

erations. But the mysteries of God's world are to be admired and adored by us, as well as those of his works. Further discoveries of them are reserved, till the day-spring from on high arise upon us: and no doubt many of them will remain mysteries to all eternity.

"I fear I have been tedious, and have darkened counsel by words without knowledge; but, seeing our Lord commands us to comfort ourselves, and to comfort one another with these his words, I have laid before you these confused hints, hoping they shall receive a favourable reception, construction, and correction, being offered by a willing mind, and according to what a man hath. May the Chief Comforter come unto you, and abide with you! May he bring meat out of this eater, and sweet out of this strong trial!"

The third letter we shall give, is from the Reverend Thomas Randall, of Inchture, a parish in the neighborhood of Perth. It is addressed to Mrs. William Hogg, and dated 7th March, 1760, and it shews the solid comfort which a believing parent draws from the doctrines of the gospel when smarting under the bereavement of children. The tenor follows:—

'MADAM,

"Yesterday, by a letter from Mr. Wallace, I understand it hath pleased the Sovereign Disposer of all things to afflict your family and friends in the death of Mr. Thomas Hogg's son. It was natural for me, who had so lately tasted of that bitter cup, to have a fellow-feeling with you all in that distress. No temptation for the present is joyous; and I know that kind of trial to be grievous. I have had spoilings of these pleasant things often; and found it hard to tell, whether the separation of the younger or of the elder branches be most wounding to the root. Each have their peculiar anguish. When grown a little up, our hopes being heightened, we have great downcastings. Yet in the younger shoots, fresher from the womb, more is felt, of what is so strikingly expressed, Isaiah, 49, "Can a woman forsake her sucking child?" as if these were hardest to forsake. In my sympathy on such an occasion, rather than attempt to lighten sorrow by insisting on the youth of the child, or mentioning the hope of future offspring to alleviate, I would allow the cause of anguish to be truly great; and I would seek to introduce cheerfulness and joy in the midst of such scenes of darkness and heaviness, only from that true source of all joy and consolation, the unchangeable and everlasting gospel, which turns all our darkness into light, our sorrows into joys. I cannot see from reason, what satisfaction men can have on the birth of children, in a world which they and all their fathers have found so vain and vexing; and I am sure in their death one gleam of comfort springs not up:—like their grave, all is darkness and consumption. It is from religion, and from the blessed scriptures, we are instructed in the grounds of rejoicing at births. Thence we are let into the connection the blessed God has without infants; that to *pleasure*, by calling them *ours*, is but a very subordinate reason for their being born; and that to be a part of his inheritance and glory, who became an infant of days, and to show his sovereignty, who call these things that are not, to be, and to be forever with himself, while the mighty are cast down, are the high rea-

sons of bringing millions into this world, who abide not in it till they know the right hand from the left, or discern between good and evil. And it is therefore from religion, and from the blessed scriptures, we are instructed also to see, that to *grieve us*, is often, but a subordinate reason for consigning them so early to the silent grave. This is the passage by which the Sovereign of all determines even they shall be brought to his presence and joy, and this the time of his calling for them. Oh! what brightness does this throw upon our shades, our darkest shades, when our dear infants are torn from our yearning bowels, and laid to rotteness and silence; and the friends and parents, believing in the second Adam and his merciful Father, not staggering at the promises of that covenant, where the interests of children are remembered, and well ordered and sure, as well as their own; but being strong in faith, give God glory about them, by believing he can give them spiritual life, and resurrection from the dead, by that power which called Isaac from Abraham's loins and Sarah's womb, which caused the holy child Jesus to be born of Mary, and afterwards brought him from the bowels of the earth in death to a glorious resurrection;—the mighty proof, that nothing was impossible with God;—the mighty pledge, that the great power which then wrought should be exerted for all the heirs of the covenant, and for the fulfilment of these promises, which were all made yea by this resurrection. The unbelieving world have no such joy in their tribulation, nor in this hard chapter of it. All is gloom, gloom dark as the grave itself, to them under such dispensations. They have no such words with which to comfort themselves, nor any solid gladness with respect to their departed little ones. When they most seek to please and flatter their minds about them, all is uncertainty. They leave them, they know not how, nor where, in the unseen world. No positive acts of their mind concerning hope of their future existence and blessedness; no particular desires about their being with Christ, who loved them, nor about his raising them also from their graves, afford comfort. Were it only for my infants dead, I would wish to be a christian, and a real one, to be made glad, by positive acts of faith, with respect to their eternal well-being. These really wipe away tears from our eyes, before our Lord does it at last, and forever, from all our sorrows, and gives the joys about them, (to others unknown) that being born and redeemed, the great end of their being brought into life is answered, which can be said on no other principles than those of their redemption and immortality.

"It is less difficult to go on, than to stop, on a subject so comfortable. But, as I must make an end of this letter, I cannot do it without offering my condoling compliments to both Mr. Hogg, Mrs. Campbell, and Mrs. Hogg. They forget not, I hope, that the exhortation is as unto children:—"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." They forget not, I hope, that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;" and real christians live by the faith of a *morning*, that will dispel every sorrow as the shadows, and bring in an everlasting day of consolation. May that hope comfort you all in every thorny and weary step of your pilgrim age."