

To K. B.

“Birmingham, 4th mo. 30th, 1836.

MY VERY DEAR NIECE,

This doubtless is a time of mourning, and of tenderly sympathizing in the bereavement of thy dear relations; there are other causes for mourning also, of which I doubt not thou art sensible. I would that I could comfort thee, but thou hast a better Comforter. The Spirit and Power of true consolation is nigh, though it may not always be discerned by those who are cast down. O! how sweet is the belief that they who are kept through tribulation, at the foot of the cross, are in safe keeping! It is my desire that we may not cherish anxiety with regard to the things which are brought upon us, in this our day. Old things revived, as respects our Society. Misapprehension or misrepresentation, and want of faithfulness among ourselves, have assuredly brought about a Babel confusion; but there is no diminution of that Power which can bring good out of evil, and cause the vain efforts of his creatures to promote his own gracious purposes.

I am endeavouring to look beyond the cloud, when (if my natural day be not so prolonged) others may be favoured to see the Sun of Righteousness shine gloriously.

I remain affectionately, thy aunt,

MARY CAPPER.”

To J. AND S. GRUBB.

“Birmingham, 5th mo. 13th, 1836.

MY BELOVED FRIENDS,

Shall I once more greet you with the language of affectionate encouragement? Though the sun, in the visible firmament be in eclipse, it is not lost. The creative Power that gave it for an external light remains the same; even the universal Father of mankind, good, very good to all who seek aright to know and to obey Him, as his truly dependent children. He who set the visible sun in the sky, has not left his rational creation, formed for immortality, without a witness in the heart, as the Scriptures amply testify. What indeed should we do, if left to doubtful disputation! If the true light in the soul become darkness, how great is that darkness! Watch and pray that the day-spring from on high may again arise upon us as a religious Society, somewhat scattered and shaken. Possessing our souls in patience, may we have compassion one for another! The Foundation standeth sure, though there may be builders thereon of wood, hay and stubble.

Well, my dear friends, after this unpremeditated introduction, I recur to what first arose in my thoughts, in viewing you as contending, again and again, for the faith, or unchanged Truth, with fidelity and unwearied diligence. The Spirit of Truth will guide into all truth. O! it is a blessed thing to be docile, humble learners at the foot of the cross.

14th. This is the third or fourth time that I have taken the pen, for I have been cheered by some kind calls from dear labourers, on their way to the Yearly Meeting. Sadness clothes the spirit as we commune together on the things which are brought upon us. Nothing new! old revilings! After a time



of lukewarmness, or living too much at ease, may it not be said, a woe is brought upon us, that availing, spiritual sorrow may spread, and may arouse the dormant faculties to a right and true exercise; and that babes may be fed with the pure milk, prepared for their nourishment, that they may grow thereby, and be able to bear stronger meat, so that they may endure to the end that crowns all, and experience the salvation of the soul, through Him who was crucified for the sin of the world,—the Son of God? ‘Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee,’ &c. May I not reverently say, the spirit within me prays, with increasing fervency that revealed truth may work the work of righteousness, to the praise and glory of the Holy One.

I think I must conclude with what was in my mind as a beginning; thinking of you, dear friends, there was a sweet, abiding impression that there is a rest, an undefiled everlasting rest, prepared for the patient, faithful labourer, in the Lord’s vineyard. Your work, my precious friends, may not yet be finished; this glorious rest awaits you, and every true labourer, so believes.

MARY CAPPER.”

FROM SARAH GRUBB TO MARY CAPPER.

“London, 5th mo. 24th, 1836.

MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND,

This day thy precious, sweet letter was handed me. O! how truly cheering it is to contemplate the state in which Divine Goodness has kept thee to this day. I can look back to my childhood, when I first saw, with wonder, the tears flowing from thy eyes in meetings; when thou wast an example to many, of nobly denying self, taking up the cross, and following Him who ‘bore the contradiction of sinners against Himself,’ and

who has been pleased to lead about and instruct thee ever since. Yea! He has kept thee as the apple of his eye; and so I humbly believe He will keep thee to the end; guiding thy feet the few steps that remain, and ultimately granting an entrance into those blessed regions where none can say, I am sick; where there is no more pain, neither any more sorrow; but the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne doth lead to living fountains of water, and all tears are wiped from the eyes for ever.

