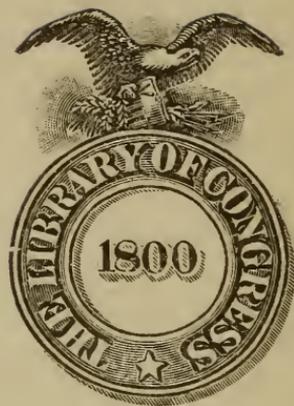


A  
New Epistle

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# A NEW EPISTLE

BEING THE WISE AND BEAUTIFUL COUNSEL  
OF THAT SAINTLY MAN, SAMUEL RUTHER-  
FORD, TO ALL THOSE IN DOUBT, IN AFFLIC-  
TION, AND IN PERIL OF THEIR SOULS.

SELECTED, EDITED AND ARRANGED  
BY

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## Introduction

**B**ORN in the year 1600, educated at the Edinburgh University, where he was distinguished for his mental abilities; appointed, after his graduation, one of the regents of that institution—this in brief, is the story of Samuel Rutherford's early life.

Rutherford did not hasten to enter the ministry; for a short season he had experience with the vanities of the world. "Like a fool," he said in later years, "I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven before ever I took the gate." A false step and a bitter lesson brought him to the feet of Christ. He became a student of theology, and in the twenty-seventh year of his age was called to the pastorate at Anworth, a secluded little parish beside the broad Solway.

Of his devotion to his chosen work there is much testimony. It is said of him that he was always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always catechising, always writing and studying. It was his

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habit to rise at three o'clock every morning, and after spending the early hours in meditation and prayer he completed the day with the more active duties of his earnest pastorate. His unwearied zeal and loving spirit endeared him to the people; many came from far to listen to his inspiring sermons, and he was spoken of as a great strengthener of Christians in all that country.

We get an intimate glimpse of Rutherford as a preacher in the lines of an English merchant, who wrote, "I heard a little, fair man, and he showed me the loveliness of Christ." Wodrow tells us he was "one of the most moving and affectionate preachers of his time," while Doctor Thomson says, "His sermons were usually radiant with Christ." And again the same writer, "He rejoiced in preaching as the lark or the nightingale may be supposed to delight in its song."

Nearly a decade passed in loving and successful service at Anwoth; but this was not to continue. Scotland at this period was in a state of religious turbulence. King James, through his bishops, was endeavoring to force upon the Scottish people epis-

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copal doctrines. Rutherford was a rigid Calvinist. The Five Articles of Perth, passed in 1618, enjoined certain religious practices which were abhorrent to him as a Presbyterian. These had to do with forms and ceremonies at baptism and holy communion, with the observance of the chief festivals of the Church, and like matters. Upright and fearless, Rutherford protested against these innovations from his pulpit with all the energy and eloquence of his perfervid nature. This antagonism to their cherished plans brought upon him the hostility of the prelates, which increased, until in 1636, after his further offense of publishing a treatise against Arminianism then in favor with the bishops, he was summoned before the High Commission Court at Edinburgh, and by that body deposed from his pastorate and forbidden, "under pain of rebellion," to officiate as minister in any part of Scotland. Furthermore, he was ordered to Aberdeen, there to be confined during the King's pleasure.

Rutherford received his sentence with the joy of a martyr. He gloried in the fact that he was "counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name." Aberdeen was

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the stronghold of his religious enemies; on his arrival there he was denounced from the pulpits and jeered at in the streets.

Of the two volumes of "Letters of Samuel Rutherford" edited by Doctor Bonar—letters three hundred and sixty-five in number—nearly two-thirds were written during his eighteen months' exile at Aberdeen. It is from these celebrated letters that I have drawn, mainly, in compiling this little work, though I have incorporated certain beautiful and helpful passages from his published sermons. It is perhaps needless to say that the original letters are not in the chapter and verse form that I have here employed.

Though Rutherford gloried in his trials for Christ and for conscience, it was a tremendous privation to him not to be allowed to preach. "My closed mouth," he wrote, "my silent Sabbaths, the memory of my communion with Christ in the many fair, fair days in Anwoth have almost broken my faith in two halves." He yearned towards his beloved brethren, his flock left without a shepherd; he was much exercised for that they were surrounded by teachers of false doctrine; he constantly

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feared for them lest their souls were "off the Rock." And how pathetic is his letter in which he envies the sparrows and swallows that build their nests in the kirk of his little parish, calling them "blessed birds;" and that other where he exclaims, "O what service can a dumb body do in Christ's house! O if I might but speak to three or four herdboys of my worthy Master I would be satisfied to be the meanest and most obscure of all the pastors of this land."

It was out of this turmoil of spirit that there came what has been called "the most seraphic book in our literature." Another has spoken of these ardent and touching letters as "a bundle of myrrh whose ointment and perfume will revive and gladden the heart of many generations." While the great nonconformist, Richard Baxter, said, "Hold off the Bible, and such a book as this the world never saw."

When permitted to leave Aberdeen, Rutherford returned to his beloved Anwoth and took up his labors again with joy. Soon, however, he was called to a larger service as Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews, a post which he accepted

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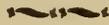
with much reluctance. In later life he wrote and published a number of religious treatises, some of which aroused great controversy. One of these, his "Lex Rex," was burnt by the common hangman in a public place, and for its publication he was cited to appear before Parliament on the charge of treason. But a higher summons had forestalled this citation—Rutherford was on his deathbed.

He died as he lived, loving Christ with a fervor that few have known upon this earth. In his last hours he was possessed of a singular rapture and elevation of spirit. Once, near the end, he cried aloud, "O for a well-tuned harp!" as though, says Thomson, "he already heard the sound of the radiant worshipers and yearned with a holy impatience to join in their heavenly symphonies."

He passed away on the morning of March 20, 1661, his last words being, "Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land!" He was buried at St. Andrews.

—G. H. W.

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## Chapter I

*The poorness of Christ's flock. 5 Worldly possessions not to be desired. 8 Exhortation to hold Christ and the winning of souls dear. 15 The world like a great fire.*

**A**S the morning watch waiteth for the morning, so we see the saints holding out their tired arms to God and longing and looking over the mountains. And they have little or nothing in hand but hope.

2 Worldlings say: What have ye that we have not? Ye are a sick, poor, oppressed, and mocked people, and where is your happiness?

3 We have an answer to such; we are onwaiters on God. Know ye not that some are very rich and have thousands in this man's hand and thousands in that man's hand. If ye ask them where their riches is and bid them let you see what

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they are worth, they can let you see nothing but a number of papers and bonds—even so heaven is the land of promise and the land of hope to believers.

4 We are the poor of the flock, the nothings of the world. We are nothing, that is, but little less than a straw, a feather. But stay, I pray you, our stock is in God's hand; fire or water can not destroy it, nor can turn of the market lessen our store.

5 Brethren, what a trifling loss it is for you to go through this wilderness and never taste sin's sugared pleasures!

6 What poorer is a soul to want pride, lust, and the gauds of this vain and worthless world? Nature hath no cause to weep at the want of such toys as these. O esteem it your gain to be a child of God, an heir of glory.

7 The very hope of heaven, under troubles, is like wind and sails to the soul, and like wings when the feet come out of the snare.

8 I beseech you, let Christ be dearer and dearer unto you.

9 Let the winning of souls be top and root, flower and blossom of your joys and desires on this side of the sun and moon.

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10 In the day when the Lord shall pull up the four stakes of this clay tent of the earth, and the last grain of sand shall be at the point of falling down in your time-glass, and the Master shall call the servants of the vineyard to give them their hire, ye will esteem the blossom of this world's glory but like the colors of the rainbow that no man can put into his purse.

11 Then your labor and pains will smile upon you and ye shall rejoice and be glad in the favor of your Lord.

12 Beloved, my Lord hath given me experience that our best fare here is hunger.

13 We are but at God's by-board in the lower house; we have cause to long for supper time and the full table up in the King's palace.

14 The world deserveth nothing but the outer court of our souls.

15 I see that this world is like a great fire: if a cold man stand at a reasonable distance it warms and comforts him; but if he go into the midst of it it burns him.

16 Men who have an indifferent hold of the world and stand at a proper distance from it are benefited thereby; but those who cast themselves into the midst of it

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are thereby swallowed up and forever lost. O but poor worldlings get but a paltry heaven!

17 Mark the fool's words: "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." Every word here is like the fool who speaks them. Blind liar! they are not laid up for the soul; for all his full barns and gold could never fill the soul. The poor soul did but look out at the two windows—the eyes—and behold them.

18 Then I counsel you, since you must go to the market and buy, spend not your money on an illusion; buy something that can be seen and heard and felt; buy Jesus Christ; Him ye may see and hear and touch; He is the True Possession, the Great and Everlasting Gain.

19 Ye can never make the world your own, but you must leave it all at the mouth of the grave and creep therein like a naked worm into its hole.

20 Christ you may take into the grave with you; ye may take Him up to heaven with you; ye may take Him to back you and speak for you in the last day of Judgment.

## Chapter II

*Of youth and its dangers. 6 Watch to be kept over thoughts and desires. 10 Youth a nest of temptations. 14 Warning against the deceitfulness of sin. 22 The gospel God's candle. 26 Guides for daily conduct.*

**O** YOUNG MEN, I counsel you to prayer and watching over your sins and the lusts of your body continually, for I know that acting orders go between the devil and your young blood.

2 Satan hath a friend at court in the heart of youth, and there pride, luxury, lust, revenge, and forgetfulness of God are his hired agents.

3 I warn you there is not such a glassy, icy, slippery piece of way betwixt you and heaven as youth, and I have experience to say with me here and to seal what I assert.

4 The ashes of the old sins of my youth are new fire of sorrow to me. I have seen the devil, as it were, dead and buried, and yet rise again and be a worse devil than

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ever he was; therefore, my brother, beware of a green young devil that hath never been overcome.

5 In youth Satan findeth dry sticks and dry coals and a hot hearthstone; and how can he with his flint strike fire, and with his bellows blow it up and fire the house.

6 Sanctified thoughts, thoughts made conscience of and called in and kept in awe, these are green fuel that burn not, and are water for Satan's coal.

7 Ye know that it is easy to master an arrow and to set it right ere the string be drawn; but when once it is shot and in the air and the flight begun, then have ye no more power to command it.

8 It were a blessed thing if your love could now level only at Christ, that He were the center of your aim and your desire.

9 For when your affection is loosed and out of hold, ye shall not then have power to call home the arrow, or to be master of your love; and ye will hardly give Christ what ye scarcely have yourself.

10 It is hard for you to conceive what a nest of dangerous temptations youth is, how inconsiderate, foolish, proud, vain,

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heady, rash, profane, and careless of God this piece of your life is; so that the devil findeth in you at this age a swept chamber and a garnished lodging for himself, and seven devils worse than himself.

11 For then the affections are, as it were, on horseback, lofty and stirring; then the old Adam hath blood-lust, much will and little wit, and hands and feet and wanton eyes and profane lips as servants to do his bidding.

12 Then a green conscience is as supple as the twig of a young tree. It is for every way, every fancy; every temptation moveth it and prevaileth with it.

13 Sinning will stupify the conscience and bring upon it more coverings and skin and less feeling and sense of guiltness; and when that is done the devil is like a mad horse that hath broken his bridle and runneth away with his rider whither he 'isteth.

14 O learn to know that which the apostle knew, the deceitfulness of sin. Give now in the morning of your life, I pray you, your wit, your will, and the green desires of youth's pleasures offhand to Christ.

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15 If He be not in you, ye will have guests and servants that do you ill and waste your substance riotously, and bring you at last into ruin and bankruptcy. But happy is your soul if Christ enter and take the keys of the house, and Himself command all your deeds and thoughts, your will and your desires.

16 Therefore I entreat you, young men, to begin now to frame your love and to cast it in no mold but one, that it may be for Christ only; for when your love is now in its framing and molding it will best take with Christ.

17 If any other get a hold of it when it is green and young, Christ will be an unco and strange world to you. Promise the lodging of your soul first away to Christ, and stand by your first covenant and keep to Jesus that He may find you faithful.

18 I entreat you, set forward, while yet your years are few, to climb the mountain of God.

19 O take pains for your salvation. For-sake the follies of vain and deceiving youth.

20 Acquaint yourselves with the Lord; hold fast Christ; hear His voice only.

21 The gospel is God's candle to let you

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see the way to heaven; study it with diligence.

22 Love not the world, neither the things of the world. Give God some of your thoughts both morning and evening, and forget Him not at any time.

23 Beware of lying, swearing, uncleanness, and all the rest of the works of the flesh, because "for these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."

24 If ye watch not night and day against the evils that beset you, ye will fall short, ye will be found wanting in the balance.

