

“ And these are truths, these are consolations, brethren, which we can believe will find their way to the heart’s depths of those amongst you who so much need them all ; who need our truest, warmest sympathy under the recent severe affliction with which it has been the will of the Almighty to try them. You will anticipate what I refer to—the heavy calamity which has, within a few weeks, befallen the family of him who has been your pastor now for more than twenty years. It is a history of sorrow and anguish, into the details of which you would not desire that I should enter ; and by withholding the recital, would spare the renewal of that crushing of the parental heart which this great calamity has produced. But terrible as the providential blow has been ; hard as the trial is, which God has made those parental hearts to bear ; there are openings still, we can feel assured, through which the heavenly consolations can reach them. The clouds of suffering, deep and dark as they are, can receive the golden brightness of comfort and joy which the spirit of God imparts.

“ We are not bidden, my brethren, to restrain our grief when the Almighty sends us such bereavements ; we are allowed to indulge our sorrow, if there be trust and hope, and resignation to the will of Him who causes it. But how much must that grief be allayed and that sorrow tempered, when we know that under the chastenings which most severely try our human endurance, there are the dealings of a Father’s love ; when we know that mercy and kindness prompt the blow which brings us so much suffering.—But can it be so here ? Yes, even to our weak human perceptions it can. God ordains, in his wisdom, the duration of life ; His loving