

[Letter from Simeon Locke Doggett to W. R. Deane, early in 1852]

W. R. Deane Esq. Dear Sir,

I write to acknowledge the reception of your kind letters to me. I delayed, that I might also notice, the reception of the Christian Register, which I have just (not yet) received. I ~~was~~ would be highly entertained with the article on the Bible signed N.E. because it is a subject of great interest to me, to all serious thinkers, and I am glad to see the piece before me. (t is a subject on which much has been written, and on which much more might be said. Many learned men have devoted their lives to the understanding, the defending, and propegating of the doctrines of the Scriptures. And all lovers of truth and all friends to mankind should commended the Bible as Mr. Grimke of my native city observed to the parents, the instructor, the patriot, to the Christian, and to the scholar to the parents & instructor [sic], for on them depends the education of the young, and as the Bible is the only standard of duty, they should interweave it with the whole scheme of secular education. To the patriot, for to the Bible his country owes not only her religious liberty, and her entire moral condition, but, to a great extent, her civil and political rights, her science, literature and arts. To the Christian, for he admits the divinity of the Scriptures, their absolute authority, an inestimable worth. To the Scholar, for the Bible offers him a more ancient, venerable, noble classic, than is to be found in the whole compass of Grecian and Roman Literature.

I remember that about 6 or 7 years ago I happen to be in Boston one Sunday, enjoying the hospitalities of your house, that you took me with your family to church. It was then that I heard Mr. Warterston, and was entertained by the soundness and impressiveness of his discourse. I believe in the afternoon of that Sunday you remained at home, for some indisposition, a headache I think. Mr. Warterston in the afternoon took for his text "Great is the mystery of Godliness", and he discoursed masterly on the Subject. He showed forth how Universal and Infinite must be the great Creator of all things. That from necessity there must be mystery in Him who is so infinitely above all created beings. And how then can man a finite being comprehend the Infinite Man, who cannot explain the mystery of himself, who sees all things in mystery, Who cannot tell of the blade of grass at his feet, why it grows, why the dews and the rains of heaven nourish it, why green its color, and why the warm rays of the sun are necessary for its vitality. How vain then it is for man to think he can comprehend Deity. The axiom of reason is an undiscovered God, and all things live in his ubiquity; observes the poet Tupper; and I here dismiss this subject by commending to You the elaborate and poetical remarks of Tupper on mystery, especially the conclusion, in which he observes that "it is just, even to man's weak thinking, To have one for God who always may be learnt, yet never fully known; (see Tupper.) -- I regret to learn that you have been sick, and I am also sorry that my letters have been a source of some trouble, and that I am now annoying you with another, but I hope you will have patience with me a few moments longer, or you may lay this letter aside and read it at your leisure, for I wish to review your letters to me and explain more fully my humble opinion of the subject under consideration. I obtained on the 10th your letter dated the 9th. In regards to your remarks on the Sugar bowl, I must say that I felt much pleased, and fluttered withal. It is some satisfaction at least "that accidents are productive of good", & that as Tupper observes "Petty quarrels ginger life," and make us love more afterwards." In reference to the second

subject noticed in that letter (and subsequently, I would observe that the object I had plan for (in view) was some pecuniary benefit for the ulterior purpose in view. If this is doubtful, or unattainable, of course nothing else about such a step is desirable, for in other respects it would be detrimental.) ~~And~~ Now therefore as I now more fully understand from your letter the nature of the thing, I conclude that I cannot it ~~exp~~ is best not to prosecute the plan any further (if I have to depend on other people), so you need not trouble yourself any more, but let it pass &c. (For it was only as a preparatory step that I proposed it, inasmuch as) I consider funds as necessary as knowledge, for the intended undertaking, ~~as~~ It was for this reason I never proposed the life in prospect to others, and why I accepted it with diffidence when proposed by others. For I am convinced from observations that I have been enabled to make, that great obligations to others, especially pecuniary liabilities ~~to~~ render the dependent person unhappy in his life, and embarrassed in his movements. Debt is the source of estrangement, and the bone of contention, and the course of unhappiness among most Crs & Drs. I view it as a sort of vassalage in which the improvident and unfortunate live and move, and sometimes die in despair, live and move disturbed, perplexed, harassed and ~~opp~~ distressed by the demands of those who have benefited, or in some way got the advantage of them. Those who urged by strong necessity perhaps, but more often by self interest, or avarice, wring from the hard hands of labor, the dearly and tediously obtained ~~the~~ fruit of his toilsome hours, in which he endured the sufferings of mind and body, the inclemency of the weather, the privations of many necessaries of life, the mortifications of poverty, the sweat, the toil, the discouragement and the anxiety of indebtedness. There are crs who must & ought to have &c. are shylocks in the world who will have their pound of flesh, and there are indiscreet persons also, ~~that~~/~~will~~ who allured by a present advantage, benefit, or gratification, will rashly blind~~ly~~ their eyes to future consequences and give themselves up a ready victim to the sons of Mammon, and while the sweetness of a little honey is in their mouth, put their feet into the stocks, their hands into the fetters, and when they find themselves powerless, or when aroused at last perhaps by the cries of a suffering family, pleading for bread and house and clothing, then to yield themselves up to remorse and despair, become a burden to themselves and to the community and vent their last spleen & maledictions upon the insidious person who lent them favors for usury.