25 Strive to make prayer and reading and study your delight. Seek good companionship; avoid late hours; be wise in your affections.

26 Keep faith and truth with all men in bargains and covenants; fail not to give due respect to women; honor your parents; forget not the poor and needy.

27 Young men, I would that there were such hearts in you as to fear God and give your souls and bodies wholly to His service. O what a sweet couple, what a glorious yoke are youth and grace, Christ and a young man!

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28 May God open your young eyes to behold the beauty of righteousness, and guide your young feet that run with eagerness and guard them from the snares that are set about you, for His name and mercy sake. Amen.

## Chapter III

*Warning against selfishness. 8 Self the root of all sin.*

**B**RETHREN, unless ye slay the body of sin in you by sanctified self-denial, ye can not be Christ's martyrs and faithful witnesses.

2 If I could be master of that house-idol, Myself, my own mind, my own will, my own credit, my own ease, how blessed were I!

3 O how loath we are to forego our own packs and burdens that hinder us to run the race with patience. How hard it is to win one foot or one inch out of our own will, out of our own wit, out of our own ease and worldly lusts.

4 Alas that Self is the master idol to which we all bow. What made Eve sin, and what hurried her headlong upon the forbidden fruit but that wretched thing Self.

5 What drew that brother murderer to kill Abel? That wild, unruly Self. What

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was the cause of Solomon's falling into idolatry and multiplying strange wives? What but Self, whom he would rather pleasure than God.

6 What led Peter to deny his Lord? Was it not Self, the love of a whole skin? What made Judas sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver? The idolizing of avaricious Self.

7 What made Demas to go off of the way of the gospel to embrace the present world? Even self-love, the love of gain for his own selfish delights.

8 Every man blameth the devil for his sins; but the great devil, the house-devil of every man, the house-devil that eateth and lieth in every man's bosom, is that idol that killeth all, Self.

9 O blessed are they who can deny Self and put Christ in the room thereof!

10 Would God that I had not myself, but Christ; not my lust, but Christ; not my ease, but Christ; not my honor, but Christ! O sweet to say, "I live no more, but Christ liveth in me."

11 Brethren, beware how ye set up an idol against Christ. If we are redeemed from ourselves the world and the devil

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have no share in us. Be mindful of this, therefore, that ye put out yourselves and have none other to dwell within you but Christ Jesus.

12 Then ye shall be able to say, "Not I, but Christ; not my will, but Christ's; not my pleasure or my gain, but Christ, only Christ."

13 May God help you, then, to crucify Self for your soul's sake. Amen.

## Chapter IV

*Comfort for loss of loved ones. 5 Tribulation the portion of God's people; they must conform to Christ, their model. 15 Why their way is hedged about with thorns. 19 Benefits of trial.*

**Y**E have lost a child; nay, she is not lost to you who is found in Christ.

2 She is not sent away but only sent before, like unto a star which, going out of our sight, doth not die but shineth in another hemisphere.

3 Ye see her not, yet she shineth in another country. If her glass were but a short hour, what she wanteth of time she hath gotten of eternity; and ye have to rejoyce that ye have now some plenishing in heaven.

4 Build your nest upon no tree here; for ye see that God hath sold the forest to destruction; and every tree whereupon ye would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end that ye may fly and mount up and

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build upon the Rock, and dwell in the holes of the Rock.

5 I entreat you, beloved, faint not in the day of your adversity. Trust in Him though He should slay you. Faith is exceeding charitable and believeth no evil of God.

6 Men do lop the branches of their trees round about, to the end that they may grow up high and tall. The Lord hath this way lopped your branch in taking from you your child, to the end you should grow upward like one of God's cedars, setting your heart above where Christ is at the right hand of the Father.

7 Prepare yourself; you are nearer your child this day than you were yesterday. While ye prodigally spend your time in mourning for her, ye are speedily posting after her. Resist not the will of your Heavenly Father. Let God have His own; and ask of Him instead of your daughter whom He hath taken from you the daughter of faith, which is patience, and in calm and holy fear possess your spirit.

8 Ye would be sorry either to be or to be esteemed an atheist, and yet doth not the apostle think those to be hopeless

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atheists who mourn excessively for the dead?

9 God forbid that I should speak thus to you in rebuke, but only fearing your weakness; for your child was a part of yourself and therefore nature in you, being, as it were, cut and halved, will indeed be grieved.

10 But ye have to rejoice that while a part of you is on earth, a great part of you is glorified in heaven.

11 Follow her, but envy not; for indeed it is self-love in us that maketh us mourn for them that die in the Lord.

12 Take heed, therefore, that in showing your affection in mourning for your loved one ye be not, out of self-affection, mourning for yourself. Consider what the Lord is doing therein. Your child is plucked from the burning; she resteth from her labors, and your Lord, in that, is trying you and casting you in His purging fire.

13 Verily I should be grieved if I were not assured that ye have One with you in the furnace of your trial whose visage is like unto the Son of God.

14 I am convinced that if your health did not require it, God would not spend so

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much medicine upon you. All the brethren and sisters of Christ must conform to His image and copy in suffering.

15 Think ye how great your glory to be enrolled among those of whom it is said, These are they who came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

16 God buildeth a hedge of thorns in your way to hinder you from straying—a thorny hedge of daily grief, loss of children, of uncertainty of estate, of lack of worldly comforts, of fear of His anger for old, unrepented-of sins.

17 What lose ye if your Lord twist and plait the hedge daily thicker? Blessed be God that He will not let you find your paths!

18 Show yourselves His true followers by suffering without murmur, and be assured that they lose nothing who gain and hold fast Christ Jesus.

19 O what I owe to the file and the hammer and the furnace of my Lord Jesus! Grace tried is better than grace; and it is more than grace, it is glory in its infancy.

20 I now see that godliness is more than the outside and the ornaments and the

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deckings of this world. Who knoweth the truth of grace without a trial? Not one!

21 O how little Christ getteth of us but that which He winneth with much toil and pains! And how soon faith would freeze without a cross!

22 Why should I start at the plough of my Lord that maketh deep furrows on my soul? I know that He is no idle husbandman; He purposeth a fair harvest.

23 O that this white, withered ground were made fertile to bear a rich crop for Christ, by whom it is so painfully dressed; and that this fallow ground were broken up!

24 Beloved, ye do well not to make them witnesses of your grief who can not be curers of it. To whom ye may turn ye know.

25 I entreat you be exceeding generous with your Lord, who loveth while He chasteneth. I pray that the Comforter may bind up your wounds, and that His grace may be with you more and more abundantly.

## Chapter V

*The world to be lightly regarded. 6 The fleeting vanities thereof. 12 What to keep and what to cast aside. 18 Lay hold firmly upon Christ.*

**O** THAT our souls would so fall at odds with the love of this world as to think of it as a traveler doth of a drink of water, which is not any part of his treasure, but is only a help on his journeying.

2 For as a child can not hold two apples in his little hand, but one putteth the other out of its room, so neither can we be masters and lords of two loves, the world and Christ.

3 Many there be who settle down in this inn of the world as though they were permanent lodgers thereat, and make no preparation of scrip and baggage for the great journey that is no near at hand.

4 They eat and drink, but time standeth not still; they laugh, but the day fleeth away; they sleep, but their hours are reckoned and put by as finished.

5 As a flood is carried back to the sea,

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so doth time carry us with wings to the grave. What then will be the short-born pleasures of our yesterdays, but as a snow-ball melted quite away?

6 We know that this world is but a shadow, a short-living creature under the law of time. Within less than threescore years, when we look back on it, we shall laugh at the fleeting vanities thereof as feathers flying in the air, and as the houses of sand within the sea-mark which the children of men are building.

7 "Ye which rejoyce in a thing of naught," God said of Israel, and so may He also say of us. Surely we spin our spider's web with pain, and build our rotten and tottering house upon a lie and falsehood and vanity.

8 For when the day is ended, and this life's lease expired, what have men of this world's glory but a fancied treasure, an unenduring fabric, a dream that vanisheth away?

9 Beloved, I entreat you, give up with the courting of this vain world; seek not the alien's movables, but the Son's heritage in heaven.

10 I rejoyce that the favor of Christ in

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you can not be blown away with winds, either from hell or the foul blasts from this corrupted world.

11 O sit far back from the walls of this pesthouse, even the pollutions of this defiling world.

12 Keep your taste, your love, your hope of heaven; it is not good that your love and your Lord should be in two separate countries.

13 Take in your journey what you may carry with you—your conscience, faith, hope, patience, meekness, goodness, brotherly kindness—for such wares as these are of great price in that new country whither ye go.

14 As for other things, which are but the world's vanity and trash, since they are but the house-sweepings, ye will be wise to make them none of your burden. Ye found them here, leave them here and let them keep the house.

15 Your sun is well-turned and low; be nigh your lodging against night. We go one and one out of this great market till the town be empty and the two lodgings, heaven and hell, be filled.

16 At length there will be nothing in the earth but bare walls and burnt ashes, and

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therefore it is best to make away towards home.

17 Antichrist and his master are busy to plenish hell and to seduce many, and stars, great Church lights, are falling from heaven; they fall from their birthrights by going after strange doctrines.

18 Fasten your hold firmly upon Christ. I verily esteem Him my richest possession; He is my helper and strength in these my bonds.

19 Having Him, though my cross were as heavy as ten mountains of iron, when He putteth His sweet shoulder under me and it my cross is but a feather.

20 I please myself in the choice of Christ; He is my choice portion in heaven and earth. I rejoice that I have such a Friend waiting for me in that fair country.

21 God, send a joyful meeting; and in the meantime, the traveler's charges for the way—I mean a burden of Christ's love to sweeten the journey and to encourage a breathless runner; for when I lose breath climbing the mountain, He reneweth breath within me.

22 Now the very God of peace establish you to the day of His appearance.

## Chapter VI

*To his flock at Anwoth after his banishment.*

*5 He envies the birds that build in the church there. 10 Sorrowing yet always rejoicing. 16 The saints' refuge. 18 Exhortation to stand fast in the truth.*

**B**RETHREN in Christ, I write unto you from Aberdeen, where I am a prisoner by order of the authorities.

2 For it hath been adjudged that in my eagerness for the truth I have uttered treason against the king, for which cause I am banished from you and condemned to silence for a term that is in the king's pleasure.

3 My closed mouth, my silent Sabbaths, the memory of my communion with Christ in many fair, fair days in Anwoth have almost broken my faith in halves.

4 I had one joy out of heaven, next to Christ my Lord, and that was to preach Him to this faithless generation; and that they have taken from me. It was to me as the poor man's one eye; and they have put out that eye.

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5 When I think upon the sparrows and swallows that build their nests in the kirk at Anwoth, and of my dumb Sabbaths, my sorrowful eyes make me look upon Christ as angry with me; but I forbid my thoughts to receive slanders of my Preserver.

6 I desire to give no faith, no credit to my sorrow when it suggests hard thoughts of Christ; yet these thoughts awake with me in the morning: O what service can a silenced man do in Christ's house? Alas, I am a dry tree! I can neither plant nor water. O if I might but speak to three or four herdboys of my Master, I would be satisfied to be the meanest and most obscure of all the pastors in the land.

7 But He saith, "I will not send you; I have no errands for you." My desire to serve Him is sick of jealousy, lest He be unwilling to employ me.

8 This thought is seconded with another, What have I done in Anwoth? The fair work that my Master began there is like a bird dying in the shell; and what, then, shall I have to show of all my labor in the day of my appearance before Him, when the Master of the vineyard calleth the laborers to give them their hire?

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9 Yet, thirdly, I truly repent and pray Christ to pardon my querulous, unbelieving sadness and sorrow.

10 I rue from my heart that I yielded so far to the law as to apprehend wrath in my Lord Jesus, for truly I am a debtor to His love; but I wish He would give me grace to learn to do without His comforts, and to give thanks and believe when the sun is not in the firmament.

11 I look often with bleared and blind eyes to my Lord's cross, and when I look to the wrong side of His cross, I know I miss a step and stumble. Surely I see that I have not strength of my own for carrying me to heaven; I must go in at heaven's gate borrowing strength from Christ.

12 It was good for me to come to Aberdeen, to learn a new mystery of Christ: That His promise is to be believed against all appearance.

13 It is true my silent Sabbaths have been and still are glassy ice whereon my faith can scarce hold its feet, and I am often blown back with a storm of doubting; yet truly my bonds all this time are perfumed with the deep love of Christ.

14 God hath made many flowers, but

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the fairest of them all is heaven, and the Flower of all flowers is Christ.

15 O why do we not flee up to that Lovely One! O for as much love as would go round about the earth and over the heaven—yea, the heaven of heavens and ten thousand worlds—that I might let it all out upon fair, fair, only fair Christ! But alas! I have nothing for Him, yet He hath much for me.

