirit of God, for he denies the self-existence of the Holy Ghost; consequently, could never expect conversion, regeneration, or any tuition, from him. I never heard nor read that he ever made any pretensions to these things: therefore he must be destitute of faith, for faith is produced under the operation of the Holy Ghost; it is a fruit of his. In this case, he must be in unbelief, as all men by nature are, and such are condemned already; therefore to justify such a one is an abomination. To the law and to the testimony we are to go; and if a man speaks not according to this word, it is because there is no light in him; for, as was before observed, By a man's words he is to be justified, and by his words he is to be condemned.

I believe in my conscience, and to the best of my knowledge, that there is not one doctrine of the bible, which is essential to salvation, but what Dr. P. has awfully perverted. He has brought in damnable heresies; and, by divine permission, and as a just judgment upon the wicked, he has been, and will be, the destruction of thousands. "Seducers shall wax worse and

worse, deceiving, and being deceived." If this charge be false, find out one doctrine that he has fairly stated, agreeably to the oracles of God; and, if God permit, you shall have an answer to it. Had Dr. P. been tossed on the billows of wrath, even to distraction and madness, and that at times for years together, as many of the elect have been; and had he been delivered, by the revelation of Christ to his soul, as Paul, and others; he would acknowledge, with compunction of heart, the distinct personality, essential and eternal divinity, of that great deliverer.

I found, by deep experience, that no mere creature could make infinite satisfaction to vindictive Justice for my sins; and that neither man nor angel could perform an obedience, Rom. v. 19, nor bring in an everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24, by the imputation of which all the spiritual seed of Abraham should be justified, Gal. iii. 6-8. Which seed is some out of every nation, kindred, people, and tongue. But the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, hath done it; and upon this foundation my soul has been fixed, blessed with peace and a good hope through grace, for these seventeen years past; nor shall Dr. P., or the gates of hell, ever prevail against this rock. This is the Doctor's stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and they that stumble and fall here shall be snared, broken, and taken; or, as the Saviour says, "Upon whom this stone falls, it will grind him to powder."

Three distinct persons in the Godhead, the divinity of the Saviour, justification by faith in an imputed righteousness, regeneration by the Spirit, redemption by the Saviour's blood, and peace by his all-sufficient sacrifice; are some of the truths which God revealed to my soul; and these are truths that shall never be overthrown, but shine with divine rays through every false gloss, and will shine for ever. These truths I have been enabled to enforce ever since I knew them, and to which God has set his seal to the conversion and regeneration of

hundreds, if not of thousands; which is what Dr. P. could never say, nor any one of the Arian or Socinian gang; nor was one soul ever converted to the faith of Christ by such men. God never sets his seal to a lie, nor confirms an usurper in an office assumed. God never sent any man to preach the everlasting gospel till he was endued with the Spirit of power from on high. The gospel is a dispensation of the Spirit, not of the Letter; "The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." Uninspired men run, but God has not sent them, and therefore Says they shall not profit his people at all.

I have no human learning, sir; what I have is what God revealed, made known, and applied to my own soul; whose kingdom stands not in human wisdom, nor in word, but in power, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; without which power, men are sure to stumble upon the dark mountains. And the Doctor errs, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. And no wonder, when God has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. And it was for judgment that the Saviour came into this world, that those that see not might see, and that those who see might be made blind.

As to any expression of mine savouring of uncharitableness, I wonder not at its appearing so to you. However, I believe it savours of truth. He that denies the Lord that bought him, brings upon himself swift destruction; and he that sends a sinner to the grave with a lie in his right-hand, is the most uncharitable being of all the human race, for he shuts up the kingdom of heaven against men. "Into the heavenly Jerusalem shall nothing enter that loveth and maketh a lie:" and he that adds to the words of Christ, entails upon himself all the plagues that are written in his book; and he that takes from his word, forfeits all claim to eternal life, and the blessings of heaven, Rev. xxii. 18, 19. And I do insist upon it, that Dr. P. has perverted almost, if not altogether, every essential truth of

the Bible. If you have long viewed the Doctor as a star that gilds with such lustre our dissenting hemisphere, your hemisphere is very far gone from the true light. We greatly differ in judgment: for, was I on my death-bed, with the tribunal of heaven in full view; and an appeal was to be made to me, to mention, with the testimony of truth and conscience, the most presumptuous sinner that I knew existing; in this nation, I should and would pronounce with my dying breath, that the greatest enemy to truth, and the most perilous state of soul that I ever read or heard of, is that of Dr. P.; nor should I expect any reproof or rebuke for such a dying confession, either from God, scripture, or conscience. If you would like to see the truth in its proper colours, you must pray the Sun of Righteousness to arise and shine upon you; it is in his light that we see light. He is my everlasting light, my God, and my glory. And, if he shines, you will know the truth at once, for Christ is the truth and the life. He is the truth of all the ceremonial types, the end of the moral law for righteousness, the substance of the everlasting gospel; the true God, and eternal life. Plead his promise, sir; all his children shall be taught of him; all his sheep shall hear his voice, and receive eternal life from him, who is the resurrection and the life. And, if he should shine upon you, you would own at once that the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth; and no more call light darkness, nor darkness light; but you would see the Doctor to be a wandering star, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever, Jude 13; and say, as Paul did, that if Dr. P., or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which Paul preached, let him be accursed.

It was with some reluctance that I sat down to answer yours, because the scriptures aver, that if a man receive not the truth in the love of it, God sends him a strong delusion, that he may believe a lie, and be damned: and, where this appears, I find a backwardness to interfere. If God gives a man up to his destruction, the Spirit will not suffer a man to reclaim him: " He

that despises the word, shall be destroyed;" and, "He that errs from the way of understanding. shall remain in the congregation of the dead."

If you would like to see the method in which God taught and led me, it is published in my book intituled, "The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer." And, if you choose to read the Letters which I have published, you will see his teachings in the testimonies of many more, who have prayed to Christ as God, and have been heard, answered, and delivered, as well as myself. If you reply to this, do not produce your strong reasons against the King of Jacob, but bring plain scripture proof, and then I shall understand you: I solicit no favour but this, that you will overlook the imperfections, as I have not time to write it over again; therefore must send it in the rough. And further, that you would spread this before my God and Saviour, and ask him who are his servants? Who are in the right? Anti whose testimony is to be credited, Dr. P.'s, or mine? If you do this, you will act as you ought to, and as a sincere inquirer after truth should do. That you may so proceed and succeed, is the prayer and desire of, Sir,

Your willing Servant, in Christ Jesus,

Winchester Roe, Paddington,
W. H

Dec. 2, 1790.

P. S. We have no Arians, Socinians, nor Sabellians, that ever were regenerated, renewed, born again, or called by grace to the fellowship 1fd of Christ. None of these gentlemen ever could produce any such testimony. Therefore your confidence can only stand in the cunning craftiness of a natural, carnal man. And, as God is true, and every man a liar, adhere to the former, but pay no regard to the latter: for it is written, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and whose heart departeth from the living Lord."

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXIX

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. B.

I HAVE been this morning begging of the best of all benefactors to remember my poor friends, and I believe it was the Lord that set me at it; and it was the same that helped my infirmities when at the work, and gave sweetness and delight, pleasure and love, in the heavenly occupation. I have begged with more than human power, and all power is from above; and he does put it forth and manifest it in the souls of much despised reptiles. Of all sensations, enjoyments, pleasures, or entertainments; of all delights, amusements, refreshings, or comforts, nothing is ever once to be named or mentioned in competition with the humbling, softening, meekening, composing, and becalming influences of the most holy, harmless, innocent, and inoffensive Spirit of all graces, life, light, and love; and all his operations lead and direct to the great atonement, and to the all-prevailing and ever acceptable mediation of Jesus: this is the saints' sweet repose, his refuge and his rest, his safety. and his sure defence. I am in comfortable hope that the Holy Spirit will mingle his softening influences, and his quickening operations, with my friend's afflictions; and if he does, the inward man will find support to

sustain the outward man's decay; and of this be assured, that peace of conscience is the best sick-bed, and love the best pillow; faith is the best bedstead, and the Lord's righteousness the best covering; the Holy Spirit the best nurse, and the Lord Jesus the best physician; the joy of God is the best candle, for this burns the brightest in the darkest night, the midnight cry will not extinguish it, nor the storm of Sinai blow it out. This is what is called a bad spirit, and antinomianism, but I am more than sure that it came down from heaven; nor have I a doubt but to heaven it will ascend.

W. H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXX

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

My dearly beloved Mr. H.,

I AM come, I hope, to tell you some good news, though it may be in a poor, broken, obscure way of expressing it to you; it is about a little one, a sister of mine, who is just departed in the joy and happiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. She was married and settled in a very dark place between Croydon and Ryegate, near Smithambottom, in Surrey; her husband is a

little farmer; they had been married seven years, in which time I have often frequented their house, and what was the reason the Lord only knows, for I could not stay away long together, I found such a longing desire after my sister's soul's good, so that when religion was talked about, or any mention was made of going to church, they would ask me to go with them, but I used to refuse, and give my reasons for it, and told them I belonged to the church of Christ, and that the members of the church of Christ, and those of the church of England widely differed, for one had the form, the other the power; so it passed on for two years. I dropped a word now and then by the way, and read the Bible to her, and then I began to open your books to her, and read them also. I first began with your "Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer," and in that part where God cut up all your formal church worship, the Lord was pleased to lay his axe to the root, and down she went; all her self-righteousness gave way sooner than usual. She sent me a Letter, saying, "Dear brother, you must come down, for I want to see you very particularly." This is now five years ago. I went down; she told me she thought she should be lost, and said that the whole world laid in wickedness, and in the wicked one; and, said, "I am very ill, and I think I shall die: I am so harassed with the fear of death, that I cannot lie down in my bed for fear of dying;" and she told me that she had been harassed with the fear of death, at times, ever since she was a little child. I was glad to hear all this; my mouth was opened to her wide, and was never shut again, except when deadness crept in betwixt us; no, not till Christ was formed in her the hope of glory, and that was on her death-bed. The next book that was blessed to her was your "Portion to Seven and also to Eight," where you are speaking of the creature being made subject to vanity; the Lord was pleased here to deliver her in some measure from the fear of death, and raised her to hope; and so for these five years she has gone on in a poor, feeble, and broken way. Her husband was a sore enemy to her in the ways of God, being ignorant of these

things; and yet I have stood astonished to see how wise the devil made him to plot and stop the knowledge of Christ from coming into her heart. She wanted for a long time to come and bear you, which at last we accomplished: I was to drive her home to my house, and her husband was to come the next day; and it being Sunday, she came trudging off with me to hear you, where she was much comforted by the word. We returned to Hammersmith to dinner; when we got home her husband was there first, and he was storming like a madman because he found we had outwitted him, and afterwards was so sulky that he would not eat any dinner. I could not help laughing in myself to think we had forestalled the devil's market. She has been twice since to hear you in the same way; and now five weeks ago on Friday last she was brought to bed with her third child, and my wife was with bet till she died. Last ordinance day I was at Providence chapel; when I got home at six o'clock, I learnt there had been a man on horseback inquiring for me, but could not find me; he left a message that my sister was dying, and I must go down directly to her. I went down in the night: when I arrived they told me she had been insensible for two days, and cried out at times to fetch her. brother: "Why don't you let him come up stairs? I know he is here, I can hear his voice." I got there at two o'clock on the Monday morning; I then found her better; she knew me, and began to tell me where she had been during her insensibility: she said she thought she had been in hell, and that she felt the flames of hell burning in her body: she told me that she had said in her heart she had sought the Lord earnestly, and though but in a poor feeble way, yet it was agreeably to his word, and if she was lost, she was lost; she was determined to pursue him in that way if she perished. That very moment her whole frame of body changed, and all pain left her, and light, life, love, and joy flowed into her soul while I was present. She sent for her husband up stairs and gave it him sharply, and what with his conscience and her flogging made him bellow like a bull; she talked to the rector

and curate of the parish till they could not hold up their heads, nor speak before her face; they were glad to get away. She set her house in order, gave my wife her child, told her she should be its mother, and she hoped I would be good to it; I told her I hoped the Lord would enable me to be so: she continued until Wednesday evening, and then went off singing, and told my wife to sing with her; my wife said, " What shall I sing?" She replied, "Sing holy, holy, Lord God, hallelujah. praise ye the Lord," and died. She desired me to write these things to you.

I remain,

Yours in the truth,

W. ATTRYDR.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXXI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

Dear Friend,

I AM sorry to hear thou art so ill, but I am more than sure that thou art safe in the bond of the everlasting covenant; my Lord and master will have nothing to do with the whole, the full, or the righteous; he came to heal the sick, to feed the hungry,

and to call sinners to repentance. When I received Mr. M.'s Letter yesterday, I was very sorry at the accounts, but last night in private prayer for my friend I was much indulged and enlarged on his behalf, and I did hope and conclude that he himself would feel the effects of my petitions, and so I said last night to my family when at supper. The union I feel with my yokefellow, the love I have to him in the bowels of Christ, the confidence and hope I have of his eternal safety, and the boldness I find in pleading for him, convinces and assures me that there is no absence between us but in body; we are still one, and present in the spirit; and this is the evidence of the union and oneness between us in Christ Jesus. God permits me to use great freedom with him for my dear friend, and I know that his faith grows and gathers strength under his afflictions, that his hope abounds upon every revival of the good work in him, and that his spiritual life is more abundant; and I am sure that his confidence has got so firm a hold that even the king is held in the galleries, so that he cannot get off or get away from my friend with faithfulness and honour on his side, without acknowledging the victory of his own implanted faith, and pronouncing a blessing on it. I know that my friend stands now upon this ground, holds fast his own integrity, pleads strongly his own cause; he maintains his own standing, insists upon his own honesty and sincerity, and takes no denial; he gives not up his suit, but states with boldness the truth of his case and state; he rehearses former deliverances, refreshings, love-visits, and tokens for good; he insists upon his unfeigned love to the brethren, and to me in particular; he pleads his sincerity and his heartness in the Saviour's cause; his hatred to those that despise his Lord; his earnest desire to be useful; his gladness at any addition to his family, though he himself has been starving for the very crumbs that fell from the table or lips of the new-born soul; he insists upon it, that none but God could have undeceived him at the first; none could change his heart, and quicken his soul, and make his conscience so tender, but the Almighty; none could support

him under such temptations, deliver him out of such troubles, or keep him from the great transgression, but the Lord God of Hosts himself: this is the ground that my friend has gained, this is his present confidence, and this is the business that he is now engaged in; and the same Lord that keeps him pleading, dictated, wrote, and now sends this; and therefore I shall sign it with his own name,

CHRIST JESUS THE LORD.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXXII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO JAMES BAKER AND OLD PEG, BRING INVALIDS.
Beloved,

THE Doctor wishes grace, mercy, and peace to the old soldiers who are creeping into winter quarters. It is written in our laws, that there was a commandment which went forth from the King of kings and Lord of lords eighteen hundred years ago, that the poor, the halt, the lame, and the blind were to be invited, compelled, yea brought in to be present, and to be guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb. This command has never been recalled; this law has never been repealed; but stands in full force to this day, like the laws of the Medes

and Persians, which alter not. It is also appointed and decreed by an unalterable statute, that all old soldiers or invalids who have been engaged on the Lord's side against the world, the flesh, and the devil, that these upon being dismissed from service, shall have a pension settled upon them, and shall be free from war for ever after. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that in case these soldiers have continued, and appeared staunch to his Majesty's interest, and have not been finally overcome by the King's enemies, namely, the world, the flesh, and the devil, so as to be drawn away from his Majesty's service, and to engage with the rebels against the King and his forces as aforesaid; it is decreed, ordained, and immutably fixed by an eternal mandate, that such shall wear a crown, in token of royalty, loyalty, and victory; and that they shall have a branch of palm in their hands, an emblem of peace, of conquest, and of eternal triumph; and shall shout among all the King's worthies, "Salvation to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever." Long live the King, long live the King.

W. H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXXIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. B.
Dear Friend,

SATAN, sin, and death have got their allies in our depraved nature (this I know by woful experience); namely, corrupt affections, carnal enmity, and unbelief; and there are darkness and death in all these: but there are charity, a sound mind, and faith also, and these are from above, and there are light and life in all these. The workings of these I have long observed, and find in heavy and sharp conflicts, much darkness and confusion, much hastiness of spirit and heat of temper, and so much impatience, that I am quite bewildered and confounded; and here I lose sight of every grace, and even in prayer I often observe that there is no going forth either in faith, hope, or love, all appear to be inactive, and at this time I have often wondered that they should lay dormant when their exercises are so much wanted; but this arises from my ignorance. These are not idle or inactive, but abide at home on certain occasions, to prop up the heart and fix that, that it may not sink too low; "Perplexed, but not in despair," 2 Cor. iv. 8. You read of being strengthened by the Spirit's might in the inward man. Faith stands not in man's wisdom, but in God's power, and by that power are we kept through faith; and if we abound in hope, it is by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit's might is our strength, and this is made perfect and all-sufficient in our weakness; and this power is put forth in the inward man, it works in faith and in hope, so that neither of these may be borne 7ce down, fail, or be overcome, which must not be, for, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." And this I have often observed, that when the temptation has been so sharp as to make me faint, yea almost to cast away my confidence and to conclude that all is lost, and that it is in vain to resist any longer, even then I have found a firmness in the mind and conscience that would not subscribe to any one of my articles of capitulation; and this I know, that there is not the sting of unpardoned sin, nor the

shame of unpurged guilt, nor the arrows of unappeased wrath, nor the curses of a broken law, nor the dread of future judgment in all these conflicts; but the thoughts of breaking the bounds, by discharging the contents of the heart, and of being plunged into the great transgression, make" one tremble; for at such times the feet are almost gone, the steps well nigh slip; almost, but not altogether; well nigh, but not quite. I am writing to one that will understand me when I say, that at such times the sin unto death is conceived, and Satan labours hard to bring it forth, yet grace is not an idle spectator in these conflicts. Faith holds her own, and hope expects deliverance, and we are not disappointed; and when the conflict is over faith ventures abroad in prayer, hope waits the returns, and love furnishes the heart with gratitude to acknowledge the saving benefits: and these all work best when the dross is purged off; human resolutions and determinations are like Samson's shaking himself, and poor Peter's vows, they only clog the wheels at best. This furnace work is to make us sound in faith; sinless perfection, free will, self-righteousness, universal grace, and universal redemption cannot stand or live here; a creature saviour and human confidence in him, are of no use in this fire. So I write, and so you believe.

W. H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXXIV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

I THANK my very dear friend for his kind Letter which received on Friday last, and was glad to hear that you were going to publish the account of my sister's death-bed experience will your answer to it, which I sincerely hope may be of use to many into whose hands it may fall. How encouraging, animating, and comforting it is to see one in dying circumstances so blessed is she was with the presence and favour of the Lord, and so enabled to testify of God's goodness, faithfulness, and truth.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." "The memory of the just is blessed," and so I find it daily, for I cannot think, speak, or write about her but I feel a sweetness upon my spirit; and my soul often blesses the Lord with tears of gratitude and joy when many things which she spake come fresh upon my mind; and I remember what sweetness and comfort I enjoyed, and many of our friends with her, both in conversation, prayer, and praise; I believe that many of us will never forget it. I often look back upon those days of rejoicing, and while I am meditating upon that life, power, unction, and savour that rested upon her and upon us all, I often feel something of the same communicated to this day; and this scripture many times comes upon my mind, "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee" "O how great is the

goodness of the Lord which he has laid up for those that fear him, and which he hath wrought for them that trust in him before the sons of men; such are hid in the secret of his presence from the pride of man, and are kept secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues, Psalm xxxi. 19, 20. This brings fresh to my mind what strife I caused amongst us when he came with his airy visions, and took many away who were of the same stamp with himself; but this was for our good; he collected the worst part, and his heresy took from among us only those which were not of us; this made them manifest, and God on the other side made manifest those which were approved of him. None but the devil could ever employ a man to speak against that which God has owned and blessed to thousands and thousands, namely, the preaching of his word. In such a wandering star as he, this scripture is fulfilled; "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" and they that followed him are those which heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and both him and his followers have been ever learning, and I am fully persuaded have never been able to come to the knowledge of the truth; they are wise in their own conceit, but God shews to wisdom's children what fools they are in religion. They are divided now into two or three parties. I never meet with any of them but I think of these words, "He that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead." I know that God will scatter them sooner or later into all winds, his hand shall be made known towards his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies. T__ came crying out against preaching, and reading any man's works except his own; but my sister has left an honourable testimony in behalf of both; and her blessed end proves to a demonstration that our way of meeting together is approved of God; and the scriptures which he has said so much about, I believe remain a sealed book to him to this day. I remember asking him once about these words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you; and he that

eateth me, even he shall live by me." I was amazed at the poor, empty answer he gave me. This sect and many others have spoken against us and our religion, but one would think, were they not hardened indeed, that the account of my sister's end would put to silence all our adversaries. But our Lord says, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to them that are without all these things are done in parables;" and in this he rejoiced; that they were hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. My father and all our family are convinced of her safety, and satisfied with her blessed end; they came to see my dear sister several times, they saw her happiness, and are fully persuaded that she is blessed for evermore; and it so reconciled them to her death, that they do not seem much to feel it. I thank my dear friend for his kind inquiries after my welfare and his kind invitation; as soon as my business will allow me, I intend coming up to town for a few weeks, when I hope to spend, some time at Cricklewood. The Lord Almighty God bless you more and more, and reward you for your kindness to unworthy me.

Yours very affectionately,

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXXV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO ME. M.

Dearly beloved in the Lord Jesus,

I AM now coming to inquire after thy welfare, as the time is coming and now is when the poor invalids have their diseases and disorders, their asthmas and infirmities searched, tried, and examined by the winter damps, east and north winds, by the fogs and by the frosts; all of which are so many warnings and ejections before the house of this tabernacle be untitled and dissolved; and when reduced to its original it will be raised up again, and clothed upon with our house which is from above. To prepare for this change, to lay lap a good foundation against that day, is the most important and the most weighty business that belongs to God's workmen, and to the workmanship of God in us; which is intended to quicken us, to animate us, and to give us spiritual affections for heavenly things, and living sensations that we may feel them, know them, be assured of the reality of them, live in the enjoyment of them, and be constrained to a loving and grateful acknowledgment of them. And these are intended to give us motion, that we may breathe, pant, and long after them, and move toward them as to our centre, our chief good, and our last end. The feet of the soul are faith and affection, these bear and move the soul as the feet do the body; hence the saint is said to stand, and to walk by faith, and to understand these footsteps called the footsteps of the flock; and what is meant by treading in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham? And what is meant by our feet slipping, and our steps being almost gone? it seems to me to be nothing else but faith staggering, and the mind desponding, and love giving way to carnal enmity, and the affections seeming to be alienated from God, as is and must be the case of all apostates who fall, not down, nor into trouble, nor from their first love, or from their own steadfastness, but who fall

away. "He that believeth shall not make haste;" he cannot put forth his own faith into action, nor can all the thundering preachers drive it. Faith is the Holy Spirit's work, it is a fruit or grace of his own planting; the mind and the heart are the seat of it; the acts, exercises, and workings of it depend solely upon the operations of the most holy Spirit of God: hence faith moves by fresh discoveries, or rays of light; by different changes, feelings, or sensations; and under different operations; and acts and moves from one foot-hold to another, as God is pleased to visit us, or make any discoveries of his truth, or of himself to the soul. The sinner awakened, alarmed, and quickened by the Spirit, lays fast hold of the justice of God, his truth, holiness, and immutability, while faith by this view and this sense purifies the soul from that idol, I mean a God all mercy, which is a false and lying conception, unworthy of God, and dishonourable to him; but, when the mercy of God in Christ appears, and melts and softens the hardened mind into contrition and compliance, this produces repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; upon this hope springs up, and a peaceable calm succeeds, which to the soul are the fruits and effects of righteousness, and of justification by it, for, "The righteousness of Christ is to all and upon all that believe." Next to this a reconciled Father is apprehended in Christ Jesus, and sonship is made manifest by faith, and upon this, love, in some degree or other, enlarges the heart; "We," says John, "have believed the love that God hath to us." By these experiences the steps of faith are taken just as enlargement with God in prayer, or refreshment from him in the means, or deliverances appear in trouble, or as encouraging promises are spoken, or as comfortable visits and indulgences are granted. I have run on at an odd rate, but you will excuse.

W H., S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXXVI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. WILLIAM BLAHER.

Dearly beloved Brother in Christ Jesus,

I AM now according to the usual custom in the hospital among the sick and wounded, and this is among the all things that work for good, for, "The whole need not the physician, but them that are sick." I have long had a most violent cold and cough, and have laboured hard to break through it, but having so often renewed it I am obliged this week to abide by the stuff, not being able to pursue, much less to go over the brook Besor. But David made it a law in Israel, that as his part is that goeth forth unto the battle, so shall his part be that abideth by the stuff; they shall part alike. And it is said that they were wicked men, and men of Belial, who said, We will not give to the faint any thing that we have taken, save to every man his wife and children, that they may lead them away, and depart, 1 Sam. xxx. 22-25. One of the names of our ever blessed Jesus, is David; he is King of Israel, and Captain of our salvation. David's regiment consisted of some in distress, some discontented, and some in debt, and some hypocrites-- a small army; and Christ's army consists of poor, maimed, halt, lame, and blind, all capital troops, picked men. Our enemies are four, the old man and Satan his ally, this world

and false preachers. Some of the Lord's army are called in a more especial manner to the field of action, others are learning the use of arms; some abide by the stuff, or keep guard over the baggage: the soldiers' wives wash the linen 1c6a , cook the camp kettle, and help to strip the slain, and gather the spoil when the field is fought, and so it is written: "Kings of armies fled apace;" that is, when Joshua defeated them: "and she that tarried at home divided the spoil;" that is, the women plundered the dead when the men had won the victory. Some of the Lord's host are sent out to preach the word, and to defend it; these, with Paul, must fight the good fight of faith, and be good soldiers of Christ Jesus, they must endure hardness, and not be entangled in the affairs of this life, but that they may please him who hath chosen them to be soldiers. "So run I," says Paul, "but not at uncertainty; so fight I, but not like one that beats the air;" not like a boxer that always misses his mark, and beats himself out of breath by swinging his arms over the head of his antagonist. Paul was sure to hit either the devil or conscience every blow he struck. They that are learning the use of arms are helps, who can speak a word in season to them that are weary, or defend their own faith against the carnal reason of enemies, hypocrites, and fools, and stop their mouths, expose them to contempt, and beat them out of countenance. The third part abide by the stuff or guard the baggage. The baggage consists of tents, the arms of such as are dead or slain in battle, the standards, the banners, ensign staffs, the camp kettles, knapsacks, canteens to carry water, cloaks and clean linen, ammunition shoes; the bread wagon, the Captain's camp equipage and tent furniture, sick, lame, and wounded soldiers, big-bellied women, the soldiers' children, and some concubines that follow the camp, but are not married women. This is the stuff, and this stuff must be guarded, for it is the work of flying troops and scouting parties, if possible, to take the baggage, in order to discourage and distress the army of their enemies; two hundred therefore that could not go over

the brook Besor, abode, sword in hand, by the stuff Now for a description of these valuables. First, tents: we must abide by the tents; wherever the Lord's word is preached there we must feed our kids beside the shepherds' tents. Secondly, the arms of such as are dead or slain in battle, the principal of which are the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, and the helmet of hope, these all the prophets held fast who are dead, and so did all the martyrs that died in battle. Thirdly, the standards: this is the cross which gives so much offence in the world; but here our sins were borne, here satisfaction was made, here our old man was crucified, and here the law was nailed. Fourthly, the banners: "His banner over me was love;" however we are afflicted, however chastened, however tried, still he loves us: this is God's gift to us, and unfolding or preaching this delivers us from Satan, and so it follows: "Thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth, that thy be. loved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me," Psalm lx. 4. Fourthly, the ensign staff Christ in human nature is the rod out of the stem of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; "To it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest. shall be glorious." Sixthly, the camp kettle to cook in: these are preachers' hearts, into which grace and truth are put, where it must be learned, marked, and inwardly digested, prepared, and brought forth; the good treasure must come from the heart, yea, things new and old; and those that guard the stuff must abide in heart-felt affection with the preacher, and cleave to the heavenly treasure which they have tasted and fed upon. Seventhly, the knapsacks are what the clean linen, the shoes, &c. are put into; these contain little bits of cake, little pocket pistols to hold a little wine and spirits for refreshment in a long march; these and many more the like things are put in the knapsacks. The christian soldier's knapsack is the Bible, where white and clean linen is contained and promised; and the preparation of the gospel of peace affords us shoes for our feet, the bread of life, and a new bottle of new wine; yea,

and strong drink for them that are ready to perish are contained therein, and we must abide by this part of the stuff: Eighthly, canteens to fetch water; this is faith, We receive the promise of the Spirit [which is the water of life] through faith," and if we want more out of the well of salvation, faith must fetch it; "Whatsoever ye ask believing ye shall receive." Ninthly, clothes and clean linen; the garments of salvation. the clothing called humility, the imputed righteousness of Christ, and the clean linen of immortal glory above, as God's free gift; we must enforce, insist, and abide fast by these things. Tenthly, the Captain's camp equipage and tent furniture; broken, contrite, and believing hearts are his dwellings, and no other; the furniture of the tent is repentance, godly sorrow, meekness, joy, simplicity, tenderness, and filial fear of him; these make Zion all glorious within, and he hath chosen Zion, "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it," saith the Lord; we must hold fast and abide by these things. Big-bellied women are labouring between hope and fear, and they are apart of the baggage, and without these the family could not be increased. The children are such as suck the breasts of comfort, and are not to be charged with war until the bounty is spent; and the concubines are such whose hearts are seeking after God, and have a regard for the saints, but are not wounded enough to need the physician, nor divorced from the law, and therefore not fit as yet to be espoused to Christ, yet these are to be encouraged. Now to abide in heart by this stuff, however faint or weak, secures part of the spoils, and a share they shall most certainly have, according to the law of David, which law is confirmed by Christ himself. The Jews, who were wicked men and men of Belial, would neither receive the kingdom of Christ themselves nor suffer others to enter if they could help it. Those that bore the burden and heat of the day would have sent the rest off with just nothing, but they that wrought but one hour were paid first and received a penny, and those that boasted of much more labour received the same; and they murmured at the king of

Zion; but he said, Is thine eye evil because I am good? take that which is thine and go thy ways, for I will give to this last as unto thee; thus the law continues to this day, they shall share alike. Time and paper fails; I cannot go through, but let me advise thee, dear brother William, however faint, to abide by the stuff; and would you know what the word Besor signifies? it is, incarnation, by which incarnation the river of the water of life flows to us; and you know it is hard work to pass over this brook, so as clearly to see that we have passed from death to life, that we are entered the gate, passed the brook, and are on the other side.

Ever yours in Christ Jesus,

W.H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXXVII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MRS B.