Some, in this day, are almost ready to adopt the language of the prophet, ‘O! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!’ for truly there is that among us which lays low the pure innocent life that ought to be in the ascendancy. Yet my faith is that better times will come, even to our religious Society. There is, I do believe, a living remnant left, who being preserved through the shaking which has come upon us will shine forth by and bye, even as the light, and many will come to its brightness, so that there will be Quakers still; those who hold the precious testimonies of the Everlasting Gospel in their primitive simplicity and unmixed purity. And surely it is unto the Truth, as it is in Jesus, that the nations must come, in the fulfilment of the prophecy, ‘The kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of God, and of his Christ.’

We have had some favoured meetings at this our annual Gathering. Yes! at seasons, the Lord’s own blessed presence and power have been over all, to his own praise; to whom all honour and glory now and ever belong.

My husband sends thee much unfeigned Christian love, in which I tenderly unite, and remain,

Thy ever attached friend,

SARAH GRUBB.”

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TO HANNAH WATKIN.

“Birmingham, 7th mo. 1st, 1836.

VERY DEAR FRIEND,

It sometimes seems marvellous in my view that our natural life is lengthened for weeks, months, and it may be years, after being brought as it were to the brink of the grave, looking for the salvation of the soul, through the redeeming love and power of the Saviour, who was crucified for sinners. No other name do we own, or profess to believe, can save us. This I consider as the unchangeable foundation of genuine Quakerism; and it is to be accompanied by a consistency of conduct, not to be controverted, agreeably to the Scriptural doctrine and precepts left upon record by the Highest Teacher, and to the example and testimony of holy men of old. As far as my spiritual understanding has been enlightened, this is what I apprehend to be Truth. Secret things belong to the Lord. My belief is, that sufficient is revealed for our instruction, and that, while persevering in faithful obedience, we shall find that lowly, peaceful, spiritual poverty is a soul-satisfying reward. I believe it is safe, and best in the present times, to leave judgment unto the righteous Judge, as to this or that; and to take the impressive counsel, ‘What is that to thee? follow thou Me!’ I hope not to weary thee, dear friend. I think only to add, that Christian union, love and fellowship, was never more precious, nor more binding to my fellow-professors in the Society to which I have been conscientiously united for upwards of fifty years; and I am so far from being dissatisfied, that in my most favoured seasons, I daily contemplate it as a mercy.

Farewell, affectionately,

MARY CAPPER.”

From S. K. a child five years old, to Mary Capper.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I should like to hear thee talk to me about heaven, where dear little children go when they are good; and if thou wilt be pleased to see me, I shall be glad to see thee; please, when will it be a suitable time?

I love thee, and am thy friend,

S. K.”

ANSWER FROM M. C.

“Dale End, 8th mo. 14th, 1836.

DEAR LITTLE FRIEND,

I am quite pleased with thy little letter, and I am glad that thou lovest me, for I have much love for children; and I am glad when they wish to be good, and to know something about that Saviour, Jesus, of whom we read in the Bible.

When I was a little girl, I had naughty tempers. I wished to be good, and I often cried when I was alone, because I wanted to be good all at once. I was like thee, dear child, too young to understand that I must be patient and humble, and learn that Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from our sins, and our naughty tempers, and to make us gentle, patient and obedient. We cannot see the blessed Jesus as He appeared in this world in time past; yet his mercy, love and power are over us all; to take away our perverse dispositions, and to prepare us for heaven, that happy place, where all are good,



happy, and blessed for ever. That thou, dear S. mayst be one of those who are eternally blessed, is the affectionate desire of

Thy friend,

MARY CAPPER."

To C. B. C.

"Birmingham, 9th mo. 21st, 1836.

MY KIND AND DEAR FRIEND,

Thy affectionate communication was, as ever, very cordially accepted; that thy precious mother will witness the best of Comforters to be near, through all bereavements and trials, I doubt not. My best love is to her. The foundation stands sure that unites the humble followers of the Redeemer. This is my hope and my anchor. My soul longs and breathes, in the spirit of prayer, for preservation, in this day of sifting. Sometimes I think in my solitude, that perhaps I enter, in proportion to what I can bear, into what some dear fellow-probationers have to sustain, in the present state of our religious Society. My heart mourns; but I know not what to do better than to leave all unto that Wisdom that ruleth over all. In our deep humiliation, we may be dumb with silence; but O! if we can trace the hand of the Lord in it, we may take courage, and hold on our lowly way, as disciples of a crucified Saviour, bearing his cross from day to day, until we put off these corruptible bodies, and rise triumphant over all opposition, through that Power that conquers death, hell and the grave. That I may really be a humble waiter, in patience, at my Saviour's feet, is daily the petition of my soul, and that I may tenderly feel for, and with my conflicted friends.

