

Moom? 19th Jan. 1857

Dear Son:

Your kind letter was, on many accounts, soothing & grateful to me; particularly as it expressed feelings so much in unison with my own, on that theme, which is first in my thoughts in the morning and last at night. In the "Hulsean Lectures," I was struck with this passage: "As we acquaint ourselves with the lamentations of mourners for the dead, lamentations so deep and so despairing, as to explain to us all the meaning of that sorrowing without hope, which by the apostle is ascribed to the heathen; as we hear too the wretched consolations of miserable comforters, the slight palliations of sharpest sorrows, which ^(he refers to the heathen philosophers) were all that, with all their kindness, they could suggest, we shall know how to prize the oil and wine, the strong consolations which are stored in the Gospel for each bruised & smitten heart—" and still more with the note appended to it, in which St. Augustine describes what were his feelings, while yet a heathen, upon the death of a friend: *quo dolore continebratum est cor meum; et quicquid aspiciabam, mors erat. Et erat mihi patria supplicium, et paterna domus mira infelicitas; et quicquid cum illo communicaveram, sine illo in cruciatum immanem vertebat. Expetebant cum undique oculi mei, et non dabatur mihi; et odebam omnia, quia non haberent cum, nec mihi jam dicere poterant: Ecce veniet, sicut cum viveret quando absens erat. Factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio, et interrogabam animam meam, quare tristis esset et quare conturbaret me valde; et nihil noverat respondere mihi. Et si dicebam; Spera in Deum, juste non obtemperabat; quia verior erat et melior homo quem carissimum amiserat quam phantasma in quod sperare jubebatur. Solus fletus erat dulcis mihi, et successerat amico meo in deliciis animi mei.* With some abatement, especially in regard to "phantasma," this passage describes my bereaved feeling exactly. The grief I felt on the two other cases was in some respects more heart-rending - and it never yet has ceased - but this overwhelms me more. He had endeared himself to me, not only as a dutiful son, but as a valued friend. He had been

a good deal in my company: and though others of my children might die before me, it never occurred to me as possible that he should. Not till the last hour, could I admit such an unwelcome thought. And then, his having so manfully won his way to a fair beginning in the world, & his serious regard to religion for the last two years of his life, & his - every thing in short in his case was so full of promise, and of hope, that the stroke, when it fell, - had well nigh deprived me of my reason. And though the mind is ingenious in gathering comfort all around in the midst of trouble - as from such a sad case as poor McKimney's, & another, young deacon, who hung himself, the other morning, in Rader's horse-mill - and Page's son, who died at Memphis, "without a friend to close his eyes," & especially in this case of my dearly beloved Sam., from the comfortable hope that his spirit is exulting now, in that Presence, which fills all with joys eternal, in company of better friends than those sorrowing ones that are left behind; yet still I grieve: & the three darts, hurled by all-conquering death - after striking to the earth, each its victim, have entered my side - and there they will remain, till another - the next it may be - which he shall throw - strikes home; & the head of the diminished family - shall weep no more. But an I.F., an intrusive if always comes in, & spoils these joys of hope.

"O could we bid those doubts remove
Those gloomy doubts that rise
And see the Canaan that we love
With unclouded eyes."

"Instant in prayer" - that I have tried to be, I may say, from childhood up, an on, to this hour. It is now more than natural; it is necessary; and if it is not a "phantom" - as I humbly trust it is not, it is a great privilege - a great privilege, as Hugh Wylie, the old Postmaster in Washington, a simple minded good man, used to say "To have a God to go to." If we go to him in prosperity, we shall find it easy and comfortable to go in trouble.

The young men here, who, I wrote you, were sick with the typhoid, are all getting well, one very unexpectedly, a patient of Dr Hammett's. He was salivated & that saved him. Darwin told me that his father

told him, that his brother, said to have been very successful
in the treatment of this disease, always salivated the pati-
ent by moderate doses from the very first appearance of the disease.
And the philosophy of the thing, they say, is, that the ptyalism
acting on the parts near the brain, draws off the energy
from that vital organ. O, if he, for whom we mourn, had
at first been treated rightly - or, if he had left that "nest of pest-
ilence", as I urged him in a letter which I sent to him
soon after I got home from Convention - having been
sick myself all the time I was there - it had been otherwise
with us now. I dare not say better, either for him, or for us:
yet it is natural to wish it, & I do wish it, though knowing it to be
both foolish & vain. -- Let me persuade you to try what vigorous
exercise with the axe every day, may do for that adhering lump
of yours. It is the means of keeping me up. Yesterday - a very cold day
I walked in my stiff, hard, heavy boots, after college, to see Mr Bole
who is not expected to live, being old & ailing for some time; & after
staying with him two hours, walked home - tired to be sure &
sore, but nothing the worse, but better, - for I slept well in conse-
quence. -- Give my thanks to good Brother Fiske for his
very acceptable & kind letter of consolation on this
affliction; & tell him, also, that I have not been able to
answer it, as I should like to do; for it did afford me some
of that comfort which I feel that I so much need. There is
nothing in this letter, which it would be improper for
him to see. Suppose you read it to him, or let him read it,
by way of answer to his letter, as well as yours. I have so
much more writing to do than I can well do, that really
the replying to a single letter is sometimes like the last
rail added to the old man's load, which broke his back.
Andrew, in his letter just now received, makes enquiries

about you. Cultivate his acquaintance. His being married
makes for him a circle of affection: & for this reason he may not
be able to give you as large a place on his heart as you had in
his - who is gone - but his also is a warm heart, honest, & large too.
& though his breath also may depart, yet, while he lives, & you,
live, let there be an interchange of letters between you. The
family are as usual & join in love to you.

Your affectionate

Andrew Wyrie



Dr John A. Wyrie
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