I RECEIVED the epistle of my daughter, and, as far as I am skilled in anatomy or in physiognomy, the outward man decays, but the inward man is renewed, his heart seems happy, and his countenance healthy; winter frosts and east winds have no effect upon charity, the bond of all perfectness;

nor will faith be confined at home, or be deterred from venturing abroad because of the cold. Faith, hope, and love can go abroad when we are confined at home, and find access within the veil when we are detained within the curtains; and as to the old man his bounds are circumscribed, his parole is between the two thrones; he cannot gain the throne of our renewed affections within, nor draw near the throne of grace above. Grace shall reign in the heart, and the Saviour is holy, harmless, separate from sin and sinners, and will never suffer the spawn of the old man to come near him. A wonder and a new thing it is that a woman shall compass a man," Jeremiah xxxi. 22; but here is a woman that has compassed three men; her outward man decays, her old man still plagues her, her inward man is renewed day by day, and her mediator still mediates for her, who is the man Christ Jesus. A glorious reward is before us, when the fight and the race are finished; an eternal weight of glory follows upon our light afflictions, which are but momentary; and the Lord, who in our nature is part of the children's flesh and blood, has got possession of the inheritance, and secures it and insures it to all the seed. And he has already admitted our hearts and our hopes, faith and affections, thoughts and desires, prayers and praise, to ascend and descend, go in and out already and find pasture; which serves to shew us that the door is not shut, that the way is cast up, the obstacles are removed, and the cloud of our transgressions blotted out; and as thy soul liveth there is but a step between us and everlasting glory. If you could know how I have explored the invisible regions of bliss, fancied and imagined the glorious orders of beings there, their songs, appearance, felicity, employments, delights, shining robes, sparkling crowns, palms, shouts, trumps, exultations, thrones and kingdoms; their fountains of life, rivers of pleasure, and above all the beauty, the perfection of beauty, and the beauty of holiness, I mean the Sovereign Ruler and glorious King of the place! There is nothing, girl, but the wail

between that country and this. Farewell; my love to the Doctor.

Ever yours,

W. H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXXVIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. HUNTINGTON.

Dear Sir,

THE Lord having graciously restored you, and for his body's sake continued you among us for our comfort and establishment, permit me to offer my grateful acknowledgments and unfeigned thanks for your past and present labours in the work of the Lord. I have at times, under the sweet and powerful presence of the blessed Spirit of promise applying his own truth with life and power to my heart under your ministry, much longed to see you; oftentimes my very soul has hung upon the finishing sentence, as it fell from your lips, and have gone away with unutterable peace in my soul. I desire to return thanksgivings to the Lord, the Spirit, for ever bringing my longing soul to the experimental knowledge

of Jesus Christ crucified, by your instrumentality, after having sought him under a legal, straitened ministry of the Letter for a number of years, bound in hard bondage, and tied down to the doctrines and commandments of men until brought to soul beggary, and starving for the bread of life; I would fairs have satisfied my craving conscience with the natural religion and ministry I was under, but could not, for my longing soul was quickened to hunger after a better righteousness than I could find in a form of godliness without the power. I ran from place to place, to find a minister that spoke of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, but was prejudiced against you by the reports of ungodly men, so that I was afraid to come near you; but after being wearied out with hard bondage, and strippe a8a d of every thing in this world that I had delighted in, my heart made soft, and my legal proud spirit broken, by a long train of family and personal afflictions, the Lord was pleased to bring my soul out of prison by your ministry, and reveal Jesus the bread of eternal life to my longing soul, which effectually satisfied my craving conscience. It is now four years ago, and the Lord has many times since sweetly refreshed, nourished, strengthened, and instructed me under you. During your last illness, I have been much afraid the Lord was about to remove you from us, but I hope the prayers of Israel have prevailed with God to lengthen out your valuable life, as popish darkness and natural religion are spreading our land from end to end. Last Sunday my very heart glowed with love to you when I saw you come into the pulpit; and though during the whole of the week I had not enjoyed the comfortable presence of the Lord, yet as soon as you began in prayer my spirit broke into tenderness and meekness, and my whole soul was overpowered with a feeling sense of God's unmerited love to my soul, which sunk me into nothing before him. I felt a voice in my sensations as plain as I heard you speak, that this gracious visit was an answer to my prayers for your being restored, now returned sevenfold into my bosom. Last Sunday was a good day for me; the Lord did so sweetly lead you to speak of our light

breaking forth as the morning, and our health springing forth speedily, of our righteousness going before us, and the glory of the Lord being our reward, that I felt an unctuous light cast on all the path the Lord had led me in bondage and liberty. The Lord the Spirit bless you in your soul more and more, and continue to make you a blessing to his heritage; strengthen you in your body, and give you to us for years to come, if it be his sovereign will. I have been at times of late much indulged with communion and fellowship with that blessed Spirit of promise, in his gracious operations and work in my heart, and this makes my soul love him and adore him equally with the Father and his dear Son; and the sweet instruction and divine consolations he has sealed on my heart, and comforted my soul with, makes me at a point in his eternal power and godhead, which is what I have been sorely tried with in times past. I hope you will not be offended with the liberty I have taken in addressing a Letter to you, being a stranger in one sense, though I do humbly hope not in another; and I subscribe myself

Your affectionate well-wisher

In the best of bonds,

B. B.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XXXIX

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

Reverend and dear Sir,

TEN thousand times ten thousand thanks and praises to God and the Lamb for teaching you to write for the instruction of poor sensible sinners. Somewhere about three years ago, the Lord in his providence cast in my way your "Arminian Skeleton," which proved a seasonable and precious companion for me; and the blessed Spirit often witnessed to my soul that this production was a fruit-of his own teaching. I believe it to be a bitter portion for an Arminian, but it proved in the hands of God a sweet and savoury morsel to my poor, guilty, hungry soul. The reading of this book produced a great longing for more of your writings, and a strong desire of hearing you preach, which the Lord once favoured me with, I having an opportunity of hearing you deliver part of a sermon from Isaiah xlix. 10, on Sunday, Sept. 30, 1804 I believe it was the first Sunday after your return from the country; but however some of it remains with me to this day. After my return to Bath I found my desires still increasing for a sight of some more of your invaluable productions; invaluable I call them, however lightly esteemed they may be by Arminian and hypocritical professors. Some time after the Lord was pleased to grant my desire, by giving me your "Bank of Faith" and "Hieroglyphical Print;" the former comforted and the latter diverted me much. These still inflamed my desire for more, although I often met with some professors who would be calling the author (whose name was precious to my

soul,) a bitter spirited man, but this did not stifle my desire for more of this bitter (as they called it) spirited author's works, for I frequently had many a sweet meal of comfort from them. About a month since I accidentally called at a bookseller's shop where I used to purchase a few books, for I have been long in that bookish fit which you describe in your "Bank of Faith," but seeing nothing to please me I was coming away, when the bookseller presented me with a book, saying, he thought that would suit me; I looked at the title page and saw your name, Sir, which was quite sufficient; I eagerly asked him if he had any more of them, and finding he had, I purchased the whole, I believe seventeen in number; a lot he bought of a butler in London, who was going to travel, and was under the necessity of selling them. I took them home with me, viewing them as so many jewels, which God in his kind providence had bestowed upon me. I read over several of them with much pleasure and great satisfaction, and admired much the strength of your arguments concerning the law a rule of life, and I hope with much spiritual advantage. But, dear Sir, when I came to read your "Forty Stripes for Satan," I was filled with confusion, and was like a dumb man; I had not read long in that book before I was filled with horror and agonies of soul which I cannot express. The devil now began to roar in a hideous and frightful manner; every page I read detected the father of lies, and my soul in all the various false haunts and lurking holes which I had been harbouring in; they were laid open to my view, and all my Sabellian notions dashed in pieces like Dagon before the ark: in reading some parts of it my hair seemed to me as if it stood upright upon my head, and I was in such amazing darkness and confusion, that I could not help thinking that my head was swollen to a prodigious size; and such was my state of mind that I was scarcely able to execute my business; and I cannot help thinking that I experienced something of what Habakkuk describes; "When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled

in myself." Yes, dear Sir, my heart smote within me, and I could now say with Jeremiah, "Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress; my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me, for I have grievously rebelled;" and now my sighs were many and my heart was faint. And this horror continued about a fortnight, and during that time I could get no access to God nor communion with him; now I was made to feel something of this text "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear." I frequently found many checks of conscience for attempting to deny the glorious and mysterious doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, and never in conscience could I give it up; and frequently was I necessitated to vindicate it; and I observed I was always favoured with more freedom in argument when contending for it, than when opposing it. But I always had to contend with a man who would never yield to any argument: this man I have been viewing these four years past as the soundest in faith, and the most experimental christian in this barren city; a man who I have always thought was the greatest instrument in the hand of God in establishing me in the truth. He is constantly talking about the love of Christ, and how precious he is to the soul, yet he cannot bear to hear of the three persons in the Trinity; and I have often taken notice when a hymn has been sung where God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost have been mentioned, he would sit silent and not sing at all. This man has now stood forty years in his profession, and has long enjoyed, as he says, a full assurance of faith; but this staggers me not a little; he can talk of it before ungodly men; and very often when he is coming from chapel, he talketh so very loud about religion that all who pass by must hear what he is talking about; at the same time I have been walking just behind, hanging my head, and trembling like a leaf, and as much ashamed as if I had stolen something and was detected. Now, dear Sir, his working at the same place with me affords me an opportunity of looking close after him, and I

have observed a few things which have often puzzled me, such as his going to a public house in the evenings for his beer, and sitting there near an hour, and sometimes more, to hear the news read; and he is very fond of disputing on politics; (this thing I detest and abhor;) and whether right or wrong he will never give up his point, and he is just the same in religious disputes. I read a great part of that inestimable work, "Forty Stripes," to him, and after I had finished I asked him what he thought of it, but he gave me no direct answer; but I put the question still more close, whether the book was true or false; but this he endeavoured to evade, by saying he could not understand the three persons, and that Christ was revealed to him when the Lord first wrought upon his soul, and that he knew of no other object of worship but the person of Christ. I disputed much at the time with him, but he remained hardened, and was very stubborn, and still maintained the Sabellian error, and said, the Lord revealed it to him. Now this man, by his continually talking against the Trinitarians, drew me into the Sabellian error, which the Lord was pleased in mercy to deliver me from, by the reading of your "Forty Stripes;" and the doctrine I attempted to oppose appears to me now the most glorious the Bible presents to my view; and my continual cry to God is that I may be rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith. At present my conscience will not admit me to be over friendly with this man, and I hope I shall not, till I see that he is humbled in the dust before the Lord, which I believe is the case with all the children of God that have been suffered to embrace an error, or at least this was my case. I now hasten, dear Sir, to ask pardon for the liberty I have taken in addressing to you this poor, weak, imperfect, blundering epistle, and hope you will pass over the numerous inaccuracies you may find in reading. Sometimes the Lord will shine a little upon me and I feel the drawings of his love, and then the devil is not so noisy when Christ is present with me; but whenever I get a little lift I am fool enough to think I am able to surmount every temptation which

the devil and the wickedness of my own heart may devise: but, alas! as soon as the temptation comes, all my supposed strength becomes perfect weakness; O the plague of this deceitful and desperately wicked heart of mine. But let me ask pardon for my boldness in writing to God's faithful servant; and may he bless you, and crown your labours with abundant success, and give testimony to the word of his grace: this is the sincere prayer of one unknown, though

Affectionately yours,

W. B.

Bath.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XL

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO W. B.F. Dear Sir,

THERE is such a thing among mankind as natural confidence; "The fool rageth, and is confident," Prov. xiv. 16; and you may call it faith, for such do for a while believe, Luke viii. 13. This is no more than a natural assent given upon a natural conviction to the truth of any testimony delivered, reason itself being utterly unable to contradict it. Upon this natural confidence

Satan often ingrafts presumption, especially upon the minds of graceless ambassadors: this is done to imitate the grace of assurance, that such characters may appear to be officers of the first magnitude. for the serpent's seed are all great. Under the law they were all prophets, in the apostles' days they were apostles, in our clays we have nothing less than evangelists; we hear of few pastors; teachers, or helps among them; but natural faith has no inward anointing to guide it; the light of nature is its only guide; and what reason comprehends natural confidence may embrace; but of this be assured, that divine mysteries require spiritual faith, faith which is the gift of God, the produce of the Holy Ghost, and which is therefore called faith of the operation of God, Coloss. ii. 12. The doctrine of the holy Trinity is as fully revealed as any other doctrine, of the gospel; we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and these are not bare names, for they each bear record in heaven, even record of the eternal sonship of Christ Jesus. And they are three distinct living witnesses, baa which nothing but intelligent persons can be, according to the law of God; "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me," John viii. 17, 18; "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness," 1 John v. 6. If ever our hearts be truly comforted, or if knit together in love; or if we ever obtain the riches of the full assurance of understanding, it must be by humble acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, Coloss. ii. 2. The gospel is preached to us that we may have fellowship with the Father and with the Son, 1 John i. 3; and fellowship with the Holy Ghost also, Philip. ii. 1. He that loveth dwelleth in God and God in him; this is coming to God the judge of all, Heb. xii. 23. He that comes to Christ by faith, obtains the forgiveness of sins, pardon, peace, and reconciliation; and this is coming to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb.

xii. 24. And the Holy Ghost cries "Abba, Father," and bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. The faith which is of the operation of God believes this mystery; and this mystery is held in a pure conscience, 1 Tim. iii. 9; and the word of God, and my own experience will beat me out, when I say that faith embraces each of the above things distinctly. Faith embraces the love of the Father, "We have believed the love that God hath to us," 1 John iv. 16; and it receives the atonement of Christ, Rom. v. 11; and, "We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," Gal. iii. 14. No child of God in his right mind will ever part with these things. The pardoning grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, are too precious to the heaven-born soul ever to be relinquished; nor shall any young man ever cleanse his way according to God's word, that denies things so essential as these. Your friend's confidence is no more than what is natural, and it holds what blind reason can comprehend; but he must stumble, and take offence at, more than half of the New Testament. I have known several in these opinions, and they all appeared to me to be wise indeed, bold, daring, confident, and very conceited; but they did not go out of the world so; their confidence gave way when it was most needed and they saw their mistake; and so will your acquaintance, for there is no lie of the truth, nor will the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem be open to him that loves a lie, or that makes one.

None can guide thee in these things but the Holy Spirit; and you must commit your way to God by constant prayer before your thoughts can be established.

Yours sincerely,

W. H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XLI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. B.

Beloved in the Lord,

Yours came to hand, and I was almost ready to say, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." I Am seeking a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God; this heavenly Jerusalem is God's covenant, typified by Sarah, and God's elect in it, called, "Sought out, a city not forsaken" This city has three gates, and no more; and these three being opened towards all the four points make twelve. There is no gate but the middle person, the Mediator; and in this city there are three things to be coveted and to be enjoyed: First, the tree of life, a life of grace and of glory. Secondly, righteousness; the holy city, the Lamb's wife was clothed in white linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints. Thirdly, liberty; the heavenly Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all; we are children, not of the bond-woman, but of the free.

Now for the gates: the first gate leads to life, "Strait is the gate that leads to life," saith the Lord; and he is the life. Secondly, "Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, into

which the righteous shall enter;" he is made of God unto us, righteousness. Thirdly, liberty or freedom; "Receive the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "I am the truth." "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in," Isaiah xxvi. 2. "Go through, go through the gates; cast up, cast up the highway, lift up a standard for the people." "Thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise." The self-condemned soul that passes by faith through these gates, from death to life, praises God; he enters this gate with thanksgiving, and enters this court with praise; and the soul that knows he is under the sentence of the law, when he passes from the curse to the blessing, from condemnation to justification, he calls an imputed righteousness a garment of praise, when a spirit of heaviness or bondage is put off; and he that receives the truth, in the love of it, feels his fears cast out, and glorious liberty brought in; this is the completing and crowning work; "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise." At all these gates Wisdom cries; at the gate of life, she says, "Strive to enter in at the strait [the most difficult] gate;" at the gate of righteousness, she says, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates;" at the gate of truth, she says, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation may enter in." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city;" not the commands of the law, for if these workers be heirs, faith is made void, and the promises are of none effect. The first command is faith; this is God's will and command, that we believe on his Son; and he that believes hath Christ the tree of life in him, for he dwells in the heart by faith. Justification is unto life, and there is life at the entrance of this gate. Truth is the word of life, the word that stands for ever, and that will be settled in heaven; "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh it is a tree of life." This is God's mystery among the Gentiles, which is, Christ in us, the hope of glory. Thus we carry the tree of life, the white robes of an

imputed righteousness, and the liberty of the gospel, which is charity, out of the world with us.

Farewell.

W.H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XLII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MRS. M

My dear Friend,

I HAVE lately had a violent cough and cold, and strove hard to break through it for a fortnight, but all in vain, for I was at last obliged to lay by ten days, and I am now purely, blessed be God for it. The outward man decays, as Paul says, but the inward man, the hidden man of the heart decays not; some one feature, trait, or member of him is still left, felt, and perceived; for if faith lay dormant, if patience is tired out, if meekness is dried up, and hardness of heart follows; if love is waxed cold, and humility is fled, yet hope remains; and if this should appear to give way, and darkness to our view seem to succeed, yet if we get into company with foolish virgins, in their glass we shine bright and glorious. And this heavenly ray

is the eye of the new man, for the new man is renewed in knowledge; and this renewing makes the path shine more and more unto perfect day. O! Girl, every member of this new man is worth more than a million worlds. Christ knows his own image, and every appearance of it; "That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit;" and every grace is a good thing toward the Lord God of Israel; and though at times all joy is darkened and all peace and comfort fled, so that bitterness and misery, Satan and corruption, come in and rise up like a flood, yet there is something left even then, and that is life; for the appetite is keen, the soul hungers and thirsts after the bread and water of life, and after the enjoyment of the living God; and longs after the word of life, and after the means of grace. And although lusts and corruptions, pleasures and vanities, and the felicity of careless worldings, are by Satan extolled, magnified and set before us even in all their glittering and gaudy show, so as to make us envious at the foolish, and at the prosperity of the wicked, yet even this is not preferred before the bitter cup of affliction; the soul says then, with pious Job "The things that my soul refused to touch, are as my sorrowful meat," Job vi. 7; for although this was all that was set before him, yet it was not the bread of life which strengthens man's heart, and feeds the new man; but it was meat of sorrows to Job or sorrowful meat, though not such to the fool, for he feeds upon foolishness. Two things, you see, remain even in the worst of times, knowledge of sinful self, and divine life, which makes us long for spiritual provision; and, "This," says David, "is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me." Furthermore, when all evidences seem to be obscured, weak, and ready to die, yet one is sure to escape the common rout when all the seed royal seem to be hid, and that is love to the brethren; and we know that we are passed from death unto life because of this; and although at times the devil lays hard even at this, and fills us with jealousy at them, and sets us to envy them, yet even then this evidence is not destroyed; for as soon as ever we see they

are sunk down into the pit, we labour with all our might to pull them out, strengthen them, and set them upon their legs again; so we do not aim at their ruin, only to keep them from running too fast, that they may not get before us, which at most is Jacob-like, holding them by the heel. There is a blessing on them whom the Lord hath made rulers over his household, to give them a portion of meat in due season; and I am fully, persuaded that this basket of fragments came from the Lord, and that some of the crumbs will suit Mary, even if the sleepy devil be still upon her; for the body sleeps, but the conscience does not. "I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh;" conscience was awake, and the knowledge of her beloved's voice was still with her. God's blessing attend this, and my poor prayers shall follow it.

THE COALHEAVER

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XLIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MRS. W.

My dear Mother acts a wise part in all her epistles to me; she keeps back part of the price of the field; she supposes me to be a man of great property, and therefore lays out the lark-

lines, in hope of her being able to draw something out of the immense treasure which she vainly supposes is in my possession. Hence I have nothing from her but complaints, real desires, accounts of poverty, beggary, insolvency, and the fears of bankruptcy, and of coming to want, and of dying in a workhouse; and as she is informed that "The simple believeth every word," she is in hopes of making me believe that these things are true of her, when at the same time she does not believe one word that she writes of all this herself; nor does she dare lay her hand on her heart, and appeal to God that the contents of any one of her Letters are strictly true; and how can she expect me to believe the packet of complaints, when she does not believe them herself? My mother knows many now who, in their own opinion, are very wise, and stand high in profession, with whom she would not change states; nor are you without an appetite for the bread of life, the righteousness of faith, and for the favour of God; and you know that they are blessed of God who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Besides, you do not deal honestly with me, you never inform me of any melting, humbling, meekening, and softening sensations which you are sometimes favoured with; I have no account of the self-abasing views, hopeful prospects, and encouraging expectations, with which my old mother is sometimes indulged; you send me no word about the promises which at times encourage you; you send me no account of any enlargements, or comfortable meditations; continual trouble, distress, doubts, fears, unbelief, enmity, rebellion, hardness of heart, vile thoughts, and dark despondency, are all that fall to my mother's share; she has nothing but rebukes, reproofs, contentions, confusion, blindness of mind, hardness of heart, with cross upon cross, and stripe upon stripe; this, according to my mother's account, is her constant entertainment: but I do not believe a word of all this, for God says, when they fall into trouble they shall be holpen with a little help; he will uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness; yea,

when they pass through the fire he will be with them, and through the waters they shall not overflow them; and that he will speak a word in due season to them that are weary, and will dwell with the contrite soul that trembles at his word. Nevertheless, let my mother pursue her old method, let her send me nothing but the chaff, the refuse of the heap, the scum of the pot, and the dregs of the cask; but every promise, every ray of light, grain of faith, or beam of hope, let her be sure to keep these things to herself, Asses are made to bear burdens, and every thing that is bad or heavy, lay that upon him, but be sure to give him no provender.

W.H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XLIV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. A. B.

THIS is Saturday morning; yesterday noon I received yours, and when I received it a confidence sprung up that God would condescend to hear my poor petitions in your behalf, and that for his dear Son's sake; and I was encouraged and drawn to venture, which I did twice, and found liberty, and much enlargement of heart, and so strong a confidence that he did

hear and would grant the petitions I put up; and I told my dame to watch and observe if it came not to pass. Under various temptations of Satan, and much darkness of mind with which I have been exercised of late, my faith has been but little in exercise; it has lain dormant, and worked but little; it has stayed at home to prop up the heart, but has seldom ventured abroad; it has just maintained its hold of what it has got, and that is all, but it hath brought in nothing new. Sudden springs of matter, and bright but contracted views have often been displayed just before preaching time, and this has been all poured forth abroad, while my own state has remained just as it was; and this has been the case ever since this fiery trial began, only at some hard pinches when prayer has carried all before it, and faith has been almost omnipotent; but in the general faith has seldom moved, no divine approaches have drawn her forth, no divine rays have given her fresh views, no heavenly smiles have invited her abroad, no new moon feasts have given her any entertainment. But she has assisted me in violent struggles, especially in prayer, which has gone up with a compounded energy of resolute determinations, and some anger and resentment; some love to the blessed object, and some high and hot displeasure; a powerful bent to persevere, and yet little or no alteration made; faith, I found, would take no denial, and yet all amounted to no more than this, "The vision is for an appointed time, at the end it shall speak." Yesterday was the first day that the blue sky appeared; the clouds blew over, much meekness came down, and my bowels were moved when his finger was felt; and then came this your epistle to carry off all the profits of this long, dark, and Dangerous voyage: and shall I praise you for this? I praise you not; "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works." God has heard me, and you shall own it

Ever yours,

W. H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XLV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MRS. W.

THE troubler of Israel is coming once more to inquire after the welfare of my poor old mother, hoping in the Lord that she is well, and though faint, yet pursuing. One thing is promised to us, even when under the greatest discouragements, and that is, a renewal of our strength in waiting upon him, so that we cannot, we dare not, give up or give out; for "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength; and by this increase of power he keeps us from despair, and makes us trust in his all-sufficient power, and hope, and expect, and seek for his great salvation. He keeps us feeling after him, Acts xvii. 27, both, in our mind, and in our conscience where he doth work; and even in his providence, and on his throne, as he is in Christ reconciled to us: in all these ways my mother feels after him, every day and all day long; and this is what the Psalmist means when he says, "My spirit made diligent search; will the Lord cast off for ever?" &c. And this is what Paul means by feeling after him, for he is not far from every one of us; and is expressly said to be near to

them that are of a broken heart, and to save such as be of a contrite spirit; and a broken heart is one made sorrowful and sad by sin, and a contrite spirit is one made sore and tender by reproofs, rebukes, and reproaches of conscience, and a sense of God's anger. And such souls God promises to dwell with, in order to revive them; for when he is pleased to search us and try us, convict, and to chasten us, our knowledge, our strength, wisdom, profession, false confidence, and legal hopes, self-sufficiency and worldly spirit, this crop withers, fades, and fails us, and down we go, having no props, no supporters; but when God revives us, light, knowledge, wisdom, life, hope, and help from above raise us up again; when repentance and godly sorrow operate, and we are enabled to trust in the Son of God alone for life and salvation; at which time a better crop springs up, which is called reviving the heart of the contrite ones. Under terrors carnal security gives way to convictions, self-righteousness gives way to the condemning power of the law when that enters, false faith yields to faith in the justice of God, and false peace falls before the alarms of Sinai; "By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation;" and this is trying work to poor, sensible sinners: but believe me when I say that there are no rods, no scourges, no chastisements, in all this school of Christ, that are to be compared, or even mentioned, with the many stripes inflicted on the wicked in the world to come. Be patient, my dear mother, and shew the same diligence, and full assurance of hope even to the end, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not; and God declares, it is good in his sight that a man should wait, and quietly hope, for the salvation of God; and, "He that believeth shall not make haste," but shall move as God moves him; and if they hasten, or others drive them, they go all that ground over again. God bless thee.

W.H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XLVI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MRS. M. To Mary, my own brat in the Faith,
GRACE, mercy, and peace be with M. and with poor C. my fellow travellers and fellow labourers. I am this morning somewhat cheerful in my soul, and therefore must trouble my dear friends with some of the overflowings; "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook." Wisdom's voice, and wisdom's words, are to the sons of men; she speaks a word in due season to them that are weary; her words uphold those that are falling; she speaks to those that are dead, and they hear her voice and live; the word quickens them, and that word feeds the life that is given to them. Wisdom speaks in righteousness as mighty to save; this brings hope, and hope brings salvation Wisdom speaks peace to the heathen; and these are her different voices, which Christ's sheep hear and follow; but a stranger they will not follow: Why? because they know not the voice of strangers. There is no suitableness, no support, no life, no salvation or peace in all they say; and therefore they will not, cannot, dare not follow them. The sleepy devil I find still haunts thee; but this is a full proof that he has lost the fort-royal of the heart, and all his armour

wherein he trusted. His armour is, first, unbelief; secondly, carnal enmity against God; thirdly, blindness of mind; fourthly, hardness of heart; fifthly, ignorance of God; sixthly, carnal security or false peace, with these he keeps possession of the palace and his goods in peace. Faith 831 conquers unbelief, and continually wars against it; the love, mercy, and kindness of God in Christ wars with enmity, reconciles the mind, and leads it to favour God, and his cause of truth; light works against darkness, rends the veil, and lays the sinful heart and the suitable Saviour open to view; mercy moving on the heart melts and softens it, the bowels move, and yearn, and sound towards a kind and suffering Saviour, at which a godly sorrow, meekness, and contrition flow out, this removes the stony heart; the life, energy, and struggles of life war with false peace; while doubts and fears keep the soul in continual motion. By these, Mary may see what that is which is born of the Spirit, and that which is born of the flesh. The worst enemies the devil has in the heart of a saint are light, life, and love; when the light breaks in, if Satan cannot keep it out, he will baffle, confound, and confuse the mind until the soul cannot make a judgment either of what it sees, hear, or feels. When life quickens the soul, he will send an hundred plasterers and daubers to heal this hurt slightly, crying, peace, peace, when there is no peace; but when love flows in he is obliged to decamp; it brings his former state of felicity so fresh to his mind, as to fill him with rage, jealousy, revenge, and desperation; nothing drives him like the fire of love, and the joy of it: this fire, and the flame of it, is too much for Satan himself; he never could maintain his standing against it; and for the sake of a little respite, and a little delusive ease, like the old cobbler, he packs up his awls and is gone. But as sure as these times of love abate, so sure does he return with treble rage; and he spreads his own infernal malice, jealousy, and bitterness through all his soul, and makes us call even the truth of the visit itself in question. "And if it be not so now, who

will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?"
God bless you all I go prays,

W.H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LXVII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. W. HUNTINGTON, S. S.

Dear Sir,

I YESTERDAY, with two friends, visited a poor woman, who heard you for the first time about seven or eight years since; she through illness has now been confined to her bed ever since August last; we found her scarce able to speak three words together, she is in so weak a state; but after we had been with her a little time she seemed to revive. She said she had not that enjoyment of God that she wished, but trusted he would shine upon her again before she left this world. I said a few words to her, and though attended with great weakness of body, she said she believed her calling was of God, and that it would be of no other; for if what she had heard you preach was true, it must be so. She told us that for nine or ten years she laboured under bondage to the fear of death, miserable through the guilt of sin which she felt in her conscience, and

knew no way but that way that seems right to man; in which she could not succeed so as to get rid of her trouble. At length, after many and various workings of heart, these words came to her mind; "If the Lord had meant. to destroy us, he would not have shewed us such things as these;" this gave her encouragement, but the power was soon gone, only after this she was led to see the suitableness of the Saviour to one in her condition, and his all-sufficiency, attended with earnest longings for an interest in him: here she laboured, sometimes it was as if faith would lay hold of him and bring him in, but then beat off and down she went; she said it was from October till the May following she event on in this way, before her deliverance came. Her husband at that time was at his work all the week from home, and one night as she was sitting up late reading beside her bed she felt uncommon power; she went to bed, but her sensations were such she got up again, and after she was up it was as if the Saviour spoke these words: "I have given full satisfaction for all thy sins." She felt the application of his death for her sins, which filled her with joy and real repentance; she said she then knew what repentance was, and if all the world felt as she then did they would love him too. She joined the Baptist church at S.; which place she attended for some time, but there fell into her hands some of your books, and among others was, "The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer;" when she got hold of this she read it through the first night, and left it not. She sometimes in reading it wept, and at other times rejoiced and praised God for you, as one raised up to give such a description of things in it as so suited her. By reading your books she reaped much benefit; but the church she belonged to was by no means friendly to you; they laboured to blacken you as much as they could; however, she heard of your coming to Cranbrook, and was determined to hear for herself, and before she came begged of God to settle the debate they had caused in her mind. You preached from these words, "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb;" your

very naming the words moved all the powers of her soul, and when you described the calling, &c. she went on with you, and was fed most sweetly. She came to hear you every time; the last night her clothes was half-way bedabbled with mud, but though a weak woman she said it did not hurt her; she was glad enough to find one to cast up the highway and remove the stumbling-blocks, which she had found none besides to do. The alarm was soon spread in their camp at S. about this woman's running away to hear Mr. Huntington, and a female of a fierce countenance soon found the way to her house, though near four miles off, to inquire of so dangerous a business as going to hear you. This poor woman seeing her coming, and guessing her business, went and begged of God to give her wisdom and strength to defend his truth she had heard from you. This female soon turned into a father confessor, saying, So you have been to hear Mr. Huntington? Yes, replied the woman, I have. I hear, says the other, you are become quite a traveller after him, and that you went every night; I think enough to kill such a one as you. She told her the journeys did her no harm. Says the other, Well, you did not hear Christ preached. Yes, says the poor woman, I did, and as I never heard him preached before. Why, says the other, he preaches himself, he preaches his own experience. That is what he should preach, replied the woman. Many grievous charges she brought against you, but this poor creature foiled her in all; one was, you said the place was full of hypocrites. The woman said, he did not call me one, nor did his doctrine condemn me for one, for she found it agree-with the Bible and God's work on her heart. Her strength seemed to increase when she told us these things, and a warmth attended her, accompanied with frequent smiles, though such a poor object. She said she never heard faith preached till she heard you. We left her with great satisfaction, and I thought I would send you the account for your satisfaction also. I this morning received yours, and thank you kindly. God will exalt your head above all your enemies round about.

I remain,

Your affectionate friend,

ISAAC BERMAN.

Epistles of Faith

Letter LXVIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. B., CRANBROOK.

