

Melbourn 4th Jan. 1857

My Dear Son:

When no letter comes to you from home for some considerable interval of time, I beg of you not to think it is because you are forgotten. No: since your sickness especially, not a day, not an hour, has passed without thinking anxiously about you: & in my daily prayer, morning & evening, in private, in the family, & in the chapel, I do not fail to remember you. But as to writing letters, I confess myself slow & negligent. So much to do - so much writing - so many cares are always urgent, that I can hardly spare the time for wielding the axe enough to keep my body in a healthy state. This last I must practise, & do, every day more or less, Sundays excepted: and that adhering lung of yours, I am inclined to think, might yet be set right, by persevering in this most wholesome exercise. I pray you to try it. It will do you good any how. It is as necessary for the health of the body, as prayer is for the soul. Since early youth I have always prayed: though I know not if one of my many earnest prayers has ever been answered. I trust they are not all lost. Still, I know not. This is not the world where to know is given. We live by faith, & faith is always less than knowledge, however strong & lively it be. Often do I think that if prayers through life have no other effect they serve to make the road to a "throne of grace" a plain & beaten path; so that from habit we can readily find it in the dark - in the hour of sickness - in the

Shock of bereavement - in the valley of the shadow of death. It will be a comfort in all these cases to reflect that we have not forgotten God in prosperity, & that He will not forget us in trouble. How full of consolation are the divine promises to the people of God - his children when in affliction. This I have often proved, although never very confident myself of being among their number.

On arriving at home - it was a sad - sad meeting. The house, the yard, the trees, the village, all wore a dismal aspect. His returning with you on your recovery rose fresh to my remembrance. How joyful I then felt - how sad now, to think that he at least shall return no more! "Tristisque sonectus", in Virgil, often struck me as something peculiarly expressive. I feel it now. Within the last year, & not before, I have begun to feel the weight of years. I eat not with the relish I once enjoyed. - but I shall here turn to the brighter side. I look back over the varied scenes of a life of toil and care; & can see in the way in which God has led me "these forty" - more than that - "years in the wilderness" much, very, very much, for which I ought to be thankful; and also humble.

Anderson manifests more sensibility on the occasion, than Kidick or any of the family except Mary. This I was not prepared to expect. There may be in his nature more good than I had thought. But, in all, the nature must be changed. Nothing less is true conversion. Nature acts freely, spontaneously. You may impress, by means from without, a force

upon one's nature; so that, while the impression lasts, he shall act & feel like another & different person: as Saul did when David cut off his skirt in the cave. But his na-
ture remained the same. The impression soon wore off; and he then acted as before. O that God would graciously so impress our hearts, one & all of the family, by this tremendous visitation, that it may issue in a thorough conversion from the power of sin unto God - a conversion of the heart, the nature, & the ways.

Our friends, & the people here generally, seem much affected at the event. He was beloved here by all who knew him.

One thing let me say on a subject of less importance, & in apology for your mother & sister, as to what they, somewhat reasonably I admit, may have said, or written, in reference to your intended. They knew you had had, before this, some inclinations of the same kind towards two others, both of whom were, indeed, so very unfit for you in almost all respects, that they had some reason to fear it might be so in this last case. This is some excuse for them; & the more, because they so much desired for you, if you should marry, a help-mate such as might prove a helper in all respects. This, I know, it would be hard to find. I know also that there is no one thing in which good young men, & girls also, are so apt to mis-match themselves as in that which of all is the greatest as to its influence on future life. — Let not the severe chastisement which we have received be forgotten. — God sanctify it, my dear son, to your eternal good. Your affectionate father J. W. G. H.



Dr John St. Myer

Richmond

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Give my best regards to good brother Perke.

All send love to you - & when you write inform us particularly about your health. We are all well. There 5 cases of typhoid among the students: one not likely to recover. Working people escape it.