16 I creep under my Lord's wing in the great shower, and the water can not reach me. We may sing even in our winter's storm, in expectation of a summer sun at the turn of the year.

17 For no created power in hell or out of hell can mar our Lord Jesus His music, or spoil our song of joy. In that hope we rest.

18 Beloved, stand fast in the truth of Christ which ye have received. Yield to no winds, but ride out the storm, Christ being your firm anchor.

19 We expect tribulation here. God's wheat in this land must go through Satan's sieve; but their souls shall not faint, neither shall their faith fail in the day of trial.

## A NEW EPISTLE

20 I beseech you, pray for me, God's prisoner, that He would send me again among you to preach and to minister unto the needs of His people. His grace be with you.

## Chapter VII

*Of sin and the world. 5 None can have two heavens. 9 Sacrifice demanded of the Christian. 14 Earthly things doomed to destruction.*

**F**OR he that counteth little of sin counteth little of God. Those who take sin into their bosom are cruel to their Redeemer, for they love their lusts that pursued Christ to His death and nailed Him to the cross.

2 Beware, then, by going on in sin, of saying "Amen" to the shedding of Christ's blood.

3 When the workers of iniquity are taken out of this life, it is said to be a cutting off; but it is not said so of the godly. "Merciful men," saith the Prophet Isaiah, "are taken away." God taketh away merciful men in His arms as children; but the wicked He cuts off like the trees of the field, and pulls them up by the roots. "Ekron shall be rooted up." (Zeph. 2:4.)

4 Set not your hearts upon the world,

## A NEW EPISTLE

since God hath not made it your portion; for it will not fall to you to get two portions and to rejoice twice, and to be happy twice, and to have an upper heaven and an under heaven also.

5 Christ our Lord and His saints were not so, and therefore let go your grip of this life and of the good things thereof. Set not your affections upon them nor desire them.

6 Where many mourn, wherefore should ye have joy; where many lack comforts, wherefore should ye have abundance and ease?

7 Have ye great possessions, how can ye fight the good fight with this hampering burden upon your back? O cast it from you. Divide with your neighbor who hath need and it shall be as treasure put by in heaven.

8 Ye know this, that ease and fullness of bread and meat provoketh lusts and desires of the flesh. "This was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom," saith the Prophet Ezekiel; "pride, fullness of bread and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters."

9 It is not the part of God's children to

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make a treasure here. Anything under the covering of heaven which we can build upon is but ill ground and a sandy foundation.

10 There is naught created that we can lean upon that shall not fail us, and therefore it is better to rest upon God than to sink or fall; and our weak souls must have a bottom and a building place, for they can not stand of themselves.

11 Brethren, I beseech you lend your thoughts earnestly to these things and learn to contemn this world and to turn your eyes and your heart away from beholding the masked beauty of all things under Time's law and doom.

12 Look beyond these passing things and behold Him who is invisible and everlasting, and the exceeding riches and glory of His everlasting Kingdom, which shall be your abundant reward.

13 Fire will fly over this earth and all that is in it; even lightnings of destruction from the Almighty Hand. And all the treasures thereof shall crumble away and become as nothing.

14 Woe that men's souls should be mad and drunken with the love of this passing,

## A NEW EPISTLE

lawless life! They think to make a nest for their hopes, and to take quarters and conditions of hell and death, that they may have ease, long life, and peace; but in the morning they shall awake from their dream and bitterness shall be their portion.

15 Their hope shall fail like a tree that is withered at the root; their treasure shall become a vain thing. Dismay shall seize upon them and they shall mourn and there shall be none to comfort them.

16 For the estates of the wicked, if they do not repent, shall consume away, and the ravens shall dwell in their houses, and their glory shall be shame.

## Chapter VIII

*Of the way to heaven. 5 The Christian must have trials. 13 He desires not a flowery path.*

DEAR ones in Christ, I know the way to heaven is judged a harsh way, a low-lived, sad, and melancholy way, full of tears and mourning.

2 It is known to all divines that in every regenerated man there is, as it were, two men, the new and the old, the spirit and the flesh; and these two have contrary ways, contrary hearts, and contrary judgments.

3 When the children of God think the way to heaven unpleasant and full of sorrow, then the old nature bears rule in the soul, and that is but the opinion of your carnal man.

4 But ask the opinion of the new man within you what he thinks of the way to heaven. O he will say God is dearer to him than thousands of gold and silver,

## A NEW EPISTLE

sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. "Whom have I on earth but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

5 If then ye ask what is the reason of their mourning, tears, wrestling, agonies, and terrors of a guilty conscience, I answer, We may not think the child of God, in his way to heaven, will never get a shower. Nay, ye have seen that sometimes near midsummer there will fall a blast of hail; but nature and the season of the year will soon dry it up, and it will clear in the west, and the birds will renew their songs, and the roses will spread their leaves again when the sun shines.

6 So, even whilst it is summer, the Sun of Righteousness will hide His face from the poor believer; Christ will seem to withdraw Himself and the conscience will quake and tremble. It was so with Hezekiah when he mourned to God as a dove and chattered like a crane. It was not fear of death, but because when he was so near death God, in his feeling, was so far from him.

7 For these withdrawals, I look upon them as like unto leaving fields of lean and

## A NEW EPISTLE

weak land to lie for a time unploughed, until they gather sap for a better crop.

8 We know that as night and shadow are good for flowers, and the moonlight and dews are better than continual sun, so is Christ's absence of special use, and that it hath some nourishing virtue in it, and giveth sap to humility, and putteth an edge on hunger, and furnisheth a fair field to faith to put forth itself and to exercise its fingers in gripping it seeth not what.

9 A soul may be in as thriving a state when thirsting, seeking, and mourning after the Lord as when actually rejoicing in Him, as much in earnest when fighting in the valley as when singing on the mountain.

10 It should be enough for us, if we were wise, that Christ will have joy and sorrow halvers of the life of the saints, and that each of them should have a share of our days, as the night and the day are kindly partners and halvers of time and take it up between them.

11 But if sorrow be the greedier halver of our days here, I know that joy's day will dawn and do more than recompense all our sad hours.

## A NEW EPISTLE

12 Let my Lord Jesus, since He willeth so to do, weave my bit and span-length of time with white and black, weal and woe, with the Bridegroom's coming and His sad departure as warp and woof in one web; and let the rose be neighbored with the thorn, yet hope that maketh not ashamed hath written a letter and lines of cheer to the mourners in Zion that it shall not be long so.

13 I desire not to go on the lee-side or sunny side of religion, or to put truth betwixt me and the storm; my Savior did not so for me, who in His suffering took the windy side of the hill.

14 When we are over the water, Christ shall cry down crosses and up heaven for evermore; and down hell and down earth and down sin and down sorrow, and up glory, up life, up joy for evermore.

15 In this hope I rest quietly in Christ's bosom, until He come. Amen.

## Chapter IX

*The sin that remains in our nature. 9 Its dominion broken by grace. 11 The guard that is to be set.*

THERE is a body of sin that remains in our nature; the apostle speaks of it as if it had us clasped in its arms, "the sin that doth so easily beset us," or goes round about us.

2 For original sin has us in fetters as captives; it is a thing we can not win from, go where we may.

3 It is like a ghost, ever in our eye; behind us pulling us back, before us standing in our way, at our right hand hindering us to hear, pray, believe, hope.

4 It is like the wind in our face, or in the face of a weak traveler that blows him, some steps back where he goes one forward.

5 It is as a man going round about us. It is in the mind, darkening the judgment; in the will, turning it in the contrary way. God bids us walk in the lowest room down in the affections, but we do the contrary.

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And this sin, as weedbind goes about a tree, wraps about us in every way.

6 It is a serpent biting our heel, and cries, "A lion in the way!" When God draws, sin holds back, at meat, drink, and sleep.

7 It is a mocker; it promises us much, but gives us the wind; and yet we believe it.

8 How, now, may we shake off this sin which dwells in us and goes round about us, even unto the grave.

9 The dominion of it we break by grace. Every sore heart we have for this indwelling sin breaks, as it were, a bone of old Adam, weakens his strength, and makes him cry out in pain.

10 As we repent and advance in holiness, we conquer this indwelling sin.

11 Now, if ye shall ask a guard to watch your soul, take these following. The first soldier is "*the fear of God.*" See that ye set Him in the very entry of your souls.

12 The second soldier to set there is "*sobriety and temperance.*" Noah and Lot forgot these, and therefore they fell into a nap or sleep. This sobriety is a modest and wise carriage in the enjoying of the pleas-

## A NEW EPISTLE

ures of this life. "Be sober, be vigilant," says the Apostle Peter, "for thine adversary goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

13 The third soldier is that virtue which Solomon calls "*discretion*;" let it be before the door to try what guests come into the soul, what thoughts enter in. As it is written, "Try the spirits whether they be of God or not." One devil is like another devil, and when we are thinking we are holding out one, another rushes in.

14 The fourth soldier is "*suspicion and fear of our own ways*," which should hold us waking. "Blessed is the man that feareth always." Paul said to Timothy, "In all things watch." Even in the things of this life, in the setting of a cup to our head, in the putting a bite to our mouth at table we should watch, for did not the devil enter into Judas with the meat? Therefore, I entreat you, let no man believe too well of himself or be caution for his own heart, "for the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

15 The fifth soldier to stand is "*meditation on death*;" let the meditation of death

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stand in the threshold of the door. It is written in Lamentations, "Wherefore doth Jerusalem come down wonderfully, but because she remembered not her last end." If men would remember Christ and that death and judgment come in the night as a thief, they would have their hand ever at the door-bar and stand behind the door, watching till the Lord should knock. "Blessed is the man whom his Lord shall find so doing."

16 The sixth soldier, that keeps the soul ever on foot, is "*a continual practice of good, and walking with God.*" Moving, walking, and serious business keep men from slumbering. Only be even-down honest with God, walking with Him in sincerity and truth and looking unto His mercy, justice, kindness, and power.

17 The seventh soldier, and the last man of the guard that I shall now mention, is "*Faith.*" These seven be valiant soldiers, and strong in the service of Christ. These are the graces of God that keep Christ in the soul.

## Chapter X

*Danger of trusting to a name. 7 Conversion no superficial work. 13 Exhortation to make sure of Christ.*

**I** BESEECH you, in the Lord Jesus, to mind your country above, and now when old age, the twilight going before the darkness of the grave, is come upon you, advise with Christ ere you put foot into the ship and turn your back on this life.

2 Many are beguiled with this, that they are free of scandalous and crying abominations; but the tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is for the fire.

3 The man that is not born again can not enter into the Kingdom of God. Common honesty will not take men to heaven.

4 Alas, that men should think that ever they met with Christ who never had a sore heart for sin!

5 I know that God hath given you light and a knowledge of His will; but that is not all, neither will that do your turn. I

## A NEW EPISTLE

wish you an awakened soul, that ye may not beguile yourself in the matter of your salvation.

6 My beloved brethren, search your hearts diligently and try if the life of God and Christ be truly in you.

7 Many are carried over sea to a far country in a ship whileas they sleep much of all the way; but men are not landed at heaven sleeping.

8 I say unto you scarce are the righteous saved; and many run as fast as either you or I who miss the prize and the crown.

9 Men think it but a stride or a step over to heaven, but have we not cause to tremble and ask our poor souls, "Whither goest thou? Where shalt thou lodge at night? Where are the charters and writs of thy heavenly inheritance?"

10 O see, see that ye give not your salvation a wrong cast, and think all is well, and leave your soul loose and uncertain until the door is shut upon you.

11 I entreat you, look to your building and your groundstone, and what signs of Christ are in you, for your sun is low in the heavens. Be watchful, be swift; strive to go a step above and beyond ordinary pro-

## A NEW EPISTLE

fessors; resolve to sweat more and run faster than they do for salvation.

12 A slack, cold pace to heaven will cause many a man to want his lodgings at night and to lie in the fields. Therefore, while the light remaineth, O hasten your steps, delay not!

13 It is time now in the evening to cease from your ordinary employ, and high time to be assured of your lodging when night falleth upon you. It is your salvation that is in dependence, and that is a great and weighty business, howbeit many make light of the matter.

14 May the Lord Jesus enable you, by His grace, to work it out, to be firm-fixed in Him, and to be ready, so that ye come safely into His Heavenly Kingdom.

## Chapter XI

*To one who suffered for the faith. 8 Ye are the King's gold, stamped with His image. 14 Forgive as you have been forgiven.*

**D**EARLY beloved in Christ Jesus, I fear that you are moved and cast down because of the harshness of evil men against you.