My dear friend's sweet account of the poor woman came safe to hand, and I am thankful to God for his abundant grace. They that are the purchase of Christ's blood shall be the trophies of his victory. Our sovereign has no subjects that are truly loyal but those that he takes out of the hand of the Amorite, with his sword and with his bow; and all that the Lord employs in this work, or engages in this warfare, had need be good soldiers, and be furnished with all the armour of God: and even then we should despair of success, did not faith and experience inform us, that the Captain of our salvation is omnipotent. When the set time comes to favour any chosen vessel, how many encircling wheels of providence seem to be in motion without, and an army of fears gnu terrors within; the poor sinner's prejudices in favour of the traditions of his fathers, his bigotry and attachment to an outward form of godliness, his natural bias to the law of works for life and

salvation, are all stirred up; his corruptions make head against him; his carnal enmity runs high, and the instrument appointed to be used is sure to be loaded with calumny; evil angels muster all their wiles, friends and relations bear their part; but the worst engines of mischief in this opposition, are those that stand high in a profession, and yet destitute of the Holy Ghost, and enemies to his divine power: these are the briers and thorns which are set in battle array against the Lord, but he will go through them and burn them altogether. What little success I have had has succeeded against all these oppositions and entanglements, which serves to make the almighty power of Christ the more manifest. God will work, and who shall let it? The wise woman's charge is well founded; if preaching my own experience be preaching myself, she is right. There are but two ways of obtaining the word of God, the first is by receiving it from God as a free gift, the other way is by stealing it; what God gives is what he promised to us in Christ Jesus As for me. this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord," Isaiah lix. 21. Agreeably to this did our faithful and true witness deal with his disciples, when he says, "I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them," John xvii. 8; and he bid them wait till he should send upon them the promise of the Father, which is the Holy Ghost; this also God gave to them that obeyed him. This was the treasure that the Lord put into the hearts of his disciples, and this good treasure they brought forth out of their own hearts, in order to enrich others, telling them that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts ii. 39. The other way of obtaining the word is by sacrilege; "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his

neighbour," Jerem. xxiii. 30; such may steal the word, but they cannot steal the Spirit, and therefore can obtain no more than Judas and Simon Magus did, namely, part of this ministry: for as to the Holy Ghost they have no part nor lot in that matter. Such labourers as these cannot preach themselves as interested in Christ, in the way that Paul did, when he tells us, I am not an apostle of man, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. "The commandment came, and sin revived, and I died; for sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Christ's light shined round about me; "they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." "The gospel preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was: taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I should preach him among the Gentiles." "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me And the grace of our Lord was abundant upon me with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." "Christ was seen of James, then of the apostles, and he was seen of me also." "I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God; I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Thus Paul preached that which was his own, what God had given to him; "We have this treasure," says "Paul, "in earthen vessels." "For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you," 1 Cor. xi. 23; and we know that, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven," John iii. 27. Paul certainly did preach himself, as having his part and lot in all the treasure that he brought forth; and blessed be God there are a few even in Sardis, that can say the same things as Paul did, and with the same application to them selves, without being called liars, either by God, scripture, or

conscience; and nothing can be a surer confirmation of this than the seal of God. He must be sealed himself whom God uses and honours in sealing others. The Holy Ghost is this seal, which assures the converted soul, and impresses God's image upon it; when it is renewed by the Holy Ghost, the forgiveness of sins, the sentence of justification, and the everlasting love of God shed abroad in the heart, are the blessed and joyful fruits and effects of this seal: "The seals of my apostleship are ye in the Lord," says Paul. We are made manifest in the consciences of such, and such souls are in our hearts to live and die with them, being bound up in the bond of one and the same covenant with ourselves. These are the brethren that will dwell together in unity, in spite of Satan and all his wiles; but all other ties which originate in nature, and which are strengthened by visiting and gadding from house to house, will soon dissolve, and such brethren will become the worst of enemies; for, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted," whether it be in Christ by temporary faith, or whether it be in the house of God by profession, or however deeply rooted in the natural affections of the saints, "it shall be rooted up;" God will turn their hearts to hate his people, and to deal subtly with his inheritance. So I have ever found it; so Paul found it, witness Demas, Alexander, Hymeneus, Philetus, &c. So I find it still, and so others shall find it who are engaged in the work of the Lord; and I doubt not but the time will come when you yourself will confess that this witness is true.

Yours in the best of bonds,

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter XLIX

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON
My dear Friend,

I CONCEIVE it will give you no small degree of pleasure to hear how God has honoured his servant, and given testimony to the word of his grace during your late blessed visit to us in the Isle of Ely. I therefore take the earliest opportunity to inform you that the good Lord has, through your instrumentality, been pleased to deliver from sore bondage the poor man that you saw at work in our garden. He came this morning to acquaint me of the glorious liberty that God has proclaimed to him while under the word; and also of the love and peace that he has enjoyed since you left us. For he told me that he was as sure that he should be saved, as that there is a God, and repeated it several times: and added, Nor shall all the devils in hell ever prevent it." He said he should have cause to bless you to the day of his death, let it come when it may. He is so fully persuaded of this, that he has not one doubt but he shall die in the joys of a good hope. At the beginning of his distress he occasionally heard at Downham Meeting; but after Mr. Jenkins had been amongst us the former took on himself to burlesque the discourses of the latter, at which this poor man was so disgusted that he never went again: they that fear God shall come forth of them all. He says he was first raised to hope under yon, and has frequently been much indulged and encouraged while hearing the word; but as soon as you had finished the discourse all was gone. He tells me he has suffered deeply in his soul of f91 late, and

had concluded, before you came down, that it was impossible for God himself to save a sinner so vile as he found himself to be: he says, his troubles at times were such, that he thought he could not live, yet he knew that, if he died in the state that he was then in, he should most certainly be damned. But, as soon as ever you opened your mouth in prayer, he declares that he felt such comfort flow into his heart as he cannot describe. In short, he declares, you asked for every thing that he wanted, and when you preached the word came with such amazing power and consolation into his soul, that it cast out all fear, and all torment. This was on the Sunday morning at Downham. He is now sitting by me while I am writing this; he came to me late last night, and again this morning, between five and six o'clock. He desires me to give his kind love to his dear father in Christ Jesus, for such, he says, he knows you to be; and begs to be favoured with an interest in your prayers; and if you would condescend to favour him with a few lines, he shall esteem it a peculiar favour: for he says, he knows you have begotten him in the bonds of the gospel; and such a love does he feel to you that he shall never be able to express. His name is Waddelow Stevens; he desired me to say that he is now in the thirtieth year of his age. He told me this morning that he had some conversation with his wife last night, and he is in hope that God has not forgotten her, as she is far from being at ease in Zion. He is a very simple, honest man; both myself and Mr. M. have long entertained a favourable opinion of him; but, being a man of very few words, and having never once opened his mouth before to us on a religious subject, we were the more surprised to hear this glorious account. He tells us that he should have come to you before you left Downham; but, as he knew the liberality of your heart, he dared not. He says, that he shall have cause to bless you as long as he is in the world; and, let his end come whenever it may, he is fully persuaded, and that without one doubt, that he shall end his days in peace. He says, he thinks, if possible, that his comforts have increased more and more ever since you left

us; yea, he declares that heaven itself cannot afford more consolation than what he now feels. He says, that he wishes he could write; he has sufficient matter for an endless epistle. God's goodness to this poor man has provoked some to jealousy; nor can I say, that I am altogether without heat from this flame; for, although I know it is better than life itself to have a good hope through grace, yet I want also to be favoured with the fullness of that love that casteth out all fear. For, let me be favoured with what encouragement I may while hearing, I cannot retain it. I remember, two years since, you told me to watch the good hand of God, for you said you had no doubt but I should soon hear of some poor souls to whom the word would be made a blessing. Last year Mrs. Etches escaped the dismal regions, and Mrs. Few found the door of hope. And this year, this poor man has been favoured with a sweet sound from the jubilee trumpet. The former I rejoiced at; nor could I refrain from tears at hearing the latter: but I will leave you to judge of my feelings, when the contested prize of the bosom is possessed by another, which is what I have so long and so earnestly sought. But in this I fail not: I always beg of God to let his word run and be glorified whenever you come down among us. But can I be wrong if I covet earnestly the best gifts for my own soul?

Adieu, my ever dear, my valuable, and ever blessed friend accept my most unfeigned and most fervent love yourself; tendered the same to my dear Lady S.; and, with kind remembrance to all friends at Cricklewood, conclude me, in the best of bonds, ever

Yours most affectionately,

MARY MARTIN.

Epistles of Faith

Letter L

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MRS. CHARLES MARTIN.

MARY'S artless and simple account of the poor man's deliverance came safe to hand, and it is a most humbling and self-abasing consideration to me, being a true copy of a living epistle, and a sweet exhibition of the unparalleled condescension and humiliation of God, in setting the broad seal of heaven to the commission of the most despicable and the most abhorred of all ambassadors; but God, knowing that I am much hated, hath therefore given me another son.

And if a multitude of various looks can speak, and countenances can proclaim, and if I have any skill in reading the risings and fallings, the goings and comings, the approbation and then the fear, the risings in hope and sinking in dread, the shining with oil and the weepings of love: I say, if I can read these inward motions by the countenance, which is a true index of the heart, you will, ere long, acquaint me with the birth of another son, unless he be one that comes from some distant place. It is a poor young man that I allude to, a face that I have often seen in the barn; both his ears were most assuredly unstopped, and he heard the voice of the charmer, and moved in concert with it; his countenance and my mouth kept pace and footed it together, until the damping conclusion of "I add no more;" put a stop to the dance; it was so conspicuous, that I could but observe it, and he was too much lost in amazement to think of concealing. I mentioned the circumstance to you and Mr. M. afterwards, though neither of you could inform me who he is; but we shall not lose

him in the crowd, for, when the voice of pardon says to the prisoner, Go forth, then they that sit in darkness must shew themselves, Isaiah xlix. 9. He must appear, for all such shall return and give glory to God, if nineteen hypocrites depart without it.

I was not a little surprised, when we first walked together in the garden, at the poor man you speak of; both his words and his countenance expressed a most hearty welcome, and his hand the most cordial reception; such salutations and embraces are seldom lavished away upon the off scouring of the earth. I expect no less either by word or look, than to be considered and received as an enemy, a deceiver, a troubler of Israel, or as a spy upon the nakedness of the land. But, as every good work proclaims the workman, so a man's gift, especially the gift of the Holy Spirit, makes room for him. If the word is a hammer, it breaks the rock; if a fire. it dissolves the mountains; if a candle, it searches Jerusalem; if a voice of thunder, it alarms the secure; and, if as the piercings of a sword, entrances and inroads into the heart and conscience are made. "A wise man," saith the proverb, "scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof;" for whenever the word enters, the power of the Spirit is clearly manifested, and a full proof of the ministry is made; and convinced souls dare not hate, though they cannot love; and, if they cannot approve, they dare not reproach; for our call, commission, and authority, are all manifested and established, even in their own confidence as well as in their own conscience; for such believe and tremble, feel and are affrighted.

But nothing makes us so welcome to the most distant fraternity of Jesse, as the horn of unction, when we are sent to pray over those who are sick of sin and of self, and to anoint them with fresh oil in the name of the Lord. And it appears, by the man's cordial reception of me at my coming, that the

Comforter had shewed him beforehand things to come. though his understanding might be unfruitful upon this head; because he gladly received the spy, when joy and peace soon followed: for there is no beauty in our feet upon the mountains, until the oil of joy anoints the eyes of the spectators; and even this is but a faint discovery of the glory of his image, who is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The poor man is a true copy of the power of the gospel, and an excellent portrait of its simplicity. Truth goes before in the promises, and faithfulness follows after and makes them good; the gospel is a display of the eternal love of the Holy Trinity to the sinful sons of men, and this divine love shed abroad in the heart is God's image in man. The Holy Spirit is the seal, and love the impression; and he that believes the love of God sets the hand of faith to the impress of love, and confesseth with his mouth that God is true.

It is now nine or ten years since I first went into the island, and the work has been chiefly ploughing, stirring, sowing, and some work at breaking the clods: but reaping, binding, shocking, and in-gathering, are the sweetest branches of the Lord's husbandry, for, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." This we see, and this we can say, that although the offence of the cross is not ceased, as under the ministry of the Letter, yet the pleasure of God prospers in the hand of the Mediator; and he sees, and we too, the travail of his soul, which is a satisfaction to him and a pleasure to us. It is true the work among us is not begetting, quickening, labouring, bringing forth, and making perfect, a whole family under one discourse, as it is among some of your neighbours; yet as the first are last, so we hope that the last will be first.

Old Sarah never was so quick in her motions as Hagar, for they that believe shall not make haste; nor is Zion so prolific as Jerusalem that now is; but, when the Lord returns according to the time of life, Zion is sure of a seed. When God visits the miserable soul with his salvation, and the consolations of his love by the Spirit, we are sure of an addition to the family; the grand example of this to all succeeding ages is recorded in Genesis xxi. 1; "And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son." Hence it appears that Isaac was an heir of promise; God did as he had spoken, and his presence fulfils the promise; and all that come forth without this divine visitation have no more members of the new man, nor any more features of God's image, than a snail.

You may tell the young man that I have it not in my power to forget him, for such are my joy and crown; and both the anointing, and the cap of state, will have a place in the hearts of all who are made kings and priests unto God, and especially in them whom God condescends to use in anointing others.

If Peter be bidden to arise and kill, he is commanded also to eat: when God restores comforts to Ephraim, he restores the same to those that bemoan him. Nor is it likely that God and his angelic neighbours should rejoice together in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, and all his friends upon earth be silent on the occasion; no, they are both called upon, and called together, to acquiesce in, and to rejoice at, this happy meeting and eternal union, when God and the penitent meet together in Christ Jesus. None but elder sons, who are in their firstborn state, will be silent, sullen, and angry, on such an occasion, and to such a degree as never to come near to God, to his saints, and to his worship any more; "He was angry and would not go in," Luke xv. 28.

The spouse may be jealous, and angry too, when the daughters of Jerusalem take up the knee and the bosom also, as jealousy often surmises; but then this is only partial and temporary, like the indignation of the ten disciples against James and John, about a seat at the right and left hand of the Lord, Matt. xx. 24. But this fire, though it was vehemently hot, yet it was not lasting; it was not like the anger of Esau, it did not tear perpetually, nor was their wrath kept for ever, Amos i. 11. Mary has no cause to be touched with jealousy on this occasion, nor any other person who fears the Lord, who favours his cause, and who waits upon him and for him; for this they have from his own mouth. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Nor is Mary ignorant of these indulgences; she is no stranger to freedom and familiarity with him; she has often approached with boldness, and left many cares and burdens behind her, and has obtained both faith and hope; and she has so strong a testimony of this, both from the Spirit and her own conscience, that she dares not deny either without belying both. Wedding-days do not last all the year round, nor is the character of a bridegroom the only one that Christ sustains. He is a husband, a father, a master, and ruler; and he appears, and tills all these in turn, and in one of these you are sure to have him. The feast of the passover was not kept all the year through. only once a year; if all is festivity, who is to carry the cross t who to bear the beat and burden of the day? who rare to endure the furnace? and who to keep open the path of tribulation? The last description the angel gives of the company bearing palms in heaven, is, that these are they who came out of great tribulation; and it was this that drove them to wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. I would to God that all who wait at Wisdom's gate were as forward as Mary. You remember my dream of the river, the boat, the company, the cottage, the green lawn, and the golden-headed bird, and the way in which I caught it. Since I have been writing this, the dream came fresh to my mind, but some parts have escaped

my memory; be so kind as to send that Letter back to me, if you have not destroyed it; for, although I place no confidence in dreams, yet some parts of that are now apparently verified. Mary cannot forget the various times that she has been so sorely beset by a sleepy devil. The sudden fall of this upon you, and at no other time but when engaged in religious exercises, makes manifest from whence it comes. God says, Awake and watch: then it must be the devil that lulls us to sleep when at prayer; but there is no danger of sleeping when the flames of jealousy are kindled; if any thing under heaven will keep you awake, this will; therefore this also is among the all things that work for good, to them that love God.

I must now address my son. And what shall I say to thee, my son? Why, I will say, as Joseph did to Benjamin, "God be gracious unto thee, my son;" and remember that God hath formed thee for himself, that thou mayest skew forth his praise. Such are to go out with joy, and be led forth with peace, while the Holy Ghost will cast up the highway, and make crooked things straight, and rough places plain, and convince thee, by his love within, that charity is the more excellent way. But a brother is born for adversity. Some will hear thy report, see and admire the work, and take encouragement from it to wait, to watch, and to hope for the same benefit; while others will see and hate the change; these will watch for thy halting, and make thee an offender for a word; and, if God keep thee as upright as the palm-tree, yet a vile antinomian thou must be called; from this no heaven-born soul can be exempt in our days, for such aspersions are intended for no other purpose but to blacken those whom God condescends to keep clean.

Thou art come forth at a busy time; it is the beginning of wheat harvest; and thy mind, thoughts, and affections, will be so entertained above, that thou wilt be as awkward and

inexpert at the scythe and sickle, as I was at the hoe and the rake; but the harvest must he got in, and thou art at work for them who are in the same secret, and who know the difference between jubilee and common years, and who can make allowances on such occasions. God has shewed thee the way of life, and has set before thee an open door, and none can shut it. Christ Jesus is the new and living way, and faith and love are living feet, these will move on at every transforming view of a dear Redeemer. Be grateful, be thankful; stand fast, and cleave close, and the God of peace shall be with thee.

I thank Mary for these welcome tidings, and bless my God, who does not suffer the antinomian to labour in vain. My kind love to Mr. M. and all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; while I ever remain, in the bond of the everlasting covenant,

Your most affectionate friend and servant,

THE COALHEAVER.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. W. HUNTINGTON.

Dearly Beloved, and Rev. Sir,

IN love to you, I write to inform you a little of God's dealings with me. About five or six years ago the dear Lord was pleased to give me a sight of my lost and undone state; I saw and felt that if I died in the state that I was then in, I was as sure to be damned as I was born; I was afraid to go to sleep for fear I Should lift up my eyes in hell, as the rich man did, for I had him always before my eyes, and in the morning I used to cry out, O! what a mercy to be out of hell!

I was brought up to the church of England, but I was obliged to lay by all my forms of prayer, and cry, God be merciful to me a sinner. I was convinced that you and Mr. Jenkins were God's servants, and when I got a little better (for I had been very ill in body) I went to hear Mr. J.; his text was, "Come out from amongst them and be ye separate," &c., and so I did, for my heart was cleaving to a new family, which I believed to be the children of God.

I had twelve miles to walk to hear Mr. J., and, as I was going one Sunday, I called on a man that used also to hear the word at Lewes, and there sat a young man reading one of your books. I heard him till I found I was condemned on every hand; I thought there was no way left for me to escape; all my righteousness was as filthy rags, therefore I was brought to hunger and thirst after something better. I had, however, a little comfort at times from these words, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst af 2000 ter righteousness, for they shall be filled;" and, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, and scourge every son that I receive; and they that are without chastisements are bastards and not sons." But carnal reason and unbelief said it could not be love that exercised me so. If I had ten thousand worlds, I could nave left them all for a part or lot in Christ Jesus, for I saw him a complete

Saviour, so suitable to my case; but, O! that sin of unbelief, which is the greatest of all my plagues ! Yet my prayer was, for God to search me, and try me, and know my heart and thoughts, and see if there was any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. And so it is to this day, for I am afraid of my own heart, it being deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. But God did not suffer me to shun the light, but to come to it, for I longed to know the worst of myself. I found God to be in Mr. J. of a truth, and I was searched and tried too, and sometimes comforted, until I was brought down to the feet of Christ. Come what may; come life, come death, come heaven, or come hell; here I am, O Lord! do with me what seemeth good in thy sight; not my will, but thine be done. I knew God would be just in sending me to my own place, for sinning against him; but instead of that I felt humbleness, meekness, contrition of heart, godly sorrow, repentance, and self-abasement; and soon after this I went to Bolney to hear you, which I never had done before. I do not remember your text, but this I do remember, that you preached Christ Jesus, and he was to me the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. I was much humbled under a sense of God's goodness, and my own vileness; O! the love that I felt to you, and to your God! I walked very humbly for some time, and delighted myself in the ways of God, particularly in private prayer, for I found nearness of access to God; but I could not bear the thoughts of your leaving Sussex, for when you came to Lewes I heard you again; and when you went away I used to long to go with you to London, and would have been glad to be your servant, or any thing else; for I think, when I have been in these frames, that I could have laid down my life for you.

After this I had a dream; I dreamed that I was in a furnace, and that I went down, as though it was nearly into hell itself, and up I came again; and there was one sitting by whom I conceived to be the Son of God; every time I had a view of

him hope sprung up, and a confidence that I should not be lost; and I was not, for he brought me out safe. I awoke, and behold it was a dream; and when I awoke I felt very humble, and willing to go through the fiery trial, for I did believe that dream to be from God, though I have had many dreams from the devil. Soon after this love began to wax cold again, and my affections were going after idols; and I went so far, that I thought I would have my own way, if I was damned for it. I found my corruptions get lively and strong, and I found unbelief, carnal reason, hardness of heart, rebellion, enmity, and hard thoughts of God, and the lust of the flesh, work like the fire of hell; "O wretched man that I am!" I thought these things would work my destruction, when these words were sent home to me, "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation;" and, "There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked." Here I expected to be cut off: but God changeth not, therefore it is that I am not consumed. "The backslider in heart," the scripture saith, "shall be filled with his own ways;" and so was I, for the dear Lord made me sick of idols, and sick of self; and the more I prayed against my corruptions and lust, the worse I was, and the devil told me I had better give up prayer, for it was of no use, seeing I was not a child of God; for, God says, "Ask and you shall have, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you;" but you have been praying long without receiving any answer. And, as I gave way to this, the devil gained ground, and I lost it; I thought, as Job says, that if I prayed and God had answered, yet could I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. O how ashamed have I been to think how I have dishonoured God through this damning sin of unbelief. I find, without God, I can do nothing good, no not so much as think a good thought, if it would save my soul. It is a blessed thing for me that there is no part of my salvation left for me to work out; if there was it would be all over with me. I have no

merit, no worth or worthiness in me, for in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. I think I do not know what the plague of the heart is; for, if I got any comfort, I was called by Satan to give an account what promise brought it, for it must be some particular promise, or else it would not do. So I thought I was not a child of promise, because I had not the promises brought to me as some have: but, since I have sat under you, I have not been much concerned about the word, for the kingdom stands not in the word, but I am sure that I have felt the power.

I came to London last November, and I was in a very heavy trial when I came, and so troubled that I could not speak, and so ill in body that I was troubled even to walk. I had not been long in town before you preached from this text, "Save thy people, O Lord, and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them tip for ever." You said, what you aimed at was to bring forth a few sweet things from your text; and, blessed be God, so you did, and so I found it; it was sweeter than honey or the honey-comb, and I had a feast of fat things. All my doubts were gone, and all my fears removed; all my corruptions and lusts were subdued; and I felt love, joy, peace, humbleness of mind, and meekness, spring up, and I had a meek and quiet spirit given to me, for I had not a doubt of my interest in Christ. The fear of death and judgment, hell and damnation, all died away, while the Spirit bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. I found what we used to say at church to be true, that God filleth the hungry with good things, and sendeth the rich empty away. I could thank and bless God with all my soul for what he had done for me, and I was very happy for a few weeks, and did sweetly feed on your discourses; but, alas! my comforts went away again, and troubles came. I felt great doubtings and fearings; my corruptions and lusts got very strong and powerful, and my heart very hard, and I was both peevish and fretful. If I read the Bible, I was as though I should give God the lie; and, in

prayer, as though I should blaspheme and die. I conceived myself to be under a delusion, and that it was presumption I had got under you: I fancied the dear Lord had left me, as he did Saul; and it was suggested to me, "Are you sure that your minister is right? does he really feel what he preaches?" I was in this state for some weeks, and though, that the workings of these evils could not be for my good, or for the glory of God, and was thereby brought very low. Afterwards it pleased God that you should preach front this text, "God is faithful, by whom you were called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." You gave such a description of the trial I was in, the temptations I was exercised with, and our being called to the fellowship of Christ, that it pleased God to own, bless, and apply the word with power, so that the devil was obliged to be off with his fiery darts, and I went home in sweet peace. Truly, I can say, God is faithful, and will not forsake the work of his own hands, nor suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear. By these trials I find out the two principles, the new man and the old; and I would not commit another sin against God, if it was his blessed will, for the whole world; yet I find a principle, that lives in me, that loves him as well, if not better, than ever it did, and can feast upon nothing else but sin; and the sins that I used to indulge myself the most in, are they which I now find the greatest plagues. Dear Sir, I lost all fear of death when you preached from this text; "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe." The language of my soul was, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. You said there were some that were waiting for the second appearance of Christ Jesus; and, blessed be God, I found myself to be one of that number, though so vile, that I am not worthy of the least of all God's mercies, for I deserve nothing at his hands but everlasting destruction.

I hate and abhor myself: this I now speak and feel, for God has given me a humble heart; it is the goodness of God that

has led me to repentance, and it has led me to God, and not from him. Bless his holy name, I love him because he first loved me, and gave himself for me, the chief of all sinners, for my sins have been against light and love. Dear Sir, I fear I shall weary you, but I love to be speaking of these things when I can, for it is all my delight, and ail my happiness; for every thing short of Christ I count vanity, and it is no more to me than the drop of a bucket.

I was much blessed when you spoke from these words, "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." O how I was comforted and established! I went home rejoicing in God, having no confidence in the flesh. I found myself firm on the rock, which is Christ Jesus; and I believe that you was chosen in him, before the world was, to bring me to Christ. I love to hear you on the life of the soul, for this is my comfort in my affliction; the word of the Lord hath quickened me. That little book of yours hath been a blessed book to me, I mean, "The Destruction of Death by the Fountain of Life." Dear Sir, I am a witness that God speaks to the heart of his people by you; Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God must give the increase, for the excellency of power is of God, and not of man. Do excuse, dear sir, the freedom I take with you; for I think there never was a son in the flesh that did love a father as I love you in the spirit, because God is in you. These words have been sweet to me, when you have said, Christ in you the hope of Glory, for glory is what I am hoping for; and, instead of being afraid of death, I often wish for it, for I am a stranger and a pilgrim in this world. I am crucified to the world, and the world to me, and my delight is in the ways of God; he has got my heart, and where my heart is there must my treasure be also. The ever-blessed God is my portion, and in him do I trust; I only want to enjoy more of his love, but bless him for ever for what I have. There is one thing which I cannot submit to, and that is

for you to die. May the Almighty and ever-blessed God abundantly bless you, both in soul and body, and give you a door of utterance, and grant you long life, and many days for his and his church's sake! so prays the least of all saints. And if you count me worthy of your notice, pray for me, and please to answer this, to let me know whether it is right or wrong my writing to you, for I have been much exercised about it Sir, I have sent you the plain truth; learning I have none, but what I have felt, that have I written.

WILLIAM WOOD.

Epistles of Faith

Letter LII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. WILLIAM WOOD.

My dear Son,

YOURS came to hand, and I thank you for it, and I thank my God for the pleasing contents. God has, as far as I can judge, led thee to the rock that is higher than thou; thou art upon the foundation that God hath laid in Zion; a living stone upon the life-giving rock, hewn out of the quarry of nature, squared by afflictions, smoothed by pardon and repentance, and cemented by love, which constrains him to adhere to us and we to him. You are a living witness, that what is called stinking

antinomianism is the gospel of the grace of God, and those styled men of a bad spirit are the ambassadors of peace; and I have no doubt but you have found many, who call themselves evangelists, loaded with chains, and in their ministry the sons of death. But God has shewn thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? By doing justly, thou wilt keep a conscience void of offence, and have rejoicing in thyself alone, and not in another. You read in Isaiah that God's everlasting covenant is the sure mercies of David; and this the prophet explains to be God's Spirit upon Christ, and upon his seed. Read and compare Isaiah lv. 3, and lix. 21. These sure mercies, and the Spirit's work, Paul puts together, saying, "Of his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." This is the mercy of God in Christ Jesus to us ward. To love mercy, therefore, is to love, revere, 2000 and admire, the Holy Spirit and his fruits, for the fruits of the Spirit are called mercies; and God styles himself the parent of these; he is the father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort, 2 Cor. i. 3. And, if you love mercy, you will loath yourself, and your best performances, and glory alone in this, that you understand and know God, who exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth, for in these things God delights, Jerem. ix. 24. And when his delight is our delight, when what he loves, we love, when his pleasure is our pleasure, then are we in heart-felt union and friendship with him; and truly this is fellowship both with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus the Lord. If you are favoured with this fellowship you will walk humbly with him; for nothing gives us so true a sight and sense of sinful self, nothing works self-abasement and self-abhorrence so effectually, as the glorious presence of God. At this the wicked perish, Psal. lxxviii. 2; at this Job with all his boasted performances, came down to self-abhorrence, and to repentance in dust and ashes, Job xlii. 6. Take diligent heed to the good work begun in you, and move

in harmony with the Holy Spirit's influences and operations; and follow after his fruits in their wonderful exercises, and in the enjoyment of them. God now expects love, joy, gratitude, thankfulness, adoration, and praise. At our entrance into Zion we are to call our walls salvation, and our gates praise; and our justifying robe is called a garment of praise also; and, when the soul is moulded into faith, and formed to love, we are created anew in Christ Jesus, that we should shew forth his praise. While prosperity lasts God tells you to be joyful, and when adversity succeeds we are bid to consider; God has set the one over against the other.

Every discovery of sinful self furnishes us with confession; troubles, and a sense of need, will prompt us to prayer; but wedding days, feasting days, and jubilee days, call for thanksgivings and the voice of melody. The Holy Spirit will inspire the heart, and furnish the mouth, for all these spiritual sacrifices; and, if you are led by the Spirit, you will be exercised in all these.

God's umpire is our own conscience; and when this is purged from dead works by the blood of Christ, and furnished with light, life, faith, hope, and peace; and governed and influenced by the Holy Spirit of God; and made to bear a joint witness with the Holy Spirit to our adoption, justification, and acceptance with God in Christ Jesus; we are at a certainty about our state. These things, my dear son, are the blessed effects of our Lord's ascension and mediation; "The Lord is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is his treasure," Isaiah xxxiii. 5, 6.

The Holy Spirit dwells in us, as in his own temple; and he erects his tribunal in our conscience, and keeps his court there. All the reproofs and rebukes; that sound in our ears

from the word preached, are always seconded by a voice from the court of conscience; without this, reproof is not received, without this, it has no weight.

The Spirit always begins his work with conscience, that being the only ally that God has in fallen man Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Here the appeals are first made, and to conscience the ambassadors of peace commend themselves in the sight of God. And the breath of eternal life is first breathed into the conscience to alarm, awaken, and animate; and, when conscience is made sensible of the alarm, and is quickened to feel, the sinner bestirs himself, and begins to confess, to call upon God, and to seek with all the heart, or with all the desires of the conscience; and it is to the conscience that the seeking sinner's first promise is made; "Your heart shall live that seek God." It is a promise to the seeking soul, that the living convictions of a soul quickened by the Spirit shall not die away and come to nothing, as the convictions of a natural conscience do; though the poor sinner may often fear that this will be his case: but the Spirit says, No, it shall not be the case, "Their heart shall live that seek God"

Conscience, when awakened and quickened by the Spirit, calls for our most diligent attention; we should attend to its accusations, to its checks and reproaches, to its troubles, to its disquietudes, to its complaints, its wants and desires; and carry all these to God by prayer, and beg of God to grant us those things that conscience craves at our hands; and this is communion with conscience. What is communion, but giving and receiving? receiving the complaints of conscience, and begging supplies for it? and this is what the Psalmist means when he says, "I commune with my own heart; and my spirit made diligent search," Psal. lxxvii. 6. And this he recommends to us; "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still" Conscience, however neglected and slighted, will be

found in the great day to be the sinner's gnawing worm; and his accusations and reproaches will never die. Attend to every charge that conscience can bring against you, and bring them to the light of God's word and Spirit in the ministry, and listen to all the cravings of conscience, and let the prayer of faith satisfy all its wants; and this is communion with conscience. When conscience magnifies its office, and does its duty by lashing, smiting, and reproaching us for every evil word and evil deed, it is then made meet to receive the promise of life; hence such are said to receive the word in an honest and good heart, Luke viii. 15. And what can be worse, or more dishonest, than a conscience that will suffer itself to be seared as with a hot iron, till it be past feeling? and suffer the strong man armed to keep possession of the palace, and conscience hold its peace till the sleepy soul feels no bands even in death, and never does its duty but in bell; then it awakes, reproaches, accuses, torments, and begins the work of a never-dying worm, being called upon to do its office by the vindictive wrath of God let into it.

