

2^d October 1848

My dear Mrs Mackenzie.

Notwithstanding a feeling that any words from others than your own immediate family would be an intrusion upon the sacred privacy of your deep sorrow, I cannot help expressing to you with how true a sympathy I have thought of you during these days of trial. Independently of the attachment which I shall ever entertain for you & the most gentle affection which I shall cherish for the memory of your beloved mother as long as my life lasts, there have been affections with yourself which have caused me to regard your welfare with a peculiar interest. I have been under the impression (whether correct or not it matters not) that we commenced the Christian life about the same period. The change in my own views that it was a very great one. Religious hopes & plans took a strong hold of my feelings & I trust, of my heart likewise: and

inhibiting the notion at the time, that your concern in this momentous subject was deepening & maturing, I felt in the privacy of my own thoughts as though I had a companion in this new life. I remember that among my earliest endeavours to present my own wants before God, I coupled with them earnest petitions for your spiritual welfare. At various times in your subsequent life, have I sought thus to remember you in imperfect intercessions, animated by the belief that in this way I might be able to return to the daughter some of the great kindness which I had received from the parents. I could not allude to such private thoughts of my own. Were it not that the mention of them ^{may assure you} that in now looking on upon your retirement, I am prompted by a feeling of the truest regard & sympathy.

I know that your retirement is one of the very keenest with which God visits his children: one which no one can fully enter into. Except those who have been

in all respects similarly tried: And though I am persuaded that by & by a thousand pleasing & alleviating circumstances will throng upon your memory, giving you occasion to see in your own case, how much of mercy is to be found amid heavy sorrows, still at present the trial is fearfully "grievous". & mortifying in its effects. Leaving then those suggestions which hereafter your heart will be better prepared to receive, suffice me to repeat - what I doubt not is fully realized by you already - that there is one only solace while in such a "furnace of affliction": - and that is a simple, child-like clinging to the arm of the Lord Jesus.

Consider that it is the act of one who strikes in mercy, & wounds that he may heal. Call to mind his unutterable tenderness & compassion. Represent him to yourself in all the attitudes of love & pity, by which he was furnished when himself "a man of sorrows" in this world. Believe that he is now the same, having a heart overflowing with sympathy for his suffering servants. Draw upon the expressions & figures employed in Scripture to illus-

that his suppetting goodness toward those who trust in him. One
of them is indelibly imprinted upon my mind. I know
well the love of a mother for her child:—How her own heart
is wrung when the darling suffers:—how every cry pierces
her very soul when she is forced in its good to inflict needful
chastening. Now this very image is used by the Lord
"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort
you!" Could words or figures more touchingly depict the
measureless love of the Lord Jesus for his people?

Cast yourself therefore, my dear friend, very, very often in
prayer upon the promises & imitations of this gracious Lord. Pour
out your griefs to him—as you poured in the ear of some devoted
friend: And you will find him very near to you—a very
present help in time of trouble. He will sustain & comfort
& guide, & assist, & protect, & sanctify you:—and qualify you
for the precious duties which his Providence has devolved upon
you.

I will therefore no farther upon you. And kneel only
by to assure you that I shall not cease to pray for your blessing
upon you & your little ones. Anna unites with me in
messages of affection. I am
most faithfully yours

Percy B. Irving

Mrs A. J. McKenzie. Farmington.