2 But I pray you be comforted, for a just cause bides under the water only as long as wicked men hold their hand above it; their arm will weary, and then the just cause shall swim above; and the light that is sown for the righteous shall spring and grow up.

3 If ye were not strangers here, the dogs of the world would not bark at you.

4 Ye shall see all the windings and turnings that are in your path to heaven out of God's Word; for He will not lead you to the Kingdom by the nearest way, but you must go through "honor and dishonor, by evil and good report, as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet

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well known, as dying, and, behold we live, as chastened and not killed, as sorrowful and yet always rejoicing.”

5 The world is one of the enemies that we have to fight with, but a vanquished and overcome enemy, a beaten soldier; for hath not Christ, our Captain, said, “Be of good courage, for I have overcome the world?”

6 You shall neither be free of the scourge of the tongue nor of disgraces, if you follow Christ.

7 I beseech you, by the blood of the Redeemer, keep a good conscience, as I trust you do.

8 You live not upon men’s opinion; gold may be gold and have the king’s stamp upon it, when it is trampled upon by men.

9 Happy are you if, when the world trampleth upon you in your credit and good name, yet you are the Lord’s gold, stamped with our King’s image, and sealed by the Spirit unto the day of your redemption.

10 This is your glory, that Christ hath put you in the roll with Himself, and with the rest of the witnesses who are come out

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of great tribulation. Blessed are they who are content to take strokes with weeping Christ.

11 Open your hearts, I beseech you, to the Spirit of love; for love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

12 Love hath strong, broad shoulders; the high mountains and the heavy burdens will not tire love. Love will never sweat, faint, nor fall in a swoon, for God helpeth love.

13 Get love and no burden Christ will lay on you will be heavy. Lay all hell upon a soul that has love to Christ and he will run with the burden.

14 Pray for your adversaries; remember how many thousands of talents of sins your Master hath forgiven you. Forgive ye, therefore, your fellow-servant's one talent.

15 It is a benefit to you that the wicked are God's fan to purge you; and I hope they shall blow away no wheat, or spiritual graces, but only your chaff.

16 May the Lord Jesus help you and lead you to see the beauty of His way of forgiveness and mercy and loving kindness.

## Chapter XII

*Comfort concerning the Church. 6 Christ shall lead her again unto triumph. 11 Rules for Christian conduct.*

**D**EARLY beloved, yet a little while and ye shall see the salvation of the Lord.

2 Fear not for Mount Zion, for they shall be sore disappointed who thirst for her destruction.

3 They shall be as when a hungry man dreameth that he eateth, but behold! he awaketh and his soul is empty. Or like when a thirsty man dreameth that he drinketh, but behold! he awaketh and is faint, and his soul is not satisfied; so shall it be with those who fight against Mount Zion.

4 Therefore let not the enemies of the Lord affright you; they shall not make Mount Zion their heritage, neither shall they dwell within her walls.

5 For the enemies of Zion shall be found out; He hath vengeance laid up in store for them, and the poor and needy shall not always be forgotten.

## A NEW EPISTLE

6 Howbeit this day be not Christ's, the morrow shall be His. He will repair the old waste places, and His ruined houses shall again be made the dwelling place of Jacob.

7 The dry olive tree shall bud again, and the dry bones shall live; the Spirit shall come upon them and they shall live.

8 The Bride will yet sing as in the days of her youth; yea, she will rejoice as in times past, and her joy none shall take from her.

9 Wait ye patiently, therefore, upon the Bridegroom's coming, and ye shall behold His triumph and rejoice again in His glory and His strength.

10 Our fair day is coming, and the court will change and wicked men will weep after noon, and sorer than the sons of God who weep in the morning. Let us believe and hope for God's salvation.

11 Some among you urgently desire of me rules for your guidance, that ye may be faithful in your godly service.

12 Take these things to heart, therefore, and follow them diligently. First, that hours of the day, less or more time, for the Word and prayer, be given to God, and not grudgingly.

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13 That in the midst of your worldly employments there should be some thoughts of sin, death, judgment, and eternity, with at least a word of ejaculatory prayer to God.

14 That ye beware of wandering of heart in private prayers.

15 That ye grudge not, howbeit ye come from prayer without a sense of joy. Down-casting, sense of guiltiness, and hunger are often best for us.

16 There be two herbs that grow quickly in our souls in summer weather—security and pride. Humility is a strong flower that grows best in winter weather and under storms and afflictions.

17 That the Lord's day, from morning to night, be spent always in private and public worship.

18 That the tongue be guarded, wandering and idle thoughts avoided, and sudden anger and desire for revenge, even of such as persecute the truth, be shut out of your hearts, for often we mix our wild-fire with our zeal.

19 That in dealing with men, faith and truth in covenants and trafficking be scrupulously regarded; that ye deal with

## A NEW EPISTLE

all men in sincerity, and that your conduct in all things, before the world, may speak favorably of Christ, whom ye profess to serve.

20 There are many minor things, also, whereby I have been helped, albeit the demands of the world upon you set some of these beyond your doing. I have been benefited by riding alone a long journey in giving that time to meditation. By abstinence and giving days to God. By praying for others; for by making an errand to God for them I have gotten a blessing for myself.

21 I charge you, beware of pride. Amongst all sins, pride takes the most room; it is a cumbersome neighbor to God, and would be upon His bounds.

22 Beware also of covetousness. The covetous man can not enter into heaven; there are strange tatters of clay hanging on him. He can not enter till the bunch be driven off his back.

23 Beware of worldliness. Worldly men are too great to win through the strait door. O how big worldliness doth make men!

24 Beware of impatience, repining, and peevishness, which are the sins of sick

## A NEW EPISTLE

people. Wrong tempers indulged grieve, if they do not quench the Spirit.

25 Take heed to all these things, observe and deny them, that ye may glorify God before men.

26 Finally, brethren, acquit yourselves in all things good soldiers of Christ, who is the Captain of your salvation.

## Chapter XIII

*Afflictions of God's chosen. 7 Christ and His cross not separable here. 16 A glorious company of martyrs. 21 Our soft natures would choose ease and comfort.*

**I** HAVE heard of your heaviness, and of the temptations and trials that press sore upon you.

2 Fear not, I entreat you, nor turn aside from Christ because of your afflictions.

3 So it was with the Lord's apostle when he was come with the gospel to Macedonia; his flesh had no rest; he was troubled on every side and knew not what side to turn him unto, without were fightings and within were doubts and fears.

4 Your troubles also are many and great, yet not an ounce weight beyond the measure of Infinite Wisdom, nor beyond the measure of grace that He can bestow.

5 Our blessed Lord never yet brake the back of His child, nor marred the work of His own hands.

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6 I know that no man hath a velvet cross, but the cross is made of that of which God will have it.

7 Take His cross with Him cheerfully. Christ and His cross are not separable in this life; howbeit Christ and His cross part at heaven's door, for there is no house-room for crosses in heaven.

8 One tear, one sigh, one sad heart, one fear, one loss, one thought of trouble can not find lodging there; they are but the marks of our Lord Jesus down in this wide inn and stormy country, on this side of death.

9 Sorrow and the saints are not married together; or suppose it were so, heaven would make a divorce. In me my Lord's sweet presence eateth the bitterness out of all sorrow and suffering. Love hath given my cup a pleasant savor.

10 I think it is a sweet thing that Christ saith of my cross, "Half mine," and that He divideth these sufferings with me and taketh the larger share to Himself—nay, that I and my cross are wholly Christ's.

11 My cross hath become, as it were, all crystal, so that I can see through it Christ's fair face and heaven.

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12 Beloved, ere we knew aught of Christ, it was so that if we had the cross at our own election, we would either have law-surety for freedom from it, or else we would have it honeyed and sugared with comforts so as the sweet should overmaster the gall and wormwood.

13 But we have learned that Christ knoweth how to breed the sons of His house; let us then give Him leave to take His own way of dispensation with us, and, though it be rough and hard to endure, yet we will trust His all-seeing wisdom and loving kindness.

14 We can never have as much sweet patience with our Lord as He hath borne to us. I know that for our good there can not be a dram-weight less of gall in our cup.

15 When God's people can not have a providence of silk and roses, they must be content with such an one as He bestoweth upon them.

16 We would not go to heaven but with company, and we perceive that the way of those who went before us was through blood, through fire, and through many afflictions. Nay, Christ Himself went in

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over the door-threshold of Paradise bleeding to death.

17 Heaven is but a company of noble venturers for Christ. They are not worthy of Him who will not take a blow for the Master's sake.

18 Brethren, I entertain no other thought than that ye have learned to stoop, and that ye have found that the fruits which grow upon that crabbed tree of the cross are as sweet as it is sour to bear, especially since Christ hath borne the entire cross, while His saints must bear but the fragments, as the apostle says, "the remnants" or "leavings" of the cross.

19 What is this lower kingdom of grace but Christ's hospital, the guest-house of sick folks whom the Great Physician hath cured upon a venture of life and death?

20 We know it is not the sunny side of Christ that we must look to here, and we must not forsake Him because of that, but must set our faces against what may befall us in following on till He and we be through the briars and bushes on fair ground.

21 Our soft natures would be borne through the troubles of this miserable life

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in Christ's arms, and it is His wisdom who knoweth our mold, that His children go wet-shod and sore-footed to heaven.

22 O how sweet a thing were it for us to make our burdens easy by framing our hearts to the burden and making our Lord's will to be our law and our guide.

23 Verily I find Christ and His cross not so ill to please, nor yet such troublesome guests as many declare; nay, with patience the cup of water which Christ giveth us becomes wine, and His dry bread turns sweet and pleasant to the taste.

24 Blessed are they who hold the crown upon His Kingly head and buy Christ's honor with their own losses and their own pains.

## Chapter XIV

*Invocation to praise the Almighty. 7 Who can lay rule upon God? 19 Christ's love is as the sea.*

O INDWELLERS of earth and heaven, sea and air, and O all created beings within the utmost circle of the great world, O come help to set on high the praises of our Lord.

2 O fairness of creatures, blush before His uncreated beauty!

3 O created strength, be amazed to stand before your strong Lord of Hosts!

4 O created love, think shame of thyself before this unparalleled love of heaven!

5 O angel wisdom, hide thyself before our Lord whose understanding passeth finding out!

6 O sun in thy shining beauty, for shame put up the web of darkness and cover thyself before thy brightest Master and Maker!

7 Who can lay rule upon God; who can measure Him whom we serve?

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8 Who can weigh Him; who can put the Almighty in the balance?

9 Ten thousand heavens would not be one scale, or half the scale of the balance to contain Him.

10 O black angels in comparison of Him!

11 O dim and dark and lightless sun in regard of that fair Sun of Righteousness!

12 O unsubstantial and worthless heaven of heavens when they stand beside my worthy and lofty and high and excellent Well-Beloved!

13 O weak and infirm clay-kings! O soft and feeble mountains of brass and weak created strength in regard of our mighty and strong Lord of armies!

14 O foolish wisdom of men and angels when it is laid in the balance beside the spotless, substantial wisdom of the Father!

15 If heaven and earth, and ten thousand heavens even round about these heavens that now are, were all in one garden of Paradise, decked with the fairest roses, flowers, and trees that can come forth from the art of the Almighty Himself; yet set but our one Flower that groweth out of the root of Jesse beside that orchard of pleasure, one look of Him,

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one view, one glimpse would infinitely exceed and go beyond the color, beauty, and loveliness of that Paradise.

16 O worthy, worthy, worthy Loveliness! O incomparable Jewel and Flower of heaven!

17 O less of the creatures and more of Thee, sweet Lord Jesus!

18 Open the passage of the well of love and glory on us, dry pits and withered trees.

19 What can quench the love of Christ? Nothing, nothing, for His love is as the sea. O to be a thousand fathoms deep in this sea of love!

20 O cruel time that tormenteth us and suspendeth our dearest enjoyments, when shall we be bathed and steeped, soul and body, down in the depths of this Love of loves?

21 O time, I say, run fast! O motions, mend your pace!

22 O Well-Beloved, be like a young roe on the mountains of separation! Post, post, and hasten our desired and hungered-for meeting! Love is sick to hear tell of to-morrow.

23 Who can find it in his heart to sin

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against love, and such a love as He beareth for us who is our Shepherd and our Redeemer, even the Son of the Living God?

24 O that I had a river of love, a sea of love that would never go dry, to bestow upon Christ!

25 O all ye who know His voice, enjoy your Beloved, and dwell upon His boundless love till Eternity come in Time's room and possess you of your everlasting happiness. Amen.

## Chapter XV

*He writes again from exile. 5 Yearns to preach again the beauty and glory of Christ. 9 Divine comfort. 15 Would not exchange his sadness for the world's joy.*

I AM at strange ups and downs here, and seven times a day do I lose ground. I am often put to swimming, and again my feet are set upon the Rock that is higher than myself.