All God's reproofs, when seconded by an awakened and quickened conscience, take us clean off from the sandy foundation, and from all confidence in the flesh; "Rebuke them sharply," says Paul, "that they may be sound in the faith." But, if the word brings no life, reproof wants an edge; yea more, the voice of all the three divine persons, and their witness or testimony, must be received into the conscience; the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb. xii. 24, because it speaks pardon, peace, reconciliation and friendship with God, must be received into the conscience, if, as Paul says, the heart be sprinkled from an evil conscience.

The Holy Spirit's cry of Abba, Father, and the witness that he bears to our sonship, must be attested with the witness of conscience, or else there would be not only pro and con, as with faith and unbelief, but also different witnesses and

clashings, which would not bring peace but confusion. But the God of peace and good order makes both these unite in one testimony: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16.

Yea, God the father's voice of love, when by circumcising our heart to love him, then says, by the fulfilment of his promise, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love," Jer. xxxi. 3; even this has its seat and voice in the conscience: "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Hence it is plain that the blood of sprinkling has a voice in the conscience; the Spirit's cry of Abba, Father, and his testimony or witness, are in the conscience too; and so is the voice of God the Father's love; charity

< 94c p>The mystery of the Holy Trinity is the most sublime mystery in all the Bible, and their three-fold witness in a believer's conscience is the greatest wonder and the greatest blessing in all the world, and this must be in the conscience also; "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," 1 Tim. iii. 9. Nothing under the sun will ever make you so sound, or settle you on the rock of salvation so firm, or fix your heart so fast, or make your union with Christ so clear and so satisfactory, as these things which I have written to you.

Indeed there is no walking with God without an experience of these things, for they that walk with him must walk in peace and equity, Mal. ii. 6. A conscience purged, purified, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, is a firm basis for an unshaken confidence; hence the apostle's good counsel to us all, "Holding faith and a good conscience," 1 Tim. i. 19. Nothing will shake, stagger, move, affright, or unsettle thy confidence like allowed sins, and fresh contracted guilt. He that exercises himself diligently to keep his conscience clean and good, is sure to have the joy of his own faith; "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, 1

John iii. 21. Conscience is the principality in which peace should rule; and Satan, sin, and guilt are the only enemies and disturbers of this sway of the Saviour's sceptre, whose kingdom stands in righteousness, peace, and joy: hence the exhortation, "Let the peace of God rule in your heart, to the which also ye are called," Col. iii. 15.

I have set my son a task that will employ him all the year round, and exercise him to the end of his days; it may grow out of favour and out of practice, but he will never make straight paths for his feet till he takes it up again. And now, my son, I charge thee to keep this commandment without spot until the appearing of Jesus Christ, and thou shalt find this exercise to be its own reward. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God. we have had our conversation in the world," 2 Cor. i. 12. Adieu. Ever yours in Christ Jesus the Lord.

W. H.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. W. HUNTINGTON.

I HEARD you preach the Tuesday evening before you went last to the Isle of Ely, when my afflicted soul and body were revived under the word, and with your last prayer went up the sincere desires of my heart and soul. I was grieved because you were going, hoping however to hear you again on your return. But I am confined. "The Lord do as seemeth him good," for, "He remembereth we are but dust." Bless, O bless his precious name for ever, for his supporting power; "When heart and flesh both fail, he is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." I am very low and weak in body, and sometimes faint-hearted; but have been holpen with a little help, and the Lord God Almighty and my own conscience, witness that the hearing of you is meat and drink to my weary soul. And I do esteem it one of the highest privileges, next to my soul's salvation, because, through mercy, the Lord the Spirit leads you, as he has done for these eight years past, to speak to my case more or less. Bless his adorable and great name, he often sends his word with power to my heart, so that I come away like a giant refreshed with wine. Yea, I have drank so as to forget my poverty, and remember my misery no snore for a while. But, O! how have I returned to my sad place again! I have had a nervous fever for a long time, and was seized last Wednesday morning with a fainting and trembling of the limbs, as though I could not long survive, and was afraid I should lose my senses. I am still very faint and low, though a little recovered, blessed be God; and am ordered down to Brighton, for the benefit of the salt water, where I hope to see and hear dear Mr. Brook, and Mr. Jenkins at Lewes. I have begged of the Lord that, unless his presence go with me, I might not go hence. And the answer in my mind is, "Go, and I am with you, and I will raise you up again." I can say to the honour and glory of God, that, when I did not expect to live many hours, I had the sum and substance of the 1034 and 116th Psalms in my soul, and that the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus, for his sake, might, by his good Spirit, influence you to plead the merits of his most precious

blood in my behalf, and in behalf of my family; and my desire is to commit body, soul, family, and all my affairs, into the mighty hand of God; for' my weak head and faint heart will not bear the weight. But he has been better to me than all my fears many times, and I hope he will be so again.

As to my love to you, that God knoweth, who discerneth the thoughts afar off, and how many times I have had a desire to speak and write to you; that he who sows, and they that reap, might rejoice together.

That a double portion of God's Spirit may rest upon your own soul is the sincere prayer of the least of all saints, and most unworthy of all sinners, in the path of tribulation, and in the furnace of affliction.

WILLIAM MOORE.

Epistles of Faith

Letter LIV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. WILLIAM MOORE.

Sir,

IT was a wonderful condescension in the Almighty, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, to take up his residence in the tent of Moses and the temple of Solomon-buildings made

with hands. But, having abandoned both these, he has said unto Zion, Thou art my people; she is redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. This beloved, chosen, selected, and compacted body, which is one in Christ, he has desired for his habitation: this is his rest for ever; here he will dwell, having desired it. And, although this is his royal city, where he keeps his court and has his palace, yet the suburbs are neither forgotten nor neglected. He blesses the habitation of the just; but loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Nevertheless, when he shines forth from the perfection of beauty, he visits the waste places of Jerusalem; so that the contrite and broken-hearted proclaim his arrival, although they have not as yet passed through the gates, so as to call their walls Salvation and their gates Praise. But our happiness lies within the walls, because the inhabitants are. no more to say, "I am sick, for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." It is upon this holy hill of Zion that the king is set, to give Life to all the seed; and from this head of influence the holy oil descends to all the citizens. Here is the feast of fit things, and the wines well refined. Here the silver trumpet sounds, to invite the perishing guests. "God wil 13c9 I abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread." In this mount I lost my fail and my yoke, which were both destroyed by the holy anointing oil. In this mountain the works of creation and the sabbath of rest must both give way to the works of redemption, for in Zion shall the hand of the Lord rest, Isaiah xxv. 10. In the works of creation God displayed his wisdom and his power, and rested well pleased with these. In Israel's redemption and Egypt's destruction he displayed both his judgments and his providence, his goodness and severity; and took up his rest in the Holy Land. But the display of his love is in the gift of Christ, and in the redemption of the world by him; and in that love he rests well pleased and delighted for evermore, Zeph. iii. 17. This display of God's love to men, and the redemption of souls, are, in their blessed effects, in the application and

enjoyment of them, both in Zion. Redemption frees us from sin, law, and justice; and love is a restoration of God's image; and in that love God will for ever dwell, well pleased, be it where it may, and no where else. God sanctifies and consecrates his own residence by his own love, which is to be our holiness before God for ever, Eph. i. 4.

Now, seeing these things are so, and such glorious things are spoken of this city of God, and that God's love is God's image in the soul; so every revival of this most holy fire, and every cheering ray that breaks in upon it, is a changing of us into the same image, from glory to glory, till perfect day and endless glory swallow up the soul in bliss. This is the renewing of the inner man. The outward must and will decay; the leprosy is deep in the walls, and has no salt to season it, no armour to guard it from the grave and corruption. All belonging to the outward man is vanity; death is vanity; and this creature is made subject to vanity, though not willingly. But it is subjected in hope. It has been, and still is, the temple of the Holy Ghost. But we may call 'it the cloister, or outward court; the soul being the seat, and charity the throne, of the spirit. Though in it, abstractedly considered, dwells no good thing: even its origin is mean, its natural corruption vile to the last degree, being but a body of death at best; and it is pregnant with the seeds of death, and is dying daily, and, therefore, it must come down. Its doors must be shut, and its windows be darkened; the cords and the pins must be loosened; the silver cord and golden bowl, the wheel and the cistern, shall all be dissolved together, and return to their original dust. This is the outward man's long home. Every one that passeth his first birth is born to trouble; and he that obtains a second is a brother born for adversity, Prov. xvii. 17. Every bodily pain is a warning to quit, every fit of sickness an ejection; and death seizes both body and goods, and hale, the former to the grave, which was once our Lord's prison: but lie was taken from prison and from judgment, and so shall we. The door of

hole and gate of life have been open, and by them we have gone out, and the Lord at the head of us, calling us by name, and leading us out. The way of life and the path of peace are cast up. Christ is the only way to the Father; and every lively act of faith upon him is a step in the way, while love straightens the crooks, smooths the roughs, raises the vallies, and levels the hills. The footsteps of the flock are faith and love, as is plain by every print of their heels. Out of this way mount Sinai is removed, the clouds of our transgressions are dispersed, the drawn sword is put up, the accuser of the brethren is displaced by the advocate, and his charges answered by the blood of sprinkling, and the great creditor smiles in the face of the surety; and no lion or ravenous beast is to be found in all the road, though we are travelling through the regions of the East. It is true that tribulation always attends upon regeneration, as gospel power and the offence of the cross go hand in hand. The furnace of affliction, too, is in this new way; but faith and love can walk through the fire. Some clashing scriptures, and some little discord between promise and providence, have at times, and will again, raise some obstructions in the way: but there are labourers employed to gather up those: and, though some should remain before us, all is clear behind.

Infirmities of body have long overtaken me: old age is never without a retinue of these; and even common sense tells us that these must increase with our clays. But the inner man, the incorruptible seed, is not subject to these things; if they increase, gather fresh strength, and thrive in light and life, in fortitude and submission, in vigour and heavenly-mindedness; the spirit will sustain the infirmities of the body.

Farewell!

Grace, mercy, and peace be with thee!

THE COALHEAVER.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

My Dear Friend,

Leicester, Oct. 1, 1809.

WE have been fully expecting you to visit us at Leicester this autumn, and that we should have heard from you ere now; but probably it may be that the continuance of the bad weather has prevented your undertaking so long a journey. However, the weather now appears favourable, and we are desirous to see you as soon as the way is open, and before the days get too short. We are aware of your unwillingness to leave your own congregation, and that they are as unwilling you should be absent: yet, as the blessing of God has attended your labours here in the north, as well as in the south, I cannot see how you can refuse us any longer, according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to you, 2 Cor. x. 13. And it may be that your absence will prove useful in the end, as your people will thereby get an appetite, and it is well known that a keen appetite is pleasant when there is good food to eat.

Our friend Miss. Chamberlain has for some time been very desirous to see you at Leicester once more, as she knows her end is fast approaching. She is very much altered in her appearance during these last five days; I mean in the decay of nature, which perhaps Mr. B. or Mr. M. may have mentioned to you. She is hastening to the grave very fast; but, though the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed daily. Myself and some other friends have scarcely ever left the house since Thursday last; and, though we cannot but grieve at the expectation of losing a near friend, yet there is abundant cause for thankfulness that she will soon go to everlasting rest, and be delivered from that body of sin which we are yet encompassed with. I never before witnessed such a scene of affliction; there is not a friend that has visited her, I believe, who has the shadow of a doubt of her eternal happiness. It is truly a pleasure to be with her; to see that in the face of death, she should possess such composure of mind. She speaks of her end with such satisfaction, and her countenance proclaims such tranquillity and peace of mind, that I cannot describe. She is very cheerful and lively in her conversation, more so than ever she was known to be when in perfect health, except at intervals, when pain comes on very acute. Her departure was expected every hour on Thursday; but she again revived, and on Friday morning was rather better, when she spoke of what she wished to be done after her death, and also of the kindness and goodness of God during her pilgrimage, likewise of the prospect that lay before her in the world to come; the particulars of which I cannot relate now, it being past time; but you shall hear from me again soon. She bears a most faithful testimony to the truth she embraced, to the power of God in maintaining and supporting her thus far, and of the efficacy of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ to cleanse and to justify; which I am persuaded will leave a lasting impression upon the beholders. I am

Yours affectionately,

B. CORT.

N. B. I wish you could see her. She is very weak indeed, but very comfortable and happy; desires her love to you, and would be glad to hear from you in return.

Epistles of Faith

Letter LVI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. B. CORT, LEICESTER.

Dear Ben,

YOURS came safe to hand. You press me to the North, not Considering that I have lately been in the East, and am this day bound for the South, namely, Cranbrook and Rutherford. I am glad at my heart that Miss Chamberlain is so happy in her last stages. Tell her from me that I have a charge against her for unbecoming secrecy. What was spoken and done in secret should have been made known and come abroad, yea, proclaimed upon the house-tops. Was she ashamed of her smutty father, that she concealed her kindred? Fair dealing, and not smuggling, best becomes those who buy the truth and sell it not She closed in with the offer, and made a match with the heavenly bridegroom, while I was publishing the bans: but she lost sight of the bridegroom's friends, though she knew

that I was proxy. Tell her that, if I had been the son of nobles, this had not been the case. My coalsack robs me, but whatever good any man doth, of the Lord he shall receive his reward. She must and shall be my joy, and the crown of my rejoicing, in that day when every branch of the coal-trade will be forgotten. And, as death will then be swallowed up in victory, so all slavery will be swallowed up in royalty. She came in last, and yet is paid first. She has wrought but one hour, and yet is made equal with us who have borne the burden and heat of the day. The Master is good, but my eye is evil. We agreed at first for a penny; for the language of every convicted soul is, I care not what I suffer if I had but faith to believe that Christ died for me. The Lord takes us at our word, and agrees for the penny a day. Here it appears that faith is that penny, for we have no true riches but in faith, nor food nor clothing. without it; for we live by faith. And if a best robe is only to them that believe. And, if faith be right and genuine, it works by love; and love is the image, if not the superscription, of that penny. I doubt not but there will be a deal of murmuring against the good man of the house. Tom Barston, I hear, has begun already. But is it not right that the Master should do as he pleases with his own? We cannot doubt of that. The reward is to all who love his appearing; nor shall she be perfect without us. Give my kind love to her; tell her I wish her a good journey, and that she will shortly enjoy what we believe and hope for, namely, that "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Yours in the best of all bonds,

W.H. S. S

4th Oct. 1809.

Epistles of Faith

Letter LVII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. W. HUNTINGTON.
Leicester, Oct. 5, 1809.

Rev. and dear Sir,

YESTERDAY, at one o'clock, my dear sister breathed her last, and went to rest in the bosom of her heavenly Father. I have lost an affectionate sister, and an invaluable housekeeper: but my loss is her eternal gain. At times I feel great distress at losing her; but I sorrow not as those that have no hope; being fully persuaded that she fell asleep in Jesus; and, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Her end was glorious; and truly "The memory of the just is blessed." I seldom left the room during the last six days of her life, when she often spoke to me, and to other friends about her, of what she enjoyed. The good Lord was pleased to strengthen her upon the bed of languishing, to make all her bed in her sickness, and abundantly to bless her with his presence. Her outward man perished, but the inward man was daily renewed; for every day she seemed to gain greater strength in the Lord, though her bodily strength was all gone, for she could not help herself in the least thing; but God was the strength of her heart, and she knew that he would be her portion for ever, and her soul greatly rejoiced in him. I never saw her when in health with such a countenance as she had during her illness; I may say, without exaggeration, her face shone like the face of an angel, for truly the Lord was the health of her countenance. How "happy are the people that are in such a case! yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord." She many

times spake very affectionately of you, expressed a great desire to see you once more, and requested her kind love. She said many sweet things, at different times, to me and my valuable friend Mr. B. Cort, who was with me; and also to Miss Sheasbury, a particular friend of my sister's, who was with her the last ten days. I have made a memorandum of some of the things she spake, and I think that we three together can recall to mind most of what she said, which I intend to write down as soon as I have time, and to send you. I hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing you at Leicester before the days get short; many will be glad to see you. The Lord has blessed your labours amongst us many times, and I hope we shall soon see you again, that we may receive another benefit. How glad should I be if you was here to speak to us, and to declare to the public what great things the Lord hath done for my sister. On Friday last she was speaking to her friends who stood about her for more than three hours. There were several in the room, and amongst the many things she mentioned, which are far beyond the limits of a Letter, she told us again of her deliverance under a discourse your preached at Newark from these words, "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." It was then that the Lord brought her out of her distress into a state of friendship and reconciliation with himself, and gave her the enjoyment of pardon and peace; and she testified to all around her that she had that peace which passeth all understanding. I shall be very glad to receive a line from you. That the Lord may be with my ever dear invaluable friend, and crown the labour of his latter days with abundant success, is the earnest prayer of my heart,

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

Epistles of Faith

Letter LVIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. W. HUNTINGTON.
Leicester, Oct. 10, 1809.

Rev. and dear Sir,

I SAID in my last that I would give you some of the particulars of my sister's conversation previous to her departure, which I am sure you will be glad to bear; for, although I have been satisfied in my own mind, and some others also, respecting her eternal state, for some time past, yet it appears more confirming when she used such language, and found such support, in the approach of death, through that sweet enjoyment she had of the Lord's love and favour to her. A few days prior to her confinement she told me much of her experience, and how sharply she had been exercised at times; what dreadful thing went through her mind, such as she durst not even speak of. She said, "When I do not enjoy the Lord's presence, I feel many fears and misgivings of heart. But why should I expect to escape this, when Christ himself cried out, I My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That consideration is often a great comfort and support to my mind" The peace of soul which she enjoyed for the last six days was very great, and her conversation was encouraging and comforting to all that came to see her: she said, "Thou wilt keep that man in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee. And so I find it, for so far as God hath given me faith to stay my mind on him I have peace. I cannot say that I have any fear of death; perfect love hath cast out all fear; nor have I any tossings in my mind, nor do I feel those sharp exercises wh

2000 ich I have bad; I have that peace in my conscience which passeth all understanding, which this world knows nothing of. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Mr. B. Cort said to her, "You remember Mr. Huntington's saying from the pulpit, If perfect love has cast out all fear, you would be no more afraid of death than I am of you." "Yes," she said, "I do, and I think that some who are not so strong in faith as Mr. H. can say the same: I feel no fear, death will be swallowed up in victory. Formerly I used to have great terror; and was so exercised with the fear of death, that oftentimes the sweat has dropt from me. One night in particular, amongst many others, I was in great fear and distress; I got up, and earnestly prayed to the Lord to remove my fears, and to reveal himself to me; and, if he had any mercy for me, to shew me mercy. The Lord heard me in this time of trouble, and delivered me, so that my soul was melted under a feeling sense of his goodness, and this scripture came with power, 'The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing, shall flee away.' And immediately after, this verse in Hart's hymns came upon my mind,

I'll lay me down and sweetly sleep,
For I have peace with God;
And when I wake He shall me keep,
Thro' faith in Jesu's blood.'

I did lay me down in peace; and when I awoke the Lord kept me by faith in his blood; he has kept me to this day, and I now have peace. When I was at Matlock my feelings were very different at times; I was taken very ill on Wednesday, and from then till Sunday I felt very dead in my soul, and dark respecting my eternal state; which brought me to cry mightily to God. I may say the Lord for a small moment forsakes, and

in a little wrath hideth his face, but with everlasting kindness he hath mercy on me. I read Mr. Huntington's Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer, and often wept while reading, it was so suitable to my feelings, and so blessed to my soul while looking in it. On Sunday I found myself so happy, and my soul so melted under the goodness of the Lord, that I knew, whether I lived or died, I was the Lord's. I praised his name, and felt more than I am able to express. O, if I could but make the professing world know what I feel, they would never speak against Mr. Huntington, nor his religion, any more. O, how should I like to see him once more in the flesh!" Being told that her time would be but short here, she said, "I know it will not, but I am the best off of you all. I The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." I have rejoicing in myself, and it is what I feel that supports me, and the comfort which I enjoy springs from my confidence in God. At times I feel more than I can utter; and then I think to myself, O what shall I enjoy as soon as I am gone! 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him; but it is revealed unto us by his Spirit:' and I look upon it that it will be the same as I now feel, only I shall have such an abundant increase. 'Now abideth faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these is charity.' The love which I feel will abide for ever, and be increased." B. C. said to her, "We know but impart, and prophesy in part;" and then she spoke on, saying, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known, and be tilled with all the fullness of God. I find many interruptions here; and when I have such enjoyments, there are many things which I wish to leave behind, and be gone. The end of the perfect man is peace. In Christ the weary and heavy laden find rest for their souls; and I shall

soon be gone, and be for ever at rest." I said to her, "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation, and they which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Afterwards she conversed with all present for some time, and then said, "O the power of unbelief! how has Satan filled my mind oftentimes with doubts and fears! I have looked forward to death many times with terror, fearing I should be left at last. But it is not so; blessed be the Lord for ever, he has far exceeded my expectations; I thank him for his goodness and mercy to me, and hope it may be for the comfort and encouragement of those that are left behind, who may be exercised with the same fears that I have been. I am a witness of his faithfulness and truth, and now prove the reality of religion, and feel his power to support me in this trying hour: when my strength faileth me his presence comforts me. Though it is sharp passing through the valley of the shadow of death, yet I experience the fulfilment of his promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." On the Friday preceding her death, the physician said to her, "I am glad to see you look so comfortable to-day." She said to him, "Yes, I am comfortable, I am very happy; I would rather die than live." He replied, "I never heard such a thing, I cannot believe it" She answered him again, "Why, Sir, if I would not rather die than live, how could I be comfortable?" The greatest calmness and composure were in her countenance, which testified to all who saw her that she was happy in heart. The Lord anointed her head with oil, and his name was as ointment poured forth; the house was filled with the odour thereof, for a sweet savour seemed to rest upon all around her. The day before her departure, I never left her for many minutes together; she several times spake sweetly to me of the goodness of the Lord. I read several of David's Psalms to her; particularly the 107th. She stopt me many times, and made some very pretty remarks, and said, "The language of my heart is with David, "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" She spoke upon

the last verse, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord;" and then mentioned how often she had been comforted in reading the Epistle of James, particularly the last chapter, speaking of the prayer of a righteous man availing much with God. The last thing she asked of me was, to look her the chapter where it is said, "These all died in faith," &c. I read it to her; and while I stood by her talking upon the words, "These all died in faith," she became much worse in body, and afterwards said but little. One morning when B. C. and myself were in conversation with her, our friend Mr. Lockwood came in, and after standing a little while to hear her speak, he said, "I am glad to Bear your conversation, and to find you so comfortable." She replied, "Yes, Mr. Lockwood, I am very happy." He said to her, "If a lively countenance is a true index of the heart, you ate happy indeed." On his departure he said, "Farewell; and, if I never see you again in this world, I hope to follow you to a better." She said, "Yes, I believe you will, and many others who have been to see me during my illness." When B. C. said to her, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth," she answered, "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." The hymn which she chose to be sung at her funeral is in page 189 of Mr. Hart's.

She is now gone to join the spirits of just men made perfect. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is 2d7 the death of his saints." Her spirit is returned to God who gave it. With several other friends, I followed her remains to the ground on Sunday last, where her flesh rests in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to everlasting life. I myself, with many others, hope to see you at Leicester soon, and I shall be very glad to receive a line from you.

God Almighty bless my dear friend, and crown his labour more and more; and that he may be long continued upon the

earth for the Church's salve, is the hearty prayer of him who subscribes himself; in the best of all bonds,

Yours very affectionately,

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

Epistles of Faith

Letter LIX

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. CHAMBERLAIN, LEICESTER.

My dear Son in the faith of our common Lord, grace and peace be with thee through Him.

I SET off to go to Kent on the 4th day of this month, and did not return till yesterday, the 12th; of course I saw neither of your Letters until I came home. The first I opened mentioned your sister's departure, which was no more than what I expected, and yet it was very affecting to me, and so it was to all in my house, who heard the Letters read. But I must tell you, that the unction that anointed her to her burial spread its odour far from Leicester; for Mr. B. Cort having mentioned that your sister's happiness had provoked some to jealousy, and that T. Barston was gone off in those flames to Grantham, upon reading thereof these words came into my mind, "But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny?" Matt. xx. 13.

From that time the parable of the labourers in the vineyard hung upon my mind; and although I was (as I thought) furnished with a message for the Lord's day at Cranbrook, yet this continuing to open more and more to my view, my other text withdrew into the back ground, vanished, and went out of sight, and left the above passage uppermost upon my mind, nearest to my heart, and shining brighter and brighter upon my understanding; so that I spoke from it for the first time at Cranbrook; and I think I was right in so doing, for his presence was with me; and I believe that I was little less than three ho 2000 urs in the pulpit; and, finding my cruse not empty, in the afternoon I took it again, and was in my pulpit full two hours more. I shall say no more upon -this subject, as many of the brethren at Cranbrook wish me to print the discourses; and, if God permit, and enable me, I intend to comply with their request.

My dear friend is not ignorant of the poor man who was the means of building that place at Newark, and of the dismal end h made; and yet you yourself, and your dear departed sister also were both begotten to a lively hope, and received the first live cog from the altar of burnt-offering in that place; nor have I single doubt, but it will be said when the Lord writeth up the people, that Joseph and Mary Chamberlain were born there, Psalm lxxxvii. 5, 6. God will work, and who shall let it?

The contents of yours filled me with grief mingled with joy; I was joyful at seeing the divine dexterity she manifested in carrying on the thread of discourse, and adding her consistent links to the golden chain, upon every hint dropped; which spewed how richly the word of God dwelt in her, in all knowledge, in all utterance, and spiritual understanding. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God ordains strength, to perfect praise, because of his enemies, that he may still the enemy and the avenger; for when the Spirit bears his testimony, Satan is put to silence, being rebuked by the

sinner's Advocate when the brand is plucked from the fire. The ministry of the Spirit is not ceased; the gospel is still the power of God to salvation.

My dear son has seen in his sister, even when the outward man was half dead, the life, the vigour, the vivacity, activity, and spirituality of the hidden man of the heart; how agile, how angelic, even when on the verge of eternity; but the soul feels the rays and joys of eternal day. And, if the incorruptible seed seems so pregnant with heavenly treasure and divine fullness when only drawing near to perfection, and before it is unclothed with the body of death, what must it be, and what must it feel, when the shrouds, hoods, and veils, are put off for good and all! The Holy Spirit and his train of grace; the heavenly light and life, which are the quintessence of faith; and glory, which is the soul of hope: and the divine power, which has been our support in much patience; and love, which is our holiness; and joy, which is the flame of love's fire; and peace, which is the calm of heaven, and which is now the end of all war, and will be in future the end of all trouble; and rest, which is the labouring man's home, his bed, his paradise; and the best robe, Zion's bridal attire; and a fullness of God, of the knowledge of God, and of the enjoyment of Him; which puts an end to the craving appetite, so as there will be no more longing, desiring, hungering, nor thirsting; and of course, no more begging, sorrowing, nor crying. The fruits of the Spirit are the believer's secret treasure, the good and perfect gifts from the Father of lights, the incorruptible seed of the second Adam, the blessings of the better covenant, the empire of all-conquering grace, and the kingdom of God in obscurity. All this treasure your sister took with her; she left nothing but the body, consisting of earth and water; and when the soul departed from that, then the blood chilled, and the whole infernal crop of lust and corruption that moment died, and every evil thought of it, and evil thought from it, in that very day perished; you heard the Holy Spirit speak by her, you felt

the force and smelt the sweet savour of celestial eloquence, which is the language of paradise; every grace had a voice, but assurance and love were the chief speakers.

All the powers of the soul, regenerated and renewed, proclaimed their happy state, blessed readiness, and undoubted expectation. The will in sweet resignation; the busy mind lively and heavenly; the understanding sweetly illuminated; the judgment clear, sound, and at a certainty; the conscience placid, serene, and at rest; the affections glowing and flaming with the hallowed fire reflected from the sun of righteousness, while the ministering angels stood listening, and learning from the departing saint the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10; and they watch and wait on the Holy Spirit, and on his possession, to carry the soul into the blessed enjoyment of God's eternal love, which is the bosom of Abraham, and of all his seed. Thus departs the heaven-born soul, enrobed with it's wedding-garment, decked and adorned with every needful grace; furnished with all essential truth, anointed with the oil of joy, and perfumed with the odour of the grand oblation: this is the death of the righteous, and this is the bride adorned for her husband.

Now, if my dear son considers these few scraps that I have written, the soul departed in its regenerate and renewed state, and with all the divine endowments of its mental powers; the wedding robe of the Saviour on it, and the Holy Spirit and his work in it; the canopy of atoning blood over it, and every grace in vigour and lively exercise, reigning through righteousness to eternal life, and just ready to blaze forth in eternal glory; there is little room left for grief. Your sister can laugh, think, talk, sing, rejoice, exult, and triumph even now, better than ever she could. Moses on the mount of transfiguration could talk, though without a body, as well as Elijah who had one, so that Peter and John could hear them and understand what they said, for they saw of Christ's decease which he should

accomplish at Jerusalem, Luke xi. 31. We shall be as the angels of God; and though they are spirits, yet they talk and sing too, Luke ii. 13.

Your sister's remains are still with us, and it is but a small part that she has left behind; and it is the will of God that no part of his saints, which are the work of God's own hands, should be lost; no, there shall not an hair of their head perish, for these are all numbered. Sin, which is the work of the devil, shall be destroyed, for Christ was manifest in the flesh to do this. But as for the body, that is left to rest in hope till the angel's trump, and the voice of the Son of God shall awaken it; then it shall be quickened, and be brought up again from the depths of the earth, Psalm lxxi. 20. The same Spirit that comforted her at her departure, shall quicken her mortal body, and change it, and fashion it like unto the glorious body of Christ, and as such re-unite it to the departed soul; so that Christ will lose no part of his purchased possession. The Lord is ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, Eph. iv. 10. Grace is our treasure, but in this life there is not one grace that has a perfect fullness in it; there is a deficiency, a something wanting in every one; and hence proceeds our hungerings and thirstings after more light, more life, more knowledge, more love, more joy, &c.; for none of these in our present state are full; but, "The pure in heart shall see God" This will be the beatific vision, and it will be an assimilating one, transforming us into the image of the second Adam; and then we shall confess that the following, as well as every other truth, is settled in heaven. "I lead in the way of righteousness, that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures," Prov. viii. 20, 21. And this every heaven-born soul feels, which finishes its course with joy, for God shines resplendent upon it, which is, " the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. Unbeclouded light, unchangeable love, and the fullness of joy in their perfection, are peculiar to the higher

world. Hence, when the soul is indulged with God's smiling presence at its departure, it struggles to quit the body of death, and the obscuring veil of ignorance, dreading the dismal gloom, and the returning works and warrings of inbred corruption. And, if our graces of love, hope, and joy, even in this life, are admitted within the veil, we need not wonder 30b at their superabounding life and vigour, when on the verge of their native country, and when animated with the glories of their own climate.