MARY CAPPER."

To K. B.

"10th mo. 21st, 1836.

If it be from the Lord, doubtless his tender compassion will bring me through the searching trial which has brought me very low, in mind and body, and yet keeps me so. As I write, I feel a fear of taking myself out of the Lord's hand; for He alone can perfect his own work,—the great work of entire sanctification. On the receipt of thy letter, O! how I wished that I were worthy to mourn with those who mourn for the state of things among us. To bear a part in the sufferings and afflictions of the true disciples of a crucified Saviour seems indeed a privilege.

MARY CAPPER."

TO THE SAME.

"Birmingham, 11th mo. 15th, 1836.

My dear brother James used to say of his wife, that she remained as a bruised reed; so I think I may say it is with me; but with the cheering hope, if not the abiding belief, that enduring Mercy will not break that which is bruised, nor quench the smoking flax. My soul longs for an increase of faith, patience and resignation. If the tender sympathy, and I believe I may add, the prayers, of dear affectionate friends are availing, surely I may be encouraged. I am greatly surprised at the interest manifested on my behalf; it excites the strong cry at the Mercy-seat, that I may not be permitted to bring sorrow or dismay upon the Christian believers, nor dishonour upon the glorious cause of the Redeemer.

MARY CAPPER."



About this period Mary Capper had to pass through much distress of mind, in consequence of the departure of some whom she dearly loved, from that path of simplicity and self-denial into which her own feet had been turned, in early life, and which she still considered 'the more excellent way.' Her sorrow on observing that some of these were counting light of those views and practices, which it had cost her much to adopt, was so deep that it materially affected her health and spirits for a time; but He who saw the integrity of her heart, and who watched over her with a Father's love, was pleased, after a season of proving, to remove the burden, and to grant her a renewal of faith and of confidence, enabling her again to go on her way rejoicing. She thus describes her state in a letter

To K. B.

"Birmingham, 3rd mo. 15th, 1837.

I have abundant cause to take fresh courage and be thankful; for a consoling hope, and lowly confidence in redeeming, sanctifying Power, cheers the path-way before me. My general health gradually improves, and my cough is abated; and how shall I describe the favour of being permitted to lie down in peace, and to take rest in safety, under a protecting Power! Thus, my dear niece, I am tenderly dealt with. I go to our religious meetings once in the day; and though faith and patience be tried, the hope of finally reaping the rich harvest of promise, urges my spirit to press onward, through all that may at times cloud the beatific vision. I walk out most mornings, rising about seven o'clock; my faithful, valued handmaiden reads portions of Scripture to me; the day is spent mostly in solitude, and closes with reading a chapter or two in the Bible, when I am early ready and thankful to retire."

About the same date, she thus writes

TO A FRIEND.

"Thou wouldst no doubt hear, from time to time, of the state of my health as precarious; indeed I was much confined to my apartments, and yet remain very feeble. But my spirit is relieved, in mercy, from a distressing exercise, which almost seemed to separate from the consolations of adoption through the Saviour. Now, in a humble, lowly calm, with watchfulness unto prayer, and that continually, a plain path in the strait and narrow way seems set before me; turning neither to the right nor to the left, to hear what others may say, but keeping in view what first brought my wandering feet from the broad way."

TO J. AND S. GRUBB.

"5th month, 1837.

YE DEAR LABOURERS,

As ambassadors it may be, oft-times in bonds, it is in my heart once more to attempt to greet you, in a measure of that love which, I cherish the hope, is a badge of discipleship.

I cannot say that none of the things, brought upon us at the present day, move me; in measure I think I participate in the clothing of sackcloth and mourning; perhaps it is a sign of life, to mourn with those who rightly mourn for the desolation spread among us. For my own part, I dare not step out of the strait and narrow way, which I believe is cast up as a safe path for me to walk in, by