2 My unfilled hours have given me to look within, and what do I behold there but abomination. Rebellion and anger against God possess me, and impatience maketh sour my spirit.

3 I sometimes think that Christ hath casten me over the dyke of the vineyard as a dry and withered tree and that He would have no more of my service. My dumb Sabbaths are like a stone tied to a bird's foot, that wanteth not wings to fly away.

4 O when shall this black night of my

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banishment be overpast and the day-star of my deliverance shine in the heavens?

5 O that I might preach His beauty and glory as once I did before my clay-tent be removed to darkness.

6 Nothing has given my faith a harder back-set till it crack again than my closed mouth. It is a painful battle for a soul sick of love to fight with absence and delays. Christ's "Not yet" is trying all the joints and fastenings of my armor.

7 I upbraided Christ and cried out that He was tired of me; my soul refused to be comforted.

8 Yea, I upbraided my Lord and said, "What aileth, Lord, that Thou shouldst cast me off and bring my soul to shame, for I have desired to be faithful in Thy house?"

9 But He laid His hand upon me and lifted me up; He hath poured balm upon my wounds and healed them; He hath opened my eyes to behold the grace beneath His gloom.

10 I see now that duties are ours, events are the Lord's.

11 When our faith goeth to meddle with events and to hold a court, as it were, upon God's providence, and beginneth to

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say, "How wilt Thou do this and that?" we lose ground.

12 We have nothing to do there. It is our part to let the Almighty exercise His own office and steer His own helm. And He steereth well.

13 Now I rest in confidence upon my Lord; daily He giveth me feasts of His love.

14 Mine adversaries know not what a courtier I am now with my royal Master, in whose cause I suffer. Sweet, sweet is His yoke, and His chains are of pure gold; sufferings for Him are perfumed.

15 I would not give my weeping for the laughing of all the fourteen prelates of Scotland. I would not exchange my sadness with the world's joy.

16 What further trials are before me I know not; but I know that Christ will have a saved soul of me over on the other side of the water, on the yonder side of crosses and beyond men's wrongs.

17 Beloved in Christ, thoughts of your souls depart not from me even in my sleep. Until it please God that I see you and be permitted to minister unto you, ye have the prayers of a prisoner of Christ, to whom I recommend you in all things.

## Chapter XVI

*Truth worth suffering for. 7 Joy sown, but  
evil prevails in the world till Christ come.  
12 A call to faith.*

**I** BLESS the Lord that the cause for which I suffer needeth not to blush before kings.

2 Christ's white, honest, and fair truth needeth neither to wax pale for fear nor to blush for shame.

3 I bless the Lord who hath given you grace to own Christ now when so many are afraid to profess Him and hide Him for fear they suffer loss by avouching Him.

4 Alas! that so many in these days are carried with the times; as if their consciences rolled upon oiled wheels, so they go any way the wind bloweth them.

5 And because Christ is not market sweet men put Him away from them.

6 As for ye, I entreat you to go on the strong upholders of Christ and His oppressed truth: the end of sufferings for Him is rest and gladness.

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7 Light and joy are sown for the mourners in Zion, and the harvest which is of God's own making, for time and manner, is not far off.

8 There will be rain and hail and storms in the saints' clouds ever, till God cleanse with fire the works of creation, and till He burn this botch-house of earth that men's sins have subjected unto vanity.

9 Blessed are they who suffer and sin not, for suffering is the badge that Christ hath put upon His followers.

10 Take what way we can to heaven, the way is hedged up with crosses; there is no way but to break through them. Wit and wiles, shifts and laws will not find out a way round the cross of Christ, but we must go through.

11 One thing by experience my Lord hath taught me, that the waters betwixt this and heaven may all be ridden if we be well horsed; that is, if we be in Christ; and not one shall drown by the way but such as love their own destruction.

12 O if we could wait on for a long time and believe in the salvation of God!

13 At least we are to believe good of Christ till He gives us the slip (which is

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impossible) and to take His Word for surety that He shall fill up the blanks in His promises, and open our blind eyes to read the mysteries beyond the veil.

14 Now the very peace of God establish you till the day of His glorious appearance.

## Chapter XVII

*The emptiness of earthly glory. 7 We are in an alien country. 13 Our attitude towards the world.*

**I**T has been told you that worldly glory is but a vapor, a shadow, a foam of the water; nay, less than this—even nothing.

2 Our Lord hath said in His Word, “The fashion of this world passeth away,” and compared it to an image in a looking-glass, for it is the looking-glass of Adam’s sons.

3 Some come to the glass and see in it the picture of Honor—and but a picture indeed, for true honor is to be great in the sight of God.

4 Others see in it the shadow of Riches—and but a shadow, indeed, for durable riches stand as one of the maids of Wisdom, upon her left hand. (Prov. 3:16.)

5 Again, a third sort see in it the face of painted Pleasure; and the beholders will not believe but the image they see in the glass is a living creature till the Lord come and break the glass in pieces.

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6 Then, like Pharoah awakened, they will say, "And behold it was all a dream!"

7 I persuade myself, brethren, that this world is to you an alien country, and that ye are like a traveler who has his bundle upon his back and his staff in his hand and his feet upon the highway.

8 There is an instinct in new-born children of Christ like the instinct of nature that leads birds to love certain places, as woods and forests, better than other places.

9 The instinct of nature makes a man love his mother country above all countries; the instinct of renewed nature and supernatural grace will lead you to love your country above and to call this world but a borrowed prison—to look upon it as a pilgrim journeying through to your own dear country.

10 This earth is but the clay portion of the ungodly, and therefore no wonder that the world should smile upon its own.

11 Ye know the mother will not let her own children want. Better be sons of God than the world's darlings.

12 I think it not ill that God's children get a hard bed and poor cheer in this world. Christ had not a house amongst

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them; they would not give Him a drink of water in His thirst.

13 I think God's children may call the world a strange inn and not their own home. Let us carry ourselves like the good-natured stranger who resolves never to quarrel with his host, howbeit his meat be ill, and his reckoning dear, and he have to sleep on a straw bed.

## Chapter XVIII

*State of the Church. 5 Believers purified by affliction. 10 Folly of seeking joy in a doomed world. 16 Should esteem the world a crucified idol. 22 Beauty of our Father's House.*

**B**RETHREN in Christ, my spirit is tormented with excessive grief for our present provocations and the rendings of our beloved Church.

2 I find it hard work to believe when the course of providence goeth crosswise to our faith, and when misted souls in a dark night can not know east by west, and our sea-compass seemeth to fail us.

3 Every man is a believer in daylight; a fair day seemeth to be made all of faith and hope.

4 What a trial of gold is it to smoke it a little above the fire?

5 But to keep gold of its fair color amidst the flames, and to be turned from vessel to vessel and yet to cause our furnace to sound and speak and cry the praises of the Lord is another matter.

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6 I know that my Lord made me not for fire, howbeit He hath fitted me in some measure for the fire.

7 I bless His high name that I wax not paler, neither have I lost the color of gold, and that His fire hath made me ready so that He may pour me into any vessel He pleaseth.

8 For a small wager I may justly quit my part of this world's laughter and give up with time and count the pleasures of this life as nothing.

9 I see, above all things, that we who have chosen the better part may sit down with folded arms and stretch ourselves upon Christ and laugh at the feathers that children are chasing here.

10 For I think the men of this world are like children in a dangerous storm in the sea, that play and make sport with the white foam of the waves thereof coming in to sink and drown them.

11 So are men making fool's sports with the white pleasures of a stormy world that will overwhelm and destroy them.

12 But what have we to do with their sports which they make?

13 If Solomon said of laughter that it

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was madness, what may we say of this world's laughing and sporting themselves with gold and silver, and honors and court, and broad, large conquests but that they are poor souls in the height and rage of a fever gone mad?

14 Then a straw and a fig for all created sports and rejoicing out of Christ!

15 Nay, I think that this world at its prime and perfection, when it is come to the top of its excellency and to the bloom, might be bought with an halfpenny, and that it would scarce weigh the worth of a drink of water.

16 There is nothing better than to esteem it our dead and slain idol, as did the Apostle Paul: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

17 Then let pleasures be crucified, and riches be crucified, and court and worldly honor be crucified.

18 And since the apostle saith that the world is crucified unto him, we may put this world to a hanged man's doom and to the gallows; and who will give much for a hanged man?

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19 Yet what a fair odor hath this dead carrion to many fools in the world! and how many wooers and suitors hath this hanged and festering body!

20 Fools are pulling it off the gallows and contending for it.

21 O when will we learn to be mortified men, and to have our fill of those things that have but their short summer quarter of this life!

22 If we saw our Father's house, and that great and fair city which is above the sun and the moon, how should we scorn the sham delights of this dying and decaying earth?

23 Fix not your affections, therefore, on the things of this life, but on the things to come. Send forward your furnishings and set your faces toward the New Jerusalem, that beautiful city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

24 May Christ be your guide and your strength, and keep your feet from straying into strange and fatal paths! His grace be with you.

## Chapter XIX

*Grace withereth without adversity. 6 God's workings incomprehensible. 13 Longing after a drop of God's fullness.*

**G**RACE withereth without adversity.  
Dry wells send us to the fountain.

2 Faith is the better of the free air and the sharp winter storm in its face.

3 If contentment were here, heaven would not be heaven.

4 Beloved, I have still great heaviness for my silence and my enforced standing idle in the field when there needeth sowers and reapers to make a great harvest for Christ.

5 If any but He had put this burden upon me, I could not have borne it. But my Lord hath done it, and I will lay my hand upon my mouth.

6 I know that His judgments, who hath done this, are past finding out. I have no knowledge to take up the Almighty in all His strange ways and passages of deep and unsearchable providences.

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7 For the Lord is before me, and I am so beclouded that I can not follow Him; He is behind me and following at my heels, and I am not aware of Him; He is above me, but His glory so dazzleth my twilight of short knowledge that I can not look up to Him.

8 He is upon my right hand, and I see Him not; He is upon my left hand, and within me, and goeth and cometh, and His going and coming are a dream to me; He is round about me and compasseth all my goings, and still I have Him to seek.

9 He is in every way higher and deeper and broader than the shallow and ebb hand-breadth of my short and dim light can take up, and therefore I would that my heart could be silent and resigned before Him who is above the understanding of men and of angels.

10 For the noonday light of the highest angels who see Him face to face seeth not the borders of His infiniteness and wisdom.

11 And therefore I would have it my happiness to look afar off, and to light my dark candle at the brightness of His glory, and to have leave to sit and content my-

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self with a traveler's light without the clear vision of an enjoyer.

12 I would see no more till I were in my country than a little watering and sprinkling of a withered soul, with some half-outbreakings and outlookings of the beams and small ravishing smiles of my Lord's dear face.

13 A little of God would make my soul to overflow as a river in the time of spring freshets.

14 Beloved, remember my bonds and help me with your thoughts and your prayers.

## Chapter XX

*Warns against backsliding. 8 Rejoices in his bonds for Christ. 17 Be free with the grace of God.*

**I**T will be my joy that ye follow after Christ till ye find Him.

2 My conscience is a feast of joy to me that I sought in singleness of heart, for Christ's love, to put you upon the King's highway, on the road which leads to our Father's house. Thrice blessed are ye if ye hold the way.

3 If ye depart from what I taught you, for fear or favor of men, or for desire of ease in this world, it can not be well with you in the end.

4 Build not your nest here; this is a hard, ill-made bed—no rest is in it for your soul.

5 Awake, awake and make haste to see that Pearl, Christ, that this world seeth not.

6 Time posteth away. Your night and your Master will be upon you within a

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clap; your hand-breadth of time will not bide you.

7 Take Christ, although a storm follow Him. Howbeit this day be not yours and Christ's, the morrow will be yours and His.

8 I would not exchange the joy of my bonds and imprisonment for Christ for all the joy of this miserable and foul-skinned world.

9 I rest joyfully on Christ and am filled with His love. The smell of Christ's wine and apples bloweth upon my soul. His cross is the sweetest that ever I bare; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird or sails are to a ship—to carry me forward to my harbor.

10 I charge you, brethren, be constant in watching and in prayer. Love not the world nor the vanities thereof; be humble and esteem little of yourselves.

11 Love your enemies and pray for them.

12 Make conscience of speaking the truth when none knoweth but God.

13 Keep your garments clean, as ye would walk with the Lamb clothed in white.

14 Strive to be dead to the world and to your own will and lusts; let Christ have

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a commanding power and a King's throne in you.

15 Desire the beauty of Christ; give out all your love to Him and let none fall by; learn in prayer to speak with Him.

16 Follow on; cling to your Savior and stray not from Him, who is the Rock of your salvation.

17 Take as many to heaven with you as ye are able to draw. The more ye draw with you, ye will be the welcomer yourself. Be no niggard or sparing churl of the grace of God.