My dear friend, adieu! The good Lord furnish thee with patience and submission to his sovereign will and pleasure in this separation. And I do most sincerely bless, praise, and adore my most benign, reverend, and revered Father-in-Christ, for his great condescension in making use of so mean and so despicable an instrument as myself to be an ambassador of salvation and peace, both to her and to you. To God only wise be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end, Amen and Amen.

W.H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LX

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. W. HUNTINGTON.
Leicester, May 1st, 1810.

My Dearly Beloved Friend,
AGREEABLY to your request I send you some little account of the way in which it hath pleased the Lord to lead me, to bring me to know him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. This is the true God and eternal life.

I was about nine or ten years of age when I received the first impressions in my mind about futurity. I was convinced that I daily sinned against God; and sin I knew would be punished in another world. This wrought so upon me, that I foreboded nothing but misery, and was continually pondering over this my wretched state. The thoughts of dying filled me with slavish and tormenting fear all the day long, and my heart could take no rest in the night; so that at times sleep had almost departed from me. When I thought of heaven I could not conceive what it could be, though I believed it to be a place of happiness appointed for those who were good, as I had been taught, and that hell was a place of torment, and a receptacle for the wicked; and I concluded that, whenever I died, this miserable state would most surely be my portion. I oftentimes strove hard to put these troublesome thoughts far off, but I could not; they followed me up so close, that my life was frequently a burden to me. and my fear and distress kept continually increasing. But I durst not mention what I felt to any one, for I thought there was not such another wicked, miserable object as myself upon the face of the earth; for I was always thinking about the devil, and wondering in myself what sort of a being he was. I wished much not to think of these things; but, as I could not drive them out of mind, I began to think how wrong it was; and, being greatly distressed about it, not knowing what to do, I once asked a person if it was good to be always thinking about the devil, - but durst not explain my meaning; and the answer I received left me as

much in the dark about it as I was before I put the question. Sometimes these impressions were considerably worn off, when I was in hopes they were quite gone, and for a few weeks went on more easily and quietly; then again they would return upon me with more force than ever; insomuch that I was bowed down therewith, and often went mourning all the day long.

I remember being one day in this sad state when my father sent me into the field, I believe it was to count some sheep which were in a close about a quarter of a mile from home. As I was going, in my way I met a very large dog, and a most voracious animal he appeared to be. As soon as he saw me he began to bark, and ran towards me, exceedingly fierce, and looked extremely vicious. I stood trembling before him, expecting every moment that he would seize me. But I heard a man whistle, who I suppose was the owner of the dog. He immediately became more temperate, and went off growling at me, but looked as if he was unwilling that I should escape feeling the sharpness of his teeth and the strength of his jaws. As soon as I could I made my escape from this terrible spot, from whence I had not gone far before it came suddenly into my mind that this dog was appointed of God to meet me, and to worry me on account of my sin; this filled me with great horror of mind; and, although I had escaped the violence of the dog, yet I thought that some disaster or other would, sooner or later, overtake me. And for many months was in continual fear, go where I would, that some evil would befall me to take away my life; but God, who is rich in mercy, preserved and kept me from all evil. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord," Isa. lv. 8. I verily believe that God's thoughts toward me, from all eternity, were "thoughts of peace and not of evil," Jer. xxix. 11. For, since it hath pleased the Lord to call me by his grace, I have many times looked back upon my past life, and have seen how God's eye was always over me for good, and how

he has preserved me, while in a state of nature, from many dangers which my own foolishness led me into, as it is written in Jude, "Preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:" twice, in particular, I ran myself into very great danger, but my life was preserved, so that no harm happened unto me: " Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds, so that he cannot pass," Job xiv. 5. I generally arose very early in the morning, as my-business was to fetch up the cows, to assist in milking, and then to take them into the field again. As soon as I awoke in the morning I began thinking of my sinful state, till I have been so miserable that I envied the happiness of every creature I saw, because every one appeared to be more comfortable than myself: I wished that there was no hereafter, or that I could sink into non-existence; but I kept all these things to myself, and had therefore no way of being eased but by weeping, which I frequently did when alone in the fields or other places; and, that none might perceive the trouble I was in, as soon as I got to any water I washed my face, and put on as cheerful a look as I could, being afraid to acquaint any one of this my deplorable state of mind. After meeting the doc, as before stated, I went in continual fear, considering it as a bad omen; and I often secretly wished that God would shew me some token for good, which (blessed be his name) a little time after he condescended to do, as will be shewn in the sequel.

About this time an aunt of mine called at my father's, and said that she had brought four nuts, that were of a very particular sort, which she wished us children to set, and gave to each of us one. I immediately began to think that God had all power; and, although we might set the nuts, yet, unless it is his will, they could not grow, as all vegetation was from him. One day, being all at home together, we agreed to go into the garden, and each put their nut in the ground; and, that there might be no mistake afterwards, we put a stick at each place, differing in size, according to our age. After we had done, 1 retired to a

place by myself, and my thoughts were as follows: "Now, if it should please God to grant that my nut should grow, and the others should not, it shall be a sign betwixt me and God, that I shall not come to an untimely end in this world, nor go to that place of misery I so much dread in the world to come; but, if my nut should perish in the earth, and the other three grow, it shall be a sure mark against me, that all which I fear shall come to pass, and my doom be inevitably fixed in this life, and in that which is to come." I waited with great anxiety to see the result of this matter, because, according to my view, the fate of this nut was to decide my own. I frequently went to see if there was any appearance of it above ground, my mind being often very much agitated about it. After waiting for a long time, I one day went, with my sister and two brothers, to look at the nuts again.. At the place where the first was set there was no appearance of it, nor of the second was there any thing to be seen; when we came to the third, which was my own, it had sprung nearly two inches above the earth; we then looked for the fourth, of which, however, there was nothing to be seen: so that none of them grew to a tree but mine; and, although it is now more than eighteen years ago, I well remember the feelings I had at the time; for, though I knew nothing of God, nor could form any right conceptions of him, yet my heart was filled with gratitude for his goodness, and I many times wept with joy, and fell upon my knees to thank him, and blessed and praised his holy name. I have since paid many a visit to this tree, and whilst standing by it have been led to look back to so memorable a circumstance, and have frequently thought upon it until my soul has been melted within me, admiring the condescension and great goodness of God to his children in such matters. I was for some time afterwards more satisfied, my mind being greatly alleviated by this circumstance; and whenever I looked at the tree I felt much quietude, as I considered it a token for good.

But it was not long before I got back again to my old place, and felt as uneasy and as miserable as ever, for my mind was in continual agitation about what would become of me in another world; so that what I felt within embittered all things which were without, and caused me many times to sigh, and wish I had never been born. And, although at this time I did not know that there was such a thing as extempore prayer, yet at times when I felt sorely distressed, I have kneeled down and uttered a few expressions, as descriptive of my feelings as I could and I have sometimes felt easier in my mind, though I knew nothing about God; for, if ever I attempted to think of him, I was immediately confused, and lost in wonder; for I could not conceive what a being he was, but I felt that which filled me with slavish and tormenting fear; and, when I could not think of words to express my feelings, which was frequently the case, I have many times wept bitterly, and thought, if the Lord would but forgive me, I would strive to do better in future; but, whenever I formed such resolutions, they were no sooner made than broken; so that, instead of getting better, I waxed worse; for what can free-will do, when the sinner is taken captive by the devil at his will, and this strong man armed keeps the palace, till Christ, who is stronger than himself, comes and casts him out? But, as I grew up in life, I was determined, if possible, to 2000 put away these gloomy thoughts, and to take pleasure in the things of this life, and enjoy myself as other people did, for I thought that no one was like me; and in a great measure I accomplished my purpose, eagerly pursuing after every vanity that my mind led me to, and which came in my way, as far as my capacity enabled me. Yet, amidst it all, I oftentimes was very unhappy, for I could not keep conscience quiet; and frequently I felt very great remorse, though unwilling to come to books, and striving hard to put off the evil day. I frequently declared my resolution not to have any thing to do with religion until I was advanced in years, saying I would then attend to it; and it is an unspeakable mercy that God did not give me up to my

perverse will and reprobate mind, Rom. i. 28; for, as I set at nought all his counsel, and would none of his reproof, he might justly have laughed at my calamity, and mocked when my fear came, Prov. i. 25, 26. I loved darkness rather than light, because my deeds were evil, John iii. 20. But God had mercy on me, and subdued my perverse will, skewing forth all long suffering, and compelling me to come in. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," Psalm cx. 3. And he gave me repentance unto life; "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterwards repented and went," Matt. xxi. 28, 29.

I was never very daring, bold, or openly profane, nor a loose, wicked liver, as some are; but have always been what the world calls a steady, moral youth. Yet some few things I was very fond of, and much charmed with; such as plays, dancing, carets, horse-races, &c. These were my delight, and I pursued them with great eagerness; but from many of the grossest vices I was kept, for to me there always appeared something in them so very horrid, that I drew back. I had once two or three companions who strove hard to draw me into every impurity, and to harden me in sin; but conscience so accused me at times that I could not get on, for their evil practices were of the baser sort, and their conduct so vile, that I could not join with them; so I very soon left them altogether; and it is a great mercy I made my escape, for, had I continued with them, I have no doubt but I should soon have become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; for childhood and youth are vanity, and Paul says that "Evil communications corrupt good manners," 1 Cor. xv. 33. However, I went on for some years in this way, and took as great delight as I could in the things which I have before mentioned, endeavouring to make myself happy in them: in this, however, I failed, for a guilty conscience is a worm that never dies, and I could never get from that: conscience followed me up close, and oftentimes, when what I had been engaged in was over, I began to reflect

upon what I had been doing, and then felt very wretched; and I never found that satisfaction which I anticipated before hand in any one vanity that I pursued, there being always something deficient. Then I used to look forward to some expected entertainment, which was to take place, and charm myself with the pleasing idea of enjoying that pleasure which I had not yet attained. But the last, let it be whatever it might, like the preceding one, always failed: so that, like all other pleasure-takers, I had nothing but one continued succession of disappointments, and could find no rest or peace; "The wicked are like the troubled sea," and God is angry with them every day: "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked," Isa. xlviii. 22. But these things have been of use to me; for, having passed through them, by the observations I have made, I can now clearly see that it is in this way Satan keeps all his subjects alive, and the world in perpetual motion to this day; for it is he that has filled it with vanities of divers sorts, suitable to the depraved desires and corrupt affections of men of every cast; so that, let their vitiated appetites lead them to whatever they may, they have an opportunity of gratifying their sinful desires. I have often considered these things, and turned them over in my mind; and, by looking both into the profane and professing world, I can see the scriptures explained; many are deceiving themselves in a false profession, and others are kept in continual motion by a succession of vanities, which are intended to ensnare their souls; "As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time," Eccl. ix. 12. I have often thought that, if they who are living in pleasure were deprived of these things, and had nothing of that sort to look forward to, they would sink in their minds, and go down like a moth; for by such things they are exhilarated in their spirits, their sensual appetites are gratified, their houses are far from fear, and the language of their heart is, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High?" Not considering, that if they sin the Lord

marketh them, and will not acquit them from their iniquity; but, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil," Eccl. viii. 11. These prosper in the world; but how awful will be their end if grace prevent not? "A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this; when the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever," Psalm xcii. 6, 7.

I was brought up to the Church of England, and a very strict attendant on her services I was; yet for many years I ignorantly worshipped I knew not what; and one thing used to distress me exceedingly, which was this, I never could stay my mind upon the prayers, so as to attend to the service long together; and oftentimes my thoughts were, like the fool's eyes, wandering to the ends of the earth, and would be on the most trifling, foolish, vain, obscene, and wicked things; much more so than ever they were at any other time: this I could not account for, but was very much troubled about it, and strove hard to prevent it. When I was about fourteen years of age, several places were sought after, to fix me in some trade: but even in this thing I can see that the way of man is not in himself. Applications were made to different people; but I could not accomplish my purpose. "God hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation," Acts xvii. 28. The business I am fixed in was not sought after, but I came to it in an unexpected manner: "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps; Prov. xvi. 9. I have many times looked back as far as I can remember, and in many things can see the hand of God towards me for good, and a train of concurring circumstances in his providence, in which the Lord has led me about; and I believe the intention of the Most High in them all has been, that I should be taught and instructed thereby. "Thou shalt remember all the way that the Lord thy God hath led thee," Deut. viii. 2. After I had left

home I still continued to go to church, where this preaching far exceeded that which I had before been accustomed to hear. I paid the minister very great attention; and often resolved, whilst I was hearing the discourse, that I would in future lead a different life. But as soon as the sound of the word was out of my ears there was an end to my religion. And for some years I kept on in this way, refraining from no one vanity which I could take pleasure in, for I was determined, if possible, to cast off all fear; and at times I strove to be very courageous; but still what I felt within oftentimes overcame all, and brought me down very low. My convictions were very strong at times, and I felt great remorse of conscience for what I had done, which caused me to be very gloomy; and I was often much dejected in my spirits on account of my sin. Thus I went on for a long time, sinning and repenting, 2000 repenting and sinning. But what I felt within distressed me most; for it appeared to me to be much worse than any outward transgression I ever committed, I was so filled with wicked and abominable thoughts; and, although I had never been addicted to profane swearing in the worst of my days, yet now my mind began to be filled with oaths and curses all the day long; though, blessed be the Lord, I never was permitted to utter with my lips what I felt working in my heart, yet such blasphemous thoughts passed through me, that I was frequently a terror to myself. Oh, the many miserable days that I have had of this sort! when I attempted to pray or read, or to think of any thing that was good, my mind would then be more infested with these wicked thoughts than at other seasons, which sorely distressed me. But I shall pass over this part for the present, as I intend to touch upon it again.

I was very fond of the minister I sat under, and very attentive to the things I heard, for his discourses were in general very alarming, as he treated largely upon the miseries of the wicked in the world to come: I think I may with propriety call it the ministry of death and condemnation. The terrors of the law

were perpetually preached, and he expatiated much upon the torments of hell; all outward sin was very much exclaimed against, and holiness of life strongly enforced: this scripture was frequently repeated, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," and a number of scriptures were brought forth descriptive of the miserable state of those who died in sin. These discourses wrought much upon me; and at the age of seventeen I set about a reformation and a thorough amendment of life, hoping thereby to please God: much of what I heard had a tendency to set me to work in my own strength, under which I laboured for a long time: but this bodily exercise profited nothing; for ministers telling poor helpless sinners what they should do, instead of pointing them to Christ Jesus, from whom alone help is to be had, is setting them to labour in vain, which I found to my cost. Indeed it is setting a double task of bricks to be made without giving straw for the work. But this legal way of preaching agreed with my legal feelings, and I soon got into a great profession; but all my business lay in making clean the outside, at which I was very diligent, abstaining from all outward things, and endeavouring to break off my sins by righteousness. To work I went, and an abundance of dead works were performed. I sometimes felt a strong inclination after those abominations wherein I had formerly lived; and the difficulty I found in leaving off my old practices I ignorantly; conceived to be the warfare between flesh and spirit; I therefore kept on mortifying the deeds of the body; and a most valiant soldier I flattered myself I was; for at length I gained the victory so far, that I followed no outward thing that could be condemned. And herein I believe my conduct was unimpeachable; and in this reformation I rested, being puffed up with a vain mind; and, having heard the liberty of the gospel sometimes spoken of, but never explained, being at ease in the flesh, I imagined I stood in that liberty; and my vain, presumptuous confidence I mistook for faith, and thought myself to be a christian indeed; and I verily believe that thousands of professors rest here, as I once did. I

attended different prayer meetings, read the scriptures, and was very attentive to every part of religious worship as far as I knew; I said many prayers, and performed all the good works I could; and, according to my ability, bestowed alms, yea, even beyond my power, for I sometimes gave all I had away, and fretting that I had not more to give. I think no poor creature was ever more puffed up with blind zeal than I was, and a prouder Pharisee, I verily believe, there never did exist; like those of old, I trusted in myself that I was righteous, and despised others. I was so full of religion, that I could talk about it at any time, and to any one; and strove hard to drag every one into a profession that came in my way; but, had I gained a thousand proselytes, their being converted to such a faith as mine then was would have been of no avail; for, like me, they would only have been two-fold more the children of hell, Matt. xxiii. 15. For Christ declares to the Pharisees, "Verily I say unto you, that publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you," Matt. xxi. 31. However, I went on for some time in this way, being swept and garnished with this external show of religion and holiness; whereas inwardly I was full of all uncleanness, and knew no more about a broken heart or a contrite spirit, nor of real sorrow on account of sin, than Satan himself; nevertheless, I was not always easy in my mind; for at times I felt so much evil working within, that I knew not what to think of myself; and this so pulled down my vain confidence, that I frequently felt very low, and was oftentimes, much disquieted, and did not think so highly of my religion; as, from what I felt, I very much suspected that all was not right with me; and this dissatisfaction kept increasing upon me, till I thought there was something more in real religion than I was yet acquainted with. I got more and more restless, and was exceedingly distressed, fearing I was deceived, and that my religion would prove nothing worth. This I know is a dreadful state to be in; "For, if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself," Galat. vi. 3. One day, being at my work, and pondering over these matters in

my mind, I became so disconsolate and distressed, that I knew not what to do, for I feared that all was wrong. At this time I had some strong impressions on my mind to go in prayer to the Lord, and make known to him all my distress. So I left my work, retired to a secret place, and glut up a few petitions, which, to the best of my remembrance, were as follows: "O Lord, I have sinned against thee, but thou art merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in goodness; thou searchest the heart and triest the reins, and all things are naked and open unto thee; thou knowest the state I am in, and the distress which I feel, fearing I am not right before thee: suffer me not to be deceived, I beseech thee, O Lord; and, if my religion is what thou thyself hast taught me, be pleased to make it known, and comfort me in it; but, if it is what thou hast not taught me, and will fail me when I come to die, reveal this also unto me; and, if it be thy most blessed will, let the first passage of scripture I ever see from this time be descriptive of my case, that I may thereby know what is my true state before thee. Pardon and forgive my sin, and make me what thou wouldst have me to be. I ask all in the name, and for the sake, of Jesus Christ, Amen" How long time elapsed before I looked into the Bible I do not recollect; but I remember one night, being very unhappy, and thinking of what I had prayed for, I took it up to read, and the first words I saw were these, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God," Acts viii. 21. On reading these words I sunk in my soul, and God quickened me to feel that I was lost, and shewed me the wretched state I was in; and in one moment such horror of mind seized me, that I felt as if I was going to drop into the bottomless pit; my heart sunk within me; I was quite chilled, and afterwards broke out into a cold sweat; my strength of body seemed to be all gone from me; and, if I had not sat down, I believe, I should have dropped on the floor. I then perceived that religion was heart-work, to which I had been an utter stranger, and had been deceiving myself in a false profession; and I felt the

wretched, fallen, lost state I was in by nature, and that, "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth contrary to the spirit, and therefore in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." Article the 9th. I now experienced the difference between legal convictions and those which are produced under the powerful quickening operations of God's spirit; "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." I believed his threatenings denounced against me as a sinner, and trembled at his word, which says. "The soul that sins shall die," and is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, Heb. iv. 12. "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light," Eph. v. 13. I had been alive without the law; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. I now saw the spirituality of God's law, which discovered to me my lost and fallen state, and what an infinite distance there was betwixt me and a holy God, and how far short I fell of the law's demands; "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin;" and, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the law to do them." Formerly I had no other knowledge of sin than by actual transgressions; but now I found that these corrupt fruits sprung from a corrupt fountain, an evil and depraved nature, which originated in the fall. By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" therefore this condemnation was entailed upon me in man's fall; for, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. v. 12. The rebukes of God in my conscience, and his wrath revealed against my sin, pulled down my self-righteous spirit. "When thou, O Lord, "with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth," Psalm xxxix. 11.

"By the law is the knowledge of sin;" this discovered to me my corruption and the concupiscence of my heart. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence; for, without the law sin was dead," Rom. vii. 8. And I believe all that the law can do is to discover sin, and condemn the sinner; as the Apostle says, " Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful," Rom. vii. 13. It condemns the sinner, and is called the ministration of death and condemnation, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9. It shews the aboundings of our transgressions; "Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound," Rom. v. 20. And "it was added because of transgressions," Gal. iii. 19. The distress and anguish I felt on account of my sin, are, I believe, what Paul calls the terrors of the Lord; for, death and judgment were uppermost in my thoughts, and "The yoke of my transgressions was bound by his hand," Lam. i. 14. So that my heart continually meditated terror. and, for some years I had no rest because of my sin, as David says, "For mine iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me," Psa. xxxviii. 4. But God, who discovered to me my sin, did not suffer me to hate nor to shun the light, but to come to it, and expose my conscience to the force of truth. "He that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." I kept up a very strict attendance at church, and often 'beard a great deal said about open and profane sin. But my wound lay within, and sorely distressed I was; which made me listen very attentively to the minister, hoping to hear my feelings brought forth; but in this I was generally disappointed, for my case was not touched upon; so far from it, that I frequently returned with an increased burden, for he set before me an impossible task, holding forth the law as the only rule of life, and setting me to work in my own strength; at which I laboured very hard, and I may say, fared hard too, for all fullness of grace is in Christ,

not in the law; and God ministereth not his spirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith; therefore, setting poor helpless sinners to work for life instead of pointing them to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4, is binding heavy burdens upon men's shoulders which are grievous to be borne, Mat. xxiii. 4. Such preaching keeps troubled souls back, rather than helping them forward. Christ says, "Ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in y e hindered," Luke xi. 52. "The law worketh wrath, for where no law is there is no transgression," Rom. iv. 15: it gendereth to bondage, Gal. iv. 25. The preaching of the law contracts, instead of enlarging the heart, which was the effect it always had upon me; and, though the ministry which I sat under was called the gospel, yet there was little else brought forth but the works of the law; and Paul calls the gospel the ministry of the spirit. These discourses upon the law communicated nothing but wrath and bondage to fear, and have often sent me away in great anguish and bitterness of soul, with a distressed and disconsolate mind. "While I suffer thy terrors," says David, "I am distracted," Psalm lxxxviii. 1.5. I laboured hard to keep the law, and work out a righteousness of my own, but all in vain; "I," saith the Lord, " will declare thy righteousness and thy works, for they shall not profit thee," Isa. lvii. 12. They are but as filthy rags at best, and God says, " Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works," Isa. lix. 6. And this I found, that, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified;" whilst in Christ all that believe are freely justified from all things: "By his knowledge," says God, "shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities;" and "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory;" as it is also written, "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength," Isa. xlv. 24. I heard much about vows, promises, and resolutions; and I made many; and at this fruitless toil laboured for some years, striving against sin in my own

strength, whereby I was kept in continual bondage and agitation of mind, for the law was set before me as my rule, holiness of life enforced, and a progressive sanctification insisted upon; in all which I found myself very deficient, and never could come up to the rule I heard laid down, for I was daily offending in thought, word, and deed, and he that offends but in one point is guilty of all, Jam. ii. 10. So far was I from having that holiness of temper which I beard of (for the question was often asked, What are your tempers, &c.?) and those good frames and feelings, that in myself I daily found that which was quite the reverse of all this, being full of fury and fretfulness, bitter in spirit, filled with rebellion, enmity, malice, wrath, peevishness, discontent, and envy, with every other evil working within: and so far was I from feeling myself more and more sanctified, so as to be free from these things, that I appeared to get more vile, and my corrupt nature shewed itself in every shape; which leads me to think that such preachers are physicians of no value, who set men to look for such attainments in themselves, instead of leading them to Jesus Christ, in whom they are all to be found; "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. Those who teach such things, keep poor souls in bondage, and, "The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city," Eccl. x. 15. I have often returned home from hearing a sermon bowed down with distress and grief, 2000 lamenting my short comings; then I used to resolve to be more circumspect, watchful, and observant, and that I would guard against every transgression and every evil with which I had before been overcome; vow and promise that I never would commit the like again, but in future would be more diligent: but, alas! sin was too strong for me, and I was soon overcome. Christ declares, "Without me Ye can do nothing," John xv. 5. I broke through all my promises, and then sunk into the deepest distress; and have set to vowing again in the same way, till I have been ready to bind myself

down with oaths; but, as Job says, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands ever so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me," Job, ix. 30, 31; and so I found it, till this bitter and woful experience made me completely sick of this wretched way of going on: and now, if ever I hear a man setting people to make vows, my soul hates what they advance, knowing that they who are at such a work will have no better success than I had; and whoever sets them at it are turning the blind and the lame out of the way; and that which is lame is not to be turned out of the way, but rather to be healed. Christ is the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in, and in him is peace and truth; as with the prophet, "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth," Jer. xxxiii. 6. All fullness is in the Saviour. If ever I made a vow, as soon as I had done it, Satan set upon me again with the same temptation I had been protesting against, and never left me till I had broken through all my promises; so that I never kept one vow that I had made, but as soon as I had broken them I was truly wretched and miserable. I verily believe that the whole of it is Satan's own work; he first sets us to make a vow, and then tempts us to break it, and afterwards turns accuser, on account of both.

I procured several books, in which were many forms of prayer adapted to different cases; but I met with none that were altogether suitable to my state; for frequently, when I began to repeat them, I durst not go on, knowing that what I was uttering With my mouth, and what I felt in my heart, were widely different, so that I could get no satisfaction from these, though I said many every day. Besides, I seldom failed repeating the morning and evening service, from the common prayer book, every day as I wag at my work; indeed I had learnt prayers to repeat upon every occasion all the day long, for I attended at different prayer-meetings, where I have heard

men pray with such eloquence, that I would have given a world to have expressed myself like them. but I was far enough from being able so to do; I could only look on and wonder at others, and concluded that none were so ignorant as myself. One day, as I was reading, I came to this scripture, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications," Zech. xii. 10; which dwelt so much upon my mind, that I began to leave off my forms of prayer, and endeavoured to call upon God as well as I could; but I was often in such confusion and trouble, that I could only utter a few broken unconnected expressions, and sometimes was not able to speak a word, on which account I was greatly distressed, but found much relief from these two scriptures, "Teach us what we shall say unto him, for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness," Job xxxvii. 19; from which it appears there could be little or nothing said. And Paul says, the Spirit helps our infirmities with groanings that cannot be uttered. The Lord knows the way that we take, and all our desire is before him. And, although many times I could not express my feelings, yet I have groaned, being burdened, sighed and wept; "And he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, for the Spirit maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Finding I could not meet with any forms of prayer suitable to my feelings, I left them all off, and have not made use of them from that day to this; but have called upon the name of the Lord, in extempore prayer, as he hath enabled me.

I laboured under a sore and most distressing temptation for many years, which was, blasphemous thoughts against the Most High; and none that I have ever passed through since has given me so much distress, it being of all others the most horrid. O the days and months of misery I have experienced, being bowed down with grief on account of it! I would not go through it again for all the world, and I hope in the Lord I never

shall; for I have many times suffered so much, as to be almost worn out with trouble, having no rest either by day or by night, so that people about me have asked what was the matter; my distress being so great, that I could rest in no place; and so dejected, that I was the picture of misery, for my mind was almost distracted. Indeed I have many times feared I should lose my senses, and be left to speak out what I felt within. I cannot express a thousandth part of the troubles I have gone through of this sort, which I never durst mention to any creature living for many years, thinking that no one besides me either was, or ever had been, tempted to blaspheme in this way. And I was the more inclined to keep this matter to myself from an idea that, if it was known how wicked I was, every one would look upon me with disdain, and I should wander about as a vagabond upon the earth; that no one would have any connexion with me; nay, so far from it, that they would shun me, as being unfit for any society but the devils themselves. This temptation to blaspheme haunted me, go where I would; and oftentimes, when I took up the scriptures to read, to meditate, or attempted to pray, or was in company or conversation with those that feared the Lord, my mind would be more infested than ever, insomuch that I knew not what to do, for I think, if possible, thousands of these fiery darts have passed through my mind in a few minutes. At length I got so bad, that I began to fear I should, in my hurry and great agitation of mind, be left, sometime or other, to utter involuntarily what I felt within. To avoid this, every time it came upon me I began to repeat, as fast as I could, "Blessed be the Lord, blessed be the Lord." Even while I kept speaking thus, numberless oaths and curses would dart through my mind, till I have been like one desperate; and have sometimes gone on in this way all the day long, dreading the approach of night, for when I (vent to bed I was worse off than ever. Various are the means which I have made use of to put these wicked thoughts out of my mind; dud many times, when in great anguish and bitterness on account of them, I pulled my hair till the tears

have run down my cheeks with pain, and I have been tossing to and fro, longing for the morning light. But I frequently rose in this distress, and passed through a dismal day, retiring again, with an increase of burden, to pass through another wearisome night; "So was I made to possess months of vanity; and wearisome nights were appointed for me," Job vii. 3. Frequently, when I have attempted to pray against them, as soon as I have kneeled down, in one moment my mind would be filled with such horrid blasphemy, that I have jumped up in the greatest horror, being a terror to myself, and have stood and wept bitterly, not daring to open my mouth to call upon the name of the Lord, lest I should be forced to speak what I felt passing within. Such days as these are the bitterest days. I ever passed through, and I have had many of them. These two passages, in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation, were continually upon my mind, and I greatly feared lest they should be fulfilled by me; "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God," verse 9; "And blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, a 2000 nd repented not of their deeds," verse 11. I thought my days would soon be at an end; and, when I got to that place of torment, that Satan would compel me to blaspheme; concluding, from what I felt, that it was one part of their employment who are confined in those dismal regions; and these words used to cut me to the heart, "They shall fret themselves, and curse their King and their God, and look upward," Isa. viii. 21. O the misery which I have had, and the tears that I have shed, on account of this horrid temptation, which I conceive to be the masterpiece of Satan! and surely he never injected into the mind of any man worse than I have felt. Nothing ever bowed me down and distressed me like these fiery darts of the wicked, Eph. vi. 16. I never heard any one hint at such things, nor had I ever read of any thing of the sort, until one Sunday evening, after returning from church, a friend of mine took me with him to call upon an acquaintance of his, who, before we left the house, put a book of yours into

his hand, which he lent me to read. I took it home, and never met with any book before that suited me so well, though there was a good deal in it I did not understand; yet some parts were very suitable to me. as it pointed out that which none had ever done before: I read it over and over again; and, when I returned it, borrowed another. which was, "The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer." This proved a treasure indeed, being abundantly blessed to me'; and I blessed the author of it a thousand times over before I ever saw him. It was the first book I ever read that pointed out my case, and from it I received the first help I ever got in my distress. One Sunday morning I retired into a garden to peruse it; and, when I came to those pages, where you mention that horrid temptation that came upon you, I was much amazed to find the very things related which I had so long laboured under, and which were so heavy a burden to me. My distressing case was exactly pointed out, and my heart began to glow with gratitude to God that I had met with a book so descriptive of my feelings: it was joyful news indeed to me to read the account, as I had never teal the like before, nor had I heard any thing of the kind spoken of; so that I had concluded no one had ever felt these things but myself. I kept reading on till my heart was so full that I burst into tears, and wept for joy. I walked up and down in the garden, praising the Lord with my whole heart, and many times cried out, "Bless the author of this book!" I cannot express the relief which I found; my burden seemed to be quite gone, and my heart and affections went up in gratitude to God, while tears of thankfulness flowed very copiously, and I kept on blessing and praising the Lord for his goodness, that I had found one who had experienced the same things which I had felt. "The author of this book," said I, "whoever he be, has laboured under the same sore and distressing temptation that I have, and he has obtained mercy; and, as the Lord hath skewed mercy to him, it may be that he will exercise the same towards me." I felt encouragement to hope, and thanked God with all my heart.