18 Praise Him and glorify His name before men at all times and in all places.

19 I send water to the sea to speak of these things to you; but it easeth me to desire you to help me pay tribute of praise and honor to our loving Lord and King.

20 O for a soul as wide as the utmost circle of the highest heaven, that containeth all, to contain His love, which passeth all human understanding.

21 I beseech you to remember me in your prayers, as I remember you always.

## Chapter XXI

*To his brethren at Anwoth, exhorting them to abide in the truth. 5 Rules for Christian conduct. 16 Free, though in prison. 21 The exceeding loveliness of Christ.*

DEARLY beloved in Christ, my only joy out of heaven is to hear that the seed of God sown among you is growing and coming to a harvest.

2 For I ceased not while I was among you, in season and out of season, according to the measure of grace given unto me, to warn and stir up your souls to seek Christ, and I did communicate unto you the whole counsel of God.

3 And now again I charge and warn you, in the great and dreadful name and in the sovereign authority of the King of kings and Lord of lords, and I beseech you also by the mercies of God and by your hope of eternal salvation that ye keep the truth of God as I delivered it unto you before many witnesses, in the sight of God and His holy angels.

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4 Remember that I counseled you in many things, and not least in these: That ye should forbear the dishonoring of the Lord's blessed name in swearing, blaspheming, cursing, and profaning the Lord's Sabbath.

5 That ye should give that day, from morning to night, to praying, praising, and hearing of the Word, conferring and speaking not on your own things, but on the things of God, thinking and meditating on God's nature, Word, and work.

6 That ye should be humble, sober, and modest, forbearing pride, envy, malice, wrath, hatred, contention, lying, slandering, stealing, and defrauding your neighbor in grass, corn, cattle, in buying or selling, borrowing or lending, taking or giving, in bargains or in covenants.

7 That ye should work with your own hands and be content with that which God hath given you.

8 That ye remember that of all the created comforts God is the Lender; ye are but the borrower, not the owner; that ye may consider the poor and the needy.

9 That ye should study to know God and His will, and keep in mind the doctrine

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which I expounded unto you and speak of it in your houses and forget it not in the hours of your labor, nor when ye lie down at night, nor when ye arise in the morning.

10 And that ye should believe in the Son of God and obey His commandments, and to make your accounts in time with your Judge, because death and judgment are before you.

11 And if ye now have penury and want of that Word which I delivered unto you in abundance while I was among you, mourn for your loss of time and repent.

12 My soul pitieth you that ye should suck at dry breasts and be put to draw at dry wells. O that ye would esteem above everything else the Sun of Righteousness, the Lamb of God, and our well-beloved Jesus Christ, whose virtues and praises I have preached unto you with joy while I dwelt with you at Anwoth.

13 And that ye should call to mind the many glorious feasts in our Lord's house that ye and I had in Christ Jesus.

14 Dearly beloved brethren, fulfill my joy by keeping all these things in all diligence and sincerity.

15 I pray you also, beloved, be not an-

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gered against those in authority for that I am not free to come unto you. I am filled with joy and with the comforts of God. And howbeit this town be my prison, yet Christ hath made it my palace—a garden of pleasure, a field and orchard of delights.

16 I know likewise, though I be in bonds yet the Word of God is not in bonds. My spirit also is in free ward and beyond man's power to bind.

17 Sweet, sweet have His comforts been to my soul; my pen, my tongue, and my heart have not words to express the kindness, love, and mercy of my Well-Beloved to me in this house of my pilgrimage.

18 I charge you to fear and love Christ and to seek a house not made with hands, but your Father's house above.

19 This laughing and white-skinned world beguileth you like a harlot, and if ye seek more than God it shall give you the slip, to the endless sorrow of your heart.

20 Yet once again suffer me to exhort, beseech, and obtest you in the Lord, to think of His love and to rejoice in Him who is to be desired above and over all. I give you the word of a King that ye shall not repent your choice.

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21 O the exceeding loveliness of Christ! Angels' pens, angels' tongues—nay, as many worlds of angels as there are drops of water in the seas and fountains and rivers of the earth can not paint Him out to you. I think His sweetness, since I was a prisoner, has swelled upon me to the greatness of two heavens.

22 O for a soul as wide as the utmost circle of the highest heaven that containeth all to contain His great, immeasurable love!

23 I beseech you to love Christ, who is worthy of your love, and to rejoice that ye are privileged to suffer here for so kind and tender a Master.

24 Beloved, ye are in my prayers night and day. I can not forget you. I do not eat, I do not drink but I pray for you all. Fail not to remember me in your supplications to the Most High.

25 Grace and peace be with you, now and forever.

## Chapter XXII

*Win Christ at all hazards. 8 Many run far but fall by the way. 16 A violence to corrupt nature to be holy.*

**I** BESEECH you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to make good and sure work of your salvation, and try upon what foundation ye have builded.

2 If ye be upon sinking ground, a storm of death and a blast will loose Christ and you and wash you away off the Rock.

3 I entreat you, read over your life with the light of God's daylight and sun.

4 It is good to look to your compass and all that ye have need of ere you take shipping, for no wind can blow you back again.

5 O how fair have many ships been plying before the wind that, in an hour's space, have been lying in the sea bottom.

6 How many professors cast a golden luster, as if they were pure gold, and yet are under the skin and cover but base and reprobate metal?



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7 How many would shape the law like a wide coat, to take in both God and their own lusts?

8 And how many keep breath in their race many miles and yet come short of the garland and the prize.

9 My soul would mourn in secret for you if I knew your case with God to be but false work. Desire to have you anchored upon Christ maketh me fear your tottering and slips.

10 False underwater, not seen in the ground of an enlightened conscience, is dangerous; so is often falling and sinning against light.

11 O how fearfully are thousands beguiled with false skin grown over old sins as if the soul were cured and healed.

12 Beloved, I know the nature of some of you to be lofty, heady, and strong in you, and that it is more for you to be mortified and dead to the world than for others of less pride.

13 Ye will take a low ebb and a deep cut and a long lance to go to the bottom of your wounds in saving humiliation and to make you a won prey for Christ.

14 O be humbled, I pray you; walk

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softly! Down, down, for God's sake, with your top-sail! Stoop, stoop! it is a low entry to go in at heaven's gate.

15 There is infinite justice in the party ye have to do with; it is His nature not to acquit the guilty and the sinner; every man must pay either in his person or in his surety, Christ.

16 It is a struggle, a violence to corrupt nature for a man to be holy, to lie down under Christ's feet, to quit will, pleasure, worldly love, earthly hopes, and an itching of the heart after this gaudy and over-gilded world, and to be content that Christ trample upon all.

17 Come in, come in to Christ and see what ye want and find it in Him. He is the straight path, the nearest way of escape from all your burdens. I dare avouch that ye shall be dearly welcome to Him; my soul would be glad to take even the smallest part of the joy ye shall have in your Savior.

18 Grace, grace and peace be with you, from your pastor and prisoner in Christ.

## Chapter XXIII

*Comforting the brethren. 6 Christ kindest in His love when we are at our weakest.*

*9 We would have a cross of our own choosing. 14 God's way with His children.*

DEARLY beloved in Christ, I have heard of your troubles, how that men despise and afflict you; and the heaviness of your trials is sore upon me.

2 There are many heads lying in Christ's bosom, but there is room for yours among the rest; therefore, I entreat you, recline upon your dear Lord whose heart is all love and tenderness for His afflicted children.

3 Be comforted to know that the darkest path was walked by your Lord and Master. Trust Him and He will lead you through.

4 Often we employ not His love, and therefore we know it not. Put Christ's love to the trial and put upon it your burdens, and then it will appear love indeed.

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5 I should twenty times have perished in my affliction if I had not leaned my weak back and laid my pressing burden both upon the Stone, the Foundation Stone, the Corner-stone laid in Zion. And I desire never to remove from this safe and holy place.

6 Beloved, I know that Christ is kindest in His love when we are at our weakest. His mercy hath a set period and appointed place how far and no farther the sea of affliction shall flow, and where the waves thereof shall be stayed.

7 He prescribeth how much pain and sorrow, both for weight and measure, we must endure. Ye have then good cause to give your love to Christ; He who is afflicted in all your afflictions looketh not on you in your sad hours with an insensible heart or dry eyes.

8 God aimeth in all His dealings with His children to bring them to a high contempt of and deadly feud with the world. He withholdeth from them the childish toys and the earthly delights that He giveth unto others, but that He may have all their affections centered upon Himself.

9 Ah, we would have a cross of our own

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choosing, and would have our gall and wormwood sugared, our fire cold, and our death and grave warmed with the heat of life; but He who has brought many children to glory and lost none is our best Tutor.

10 Blessed be His name that the wheels of this confused world are rolled and cogged, driven according as the wise God willeth. I rejoyce that His sovereignty is lustered with loving kindness and mercy.

11 Rebuke your soul as doth the Psalmist, saying, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul; why art thou disquieted within me?"

12 That was the cry of one who was at the very overgoing of the precipice; but God held a grip on him.

13 In your tribulations, I entreat you, cling to the promises; they are our Lord's branches overhanging the dark waters that His poor, half-drowned children may grasp and save themselves from sinking.

14 I rejoyce that He hath chosen you in the furnace. This is an old way of Christ's; He keepeth the good old fashion with you that was in Hosea's days, "Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into

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the wilderness and speak to her heart." There was no talking to her heart while He and she were in the fair and flourishing city and at ease; but out in the cold, hungry, waste wilderness there could He speak unto her so that she might hear and heed.

15 Even so He brought you into the wilderness that He might win you unto Himself.

16 Beloved, sin not in your trials and the victory is yours. Pray, wrestle, and believe and ye shall overcome and prevail with God, as did Jacob. "Rejoice," says the apostle, "inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

17 I know that His sackcloth and ashes are better than the fool's laughter, which is like "the crackling of thorns under a pot."

18 Now the very God of peace confirm and establish you unto the day of the blessed appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Chapter XXIV

*Heaven not easily won. 5 Many are lured from the path. 10 Small value of earthly possessions.*

**G**RACE, mercy, and peace be with you. 2 Dearly beloved in the Lord, I earnestly desire to know the case of your souls and to understand that ye have made sure work of heaven and salvation.

3 Remember that it is by siege heaven is taken, and not by ease and supineness. The prize is free, but the race is not lightly won.

4 Many there be who start towards heaven who fall on their back and win not up to the top of the mount. It plucketh heart and legs from them and they sit down and give it over because the devil setteth a sweet smelling flower (this vain world) to their nose, wherewith they are beguiled and so forget or refuse to go forward.

5 Many again go far on and reform many things, and can find tears, as did Esau; and suffer hunger for truth, as did

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Judas; and wish and desire the end of the righteous, as did Balaam; and profess fair and fight for the Lord, as did Saul; and desire the saints of God to pray for them, as did Pharaoh.

6 Many prophesy and speak of Christ, as Caiaphas did; and walk softly and mourn for fear of judgments, as Ahab did; and put away gross sins and idolatry, as Jehu did; and hear the Word of God gladly and reform their life in many things, as Herod did; and say to Christ, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," as did the man who offered to be Christ's servant.

7 And yet all these are but like gold in outward color and appearance, being within naught but plated brass and base metal.

8 Take note, then, to try your hearts that ye be like none of these who, having gone far, yet fail of the heavenly goal.

9 Brethren, I recommend Christ to you in all things. Let Him have the flower of your heart and your love.

10 Set a low price upon all things but Christ, and cry down in your hearts the vain possessions of this world that will not comfort you when ye get summons to re-

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move and appear before your God and your Judge.

11 Remember that when the race is ended, and the play either won or lost, and ye are at the utmost circle and border of time, and shall put your foot within the march of Eternity, and all the good things of this short night-dream shall seem to you like the ashes of a bleeze of thorns or straw, and your poor soul shall be crying, "Lodging! lodging, for God's sake!" then shall your soul be more glad at one of your Lord's lovely and homely smiles than if ye had the charters of three worlds for all eternity.

12 O let pleasures and gain, will and desires of this world be put over into God's hand as arrested and guarded goods that ye can not meddle with.

13 Blessed were we if we could make ourselves master of that invaluable treasure, the love of Christ, or rather suffer ourselves to be mastered and subdued to Christ's love so as Christ were our "all things," and all other things our nothings and the refuse of our delights.

14 To God, who can direct, quicken, and strengthen you. I commend you. Amen.

## Chapter XXV

*To his parishioners. 3 Protestation of anxiety for their souls. 9 Delight in his ministry and in his Lord. 18 Warning against errors of the day. 22 Woe unto the hypocrite and the slumberer. 28 Intense admiration of Christ. 33 Wise admonitions.*

**D**EARLY beloved and longed-for in the Lord, my crown and my joy in the day of Christ. Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 I long exceedingly to know if the tie betwixt you and Christ holdeth, and if ye follow on to know the Lord.

3 My day thoughts and my night thoughts are of you: while ye sleep I am afraid for your souls that they be off the Rock.

4 Next to my Lord Jesus and His broken Church ye have the greatest share of my sorrow and of my joy; ye are the subject of my tears and the daily prayers of an oppressed prisoner of Christ.

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5 As I am in bonds for my high and lofty One, my royal and princely Master, my Lord Jesus, so I am in bonds for you.

6 For I could have slept in my warm nest and kept the fat world in my arms; I could have sung an evangel of ease to my soul and you for a time with my brethren, the sons of my mother, that were angry at me and have thrust me out of the vineyard.

7 If I could have been broken and drawn on to mire you, the Lord's flock, and to cause you to eat at pastures trodden upon with men's feet, and to drink foul and muddy waters.

8 But I could not, for the Almighty was a terror unto me, and His fear made me afraid. Therefore they drave me out from among you and made me to dwell, as it were, in the desert, where I mourn and am desolate.

9 For next to Christ I had but one joy, the apple of the eye of my delights—to preach Christ my Lord; and they have violently plucked that from me. It was to me like the poor man's one eye; and they have put out that eye and quenched my light in the inheritance of the Lord.

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10 But my faith looketh towards my Redeemer; I know that I shall see the salvation of God, and that my hope shall not always be cut off.

11 I charge you, brethren, beware of false doctrines that spring up and flourish about you. The breath of God's anger shall blow upon them and they shall wither away. They shall pass as a dream; they shall vanish utterly.

12 My sorrow shall want nothing to complete it if ye follow the voice of a stranger, one that cometh into the fold not by Christ, the door, but climbeth up another way.

13 If a man build his hay and stubble upon the golden foundation, Christ Jesus (already laid among you), and ye follow him, be assured that man's work shall not stand. The fire of God shall utterly consume it, and ye and he both, except ye repent, shall come under sure condemnation.

14 O if any pain, any sorrow, any loss I can suffer for Christ and for you were laid in pledge to buy Christ's love to you!

15 If I could obtain of my Lord, before whom I stand for you, the salvation of

## A NEW EPISTLE

you all, how rich a prisoner were I! My witness is above, your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations.

16 O that I could make you possess the unspeakable riches of Christ; that I could set your feet upon the one sure path to the Kingdom; and that I could lay my dearest joys, next to Christ my Lord, in the gap betwixt you and eternal destruction!

17 Dearly beloved, ye have heard of me the whole counsel of God. I charge you, by the blood of Christ, continue still in the truth which ye have received.

18 Beware of the new and strange leaven of men's invention now coming among you, and having no warrant from Christ, our Captain and our Lawgiver. I adjure you, open not your hearts to new doctrines born of the flesh and the lusts of the flesh that appeal to your softness and your love of ease.

19 Ye know that this is not your country; ye are in a rough and alien land that rejected your dear Lord and would have naught of Him: and shall the servant be treated better than his Master?

## A NEW EPISTLE

20 O then take Christ in His rags and losses, and as persecuted by men, and be content to sigh and pant up the mountain with Christ's cross on your back.

21 Woe unto him that hath one God and one faith for summer, and another God and another faith for winter; that hath a conscience for every fair and market, and the soul of him runneth upon these oiled wheels, time, custom, the world, and command of men.

22 Woe unto him that shifteth his burden upon another, that saith, "God forgive our pastors if they lead us wrong—we must do as they command," and layeth down his head upon Time's bosom, and giveth his conscience to a deputy, and sleepeth so till the smoke of hell-fire fly up in his throat and cause him to start out of his doleful bed. O that such a man would awake!

23 Woe unto them that slumber, their souls being drugged with a false sense of security. All men say they have faith: as many men and women now, as many saints in heaven. They had never a sick night for sin; conversion came to them in a dream.

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24 Alas! it is neither easy nor ordinary to believe and to be saved.

25 Many must stand, in the end, at heaven's gates. (Luke 13:25.) When they go to take out their faith they take out a fair nothing, a mockery, an illusion. O lamentable disappointment! I pray you, I charge you in the name of Christ, make fast work of Christ and salvation.

26 I know there are some believers among you, and I write to you, O poor, broken-hearted believers, all the comforts of Christ in the Old and New Testaments are yours. O what a Father and loving Savior ye have!

27 Ten thousand worlds, as many worlds as angels can number, would not be a grain in the balance to weigh Christ's excellency, sweetness, and love. His beauty is above all imaginable and created glory.

28 I would esteem myself blessed if I could make open proclamation and gather all the world that are living upon this earth, Jew and Gentile, and all that shall be born till the blowing of the last trumpet, to flock round about Christ and to stand gazing, wondering, and adoring His beauty and His sweetness.

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29 For His fire is hotter than any other fire, His love sweeter than common love, his beauty surpasseth all other beauty. O if ye would fall in love with my Master, how blessed were I! How glad would my soul be to help you to love Him only!

30 But amongst us all how small is the best of our love against His great deserts!

31 O invite Him and take Him into your houses in the exercise of prayer morning and evening, as I often desired you; especially now let Him not want lodging in your houses, nor lie in the fields when He is shut out of pulpits and churches.

32 I pray you, think not that the common way of serving God, as neighbors and others do, will bring you to heaven. I know this world is a forest of thorns in your path, but ye must go through it.

33 Acquaint yourselves with the Lord; hold fast Christ; hear His voice only.

34 Bless His name; sanctify and keep holy His day; keep the new commandment, namely, "Love one another;" let the Holy Spirit dwell in your bodies, and be ye clean and holy.

35 Love not the world; lie not, love and follow truth; learn to know God.

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36 Bear in mind the things I taught unto you, for God will seek an account thereof when I am far from you.

37 Abstain from all evil and all appearance of evil; follow good carefully, and seek peace and follow after it; honor your king and pray that strength and wisdom may sit at his right hand.

38 Remember me in your daily supplications; I can not forget you, my beloved flock robbed of its shepherd. Ye are in my thoughts continually.

39 Let us abound in faith and wait patiently upon Him who knoweth all things. The prayers and blessings of a prisoner of Christ, in bonds for Him and for you, be with you all. Amen.

## Chapter XXVI

*This world's vain glory. 6 Heaven a besieged castle to be taken by force. 13 Christ's true servants known by these signs.*

**M**Y witness is in heaven that I would not exchange my chains and bonds for Christ, and my sighs, for ten worlds' glory. I esteem suffering for Him a king's life.

2 I judge this earthly idol which Adam's sons are setting up at auction and selling their souls for not worth a drink of cold water.

3 May flowers, and morning vapor, and summer mists post not away so fast as these worm-eaten pleasures which we follow. Lo, we build castles of cloud that pass away, and as night dreams that vanish are the vain treasures that our hearts desire.

4 O contend for salvation, which is precious above all the things of earth.

5 I say, Contend, for heaven is not to be lightly won. There is not a promise of

## A NEW EPISTLE

heaven made but to such as are willing to suffer for it.

6 Your Master, even Christ, won heaven with strokes; it is a besieged castle, it must be taken with violence.

7 It is a woeful thing to die and miss heaven, and to lose house-room with Christ when the night cometh.

8 Alas that all come not home at night who suppose that they have set their faces heavenward!

9 I see that ordinary profession, and to be ranked amongst the children of God, and to have a name among men, and to give liberally of one's substance, without sacrifice, is counted sufficient to carry professors to heaven.

10 O beware of this delusion; Christ will not mistake you, man may!

11 I persuade myself, with sorrow, that thousands shall be deceived and ashamed of their hope in that great day; because they cast their anchor in sinking sands they must lose it.

12 I entreat you, beloved, give not your soul or Christ rest, nor your eyes sleep till ye have gotten something that will endure the fire and stand out the storm.

## A NEW EPISTLE

13 If ye have these marks, then are ye Christ's true servants—that ye prize Him and His truth so as ye will sell all and buy Him, and suffer for it—that the love of Christ keepeth you back from sinning more than the law or fear of hell, that ye be humble and deny your own will, credit, ease, honor, the world, and the vanity and glory of the world.

14 Moreover, your profession must not be barren and void of good works; ye must in all things aim at God's honor; ye must in all your goings and comings, your dealings and tradings, remember God.

15 Ye must show yourselves without ceasing an enemy to sin and reprove the works of darkness, such as drunkenness, swearing, and lying, albeit those whom ye reprove should hate you for so doing.

16 By these things shall ye know that ye are the children of God and not hypocrites and sinners.

17 To your Lord Jesus and His love I commend you. Amen.

## Chapter XXVII

*Of self-denial. 4 Our treasure in heaven.  
8 Waiting on the Lord.*

**U**NDERSTANDING of the going of the bearer, I would not omit the opportunity of writing to you, still harping upon that string which can never be too often touched upon, nor is our lesson ever well enough learned—that there is a necessity of advancing in the way to the Kingdom of God, of the contempt of the world, of denying ourselves and bearing our Lord's cross, which is no less needful for us than our daily food.

2 And among the many marks that we are on this journey and under sail towards heaven, this is one: When the love of God so filleth our hearts that we forget to love and care not much for the having or wanting of other things, as one extreme heat burneth out another.

3 By this ye know that ye have betrothed your soul in marriage to Christ, when ye do make small reckoning of all other suitors or wooers; and when ye can,

## A NEW EPISTLE

having little in hand but much in hope, live as a young heir in the time of his minority, being content to be hardly handled and under as precise a reckoning as servants, because his hope is upon his inheritance.

4 For this cause God's children take well to the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

5 That day that the earth and the works therein shall be burned with fire your hidden hope and your life shall appear. And, therefore, since ye have not now many years to your endless eternity, what better course can ye take than to think that your one foot is here and your other foot in the life to come, and to leave off loving, desiring, or grieving for the wants that shall be made up when your Lord and ye shall meet and when ye shall give in your bill, that day, of all your wants here.

6 If your losses be not made up, ye have place to challenge the Almighty; but it shall not be so.

7 Ye shall then rejoice with joy unspeakable, and your joy none shall take from you.

## A NEW EPISTLE

8 It is enough that the Lord hath promised you great things, only let the time of bestowing them be in His own carving. It is not for us to set an hour-glass to the Creator of time.

9 We will put that in His own will; we will bide His harvest and wait upon His term-day.

10 For His day is better than our day; He putteth not His sickle into the corn till it be ripe and full-eared.

11 The great Angel of the Covenant bear you company till the trumpet shall sound and the voice of the Archangel awaken the dead.

## Chapter XXVIII

*Of faith required. 7 Many would have  
Christ divided. 15 The subtlety of sin.*

**T**HE faith that God requireth of sinners is that they rely upon Christ, as despairing of their own righteousness, leaning wholly and withal humbly, as weary and laden, upon Christ as on the resting stone laid in Zion.

2 But He seeketh not that without being weary of their sin they rely on Christ as mankind's Savior, for to rely on Christ and not be weary of sin is presumption, not faith.

3 Faith is ever neighbor to a contrite spirit, and it is impossible that faith can be where there is not a cast-down and contrite heart in some measure for sin.

4 O beloved, search your hearts and try if your lusts be dead and sin mortified. If the world and you are as great friends as ever you were, I shall not believe that you are joined with Christ.

5 If ye and the world are hand-fastened

## A NEW EPISTLE

together, that marriage must be divorced, or else He will not look on that side of the house that ye are in.

6 Sad it is that Christ getteth but only broken and halved work of us, and, alas! too often against the grain. Sanctification and mortification of our natural desires are the hardest part of Christianity.

7 How many of us would have Christ divided into two halves, that we might take a portion of Him only.

8 We take His office, Friend, and Mediator, but "Lord" is a cumbersome word, and to obey and work out our own salvation, and to perfect holiness, is the wintry and stormy north side of Christ and that which we eschew and shift.

9 I see this, that nature is a sluggard and loveth not the labor of religion. Can a man come to heaven lying on his back? Not so. Paul says, "Let us run the race." Running shows there is need for haste. The way is long and we have far to go.

10 Luke admonishes us, "Strive to enter in." That is, Fight and throng in by force. When God by faith lets a man see heaven, He resolves that in he must, come what will.

## A NEW EPISTLE

11 "I press forward towards the mark," says the apostle. That is, he ran so that his head and breast pressed forward before his feet, and his two arms reached out to catch hold of Christ.