It was now church time, and, as my master called me to go, I was obliged to obey. But before I returned home again I had lost all those sweet feelings which I had had in the morning; for what I heard at the church was as opposite to the matter contained in the book as the East is from the West. In the course of the week this dreadful temptation returned upon me again as violently; and, to add to my distress, it was in a moment darted into my mind that this was the unpardonable sin; whereupon I sunk in my feelings lower than ever; what I felt I cannot express; I however concluded that all was over with me, and I was inevitably lost. The unpardonable sin was always uppermost in my mind; and sometimes it lay so heavy upon me, that I was scarcely able to go about my business; then again the weight of it would, in a measure, wear off for a time; but the first effectual relief I got was when hearing you preach from these words, "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence," Psalm xci. 3. Whilst you were speaking from these words my burden was quite removed, and I saw clearly that I had not committed the unpardonable sin. In the course of the sermon you mentioned this blasphemous temptation, observing that there were but very few of the Lord's people, who were sharply tried, but were exercised with it; and that the next thing which Satan suggested to the mind was, that this was the unpardonable sin; and then you skewed plainly what the unpardonable sin was, and that this temptation was not it. O what comfort did I receive whilst hearing this discourse! My hope was strengthened, and I returned from Providence Chapel rejoicing in my heart, being relieved from the heaviest burden that can come upon the mind of man. Still, however, the temptation to blaspheme was not completely removed, for oftentimes afterwards I was sorely harassed with it, though I prayed against it night and day, till at length I began to despair of ever getting rid of it, and thought it of no use at all praying against it, and that I must give it up: but one day, when I was walking alone, and was very pensive, pondering it over in my

mind, these words struck me very forcibly," "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting," Matt. xvii. 21. I looked in the bible for these words, to see upon what occasion they were spoken; and when I found them I took encouragement, and kept on, praying against this blaspheming devil; and blessed, for ever blessed, be the Lord, he was pleased, in his own time, condescendingly to hear my poor petitions, and answer my prayers, and delivered me from this snare of the fowler. "Christ spake a parable, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." "If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us;" "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily," Luke xviii. 7, 8; and, blessed be his name, I have not for some years past been much exercised in this way; and whenever I am it does not distress me now as it used to do. But nothing that I ever heard or read alleviated my mind so much as a Letter of yours; by which I perceived that these fiery darts came from Satan; and it was so blessed to me, that since I first read it I have never been so cast down and distressed about it as I was before, being persuaded, as you therein observe, that it was the devil's own sin; and my soul-escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare was broken and I escaped," Psalm cxxiv. 7. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given me a prey to his teeth.

After reading The Kingdom of Heaven, &c. I had a great desire to purchase some of your books; but how it was to be brought about I knew not; for, being an apprentice, I had no means of getting money; however, I came to this determination, that the next time I saw my father I would ask him to give me a guinea; and, if he refused, I would then ask for the loan of one till I was out of my time, when I would repay him: accordingly, when he came to see me, I asked of him this favour, and, after interrogating me upon the subject, being informed that the author of the books was not a

methodist, he gave me a guinea, and I purchased books with it as far as it would go; and by reading these. I soon began to disrelish all my former ones: so that "The whole Duty of Man," "Alleine's Alarm," "Russell's Sermons" and several others which I had of the same linsey-woolsey sort, grew out of favour and out of fashion with me; and I have never looked at them since, nor do I ever intend so to do. One Sunday morning I rose very early, and read a part of "The Moral Law not injured," &c. Here I found my mind greatly instructed, and was much comforted; at seven o'clock I set off to a prayer meeting, which I had for some time attended. On my return home I walked with an elderly man, who had been to the same place, and was called a father in Israel. In the simplicity of my heart, I asked him whether he had heard a Mr. Huntington preach, or had read any of his works. He said he had both heard you, and had seen some of your books, which were very dangerous. On hearing this I was very much surprised; but he went on. "He is a man of a very bad spirit, and the books have a dangerous tendency." This stopped all further conversation, except my observing that I had read some of them, and liked them better than any books I ever saw. After this I lent the Kingdom of Heaven, &c. to an acquaintance of mine, who was older than myself, and had been much longer in a profession, hoping it might be of use to him, as he always seemed bowed down to the earth with trouble. But, on returning it, he merely remarked that he thought it was too full of levity. By which I perceived that the book had not found favour in his eyes, though I esteemed it as one of my greatest treasures. But when I saw what a cool reception it met with, it rather damped me, though I held my peace, and pondered the matter over in my heart; for in times past I used to wonder how such things could be, as I could not understand them. But I now perceive that there is no union betwixt the bond family and the sons of the free woman; they are two separate people, and never can be brought together: what one delights in, the other hates; one serves God in the

newness of the spirit, the other in the oldness of the Letter; and whenever the best robe is brought forth, to adorn the prodigal, these elder sons, are always angry; "The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed, " Rom. ix. 8. The bond woman and her son is to be cast out, for he shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.

Soon after this affair I read the Justification of a Sinner, which was much blessed to me; indeed I was benefited, more or less, in the perusal of every book I had, what I experienced being therein described. And I daily searched the scriptures, to see if these things were so; and I found, as far as I had gone in experience, and according to what little light and judgment God had given me into his word, that they were written agreeably to it, and that the author of them was a partaker of the same spirit as those holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and as the Bible, the books, and what I felt within, coincided with each other, I moved on agreeably to what I felt; and by reading the scriptures and these books I got that knowledge and satisfaction, and those helps, in the troubled state I then was in, that I never got from any preacher, go where I would; for I was sinking under a sense of God's wrath and sore displeasure; therefore they, who had never felt these things, were of no use to me, for he that knows nothing of a wounded spirit can never speak to the feelings of one that God hath quickened. But your books described my case; therefore we were well agreed; and I believe that those who read and then reject them know little or nothing about the matter. However, herein I am of David's mind, "Let them curse, but bless thou," Psalm cix. 28; and I have cause to bless the Almighty that I ever saw them. I seldom went to any other place of worship than the establishment; and, whenever I did, I got no more satisfaction in hearing the dissenters than the minister I attended in the church, for in both places there was a famine,

for want of the bread of life. My distress was great, feeling the lost and perishing condition I was in; and what I wanted to hear was, how such an one as I could be saved; but Christ was not set forth as the Saviour of the lost, so that what I heard oftener increased my burden than lightened it, for such legal preaching only makes the heart of the righteous sad, by putting darkness for light, and light for darkness. There was no casting up, nor preparing the way, nor removing the stumbling-blocks. as God hath commanded, Isa. lvii. 14 I was like the woman with the issue of blood, who had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse, Mark v. 26. When I heard a text read I frequently thought there was something contained in the words suitable to me; and, if it was expressive of distress and trouble, then my expectations were raised very high, hoping to hear something to do me good; as I was waiting to step in if the waters were troubled, John v. 7; but, alas! alas! my expectations were cut off, and I was left sinking in my troubles far enough below any thing that I heard touched upon. Sometimes I returned home quarrelling with the minister, being vexed in my spirit; at other times I came away distressed beyond measure, writing bitter things against myself, and thought surely the fault was altogether in me; and I was sinking under a burden almost too heavy for me to bear, for truly it was grievous, a long string of duties being pointed out, but no leading of the mind to Christ, upon whom help is laid, and where alone strength is to be found. These things bowed down my soul; for all that was said in general seemed to make against me, and nothing was brought forth that I could take hold of, or that gave me any help in the way. "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?" Job vi. 6; " Or doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass; or loweth the ox over his fodder?" Job vi. 5. No; the gospel trumpet is to be blown, and the promise is, that they shall come who are ready to perish. It is the outcasts which are to be gathered in; and none are capable of inviting these guests but they who are

appointed to it by God himself. It is a faithful witness that delivers souls, and, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy;" therefore he that is destitute of these things -is not made instrumental in bringing souls to Christ. There is no life; therefore no power; it is the spirit that quickeneth; "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20; I long spent money for that which was not bread, and my labour for that which satisfied not, Isa. lv. 2; but this has been, and still is, of great use to me; for by it God shewed me the insufficiency of a form of godliness without the power, and he threw down all my sandy foundations upon which I was wont to build; and himself fed me in a right way, that he might bring me to a city of habitation. And, as soon as it pleased God to bring me to hear the truth, I forsook them altogether, having had enough of it. The wise man tells us, "To forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding," Prov. ix. 6. And Christ says, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; but a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers, John x. 3-5. And so I have found it many times, when I have gone to hear different ministers, for the gospel which I have received was not like what they taught; therefore what I have gone through has been of great use to me in this respect, that I can now see the foundation upon which numbers build, and where they stand; and I know that they are resting short of the promise; for what God has taught me has been to bring me off from such a religion as they are in possession of. And it has grieved me much, when I have gone at times to hear what is called the gospel, to see whole congregations set down short of the kingdom; and I have thought of the Saviour's words, "Wo unto you, for ye are as graves that appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them," Luke, xi. 44. And I know that they are not aware of the deception, for I have seen many elevated with a discourse which has grieved me to the heart. But I have always found that, if a word be spoken

against such preaching 2000 , the people are angry, and such refuse to come in The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. v. 31. Why, our Lord says, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Matt. xv. 14. God is a sovereign; and the scriptures inform us that with him is strength and wisdom; "The deceived and the deceiver are his," Job xii. 16.

A few months before I was out of my time I was one day standing at my work, very disconsolate and much cast down, being in great distress about my eternal state, and thinking that I should soon be removed from the situation I was then in, but to what part of the world I should be tossed I knew not; but I pictured things out to myself as dreadful as my imagination could paint them: and, whilst I stood pondering over this gloomy subject, this scripture came upon my mind as powerfully as though a voice had spoken it to me, "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of," Gen. xxviii. 15. I found such a change in my feelings, and such an heavy burden was taken from me, that I knew not what to think of it; I was like the child Samuel. It is said of him, "Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him," 1 Sam. iii. 7; I felt the power, though, like Peter, I "wist not that it was true which was done by the angel," Acts xii. 9. But I felt very comfortable, and was much relieved from my distress; and this kind promise has been fulfilled to me, as will be shewn as I proceed with the narrative. When I was out of my apprenticeship I wished much to go to London, having a great desire to hear you: but I had no prospect of being able to accomplish this. Afterwards I engaged myself to a gentleman in the country, who did not immediately want me; so that a door seemed now open in providence for me to go to town, where I stayed for two

months. "The desire of the righteous shall be granted," Prov. x. 24; and the Lord was with me as he had promised. I came to Providence Chapel on the Sunday morning, and you preached from these words, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," John viii. 39. The works you spoke of were such as I had never heard from any pulpit, yet I knew they were the things I had long wanted to bear: and, though some things made against me, yet there were others that were suitable; and I felt my heart move in affection towards you in such a way as I never had done before to any preacher living. I was quite amazed, and marvelled greatly, to hear you bring forth my feelings as you did; I was like Manoah and his wife, when the angel appeared to them; "And the angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on," Judges xiii. 19. I attended every time you preached, both at Providence and Monkwell Street Meeting, and often heard things which I had not understand, as the experience you brought forth was far beyond any thing which I had attained to. But, when you spake of trouble and distress, I understood that part, and many times got a help by the way; so that, as Paul says to the Corinthians, I acknowledged you in part, 2 Cor. i. 14; and I believe I shall acknowledge you even to the end. For some weeks after I first heard you I was sorely distressed, for you stripped me of a good deal of my religion, as I lead plenty about me of what the prophet calls untempered mortar; and your preaching discovered to me the worthlessness of the greatest part of my profession. I had been daubed over with untempered mortar, and the Lord made use of your ministry to throw down this work. One night, as I was hearing you preach at Monkwell Street, God rent this wall, as himself hath said, "I will rend it with a stormy wind in my fury," and down I went, and from the Tuesday evening until the Sunday following was distressed indeed. "So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall," and so it was

with me; and the Lord fulfilled his own word, which says, "Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered mortar, and will say unto you, the wall is no more, neither they that daubed it," Ezek. xiii. 13, 14, 15. And so it came to pass, for on the Sunday morning I came to chapel, bowed down with an expectation that I should most surely be cut off: but, oh no! this storm was not intended to destroy, but to strip me of that which was better lost than found. You preached that morning from these words, "And, though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see my teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying; this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left," Isa. xxx. 20, 21. On hearing the words my heart revived; and as you went on speaking from them it was much blessed to me, for I understood what you said upon the bread of adversity and water of affliction, and God opened my eyes to see my teacher, and my ears to hear his word, according to the promise, "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more:" and, blessed be his name, they have not; for mine eyes have seen my teachers from that day to this. After hearing you I went no more among professors of any description; but, as God has enabled me, I have abode fast by the truth, and gone according to that light and judgment which he has given me to this day. It was about two or three Sundays after this that I heard you preach from Psalm xci. 3, when I received that comfort I have before mentioned, respecting my not having committed the unpardonable sin. During my stay in town I heard you preach several other discourses, from which I received a good deal of encouragement. "My word," saith the Lord, "shall not return void."

My time being expired, I was obliged to return to my situation in the country, though very reluctantly. During my stay at that place I spent my sabbaths alone, for the professors were of that sort with whom I felt no union; therefore I wished for no confederacy, but stood aloof from all, waiting upon God, and reading the scriptures and some part of your books; and I found the presence of the Lord with me. After I had been at this place about eight months I was obliged to leave it, the person in whose employment I was having no further occasion for me. This man pretended a great deal of friendship towards me; "His words were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart," Psalm lv. 21; for secretly he did me all the injury he could; and I think I may say of him what Joseph said of his brethren, "But, as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good," and so it proved. I very soon obtained another situation, and at the time appointed went to it; the morning I set off I had twenty-five miles to walk, and in my way was greatly fatigued in body, much cast down in mind, and was in a great bitterness of soul; for the adversary set before me all things in as gloomy a light as possible, and provoked me sore, and made me to fret, 1 Sam. i. 6. In this dilemma I turned aside into a field, and sat down under a hedge, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore, 1 Sam. i. 10. Whilst I sat down I took some refreshment, blessed the Lord for what I had, and thanked him that he had helped me thus far. Whilst I sat in this place I felt a melting, softening frame come over me, and was very much relieved from my distress: I think I may say of this field as Jacob did when he was going to Padan-aram, and lighted upon a certain place, where he tarried all night, and God appeared to him in a dream, and when he awoke he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not," Gen. xxviii. 16. I rose up from my place, thanked God for his mercies, and then journeyed forward: but the situation in which I was now placed was by no means agreeable to me in this my distressed state of mind, therefore I soon returned to Leicester, where I had a

great desire to stop, if it was the will of God; and I teas the more anxious, because a few people met together for prayer, the reading of the scriptures and your works, with whom I felt union of heart; and the thoughts of being separated from them grieved me much. After waiting for some time, however, and no way opening for me to reside there, at length I engaged myself to go more than thirty miles distant: this I did with very great reluctance, as the thoughts of being removed troubled me not a little. Being one morning in great distress about it, I went in prayer to the Lord, and poured out my complaint before him, shewing him all my trouble, Psalm cxlii. 2; and making all my request known; and I humbly entreated of him this favour-that, if it was his most blessed will I might not be removed from hence, but that he would be pleased to provide for me in the way that seemed good unto him; as he knew my heart, and that the only reason I desired to stay was, that I might have an opportunity of meeting with those who feared his name, which I had long been deprived of, and how much I had suffered in other places on that account. The good Lord condescended to hear my petition, and on that very day a situation was provided for me, my former engagement broken off, and God fixed me in the place where I solicited, and where he has kept me to this day; and the promise he gave me before my first removal was fulfilled; the Lord was with me, and kept me in all places whither I went; he was with me in London; he was with me when I waited upon him, and spent my sabbaths alone; he was with me and blessed me under the hedge; and he has never left me, but brought me again into this land! "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!" Psalm xxxi. 19. "If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and, if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him," 1 John v. 14, 15. And how sweet and acceptable is every thing that is much wanted, and comes in answer to earnest prayer! "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear," Isa.

lxv.24. This endears the Lord to us; "Whose is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord," Psalm cvii. 43.

A few months after this affair, in the year 1800, a way was opened for me, and I got settled in business; and for a long time every thing I engaged in went on as prosperously as could be desired. Nevertheless, my ruined and lost state was my meditation day and night, which brought me down very low, and my distress kept increasing upon me; my natural strength was much abated, and extreme weakness of body succeeded; for the arrows of God stuck fast in me, and his hand pressed me sore, therefore I was feeble and sore broken, Psalm xxxviii. 2, 8. In the month of November you came down to Leicester, and I heard you preach from these words, " Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth; thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side," Psalm lxxi. 20, 21. Never was any thing more suitable to any one than this discourse to me in my then distressed state of mind; the things you brought forth were what I had felt, and I was a good deal relieved from the burden I had long laboured under, and felt encouragement to hope that he which had began his good work in me would carry it on; for, although I was in such a state of confusion that I could make nothing of myself, yet, as you went on with your discourse, I could see that it was God's good work, and I was greatly helped, and for some time not so much bowed down as heretofore; but after a while I not only got back to my old place of darkness, confusion, and misery, but sunk lower than ever; till, like Job my soul was weary of my life, and I went mourning by reason of the disquietness of my heart. This increased my weakness so fast, that I soon was in such a debilitated state as to be apprehensive it might terminate in my dissolution; and I was much cast down, through the fear of death and judgment to

come. My sins were set in order before me, and God appeared as a swift witness against me. "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow, then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul," Psalm cxvi. 3, 4. I had no rest in my bones because of my sin, Psalm xxxviii. 3. The caul of my heart was rent, and I went in heaviness, meditating terror, for the arrows of the Almighty were within me, the poison thereof drank up my spirits, Job vi. 4. God made inquisition for blood, and I knew that I was out of the city of refuge, Numb. xxxv. 6. And the avenger of blood was behind me; should death cut me off, as the tree falls so it lies: I was sensible that where death left me judgment would find me; and, if I died in the state I was then in, all would be lost for ever, and I should be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thess. i. 9. These things were so weighty, that I felt myself incapable of transacting business, my mind being wholly engaged about them; and in that disconsolate state I could pay but little attention to sublunary things For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" Luke ix. 25. Many passages of scripture, which seemed to make against me, laid with very great weight upon my mind; and, amongst many others, I often thought of the fruitless cries of Esau, and frequently wept when thinking I should be like him: the words also of our Lord were very cutting to me, "Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up," Matt. xv. 13. Thus my way was hedged up, and fear was on every side; for, look which way I would, there was no rest for the sole of my foot; my life hung in doubt; and I was filled with slavish and tormenting fear night and day, so that in the morning the language of my heart was, "Would God it were even," and at even I said, "Would God it were morning," for my sin Was ever before me; and I found, as Paul says, that destruction and misery are in all the sinners' ways, and the way of peace have they not known,

Rom. iii. 16, 17. I was bowed down under the guilt of sin, and a sense of God's wrath. The heavens revealed my iniquity; and "I remembered God and was troubled; I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed," Psalm lxxvii. 3. So that, as Job says, my words were swallowed up, Job vi. 3; and I had sorrow in my heart daily; for God, conscience, the scripture, law, and gospel, all appeared to be against me, for day and night his hand was heavy upon me; and so distressed was I, that my days were sorrow, my travail grief, and my heart took not rest in the night, Eccl. ii. 21. I sunk in the deep mire, where there was no standing; and being in this perilous condition, I hastened my escape from the stormy wind and tempest, Psalm lv. 8. "The captive exile hastened that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail," Isa. li. 14. My life was quite a burden to me. for I had no satisfaction in any thing beneath the sun; and, "The comforter, which should receive my soul, was far from me." Lam. i. 16. And so distressed was I, that for some time sleep almost departed from me; "Thou holdest mine eyes waking," saith the Psalmist. I used to think of, and long for, the experience of these words, every night when I retired to bed, "Thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid," Job xi. 19. But, so far was I from this, that I was full of fear; "My sore ran in the night, and ceased not;" for, as Job says, "When I Consider I am afraid of him," Job xxiii. 15. Thus my distressed state of mind brought me down so low, that I was almost worn out with trouble; "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Prov. xviii. 14; and in such a weak and feeble state of body, that I was under the necessity of having medical assistance. But the physicians knew no more of my disease than I understood of their medicine; sin was the malady, and I felt its dreadful effects; this fretting leprosy was broke out in every part; so that, as the prophet says, from the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart

faint; and none but the good Samaritan, which is Christ Jesus, can bind up these wounds: he is anointed "to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised," Luke iv. 18. He alone can heal a wounded spirit, as it is written, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us, he hath smitten and he will bind us up; after two days will he revive us, and the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight," Hosea vi. 1, 2. But, as Christ says, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" and so I found it; for faith in him, as my Saviour and Redeemer, was not then come; I could no more believe than I could create a world; but was "kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed," Gal. iii. 23; being bound in the prison-house of unbelief, hardness of heart, and blindness of mind; and it is the Lord alone that can say to such prisoners, "Go forth; and to them that are in darkness, shew yourselves." Faith in him sets us at liberty from this prison; and it is his own power that effects this work of faith; "This is the work of God, that we believe on him whom he hath sent," John vi. 29. It is the Holy Spirit that must first melt the heart, soften the affections, work confidence in the mind, and draw the soul to him, before we can come in faith and affection. I was so gloomy and dejected, that my soul was weary of life, and my chief concern was to know how I could be saved. I was weary and heavy laden weary of working for life, and heavy laden with sin; and whether God would skew mercy to one so vile as myself I could not tell. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." But I had no power in myself to come to him, "No man can come unto me," saith the Saviour, "except it were given unto him of my Father," John vi. 65. I began to think that all was over with me, and that I could not obtain mercy; and, seeing that all was lost, I thought it was but of little use labouring for the body, as I had no other prospect before me but an eternity of misery; therefore I left

my business, and retired to my room, to fret and mourn over my wretched fate. In this melancholy state of mind I sat me down in a chair, with as heavy a load as ever any poor mortal laboured under. I pitied myself, envied every body, and heartily wished I had never been born: and whilst I sat in this miserable state these words came upon my mind, "The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." Then, thought I, if this is the case, surely I am one that is sick; for I am sick of self, sick of the service of Satan, sick of sin, sick of the world and all that is in it: I feel my need of the Saviour: and O that he would shew mercy to me! This scripture came also into my mind, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Then, said I, I am a sinner indeed, and have destroyed myself; and, as Christ came to seek and save the lost, I will call upon his name once more, and confess my faults before him. While doing this, these words came sweetly into my mind, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me," John xiv. 1. I felt a little relief, rose off my knees, and sat down to meditate upon the words. "Believe also in me," kept rolling over my mind, and I was led out to look to Christ, as the mediator and saviour of the lost; I felt that hardness of heart and desperate rebellion, under which I had laboured so long, in a measure to give way, and a hope rise up in my soul that the Lord would, sooner or later, have mercy upon me. I sensibly found a burden taken off me; and, instead of giving all up for lost, I felt encouragement to keep on seeking him, from whom I had deeply revolted.

Some time after this, being ordered to the sea, I purposed, in my way to Brighton, to stop in town to hear you; but, upon my arrival, finding you were gone to Lewes, I journeyed forward, and the next day arrived there, and that very night heard you preach. from these words, "And the Lord was with Judah, and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountains, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron," Judges i. 19. This discourse was much

blessed to me, and did me more good than all the medicine I had taken. It is hope being deferred that makes the heart sick; but, when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. I was sweetly refreshed, my hope being strengthened and my faith increased. I had indeed been brought low, but the Lord helped me; and I received that hope and satisfaction which I never entirely lost sight of again; "Whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever," Eccl. iii. 14. I heard you again the Sunday following at Lewes, and one evening in the Barn at Ringmer from these words, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, hearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him," Psalm cxxvi. 6. And here I got another help in the way, and a light was thrown upon my path. The Lord will give strength to his people; "They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God," Psalm lxxxiv. 7. In my way home I heard you several times in London, from which I reaped great benefit, and returned from this journey in every sense much better. The loins of my mind were girt up, and my health was much recovered; "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing," saith David; "thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness," Psalm xxx. 11. And, although I many times after this sunk very low, and was much cast down, yet I had a hope at the bottom which I would not part with for all the world; though it was several years, from my first being quickened to feel my lost state, before I was brought to know my interest in the dear Redeemer. Nevertheless, as saith the prophet, I was holpen with a little help, and the everlasting arms were underneath me; and the Lord kept me earnestly seeking his salvation, until he was pleased to cause me to return to my stronghold as a prisoner of hope, and my eyes beheld the King in his beauty. "Being confident of this very thing," says Paul. "that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Philip. i. 6.

I have frequently been sweetly refreshed in our meeting for prayer and reading the scriptures and your works; being comforted, strengthened, and encouraged; "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." And, although this way of meeting together has been, and still is, despised by many, yet I have reason to rejoice, having therein received much good, and at times found him whom my soul loveth; "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20. The Lord hath condescended to meet with us; he has owned, honoured, and blessed us with his presence, and in the mid 2000 st of all opposition has enabled us to stand fast, and to contend earnestly for the faith. And this work and this counsel, which I believe to be of God, all our opponents have never been able to overthrow; therefore they had better desist from such an unholy war, lest, haply, they be found even to fight against God, Acts v. 39. I embraced every opportunity which offered in coming to town to hear you; and when you had been down in the North I have generally attended in every place where you preached. But to enter into particulars, by giving you an account of each time and place where God has blessed your ministry to me, of the many helps by the way, and the encouragement and strength I have received in hearing you at different times, might appear tedious; suffice it therefore to say, that I never came up to London to hear you, nor attended you in the country, without receiving some good, more or less; and have many times rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. The Lord's word does not return void, but accomplishes that which is pleasing to him, and prospers in the thing whereto he sends it; "He confirmeth the word of his servants, and performeth the counsel of his messengers." Three or four times, when I came up to London to hear you, I have been much perplexed, sorely distressed, and under heavy afflictions; but I never came in vain. Once, during the time I was a married man, when no one, I think, was under heavier trials than I was, which my countenance fully proclaimed, I

had a great desire to speak to you, and for that purpose went to the vestry at Monkwell Street; but when I saw you I said nothing about my trials and afflictions, though you asked me what was the matter, and the cause of my looking so ill. The truth is, they were of so complicated a nature, and from such an unexpected quarter, that I was unwilling to enter into the subject. I have often found that, when under the heaviest trials, I have been afraid to speak of them, not knowing how the matter would end. Perceiving that I was much bowed down, you spake very kindly to me, though I came out of the vestry with a heavy heart, ready to break with trouble. I walked about and wept much, Having great sorrow in my heart; afterwards I went into the chapel, and you preached from these words, "Out of the mouths of babes and suckling's hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger," Psalm viii. 2. What I heard that night comforted me not a little, as you described the very feelings of my soul, and I was much relieved from my burden; "A gift in secret pacifieth anger, and a reward in the bosom, strong wrath," Prov. xxi. 14. And though I was troubled on every side, yet I could see that I was not forsaken of God, but my hope was strengthened in him, that he would be with me and support me; and I found him as he hath promised, a present help in trouble. Unto God I committed my cause and waited upon him, watching his hand; the Lord sustained me; and, though the trial was sharp, yet, under God it worked for my good, and has been of great use to me since. My afflictions were many, but the Lord in his own time delivered me out of them; it is God that avengeth me, and girdeth me with strength, therefore, " Bless thou the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

The next heavy trial was the division that took place in the church. After we had met together for some years, heresy crept in amongst us. Onesimus came with his airy visions, and beguiled many unstable souls; this enemy sowed his tares

amongst us, and then went his way; but after his departure, the leaven which was communicated, continued to ferment, and it was not long before its dreadful effects were seen, as many amongst us gave heed to this seducing spirit, and soon shewed that they were subverted thereby; so that we found it to be as Paul says, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," Acts xx. 30. Some withdrew, and set up for teachers, while others followed after them. "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for, if they had been of us, they would no doubt. have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us," 1 John ii. 19. Howbeit, though many were taken with his wild and extravagant notions, yet not all; for some stood fast in the truth which they had received, and withstood him, though he prated against our manner of worship with malicious words. John says that he had no greater joy than to hear that his children walked in truth; and Paul saith, "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," 1 Thess. iii. 8. And some were enabled so to do; for by what we had already experienced, we well knew that our way of assembling together was approved of God, and that what this deceiver brought forth was not according to the gospel we had received. The Lord had met with us and blessed us, therefore we knew that we had not followed cunning devised fables. An outcry was raised against reading other men's works, and preaching in general, without making any distinction between right and wrong; in short, every thing was found fault with, but nothing established; Much confusion wrought, and the greater part knew not for what they were come together; for it was utterly impossible to know what was aimed at, as nothing but wind and confusion was brought forth. But some who were like the Athenians of old, always fond of either telling or hearing some new thing, Acts xvii. 21, were much charmed, and were all alive; and it was amazing to see how this strange fire spread itself amongst many; it served as a fan, by which the floor was

purged: when the chaff is blown away the wheat becomes more consolidated together; "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest," 1 Cor. xi. 19. There are some, Paul says, which received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie," 2 Thess. ii. 11. They that cannot endure sound doctrine, after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Some there are, who are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth: and many there be who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; "and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in the time of temptation fall away," Luke viii. 13. When men are puffed up, and become vain in their imagination, their foolish hearts are soon darkened; and, when once they get wise beyond what is written, God soon makes them fools in religion; "They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them!" Jer. viii. 9. These lack moisture, and therefore wither; "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," 2 Tim. iii. 13. Paul says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him;" and, he exhorts us, whereunto we have attained, to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing. When this wonder of wonders first appeared I begun to try his spirit, whether it was of God; for which purpose I brought what he advanced to the test of scripture and my own experience; and I perceived that what he brought forth was not agreeable either to the scriptures, or what God had taught me, and I believed he was an utter stranger to that power in which the kingdom of God stands. Paul says, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," Gal. i. 9; and exhorts us not to give heed to seducing spirits, for by them the minds of many are corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, in the same way as the serpent beguiled Eve

through his subtlety. God is the author of peace, but not of such confusion as this man brought forth; he erred, not knowing the power of God. "Whosoever 2000 ver transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." God has promised his holy Spirit to guide his children into all truth; "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him," 1 John ii. 27. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his" Paul laid the foundation as a wise master builder, and warns every man to take heed how he buildeth thereupon; "Now, if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble," Here are two sorts of builders, and the materials are very different: one sort the fire will not burn, but refine; the other will be consumed by it. Sharp trials discover many that are not- sound in the faith. It is one thing to receive the knowledge of the truth into the natural understanding, in the Letter of it; and it is another to receive the love of the truth in the heart; and, when the fiery trial comes, by which every man's work is to be revealed, many fall away, the work is burnt up, and then it is made manifest of what sort it is. Many seem to run well for a time, and then draw back, and become so degenerate, that there is not a shadow of truth about them; they go from a tolerably sound judgment into Arminianism, and sink into the worst of errors; and it is often seen that such are greater enemies to the vital power of godliness than they who have never made a profession; the scribes and pharisees were the worst enemies to Christ. The preaching of the gospel is compared to a net cast into the sea, which gathered of every kind; the servants did as they were commanded, and gathered together as many as they found, both good and bad, and the house was furnished with guests; but when the kin,

came, he discovered a man which had not on a wedding garment while the good seed is sown by the servants of Christ, the enemy sows tares. Paul says, " But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour: if a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work," 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.

It was some time after Onesimus came and introduced his wild ferment before the division took place; during which time we had to contend earnestly for the faith, and the contention was extremely sharp. Before they separated themselves from us I had two singular dreams, which made a great impression upon my mind; and thinking them very significant, I wrote them down, waiting and watching the end. They were as follows: I dreamed that I was travelling in some very rugged roads, full of hills, that were of an amazing height; by the side of the hills there were great numbers of people, sitting upon seats, who seemed very attentive, as if listening to some one speaking: at a little distance off were a number of people with a great variety of articles to sell, which were all wearing apparel of different kinds; some looked like woollen cloth, and other pieces had the appearance of linen; many of them, as I passed on, asked me to buy: but I found fault with their articles; for on examining a number of pieces, I could discern a thread of woollen mixed in them all, on which account I refused them. All the pieces that I looked at were woollen, or mixed with it, except one, which was a piece of fine wove silk: I examined it very minutely, and could discern no woollen in it; I therefore bought the piece, and yet paid nothing for it. I then went on over the hills, through the midst of a great number of people; and, as the roads were very bad, and many large stones laid in the way, it was with great difficulty I got along: and I had not gone far before I met a woman who much

admired my piece of silk, and asked me to let her have a part of it; but I refused, telling her I should want it all for myself, and would therefore part with none. She said to me, "It is a nice piece." I told her it was, and that amongst them all there was not one like it. She then left me, and I journeyed forward till I got into some very rough and indifferent roads again, and at last came out into a very large building, where there was a great number of people, some looking fat and healthy; while others appeared thin and very ill. As I stood in this place, a man came up to me and said I was wanted in a room up stairs; in my way there it came into my mind that they wanted me to contribute to some one's relief; so I put my hand into my pocket, and took out three pieces of gold; but thought I would part with none till I knew to whom and what for. I then opened the door, and was greatly amazed; for in the middle of the room was a very large couch, full of men that lay in a very disorderly manner; some were dead, and others looked very ill, apparently at the point of death, with their mouths wide open, gasping for breath; and the visages of all were frightful to behold. As soon as I entered the room it came into my mind that these men were all professors of religion, who had swerved from their profession, and brought disgrace on the truth, on which account they were so afflicted, and visited with the judgments of God. I saw no one that spake, but heard a voice which talked with me. I inquired how it was that these men all came together; and was answered that they came to see each other, and that the disease was such, that as soon as they entered the room, it seized them immediately, so that they could not get out again. I felt no fear of catching the disease, nor of death, nor had I any symptoms of it come upon me; but asked what I was sent for. The same voice answered me, that I was to join with another in prayer, that this disease might not spread itself farther. which appeared to be as destructive to mankind as the plague. I felt a good deal agitated in my mind, and a little afterwards kneeled down by the side of the couch: earnestly looking at them all, I

perceived that some were quite dead; others, whose visages were very long and countenance pale, appeared so ghastly, that they were horrid to look upon; and a third sort appeared very sickly, though the infection was not so strong upon them. Whilst I was looking at the whole I perceived that there were some amongst them whom I knew; and I discovered several that attended our chapel, which so distressed me that I awoke out of my sleep.

A few nights after I had another dream, in which I came to a large piece of water, the half of which was its clear as crystal and the other half thick and muddy. These waters were not at all mixed, but separated down the middle as straight as if by line; while I stood looking at the water I perceived that there were a number of men in it. I then drew nearer; and in the part which was clean I saw several men swimming, very healthful and strong, and some whose bodies were partly in the clear water and partly in the muddy; these looked very sickly. Others again were in the water that was thick and muddy: these had been choaked with it, and were quite dead. The inference I drew from the dream was this: the clear water I thought to be the pure doctrines of the gospel: the men that were healthful and strong I judged to be such as would stand fast in the truth received; those which were partly in the clear water and partly in the thick, I concluded would be tainted with the errors of this man, on which account they would be sickly for a time; and those dead in the muddy water, I thought indicated that some would be so caught in these errors, that they would quite depart, and prove themselves to be dead while they had a name to live, Rev. iii. 1; being men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith," 2 Tim. iii. 8. I told this dream to one who m 2000 et with us, of whom I had a suspicion, and what I thought it signified; that there were certainly two sorts of people in the chapel, betwixt whom there was no union; that there were two spirits; and that it would end in a division. To which he answered, "God forbid," and

seemed to be quite shocked. I have often thought since of what Elisha said to Hazael when he told him of the evil he would do to the children of Israel, &c.; and of Hazael's answer, "But what is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" 2 Kings viii. 12, 13. Yet afterwards he perpetrated the deed; and this man soon after separated himself, than whom not one amongst all that went out front us has shewn more enmity; nor has any one sunk deeper into error, nor swerved farther from truth than he has. When Judas had received the sop, he went out immediately. "Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him," John xiii. 31; and then he talked to the disciples. I am sensible that since the division we have had tenfold more of the power and presence of God with us than ever we had before; therefore all has worked together for good: the hand of the Lord shall be made known towards his servants. Moses asked the Lord, "Wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth," Exod. xxxiii. 16. It is the pretence and power of God being with his people which makes them to differ from all others. The goodness of the Lord is great to those that fear him, and he knows them that put their trust in him; he hides them in the secret of his presence, and keeps them safely in a pavilion from the strife of tongues, Psalm xxxi. 20. The scripture says, the man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead, Prov. xxi. 16; this is to the present verified in all that went out from us; for although they have changed their opinions more than once, yet I know of no one among them that is not far enough off from truth; "They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return." And how awful is the state of every man who departs from the faith! "He feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?" Isa. xlv. 20.

After a few years of prosperity, it pleased God that I should be exercised with a long and sore day of adversity, during which time I have had many things to consider of, and my afflictions have been many; nevertheless, the Lord has sustained me in every time of trouble; and, although I have been much cast down, yet not destroyed; though, like Hezekiah, I many times have said, "I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living;" and, like him, "I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones, from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me," Isa. xxxviii. 13. When this fiery trial first began I was like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and Satan was permitted to stir up all that was within, which is the worst of all; and very obstinate, froward, perverse, and rebellious I was; but I found it as the wise man saith, "He that hath a froward heart findeth no good," Prov. xvii. 20. And, as long as the fool's lips enter into contention, stroke upon stroke must come, for unto the froward God will show himself froward. It is by hard labour that the heart is brought down; and, when the heart is humbled, and the punishment of our sins is accepted, then the Lord appears propitious to us in his covenant. It appears that Hezekiah was lifted up, and then "God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart," 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. And, had I never been tried in the way I have, I never should have been acquainted with the evil of the heart as I now am. When it phased God to try Job severely, by taking away all his substance, he received this with great submission; "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." But it is said that after this Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day; when Satan stirred up what was within, Job then showed what was in the heart; I have long laboured under a train of heavy trials; and those that I have had outwardly have oftentimes produced great fear within, as all things seemed to make against me, and I was troubled on every side; look which way I would, the prospect was gloomy. And I have many times been brought into such a strait, that it appeared impossible I

could escape; and, like Jehoshaphat, I have been at my wit's end. But the Lord never left me in a trying hour; for, when every other refuge failed, he always appeared in my behalf, and wrought deliverance in such a way and manner as I never could expect. I have been brought low, but the Lord has helped me; underneath have been the everlasting arms, and strength has been given equal to my day: the Lord is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working; he hath never left nor forsaken me; and, though often faint, he has always kept me pursuing: I have frequently been ready to give all up; which I certainly should, and have turned back in the day of battle, had not the Lord strengthened me, and kept me by his almighty power. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 6.

You was once in the country when I was under very trying circumstances, and I heard you several times; many things which you then brought forth were very suitable to me, particularly a discourse which you preached from Prov. viii. 20; "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasure." The word was attended with power, and much blessed to me; for I received encouragement, strength, instruction, counsel, and comfort. My hope was revived, and my way cast up; for in treating of the way of righteousness, and the paths of judgment, you exactly described the feelings of my heart, and I found myself a good deal relieved from that anxiety and distress which then lay heavy upon me. The hand of God seemed to be gone out against me, as it went out against Naomi; and I laboured under great bondage, darkness, and fear; my soul being bowed down with affliction, so that I was far off from peace; I forgot prosperity, Lam. iii. 17. My grief was great, and my life bitter, and I said, with Jeremiah, "Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day," Lam. iii. 3.

And I was in such confusion, that I could not make what I experienced accord with the scripture, as many things seemed to clash, and Providence run counter to the promise; but I have since perceived that the Lord hath led me in a right way, and that all the words of his mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them; they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge, Prov. viii. 8, 9. The first time Mr. Brook was down in this part of the country, I remember hearing him preach from Deut. xxxii. 10, 11, 12. "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth tip her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him." His discourse I heard with great satisfaction, and what he brought forth from the scripture was suitable and profitable to me; for as he went on I could see the way in which the Lord had been leading me to humble me, and to prove me; and I hoped that God would sooner or later appear, and make darkness light before me, rough places plain, and crooked things straight. 2000 I felt my heart a little moved in gratitude to God that he had helped me thus far, and had hitherto supported me tinder all my troubles, and had kept me as the apple of his eye; "All his saints are in his hand, there is the hiding of his power." The Lord waters his vineyard every moment, and keeps it night and day. But to return; I had one continued succession of trials, troubles, and disappointments; so that I was frequently much cut up, and my soul discouraged because of the way, fearing that in this time of temptation I should wither for lack of moisture, and so fall away. But, blessed be the Lord, it was not so; he kept me by his power, and enabled me to feel after him, and with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord; "But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive, every one of you, this day," Deut. iv. 4. All fullness is in the Saviour: he is our life; and the seed

of Jacob never sought his face in vain. He communicates grace and strength equal to the day; he giveth more grace, and has promised to him that hath more shall be given; he strengthens the things that remain, which, according to our apprehension, are ready to die, and supplies, as we go on, all our wants out of the riches of his grace. "I am come," saith the Saviour, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, John x. 10. "Without me," says he, ye can do nothing;" and counsels us to abide in him, promising, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," John xv.7. And I bless his name for ever that he hath sustained me under every trial, and enabled me to wrestle with him in prayer, and prevail too, not suffering me to give him any rest till his righteousness went forth as brightness, and his salvation as a lamp that burneth: therefore I may say with David, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my fears," Psalm xxxiv. 4.

When I came to Grantham to hear you in the year 1807, I was bowed down with trouble, till my spirit sunk within me, and, as Paul says, I seemed pressed out of measure, above strength; and my countenance proclaimed to all who saw me the disconsolate and distressed state of my mind; what I suffered I can never express; I felt as if the time was just at hand when all would be over with me, and that something would take place, to make manifest to all the awful state I was in. I thought that no one seemed to care for me, which added abundantly to my grief; "I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no one that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul," Psalm cxlii. 4. In this state I went to the chapel on Sunday morning, and you preached from Habakkuk, iii. 2. "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid; O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." While you were speaking I found a very great change in my

feelings, and was very comfortable; the Lord's presence was with me, and I had some little brokenness of heart before him; but this was only the beginning of that which was afterwards to follow, for there were yet greater things in store for me. "Ask, and ye shall receive," saith the Saviour, that your joy may be full." Before I left Grantham, on relating to you a few of the trials I had gone through, I remember that what you said to me was very encouraging, and your last words were, "When submission to the will of God takes place, I have no doubt he will appear for you" When I left you to return home my heart was Beady to break with a mixture of grief and joy. I had no expectations of hearing you again on the following week; but God's thoughts are not as ours, neither are his ways our ways; wherever he intends to do his people good, something must occur to bring them there, as nothing can hinder his purpose; "God will work, and who shall let it?" A way was opened for me to go to Newark, which I gladly embraced; and on the following Sunday morning I found my mind more serene, calm, and quiet, than it had been for some time; and in prayer I found nearness of access to the Lord, and a little enlargement; I was led out in great earnestness that the Lord would be with me to bless and comfort me; and I felt a confidence spring up in my mind, and a persuasion in my heart, that God had heard, and would answer the petition that I had put up to him, to bless your ministry to me that day. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. And blessed, for ever blessed, be the Lord, he condescended to fulfil all my petitions, and attended his word with power to my heart, while you was speaking from Isa. xxxv. 3, 4; "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will come and save you." I may say with the Psalmist, "Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand," Psalm

xx. 6. He strengthened me out of Zion; but what I felt I shall never be able to express; the God of hope filled me with all joy and peace in believing, that I might abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost, Rom. xv. 13. While your doctrine dropped as the rain, and your speech distilled as the dew upon my soul, my beloved was come, and his reward was with him, and his work before him; the Holy Spirit testified of him, and took of the things which were Christ's. and sketched them plainly unto me. And I felt in my soul such quietness, composure, tranquillity, and submission to the will of God, and such brokenness of heart and contrition of spirit, together with such unction, power, rest, and peace, as I am not able to speak of; but I found that godly sorrow that worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, 2 Cor. vii. 10. All my bondage, darkness, and fear were gone; and I rejoiced in God, as the portion of my soul, who had reconciled me to himself by Jesus Christ; "For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion." All that I had suffered before was not worthy to be compared with that glory which was now revealed; "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," Isa. lxi. 1. The Lord was the health of my countenance, he anointed my head with oil, and my cup ran over; my soul delighted itself in the Lord; and, as I said then, so say I now again, I would not take all the world for what I then enjoyed, and what I have many times experienced since; it is that which makes all things in this life sink into nothing. The price of wisdom is far above rubies, and in Christ we have all things richly to enjoy; "The meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace," Psalm xxxvii. 11; as it is written, "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." "My fruit," saith he, "is better than gold, yea than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver," Prov. viii. 19. It is by the blood of the covenant God sends forth his prisoners

out of the pit, wherein is no water, causing them to return to their strong hold, Jesus Christ, as prisoners of hope. The atonement being applied speaks pardon, peace, and reconciliation with God; whereby the conscience is purged from sin and dead works, truth makes us free, and the Spirit bears witness to our adoption, works faith in the heart, proclaims our enlargement, and cries, Abba, Father. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father, Gal. iv. 6. Our conscience beareth us witness in the Holy Ghost; and, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," Rom. v. 1. The soul feels the blessed effects of this union; "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me," John xvii. 23; and, being made an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ, I was enabled to approach him without wrath or doubting, perfect love having cast out fear and torment. This makes his service perfect freedom, and enables us to worship God in newness of the Spirit, and to walk in newness of life. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you," John xiv. 20., Well might Paul call it a peace which passeth all understanding, and an everlasting consolation; for, while the soul feels this blessed earnest of its future inheritance, we are lost in wonder, looking forward to that felicity which will be enjoyed beyond this life, when we shall be filled with all the fullness of God. John, feeling the love which God hath to us, seems to want language to express it, and therefore says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 1, 2. The Lord Jesus Christ made to me a feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees; and I drank and forgot my poverty, and remembered

my misery no more. It was a day of release, and I, who had long been bowed down, labouring under heavy afflictions and sore trials, and had feared every day because of the fury of the oppressor, was bidden to go free; and I could then in my heart bless the Almighty for all the trials I had endured. It was one of the days of the Son of man; and how delightful it is to sit at his feet and receive such blessed portions as these! My heart, like David's, was fixed, trusting in God, while his loving-kindness and tender mercy, made known to me in a dear Redeemer, melted my soul in gratitude and thankfulness before him. Nay, so abundant was the revelation, that I well remember that at times, whilst I sat, I hardly knew where I was. I have frequently thought of Paul's words. Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth; of such an one will I glory, though of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities;" this experience is a blessed reality, which no bond servant ever knew. " The servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth;" "The world seeth me no more, but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 19. This secret is with the righteous, and it is those that love him whom he causes to inherit substance; who with the heart believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it," Isa. xlv. 8. The kingdom stands in power, and not in word; it is in righteousness, joy, and peace. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God and eternal life," I John v. 10, 20. Paul says, that "No man knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God;" and the Saviour promises that he shall teach us all things; "It is the Spirit that searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." "He shall glorify me," says Christ, "for he

shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you;" and this he does by revealing unto us his fullness and all-sufficiency, and his suitableness as the Saviour of the lost, by leading our souls to him, and revealing and making him known to us in all his covenant-characters, and in all his undertakings in our behalf; "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," that Christ should be all in all; he testifies of him, applies the benefits of his death, and gives us to feel our interest in his blood and righteousness. His blood cleanseth us from all sin, and in his righteousness we stand complete before God. These I believe are some of the things which accompany salvation, and God has said, that "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. And I bless the Lord that I find, as I go on, an increase of these things; fresh grace, light, and life, are communicated out of Christ's fullness; and there is a growing up into him in all things; as it is written, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" Paul knew in whom he had believed; and John says, "That which-we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3. And in what I have now written I may say with David, "I have spoken of the things which I have made touching the King;" I am still exercised with many trials, and experience much tribulation; but this, saith our Lord, ye shall have. Nevertheless, in him I have peace; and, though my trials are as heavy as ever they were, I find this difference-they do not cast me down as they did in times past; and though at times much perplexed, I am not in despair, for, "Hope is as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that which is within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus," Heb. vi. 19, 20. And I find throughout, that, after having suffered awhile, God is pleased to strengthen, establish, and settle me, more and more; "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability

of thy times, and strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is his treasure," Isa. xxxiii. 6. A daily cross counter balances the spirit of this world; "Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit," John xv. 2. The Lord's fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem, Isa. xxxi. 9. Much furnace-work causes self-examination, and a searching of things to the bottom; "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness," Mal. iii. 3. Paul says, "The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is," 1 Cor. iii. 13. And I find as I go on, that, although no chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous, yet it has been profitable unto me, and afterwards has yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness; and, though I have had sharp work of it at times, and have felt much fear in time of trial, not knowing how the matter would end, yet, "Having, therefore, obtained help of God, I continue to this day," and am kept by his power; though sometimes I am in great heaviness, through manifold temptations, still all works together for good; "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit; so wilt thou recover me, and cause me to live," Isa. xxxviii. 16.

I have lately had a good deal of furnace work, being sharply tried with many severe afflictions, which I think the Lord shewed to me beforehand, in a dream I had some time ago, which I should not have inserted here, but that whilst writing it has occurred fresh to my remembrance, and, immediately these two scriptures came upon my mind, He that hath a dream, let him tell a dream, Jer. xxiii. 28. "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not; in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed; 2000 then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction," Job xxxiii. 14-16. In the night of June the 10th, 1809, I dreamed that I was in the greatest trouble, perplexity, and distress, weighed down with

grief, and my burden appeared more than I could bear; I was so oppressed that I laid myself down, and so weary that I was unable to get on; what I laid upon seemed like a large couch. While I was in this state a man came to me and wished me to sing a hymn; I told him I was so distressed that I could not sing; but he pressed me so much, that looking at him, I said, if I sing a hymn, it must be this,

Much we talk of Jesu's blood,
But how little's understood!
Of his sufferings so intense
Angels have no perfect sense.

Who can rightly comprehend
Their beginning or their end?
'Tis to God, and God alone,
That their weight is fully known.

I could sing no more than this verse, my mind was so led out in contemplating the sufferings of Christ in the garden; and I felt such a sympathy with him in his sufferings for me, that I wept, and was quite overcome. After this I wandered along some very beautiful fields, in sweet conversation with some one, though I know not who; but I was very happy. Soon after this I met with a very particular friend, and began to tell him what I had passed through. Admiring the beautiful situation we were in, we talked very freely to each other. On looking forward I saw, at a distance from me, a large building, in a low valley, having the appearance of an old abbey. While directing my friend where to look for it, I cast my eyes still farther, and saw a man walking along, on which I remarked, that that person looks like one who formerly attended at our chapel. He seemed to be very happy, quite full of comfort, and much elevated in his spirits; his countenance was rather pale, and his eyes looked extremely fierce; I therefore kept my eye fixed steadfastly upon him, watching his gestures and looks.

As he approached the building a woman came and stood in the door place, and intreated him to go in, Saying she had prepared a repast. He went in, and we saw him no more. She then looked at us, but we both turned away. After this there was brought to me a young girl dressed in long white robes, and the person who brought her began to extol her much, and seemed greatly to admire the finery she had about her, wishing me to notice it; but I was quite disgusted at her appearance, and spoke most vehemently against her clothing. I then went on, and came to a place which had the appearance of a barn floor, and by the side of it was a wall built, white-washed over with lime. A man stood at the end of the wall, recommending the floor and wall to my notice; I looked at them for a considerable time, and then told him that the floor was laid very smooth, but it was of no use, nor would the workmanship do. Seeing a man walking down the middle of it, I said to him, "You had better not venture there; for though the floor looks sound, there is danger: and if you fall through, underneath I see a deep pit, which if you get in, it will be a wonder if ever you come out again; you never can unless some one help you, for you cannot get yourself out." I then said to the man by the wall, "Your wall is not upright," and reached a plummet that lay by me to measure it. Putting the line to it skewed that the wall was not upright; wherefore I said to the man, "Your work will not do;" on which he turned pale and went from me in a rage, when the wall fell down; and immediately another man appeared before me with a piece of machinery upon the floor, and a smile on his countenance, entreating me to look at that. (the man I had warned upon the floor stood by); I looked at it, and said to the man, "I am no mechanic, therefore it will never do for me to argue about machinery; but this will not answer the end for which it is designed." I then saw in the inside a pair of grindstones, which lay very much aside, on which account I told him it could not be properly worked, and what was put in it would not be sufficiently ground; it must therefore be useless. While bearing

my testimony against this work, there came a man up to me, who told me that I must leave them, and go and do business at a large furnace, which was at a little distance from me. Giving me something he had in his hand to carry into the middle of it, I set off; but there being much fire in the road, I turned back to go another way, lest I should be burnt; and here I was worse off still, as liquid fire ran in every direction, which made me stand still, to see which way I could get. On looking a little to my right hand, I saw here and there a place free from fire, though but just room enough for me to pass. I then set off, and got to the place where I was directed without being burnt. When I came out of the furnace I seemed to have something to dispose of; and as some very poor-looking people stood at a distance, I went and offered what I had to them: but most of them turned away, and rejected what I said; at which I was surprised, and told them that what I had to offer was much cheaper and better than the man's who had the machine. Passing on, I came to some rising ground, where I saw a few more people, very ragged and poor. To them I likewise offered what I had, and after a time they took some of me; for which however I received nothing, but walked about till I came upon a very high eminence, and was much dissatisfied that so many rejected what I offered them. From this spot I looked down, and perceived that the sea was by the side of the rock, and in the sea I saw something with a pair of wheels, and behind it a small boat, in which was a man; the wheels turned round with the greatest velocity, and it went through the sea as swift as the wind, and presently came to the place where I stood, and then rose up out of the water. In a moment I was forced into it, and down it went again; at first I was seized with great fear, thinking I was sure to be drowned' but before I got to the water I saw a place for me to hold by, of which I laid fast hold, and my fears abated. As soon as I reached the water it went off as fast as I saw it before, and through the sea I went, hoping to get out on the opposite side but no! it turned with me back again; and, when I had gone an

immense way in the water, I came to the largest wheat stack I ever saw, which stood upon pillars. I begged so earnestly to stay by this stack of corn, and not to go any farther, that it waked me out of my sleep in great agitation, and in a few minutes after this scripture came upon my mind, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee," Isa. xliii. 2. Which kind promise hath hitherto been fulfilled, for God hath been with me and supported me through all my afflictions, and he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5. So that we may boldly say the Lord is our helper; "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life," Jam. i. 12. Grace and strength have hitherto been equal to my day, and all has worked together for my good;" The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot," Psalm xvi. 5. After Abraham had patiently endured he obtained the promise, Heb. vi. 15. The Lord will not forsake his people, nor does he willingly grieve or afflict his children; but as every man's work is to be revealed by fire, faith, like gold, must be tried; and Peter informs us what this furnace is intended for, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 7. The Lord watcheth over his people for good, and he is nigh unto all those that fear him; he keeps them night and day: and may the Lord enable me to stand fast, to fight the good fight of faith, and to finish my course with joy; he is able to keep that we commit unto him against that day, and has promised to bring all his ransomed people to Zion; "Happy are the people that are in such a case, yea blessed are the people whose God is the Lord."

Before I began to write this narrative I was quite at a loss to know how to proceed, and as if I knew not where to begin, nor what to say; when this scripture came upon my mind, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," John xiv. 26. And as I went on things came fresh to my mind, which when I had time I wrote down, and the promise was fulfilled, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I shall say to you." Formerly when I was under heavy and grievous trials, I used to look at them as coming in anger and in a vindictive way, which sunk me very low: but now, blessed be God, I am enabled to view them differently; "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee," Deut. viii. 5. And I believe the intention of the Most High, in all the sufferings I have had to this day, has been to humble me, to prove me, and to do me good in my latter end; "All that I love," saith the Lord, "I rebuke and chasten." God will visit sin with the rod; but he hath promised, saying, "My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips," Psalm lxxxix. 33, 34.

I bless the Lord, and rejoice in my heart to know of your success in bringing souls to Christ Jesus, the only friend of lost helpless sinners. "He that is our God is the God of salvation." God Almighty be with and bless my dear friend, more and more, whom he hath been pleased to make the instrument of bringing to my heart the glad tidings of his most blessed salvation. Many I know have consulted to cast him down from his excellency; but in this they have failed, and brought ruin upon their own heads; none ever fought against God and prospered. "He that receiveth whomsoever I send," saith the Saviour, "receiveth me." The Lord's hand is made known towards his servants, and his indignation towards his

enemies: the council of the wicked he bringeth to nought. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might," Judges, v. 31.

Most affectionately yours,

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

Epistles of Faith

Letter LXI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MRS. BERRY, GREEK STREET, SOHO.

Dear Friend,

By particular desire I take up my pen, though in a very unfit state, being weak in body, and dark, barren, and lifeless in soul, but hope it will not be so long; for we are told that, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." I have been till within this last month kept nearer to the Lord, and have had greater liberty with him in prayer than I ever had before, which makes me more sensibly feel my deadness; but I believe I shall soon be delivered from it. Hope, ere this, the Doctor is recovered of the illness you mentioned in your last; not only for the good of God's church and people, but to expose those heretics that write or preach against so faithful and valuable a servant of the Lord as he is, of which we have had a recent witness in our own family. It is

by the desire of my sister Gardner, of Bodicott, that I now write to inform you of the dealings of God with her soul, thinking you might some time or other communicate the same to Mr. Huntington. Had it been in her power, she would have immediately sent him the whole account herself; but she says, that words cannot express the unutterable love she feels towards him. She has for many years been a sincere seeker of the Lord Jesus Christ, and almost as long an admirer of Mr. H. and a constant reader of his works; and very great establishment she has derived from them, which she has often told me, and declared, that, if that dear man of God (meaning Mr. H.) was right, so was she.

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I was at Bodicott about a month before Christmas, when she appeared in great distress of soul, and complained that 'her temptations were very great, and of a different kind to any that she had ever experienced before For,' continued she, "I always from a child had very high and exalted thoughts of the Saviour; but now they are so mean, so base, and so blasphemous, as to make make my blood rankle in my veins." And she wept like a child; it grieved me to the very soul to see her in such a state.

At Christmas I saw her again, when she appeared more composed, as the temptation, though not removed, was much weakened, from the effects of a Letter Mr. H. had sent to a Mr. Cort of Leicester, where he is speaking of the agreement or bargain of the sinner, under his first conviction, with the Lord, and how Christ makes and takes them at their word. She derived much comfort from it, and it was the constant language of her heart, for a long time, that this was true; and she seemed very impatient to see a book entitled, "The Heavenly Workfolks," saying she did not want any other entertainment during the Christmas than the reading of that book, having a firm persuasion in her own mind that, if she

could get a sight of it, she should be set at liberty; in which, blessed be God, she was not disappointed. When I visited Banbury, finding the book was published, I took the earliest opportunity of sending it to her. On the Sabbath before I received your Letter, I was with her again, when she gave me such a sweet account of her deliverance as it is not in my power to describe. In reading the latter part of the book, her temptations, distress of mind, hard thoughts of God, and fears of death and damnation, all fled, and such love, joy, and liberty, flowed in as no tongue can express, and such as she never expected to enjoy till within a few hours of death; and which, though so long ago, still continue with her. She said to me, "Were I to die this moment, I have no more doubt of my safe arrival in glory than if I was already there." I saw her again the last Lord's day, when she told me that her joys were not so great, but her assurance was still the same; though Satan suggests to her that it is all a delusion, and that if Mr. H. was to see her he would call her a hypocrite; but, finding this to have no effect, he tried to persuade her that she was an idolater, and that she worshipped the Doctor instead of God: this, however, had no more weight with her than the former, as she knew from what quarter it came, and that the penny was still the same. She longs much to see and converse with Mr. H., for she says, "It is impossible for him to have one natural or spiritual child on earth that has a greater affection for him than herself." I was also much benefited in reading the same book. Oh, my dear friend, how highly are you favoured in sitting under so sound and experimental a minister! I should look upon it, next to the salvation of my soul, as the greatest blessing I could enjoy.

Please to give our love and respects to Mr. B. and all friends, and accept the same yourself. I hope you are all well, and that your sister is recovered from her late confinement. I should be happy to see any of you whenever convenient.

Believe me to be

Your sincere Friend.

A. H.

Clattercott, March 21st, 1810.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LXII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. W. HUNTINGTON.

Lombard Street, 3d July, 1810.

Reverend and dear Sir,

As it pleased God to make you instrumental in calling my departed wife to the saving knowledge of God, and as it was her wish that I should inform you of the state in which she departed, I hope you will excuse my troubling you with this short account of her.

She remained quite ignorant and unconcerned about the state of her soul till she was about twenty-two years of age, which was about thirteen years ago; when, one Sunday afternoon, after she had been spending the fore part of the day with worldly people, having been always subject to ill health, and

experiencing many disappointments, she was led to reflect on the vanity of all worldly things, and found immediately her heart going out after God, and wondered at his goodness in sparing her so long. She directly set out to go Surrey Chapel, for she found a different influence to what she ever had before. The minister, Mr. Jay, took these words for his text, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open to me, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." These words struck her very forcibly, and she wondered what it could mean, as she understood not one word of the sermon; but the text still abode with her; and from that day she found a great deadness to the world, and was enabled completely to turn her back upon it, and found a great love to reading her Bible, and being alone. She was very diligent in hearing preaching at Sur 2000 rey Chapel, and attending at the morning prayer-meetings; but spoke to nobody. She went on thus for several weeks, and was quite happy, longing to die and be with God.

A friend of hers, who formerly lived with her in the same family, and upon whom God had begun his own gracious work, hearing that there was something of a change in her, advised her to come under your ministry, which she accordingly did; and, though that comfortable influence she was at first under began gradually to wear off, yet she found a great attachment to your ministry and closely attended it, without reaping any visible benefit, for seven years. But during this time, as she since informed me, she had much working in her mind at times, as she could plainly see, and heartily believed, that there was a reality in religion which she had never experienced, and often used to be saying, she hoped she should never pretend to any thing farther than what she felt, for she would sooner die in the state she then was than be a hypocrite.

About this time it pleased God to enlighten her mind a little into what you used often to be insisting upon at that time, which was the necessity of life, and that every thing short of that would come to nothing. Upon this one thing she directly set her heart; and used often to say she was convinced, if she had that, every thing else would follow. And now she began to be exceedingly anxious to hear at every opportunity; but used to say when she came home, "Life is not come to me yet, and I begin to fear it never will." On Sunday evening, February 3, 1805, she set out for chapel much discouraged, as she was far advanced in pregnancy, and thought it would be nearly the last time she should be able to go, as we lived then nearly four miles off. On her way to chapel she began to reflect on the state she was in, how long she had heard the word, and what difficulties she had laboured under, and was as far from what she wanted as ever. She then began to appeal to God, that she had waited on him with a real desire to find life, and had been disappointed; that she knew she could do no more than she had done. She reached chapel with great difficulty, sat down before service began, and found a great despair come over her mind, and concluded, with much reluctance, she would give up coming, for it was all in vain; life was all she wanted, and she found she could not quicken her own soul. However, she thought within herself, as this would perhaps be her last time of hearing, she would pay all possible attention to the sermon.