12 To speak so, he pursues Christ and heaven, and they seem to flee from him, and he follows: so should we do.

13 So speed on; the prize seems to flee from us, but it can not flee further than to heaven's gates, and there we will get hold of it.

14 I see this also, that in prosperity men's consciences will not start at small sins. In ease lieth danger; luxury and lust dwell in the same house.

15 Sin lieth ever in wait for us. Some it tricks out of the way and lays asleep in security like a drunken traveler who sleeps in a moor till the sun be down; then he awakes and is terrified.

16 Alas! that the world hath many who sell their souls for sin; and what a pitiful thing, for what can the world give in exchange for their souls? Be ye not of these.

17 I recommend to you, brethren, that ye daily set about to mend your nature,

## A NEW EPISTLE

to reform your failings, one or the other, every week; and to put off a sin, or a piece of it, as anger, wrath, slothfulness, intemperance, lying, every day, that ye may the more easily master the remnant of your corruption.

18 May God in His mercy help you so to do!

## Chapter XXIX

*Comforting the saints in their temporary afflictions. 6 Christ suffered before us. 10 The shallow mirth of the ungodly; their fleeting joys. 15 Exhortation to rejoice in the unfailing promises of God.*

**I** ENTREAT you, brethren, be not discouraged nor dismayed under the chastening hand of your God.

2 Strokes of a loving father are not given in wantonness; take them as evidences of your Heavenly Father's kindness and care.

3 If ye were not Christ's wheat, appointed to be bread in His house, He would not grind you.

4 His most loved are often His most tried. The lintel-stone and pillars of His New Jerusalem suffer more knocks of God's hammer than the common side-wall stones. They must be carven and shaped to His divine purpose.

5 Losses and disgraces are the wheels of Christ's triumphant chariot.

## A NEW EPISTLE

6 The cup of sorrow that ye drink was at the lip of our Lord Jesus, and He drank of it. Let the cross be dear to you, for it was borne by your Redeemer before you.

7 It is one and the same cross, albeit there be sundry faces and diverse circumstances behind the sufferings of Christ and yours. And the grave, because He did lie in it, is so much softer and more refreshful a bed of rest.

8 I see that in the sufferings of His saints, as He intendeth their good, so He intendeth His own glory, and that is the butt His arrows shoot at.

9 The children of this world have much joy that is ill-gotten; they steal joy, as it were, from God, for He commandeth them to weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon them.

10 It is no good sport that they laugh at; the sound of their mirth is the sound of fever and of raging.

11 But faith may dance because Christ singeth. None have a right to joy but the redeemed, for joy is sown for us, and an ill summer will not spoil the harvest.

12 Let fools laugh the fool's laughter, and scorn Christ, and bid the weeping cap-

## A NEW EPISTLE

tives in Babylon, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion, play a sprightly air to cheer up your sad-hearted God."

13 We may sing upon luck's head beforehand, even in our winter storm, in the hope and expectation of a summer sun at the turn of the year.

14 For no created power in hell, or out of hell, can mar the music of our Lord Jesus, nor spoil our song of joy.

15 Let us then be glad and rejoice in the salvation of our Lord, for faith had never yet cause to have wet cheeks and hanging-down brows, or to droop or die.

16 The only wise God strengthen you with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. Amen.

## Chapter XXX

*Christ's way of showing Himself the best.*

*8 Our need of humility and faith. 16*

*Shall we teach the All-wise God? 20 The  
believer's course.*

**G**RACE, mercy, and peace be unto you. I am constrained to write unto you concerning the mystery of Christ's dealings with us His servants.

2 I find that my Lord cometh not in that precise way that I mark out for Him; He hath a way of His own, higher than the highest above my way or your way.

3 It is best not to offer to teach Him a lesson, but to give Him absolutely His own way in coming, going, ebbing, flowing, and in the manner of His gracious working. At present I see but little of my dear Lord; He hath hidden His face from me.

4 He hath fettered me with His love and run away and left me a chained man.

5 Woe is me that I was so loose, rash, vain, and graceless in my unbelieving thoughts of Christ's love!

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6 I had not learned, as I should, to put my stock and all my treasure into Christ's hand, but I would have stock and treasure of my own. I forgot that grace is the only garland that is worn in heaven upon the heads of the glorified.

7 And now I half rejoice that I have sickness of spirit for Christ to work upon. Since I must have wounds, well it is for my soul; my wounds cry aloud for the Great Physician.

8 Brethren, our greatest need here is humility and faith, for out of faith cometh patience and out of a chastened spirit perfect trust.

9 Faith should be long-headed and not soon tired, and should lie believing and praying till the gray hairs.

10 Believers often seek in themselves what they should seek in Christ. There is as much need to watch over grace as to watch over sin.

11 It is best for us, in the obedience of faith and in holy submission, to give that to God which the law of His almighty and just power will have of us.

12 Your Lord willeth you in all states of life to say, "Thy will be done in earth as it

## A NEW EPISTLE

is in heaven," and herein shall ye have comfort, that He who seeth perfectly through all your evils and knoweth the frame and constitution of your nature, and what is most healthful for your soul, holdeth every cup of affliction to your lips with His own gracious hand.

13 Never believe that your tender-hearted Savior who knoweth the strength of your being will mix that cup with one dram-weight of poison.

14 When the Lord's blessed will bloweth across your desires, do ye strike sail to Him in humbleness and trust. Christ hath another sea-compass He saileth by than our short and raw thoughts; learn to believe Christ better than His strokes, Himself and His promises better than His glooms.

15 We are prone to grieve that the Lord lingereth, enemies triumph, goodly ones suffer, atheists blaspheme.

16 Ah, we pray not, but wonder that Christ cometh not the higher way—by might, by power, by garments rolled in blood. What if He come the lower way? Sure we sin in putting the book in His hand. Shall we teach the Almighty knowl-

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edge? Shall we lay out the courses of the Omnipotent?

17 We make haste; we believe not. Let the wise God alone; He steereth well.

18 He draweth straight lines, though we think and say they are crooked.

19 It is right that some should die and their breasts full of milk; and yet we are angry that God dealeth so with them. O that we could adore Him in all His hidden ways, when there is darkness under His feet and darkness in His pavilion, and black clouds are about His throne!

20 Beloved, hoping, believing, patient praying is our life. He loseth no time.

21 Let us charge our souls to believe and to wait for Him, and to follow His Providence, and not go before nor stay behind it.

22 The Lord Jesus be with you and direct you, and minister unto the needs of your souls. Pray for your servant that he may be patient in his bonds.

## Chapter XXXI

*The devil a deceitful merchant. 13 A good conscience is like a glass. 21 He warns against covetousness.*

**B**LESSED are they who are weaned from the love of the world.

2 Alas, how many Esaus there be in the world who sell their heavenly inheritance for a mess of pottage!

3 The devil is a deceitful merchant; he causeth us to buy sin before we see our merchandise.

4 Pleasure is the devil's common bait that he puts upon all his hooks.

5 Woe is me that the holy profession of Christ is made a stage garment by many to bring home a vain fame, and that Christ is made to serve men's ends. This is, as it were, to stop an oven with a king's robes.

6 Woe is me that we run our souls out of breath and tire them in coursing and galloping after our night dreams to get some created good thing in this life and on this side of death.

## A NEW EPISTLE

7 We would fain stay and spin out a heaven to ourselves on this side of the water; but sorrow, want, change, crosses, and sin are both the woof and the warp in that ill-spun web.

8 Bind a ship to a rush-bush to hold her by; that is but a slim anchor—it can not hold her when she begins to be moved.

9 He who thinks he has little need of Christ is ready to fall.

10 He who loveth his chains deserveth chains.

11 Beloved, regard your conscience. See that ye keep it void of offense toward God and man.

12 Conscience is like an earthen vessel when ye break it—ye will not mend it again.

13 That which is called a good conscience is like a glass wherein a man may see his face. Whereas the wicked have a conscience like a foul, muddy fountain, where the bottom can not be seen.

14 Nay, he dare not in a heavy temptation, or in death, go into his conscience; his thefts, his covetousness, his backbitings, and wrongs done to this man and to that man are such nauseous things he dare not stir them up lest they cause him to vomit.

## A NEW EPISTLE

15 Woe is me to see so many men land-masters of their consciences: as if their conscience was so great that they might sell part of it in fairs and markets to the highest bidder.

16 Some count little of their conscience; they will take an edge thereof to augment their house.

17 Another will dispense with a part of it to enlarge his possessions.

18 Yet another will yield up half his conscience to enhance his credit.

19 Many pay little respect to their conscience in buying and selling, if they can get gain. The merchant wastes his conscience; for, before he quit an inch of his credit, he would rather quit an ell of his conscience.

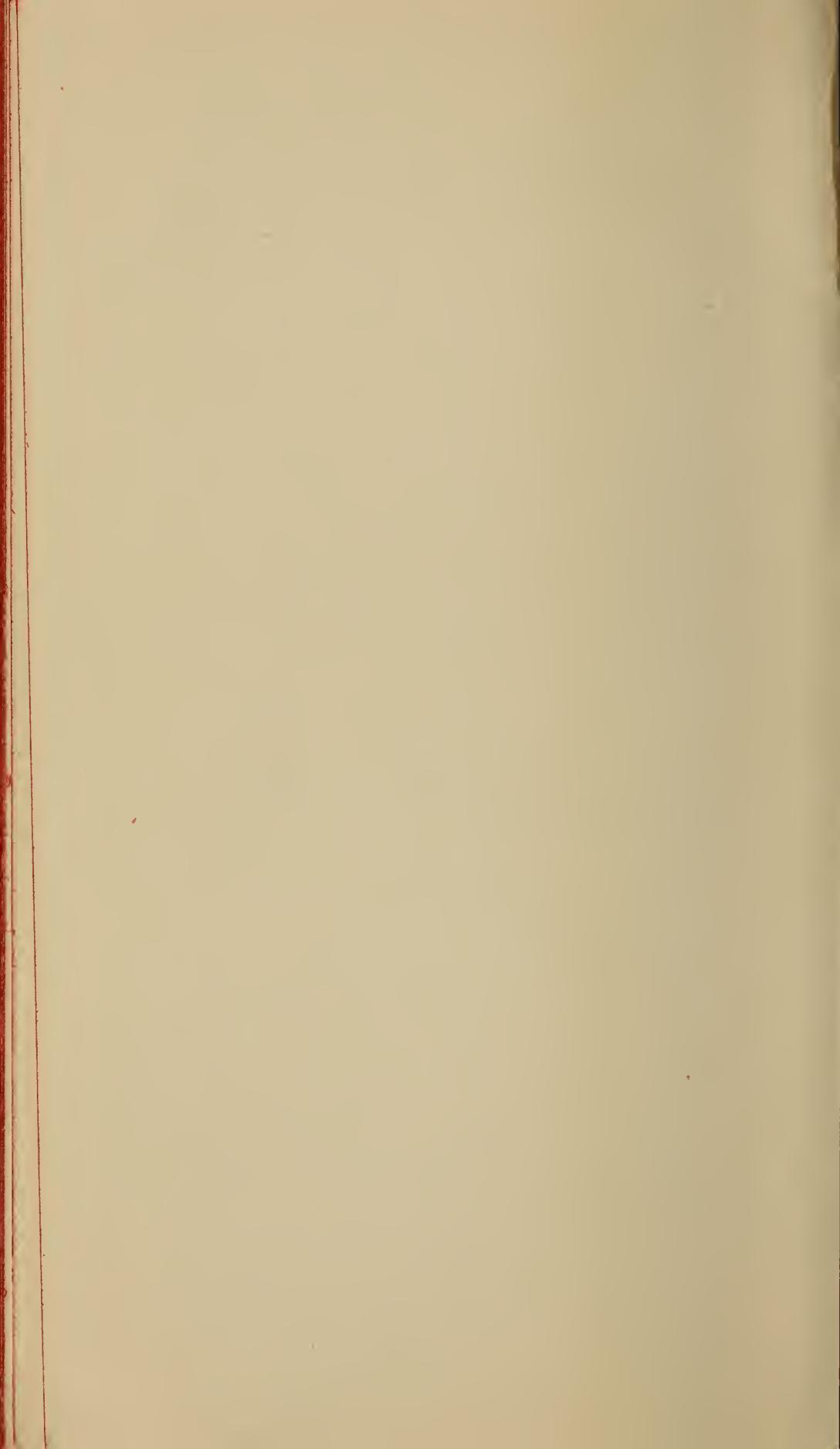
20 The proud man wastes his conscience to carry on his pride.

21 O beware of the devil's and the world's hammer of covetousness lest it light on your conscience and break it all to pieces. Keep your conscience sound and pure, for a sound, clear conscience in a dying hour will give more satisfaction than all this world can afford.

22 To the only wise God be praise.  
Amen.









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