The text you took was from Acts xvii. 26, 27. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." She felt nothing at the first part of the sermon, though she paid great attention, till you began to speak upon seeking the Lord, and feeling after him; and then she began to feel a power which she had never felt

before. She said that every word, to the very end of the discourse, agreed with her feelings; so that when you had done she scarcely knew where she was, being so lost and swallowed up with the power she felt, particularly when you was speaking upon feeling for God, and his being not far from such. In that part you were led to speak largely upon the text which first struck her mind the day she went to Surrey Chapel, "Behold I stand at the door and knock, &c." "I knew," said she, "I was trying to open to him just as Mr. Huntington described." She returned home, without speaking to any one, in great agitation, and desired me not to speak to her. "Why not?" said I. "Do not speak a word," said she. I replied, "You have got the prize; I know you have life." Dear Sir, I must here inform you that, when my wife went out that night, I felt much for her after she was gone, knowing how poorly she was, and how low she seemed in her mind. As soon as I could I retired in private, to entreat the Lord to strengthen her, and protect her safely back again; when all at once I was led with such energy to beg that the word might be made effectual to beget life in her soul, and was so persuaded that it would, that I waited with the greatest anxiety for her return, and should have been much disappointed had it not been the case. But blessed, for ever blessed, be the Lord, I had a full answer to my prayers, and much enlargement of soul that night; I shall never forget it.

From that moment till the day of her death, it may truly be said of her, that she gave all diligence to make her calling and election sure. She had immediately the Spirit of grace and supplication poured out upon; her, and I know she found great nearness to God in private prayer. The word of God, which had all the while till now been as a sealed book, began to be opened to her; and I really could but wonder at the progress she made, and so do many others now, who could see God's hand towards her.

I could mention many sermons which God made a great blessing to her, but am fearful I shall be tedious; only I must here observe, that the book entitled, "The Destruction of Death," &c., she prized next to the Bible, it was so blessed to her, as far as she could then go with it. She was naturally of a quiet disposition, and had but little to say in conversation: but was very observant of the blessed Spirit's operations on her own soul; and in about eighteen months time was brought to enjoy so much of the love of God, and could speak with such a savour and certainty about it, as made several good people greatly to admire God's goodness to her.

Her desire to hear the word was always very great; and, though our little family was at times a great hindrance, yet she embraced every opportunity, both winter and summer, and all weathers, which I believe was the means of hastening her death in the end, for she was seldom free from colds, which at last settled upon her lungs, and brought on a gradual decline for the last two years. On Sunday, the 4th of March last, she set out for chapel, very weak, saying she would try her strength once more. With great difficulty she got up; but on her return, coming down Holborn, she stood still to let a coach turn up Hatton Garden, when a drunken man ran with full force against her, and beat her with great violence under the horses; and the wheel is supposed to have passed over her shoulder, which dislocated it, and bruised her head. She was brought home to me in a coach. The doctor set her shoulder, and said he hoped she would soon do well: but, when he came to see her the next day, he told me not to flatter myself, for she would not live long-she might do well with respect to her hurt, but her lungs were quite gone; which was a great blow to me. This providence seemed rather staggering to us both; she was at first exercised with much spiritual desertion; but it pleased God, after a month, to visit her again with much of his presence, and then she talked much of his goodness to her. She now read, "The Destruction of Death" over again,

saying, she could now follow Mr. Huntington to the very end of it; and that she had been enabled to exercise every grace therein mentioned, and had certainly found life at different times in them all. She had not the least fear of death, but often longed earnestly for it. In her illness she once dreamed that she was at chapel, and saw a small shock of corn, which grew right under your pulpit; and that it was so ripe and brown, it only wanted to be cut down. In relating it she said, "I know what it means."

She was exercised at times with much spiritual desertion, which taught her how dependent she was on the blessed Spirit for every drop of consolation: but she said, "He still leaves his witness, at the worst of times, to the reality of his owe work, and I am not at all afraid of coming short at last." She called me 834 to her a little before she died, and desired me to give her kindest love to you. "Tell him," said she, "I am a witness of the truth of his doctrine, let others say what they may; and it will do for me to die by." She was continually inquiring after Mr. Jenkins's welfare, his Letters having been very useful to her at times.

A little before she died she told me, one evening, that she has had such a visit from her dear Saviour, that he had been with her all that day, and such sweet familiarity she had enjoyed, that she could not describe it, and desired me to read the Song of Solomon all over to her.

She found much of the path of tribulation all through her walk, and was deeply exercised with the plague of the heart, and acknowledged that she found corrupt nature just as bad to the last; that she had not one good work to plead, but found herself to be just such as the Saviour promises to save; that she never was suffered to lay a presumptuous claim on him, nor exceed what God had himself done for her, and now found her claim stand fast in the day of trial. She suffered

much in body, and was not expecten to live one hour after another fur the last month. But three days before her death she was delivered of a child, which lived about thirty hours: from that time she could scarcely speak, but retained her senses to the last, and died in sweet peace on Monday the 13th of June, in the 36th year of her age, and was interred on the Saturday following, at her own request, in Bunhill Fields, where a few that loved her met and sang a hymn over her.

She had a short interview with you, about a year ago last February, at the vestry, when you cordially received her. She told you then that we lived at Lambeth, in the same house with Benjamin Thatcher.

Pray, Sir, excuse the liberty I have taken; and may the Lord still continue to comfort and support you,

Prays your much indebted friend,

And well-wisher,

ROBERT EEDES.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LXIII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. O.

The Cabin, on board the Providence, outward bound, at Sea, under sail, the wind at south-west, bound for the friendly islands, and the fair havens, by the Cape of Good Hope.

ONE Of the crew, through grace an able seaman, is sick; laid aside by the Captain's orders for the sake of overhauling the rigging, examining the log book, pumping the vessel, and casting out some part of the burthen, in order to lighten the ship, that she may combat the waves with more plank above water. The scurvy and leprosy much attend the crew in these climates; bitter herbs are profitable, but not palatable; they strengthen the stomach, help digestion, and promote appetite, and make the roast Lamb taste the sweeter. Keep at sea; there is no haven in those climates commodious to winter in; expect the wind Euroclydon, the north; after proceeds the south: the former chills, hardens, and makes us tremble, but the effects of the latter in their melting and soul-dissolving influence appears the more conspicuous. Abide in the ship, for there shall not an hair fall from thy head; nevertheless thou wilt fall into a certain place called great strait, where two seas meet, the troubled ocean of inbred corruption, and the flood of infernal rage; and here it is hard work to come by the boat: this is attended with a tempest that often lies on us, and at which time neither sun, moon, nor stars appear, as we think, though our sun never goes down, nor does our moon withdraw itself; the whole eclipse is upon our eyes, and not upon the ordinan aa5 ces of heaven. If the ship labours. much it will not be amiss to undergird her, lash her with the girdle of truth; this will keep her sides together; she can never bile, reel, nor wreck, if truth be her cordage; and it is experience that makes her cordage cleave and stick fast. Wonder not if she appears for a time ungovernable, and should not answer her helm, "For the things that I would not that do I;" keep the soldiers on board, let none of them flee out under colour; faith, patience, meekness, submission, resignation, humiliation,

self-abasement, &c., for unless these abide in the ship you cannot be saved. Sailing is dangerous, for the fast. is already past; at such seasons the wind varies, and every gale is contrary, and will be so till we can refit and recruit at another festival; "Bread shall be given them; their waters shall be sure." Sound often, and observe the soundings; when all is purged away you will find a clear bottom, and an anchorage within the veil; and be sure to cast out with your own hands the tackling of the ship, for every one that proves his own work shall have joy in himself and not in another, Gal. vi. 4. Should the storm continue long, and every attempt fail, loose the rudder bands, strike sail, and let their drive; his power is made perfect (or all-sufficient,) in our weakness, 2 Cor. xii. 9. If no sail of love appears unfurled, confide in the love that is in him, and leave the charge of the vessel to him that gathers the wind in his fist, and rides upon the storm; he is the ship's owner, we ale not our own. As soon as over the wind abates cast anchor, and cast the first out at the stern; this must be the kedge anchor. Look back and see what he has done: he hath delivered, and we trust he will yet deliver; it is, experience, past experience, that worketh hope. But if she poll drive, let go the sheet anchor, hope in his truth; "Remember thy word unto thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope." this will not hold her, let go the small bower, hope in promised support, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be:" if this fail, and al1 hope of being saved is taken away, then cast out your best bower; "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God," through a mediator: this will fetch her up at fifteen fathoms of cable, and after this she will ride it out and ride easy.

Thy feeble soul will fear no more
Than solid rocks, when billows roar;
What I predict, in mighty faith,
Thou shaft not contradict in death.

W.H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LXIV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. B.

WELL, brother trade, how goes business on? have you plenty of patients? are you at work day and night? if not I often am; I mix many ingredients at night, and carry them forth by day. Broken bones and broken hearts, the leprosy and the plague often break out amongst us; inward fevers from the fiery law that worketh wrath, and the influenza from the old man of sin, are too common at this season of the year. Many groanings have I to attend, and many pregnant women who look every hour, and whose reckoning, according to their account, has been out these three, some four, some five years; these conclude that they have passed the time, and shall always be big, bring forth wind, or die in labour. Many, many difficulties, singular cases, and strange influences attend our profession; in these I act as you do; in gouty complaints I recommend flannel, the obedience of the Lamb, and patience; to dropsical, lethargic, and drowsy complaints, I prescribe bitter herbs, wormwood, gall, and aloes, together with a little nitre, or fire of spiritual jealousy; the former promotes appetite, and the latter

perspiration; for jealousy is the same to a careless saint as the golden fly is to a sluggish bullock, it will move him when a wire of an inch long will have no effect. To bilious complaints, such as gripes in the conscience, straitness in their own bowels, or heaviness in the heart, I administer or recommend a little of the new wine of the kingdom; this is for their stomach's sake, and their often infirmities; but for those afflicted with the stone, I do not mean gall stones in the liver, nor gravel stones in the kidneys, nor chalk stones in the joints, but flint stones and adamant stones in the heart, for this complaint I generally hold forth the oil of joy, and the juice of spiced wine of the pomegranates--the former. is of a dissolving softening nature, the latter is inebriating and enlivening. In costive habits, I recommend hyssop and saline draughts; hyssop purges, and salt keeps matters open; "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another:" but for all inward bruises and green wounds, I have recourse to the balm of Gilead, and always consult the great Physician there; this is a restorative: but to swelling humours, white swellings, boils, and ruptures, or breakings out, figs for a plaister is my choice remedy; such figs as grow upon the good fig-tree., the humbling graces of the Holy Spirit, an effectual remedy for all swellings or breakings out, for all running sores, such as run in the night and cease not, at which times the patient refuses to be comforted. I generally recommend bandage, and order it to be put tight, and to swaddle the part affected with many folds; the best rollers or swaddling bands are those called the cords or bands of love; and I have been now in practice thirty years, and to my knowledge, I never observed this remedy to fail: but for all ricketty, hobbling, or halting complaints, or relaxation in the nerves or muscles, I prefer the girdle of truth; " Gird up the loins of your mind, watch and be sober." As for crutches, stilts, sticks, and all iron bows and stays, I never recommend. Cold water for thirsty souls; good news from a far country for melancholy complaints; bathing lip to the ankles, knees, and loins in the water of life for; stiffness in the joints, I

am very partial to; sincere milk I recommend to young ones, whose teeth are too weak to mump a hard crust, or grind strong meat. Strong drink I generally make use of to those that are ready to perish, and old wine on the lees to those of heavy hearts. Honey I generally give to lying-in women, when their legal labour is over, and love has cast out fear; this so sweetens their spirits as to make them forget their anguish, for joy that the new man is brought forth: but in all dangerous symptoms, perilous cases, or chronic disorders that have any desperate appearances, I generally apply the leaves of the tree of life; that more sovereign in such cases than either the pope's extreme unction, wafer, or holy water; it revives the expiring, and gives life even to the dead. Now though I know that you do not make of my medicines in your line of practice, yet I think you will acknowledge the salutary effects of many of these prescriptions.

Brother trade, Doctor Sark's kind love to the Doctor, and wishes that your trade may decrease, and that mine may increase; so prays the gentleman of the faculty. Love to Dame; excuse the ins and outs, spelling, and inditing; the thoughts a carte, and were as soon down.

W.H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LXV

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. B., CRANBROOR.

"Behold, this dreamer cometh." _Gen. xxxvii. 19.

Beloved,

ABOUT ten years ago I saw in the visions of the night, and behold wooden fences, exceeding strong, made in imitation of the best sort of post and rail, but very stout and strong, and so high that they reached above the clouds. On the other side of these lofty fences, in the air, and above the clouds, I saw an innumerable herd of black bulls, running by droves to and fro in the air; their appearance was fierce and furious to the last degree.

After running to and fro for some time, I saw them attempt to leap the fences, and some few I saw went fairly over, and running about in the air as if wild or mad; but what astonished me most was, they were, to my view, many miles high in the air. I awoke and behold it was a dream. But when so great a part of Europe was overrun, I thought of my dream; and I considered the lofty fences to be the laws of nations, of churches, and of states, and the human forces engaged to protect these; but the fat bulls of Bashan went over them all.

Some time after this I dreamed again, and I saw in the visions of the night a most extensive open plain, on the border of which I stood. I lifted up my eyes a second time to see the vast extent of the plain, and to my surprise, I saw two vast armies mustering; I considered myself placed there, not to fight, but make observations, and to bear tidings. I looked on till both the armies were marshalled and drawn up in battle array, and as soon as they began the fight I set off with the tidings. I went from off the plain down into a hollow road, at the end of which road, or lane, was a little village, at which I

was to deliver my tidings; but as I ran, a sudden fear seized me, that I was in imminent danger of being shot. I looked on my left hand towards the plain, and it appeared to me about forty feet above my head, and at the verge of the plain, a strong old stone wall, which reached so high, as for the top of it to be on a level with the field of battle. Seeing my safety, I mended my pace, and when I came to a gate which led into the village, I was in so great a hurry that I attempted to throw myself over it, and the violent exertion fetched me out of my sleep; this also was a dream.

Soon after the above, I dreamed that I was in a low valley, somewhat like Romney Marsh, in which valley I saw a great many deep ditches, broad rivers, and little brooks; in this valley a battle had been lately fought, and I was brought there to see the slain, and the dead were so innumerable, that the rivers, the brooks, and ditches were so filled with corpses, that the bridges were choked up with the dead, and the water so stopped in its courses, that it begun to deluge the country; and the fear of being drowned awakened me out of this sleep also.

I one night after this dreamed that I was in the land of promise, and saw at a considerable distance many noble, lofty, and ancient piles of stone buildings, interspersed with avenues of stately and very high trees, through which the windows, pinnacles, towers, &c., shone with wonderful lustre, the sun appearing in his meridian. I looked on my left hand, and saw an extensive valley, and in the valley a great many rows or streets of new houses, in building; some few appeared finished, some just covered in, others going up in their walls, and some just founded, with an innumerable number of workmen, and all very busy; and this work was going on in this large open valley. While I was looking and wondering at these buildings, and at the beauty of this country with its hills and vales, I looked on my right hand, and there stood a little old woman with a black cloak and black bonnet; I

asked her what that noble pile of buildings)were which shone so bright through the avenue of trees; she Laid, " That is Jerusalem old town:" then I pointed her to the row of houses building in the valley, and she said, "That is Jerusalem new town." I asked her a few more questions, to which she returned answers, and I awoke. I have thought much lx times since of the old Jerusalem, that is in bondage with her children, and of a new Jerusalem, of which God speaks; "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad & rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy," Isa. lxxv. 17, 18.

Some time after this, I had been much engaged in my mind about this long, tedious, and destructive war, and of the revolutions that have taken place lately in Europe; and was wondering whereabouts in God's book the account of these things stand, not doubting but it is in the Bible, because the mystery of God is to be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets, Rev. x. 7; and I thought we might say with David, "We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there amongst us any that knoweth how long," Psalm lxxiv. 9. In the days of old it was not so; "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets, Amos iii. 7; but as for us, we were such a poor, blind, ignorant remnant, and so unworthy, that God would not divulge any of these matters to us, and I wept much: it was at going to bed. It is true we have had several things published upon the signs of these times, but the discoveries they have made are little else than their own blindness and ignorance. I went to bed not a little distressed, and when I awoke in the morning these words sounded loudly in my heart and ears, "This is the hour of temptation;" from that time to this I have not had one doubt but the whole account stands in the eleventh chapter of the book of the Revelations, by John and principally in the thirteenth verse;

but the hour there spoken of has no small difficulties attending it. A prophetic day being a year, according to many accounts in that book, the learned fix that hour to be about a fortnight; but we who have lived to see the earthquake there spoken of, and the long continuance of the war since the first revolution, see nothing as yet of that fortnight, to which space of time that hour is fixed by the learned. I have taken much pains to find out what the scriptures mean by an hour, but can come at no certainty. The hour that I allude to in the Revelations is three times mentioned, first, by way of threatening; "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee," Rev. iii. 3. The Philadelphian church receives a promise of being preserved from this hour; "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation," Rev. iii. 10.

But in Rev. xi. 1:3, it appears that it will take place during this war; "And the same hour there was an earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell," &c., but to come to any exact time signified by this hour, is not an easy matter. I considered Luke xxii. 53, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness;" this was the time Christ was in the hands of his murderers, who crucified and insulted him in his sufferings, and when in his tomb triumphed over him, which was but a few days at most, and yet much more than a common hour.

And in Rev. xvii. 12, "And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." The head of the Romish church, the pope, and these ten kings, receive power together; these kings receive power one hour with the beast, that is, these ten kings shall come to their kingdom and the pope to his grandeur in one hour. The learned allow that the beginning of the setting up of these kingdoms in the western empire, was in the year 356, and that all the ten

kingdoms were not up till 450, and some write not until 486, which make this hour to be more than a hundred years.

The slaughter of the witnesses, and their lying three years and a half unburied, their resurrection, and the present earth quake, are all said to be "the same hour," Rev. xi. 13; whereas we see the earthquake still remains; the war has been carried on not much less than seventeen or eighteen years, and the witnesses are still alive; all which convince me that it is a very difficult thing to fix any exact time to the Holy Spirit's meaning by "an hour," "one hour," and "the same hour," which perhaps is to check our being over solicitous.

About three years ago I was at Grantham in Lincolnshire, and being in bed alone I dreamed that I was in company with many professing people. We were gathered together in a large open space of ground, and there was another company gathered together against us; they seemed to be very violent and malicious at us, and we were in very high dispute; but I do not remember that any body spoke on our side but myself While I was disputing with this multitude among my friends, I looked on my right hand, and saw a large rock rise up out of the ground, very much resembling what I have seen in drawings and in print of Mount Sinai, in Arabia. I pointed our adversaries to look at that; they did so, and turned pale, and their scorning, sneering, and grinning subsided. I awoke, and behold it was a dream.

I soon fell asleep again, and dreamed the same as before, and the same rock rose up at the same place as in my former dream, to which I pointed our opposers 2000 ; they looked at it and their countenances fell. I said, "Look there, and let that convince you that God is for us;" and I awoke with these words sounding both in my heart and ears, "Thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee," Isa. xliii. 4.

Since I have been settled in London, I have made it a rule, once in the space of six or eight years, to visit those favourite spots in the country, where it pleased the Lord Jesus Christ at times to visit me. I went first with my dame to Mortlake, in Surrey, where the Lord first spake to me, bidding me to come out of the world, from all mine acquaintance, and to have no more to do with them; this was in a garden belonging to the Honourable Messieurs Clive, brethren to the late Lord Clive. We went to the house, and t rung at the bell, and the footman came. I asked if the Honourable Messieurs Clive lived there; he told me no. I told the servant that I had been acquainted formerly with that family, and had spent many days in that garden, without saying in the capacity of a gardener. The servant informed us that the gentleman of the house was not at home, but that the lady was. I sent my respects, and begged the favour of a walk in the garden. She sent me word I was welcome to walk where I pleased, and as long as I liked. We went in, but the garden was so altered, that I should not have known it to be the same, if I had not been well acquainted with the place. I had more than once been by the house and garden, but never into it before nor since the time I left it. I pointed to one corner of the garden, and told my wife I had made a mount in that corner, when I worked here; we went round and saw the mount: it is still in being. I then went to that quarter of the garden, where I was at work when the voice came; and there is a very lofty old apple-tree, which identified the very spot. My bowels yearned at the sight of the place, and much meekness and contrition flowed in; and the humbling sensation abode with me for many days.

Afterwards the lady came out and walked with us, and then took us into her house, and treated us with great civility: we made the servant a present and withdrew. I thought of the highly-favoured places of the royal Psalmist, when he vows to remember God from the laud of Jordan, and of the Hermonites from the hill Mizar, Psalm x1ii. 6.

Strange as it may appear, yet it is truth, before this voice came to me I had no more knowledge of God than the beasts that perish; but as soon as the voice came I was at once assured that it was the voice of my Creator that spake to me; nor have I ever had one doubt about it, from that hour to this. Christ, by his Spirit, spake to my heart; and faith from his fullness came to me by hearing, and hearing by the word which he spake: "As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me," Psalm xviii. 44. The obedience of faith, Rom. i. 5, attended the words of his mouth. My orders were to come out of this world, and from all mine acquaintance, and to have no more to do with them; and I was made willing in the day of his power, Psalm cx. 3, and came out, and have no desire to go back, although I have had opportunity to have returned.

A few weeks after this, I went in company with a friend to Sunbury, in Middlesex; this was the place where I first heard the sound of the jubilee trump; the effect was, "Loose him and let him go:" it was the place of my enlargement. I did not ask leave at this place for admittance into the garden; another way was opened for me; the next house, a noble structure, is pulled down, and only an out-building left. The garden which adjoins to that in which I wrought, is let to a market gardener, and the out-building is his residence; into this we went, and with leave into the garden. Against the wall, near the spot where the light first shone round about me, there stood a ladder, and upon it I got up to the very place where the sun of righteousness arose with healing in his wings; and I saw also the little tool-house, where the first fervent and effectual prayer was put up, and to which such an answer was returned as will live, burn, and shine to all eternity; for, "Christ dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him."

A few weeks after this, I went to Ewell in Surrey, and went round the house and garden in which I wrought in those parts; this was the nursery where my first weaning time came on;

where also I was taught the mystery of providence, and learned to live depending upon it. The overbearing lord, under whom I laboured, and the large and flourishing family, like olive plants round about his table, are left few in number; there are two tombs erected since I lived there, and I believe both are full, and one was opening the very day that I was there for the reception of another branch of the family. I thought of David's words; "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be," Psalm xxxvii. 10. No more scoffing, mocking, and ridiculing religion The extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressor is consumed out of the land," Isa. xvi. 4: while the slave, the drudge, the servant of servants, is still in possession of double life, and delighting himself in the Almighty.

The slaughter-house at Kingston=upon-Thames, where the commandment came to me with its convicting and condemning power; where my sin revived and came fresh to light; when the awful curse came home, and the yoke of bondage came on; when guilt and wrath formed' a junction; where heart and flesh failed, and all legal hopes gave up the ghost; this place I have never visited since. I have visited all my Bethels, but not the barren wilderness; that dry and thirsty land I wished to see no more. I have often looked at the house, but it is too much like Jonah's bed in the bottom of the sea, which he calls the belly of hell: the poor apostles did not exult because they had found Moses, but because they had found the Messiah. I looked at the nursery in Hampton Wick, where I wrought during a great part of mine affliction; this was something like the house of Dagon, where Samson made sport. The agitations of my mind, and the continual motion of my limbs, to keep the conceptions of sin from passing into words, gave my fellow-labourers no small entertainment.

I conclude that I have now taken my last farewell of all these sacred spots; I get old, and am looking forward in hope of the better country, and that city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God. Of late I have been ill with a bilious disorder, and, to tell you the truth, I have seldom been much indulged in bodily afflictions, as some are; but in this last fit my mind was wholly engaged for several days with the greatest and most sublime subject in all the Bible; my views were capacious, clear, harmonious, and very instructing and confirming; and when I got out again I found my cruse full, the spring became a flowing brook, but it was emptied by three discourses on the following words; " That they also may be one in us," John xvii. 21. I learn that afflictions empty the vessel of self; the dross dissolves in the fire, and the tin is consumed, and a perceptible fullness flows in and springs up, and thirsty souls always fare best when the head is anointed with oil, and the cup runneth over, Psalm xxiii. 5; for all that runneth over is dispersed abroad, and is intended to revive, exhilarate, and make verdant by watering the heavenly crop, hence called "The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." But this I perceive also, that however the old man may be mortified, put off, and denied; and however the dross and tin may be purged and subdued, Insomuch that the soul becomes dead to every motion of it, and loathes and abhors the body of this death; yet it revives again, and loses in a great measure its deformity and unsightliness, and soon assumes an air of gaiety: this must be one of the master-pieces of him who can transform himself into an angel of light.

The Canaanite 458 s will dwell in this land; and by these old inhabitants I understand very wicked men; and that corrupt nature which constitutes them such, is, in all its malignity and evil nature, in every member of Christ's mystical body, while in a state militant: hence the most enlarged soul is but a prisoner of hope, for the iniquity of his heels still compasses him about, though he has no just cause to fear, even in the day of

evil, Psal. xlix. 5. But against all hope founded in nature and in reason, we must hope, with an expectation founded in grace and truth; "That which is born of the flesh is flesh:" and, "This I say, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," 1 Cor. xv. 50. But "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" and every grace, every fruit of the Spirit is an incorruptible seed, that lives and abides for ever. My old companion; my honest, faithful, and affectionate friend, adieu.

W.H. S. S.

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LXVI

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. M.

To my beloved Brother in the Lord, greeting.

YOURS came to hand, and I thank you for it, as I am always glad to hear how the poor family of the Lord do; for my part, I am but poorly with a cold and the rheumatism in my head, which for some time has tried the not a little. Cough and shortness of breath have rendered my little cabin almost unbearable. These things often make drill, field days, reviews, the camp, and the field of action, irksome, and make me

cringe and think of winter quarters, dismissal from service, the king's Letter, or an Honourable pension: but instead of this am obliged to keep on, although I confess that at times my heart sinks upon a Sunday morning, as soon as the drum beats, at the thoughts of mounting guard, or doing duty at the Palace. However, the Captain of our salvation is often better to me than all my fears, and brings me sometimes through with such a high hand as to make me a wonder to myself, though at the same time I have thought that Iliad scarcely strength to sit upright, even on the baggage-waggon; at this momentary, timely, much-needed but undeserved and unexpected aid and assistance, I leave much wondered, and have gone on as if in the first campaign; but no sooner is it over but I dream of the surgery, or the hospital; and if I do in any measure survive this, still nothing suits me or charms me like that pleasing sound of "Go to bed, Tom;" and when I obtain this I am often interrupted with dreams or visions of a rout, or halt, or march, or a call to arm 767 s. Sometimes I fancy I am pursued, and my road so slippery that I cannot stand; at other times I am called to action without either arms or ammunition: sometimes I fancy my station on the forlorn hope, the most perilous station of all the besiegers; at other times I am giving the word of command, but alas, I am dumb; and when I order others to march, I myself wish to retreat. Lately I have been erecting the King's standard; I have been waving the banner, and beating up like one on a recruiting party; delivering the King's speech; promising new clothes, a large bounty, present pay, good quarters, invaluable and invincible accoutrements, certain victory, infinite spoils, and eternal honour: and at the same time my wicked heart rebelling and giving the lie to every word that my mouth has uttered. I often find, at this work, that I vainly suppose that not a few recruits have volunteered their services, and have seemed to join the young troops; but soon after, when I expect them at roll-call, one half are missing; some complaining of too much drill, and others of the difficulty of

learning the manual exercise: and often in this recruiting business I have exceeded, I mean in spending more than the king's allowance, that is, I have feigned the bounty, when in truth the whole stock has been gone; this has brought me in short in my accompts, and this puts me under stoppages, one Halfpenny in two days, and hardly that. At this time I am catering, or hunting for forage; and often asking or taking French leave in a furlough; and even this has often confined me in the guard-house; and many heavy petitions have gone up before I could appear to enjoy the privilege of a prisoner, or the parole of honour: and what can you think of such a soldier as me?

W.H. S. S

William Huntington

Epistles of Faith

Letter LXVII

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO MR. A.
Lumea, Oct. 15, 1810.

Dear Christian Friend,
AFTER a long and fatiguing campaign, I have somewhat to write to my friend. I can rejoice in saying, hitherto the Lord has helped me. I can assure you that it is a something more than

men in general build on, that will support the soul in a trying hour: true and vital religion is an internal principle, wrought by the Spirit of God in the heart of man; and no less than Almighty power can keep alive, or purify the affections of the soul. This is the place that would try many a blazing professor, for nothing short of a real possession can ever withstand the blast of the terrible ones that beat against the wall. I am now surrounded with many, and mighty enemies; there are awful fightings without, and God-dishonouring fears within. I must acknowledge that I find sinful unbelief the worst enemy I have to grapple with, yet I can say, blessed be God, that if ever I knew the comforts of the Holy Ghost it is truly since I have been in this country; yet I have not learned that sweet lesson which Paul speaks of: I know what it is to abound, and be in great straits, but I cannot say that I have learned therewith to be content. I stand greatly in need of the sweet graces of faith, patience, love, and resignation to my blessed God and Saviour's will. I find by painful experience that Satan goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; and when he finds the poor trembling child of God enjoying his dear God as a sanctuary to his soul, he will use all the artillery of hell to disquiet him. My friend, I know these things by painful experience, yet I trust through the tender compassion of my good God, to come off more than conqueror; yea, I trust to enjoy the gospel of Christ in the land of my nativity. I do believe that the Lord will turn my captivity as the streams in the south; then shall I rejoice in telling my dear friends what the Lord has done for my soul.

All the army has retired near Lisbon, and we are daily in expectation of fighting the decisive battle; I believe there are more than three hundred thousand souls drawn up for that purpose. There has been many severe battles, but the great battle is yet to be fought; it will be an awful day; but if my good God is pleased to spare my life to see your face again in peace, I trust love and gratitude will be given me to praise his

dear name. It is the most awful scene I ever witnessed, to see thousands of inhabitants flying from their houses, leaving a great part of their property to the mercy of a cruel army. I have often thought what Jeremiah says, or rather the Lord by him; "Shall I not visit for these things? and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" The people here are the most bigotted idolaters I ever saw, and the most treacherous and unjust in their dealings.

I heard of dear Mr. Huntington's chapel being burnt down, which was I believe an interpretation of a dream I had since I came into this country, which I will relate to my dear friend when I return. I hope God will give Mr. H. another chapel on earth, to declare the truth, and when he has done what the Lord hath appointed for him, give him an eternal inheritance with all his dear children in glory. I am well aware that all the children of God have their various trials, yet you are at home enjoying the gospel, sabbath by Sabbath; be thankful, for many a dear child of God is scattered up and down, having no place to fly to hear the word, or hardly to read the Bible if they have one: I myself am cut off from all the means of grace, yet, blessed be my indulgent God, I find him faithful to his promise in being a sanctuary to his people. Give my best love to all Christian friends at Richmond, and to Mr. R___, at B___, when you see him; and when it is well with you remember a poor soldier, who remains,

Yours in the best bonds,

WM. WILLDEN

Direct to me,
Trumpet Major, 13th Light Dragoons,
General Hill's Division, Portugal.

William Huntington