Nor do I think the case is ameliorated ~~wh~~ much when the parties are brothers or near relations. I do not think that shade of ~~relationship~~ will forbid the entrance ~~prevent~~/~~the~~ torrid rays from piercing through the tender leaves breast of contention & tergiversation* and scorching up the growth and life of affection for if indebtedness lurks in that cool retreat with its concomitant evils ~~are~~/~~there~~ *in the breasts of those retired there of tergiversation & contention, if indebted lurks &c.

For, "The hungry hounds of extortion are there, the bond, and the mortgage, & the writ,

While the appetite for gold, unslumbering, watcheth to glut its maw, --
 And the heart so tenanted and shaded, is cold to all things also:
 It seeth not the sunshine of heaven, nor is warmed by the light
 of charity

If corroboration of these remarks it is not necessary for me to adduce examples from history, and from distant times and places I would not have to go far from the domicile in which I live, I would not have to search into the affairs of distant persons, or to pass over the connections with whom I am connected, nor would I have more to do to apprise you of the verification of all this evil, than to refer you to the subject of that letter my father received of the same date of the one sent to me.

Admonished by the misfortunes of others, instructed by the effect of their mismanagement and indiscretion, seeing the rocks and shoals upon which they struck, the pits into which they fell the gins and toils by which they were ensnared, the temptations to which they yielded, the inviting cup with bitter dregs that they drank with glee and tears & the embarrassments unhappiness, distress and misery thus engendered, I should be cautious that I do not tread in the same path of perplexity anxiety and distress. I should be doubly impressed and I should carefully heed the injunction of the apostle -- "Owe no man anything but love". This has been, this is, and this will be the rule of my life. -- By it I wish to ~~conquer~~ strive and conquer, or gloriously fall; -- contented with the commendation of Dr. Young that,

"If nothing more than purpose in my power, that purpose firm is equal to the deed -- Angels could no more."

Actuated by this principle it can easily be seen why I proposed what I have, though it may be thought inconsiderate by others. Actuated by this principle it may be seen why I think that darkness clouds and shadows rest upon the success of the plan of life in view; and why I find much to dishearten me in the pursuit of a desideratum so remote. Unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances may arise that will discourage & perhaps utterly preclude my entrance in the path proposed. Among other disparagements that now stand like lions in the path, is the principle upon which I have above expatiated, and the certainty I feel that then I will be about as unable to help myself in that respect as I am now.

From my father I can expect no assistance, for he rather, from his embarrassments, must expect help from me; for he is indeed "Un homme sans agents: et sans amis"; and I calculate but little on the assistance of those of my relations who feel interested in my behalf, lest I should obtain favors I could not repay, or that I would be unwilling to receive from motives of prudence. -- But I will bide my time and wait the results of events* *And still cling to my Mottos by which I have accomplish much perseverantur vincit omnia -- If I can not lift the veil of futurity, and see before that time the secret influences in operation that may work a mighty change in my destination. I may be dead ere that time, with the clods of the valley resting over my head, or my bones bleaching on some distant shore; I may be thousands of miles from the land of my home; I may be utterly discouraged in my present purusit, or well and successful. But I believe however Let the climacteric be what it will, --

"There is a Divinity, shapes our ends rough hew them how you may."

Whather amid the frozen regions of the North, or under the sweltering heat of a torrid sun, or crossing the dreary waste of the desert, or on the deep blue sea, or cast on some lone island, weather in company of the friendly, or among a savage band, in the land of freedom, or in the land of tyranny, in the tranquility of peace, or in the rage of & carnage of war, yet still I would confide & rejoice that I have one source of strength, one support, one hope, one Friend that sticketh closer to me than a brother, in whom I live and move and have my being, whose I am, and whom I serve. (See Your)

Such being the inevitable course of life, -- the path of peace, that after a few years of trial and care, leads up to the mansions of eternal bliss, or the broad road of iniquity that after a little season spent in guilty pleasure, leads down to the infernal regions of despair -- such being the responsibility of every individual to guard his own steps, to beware of the dangers that environ him, to resist the temptations that beset him, to shun the allurements of the world, to improve the precious time given to embrace every opportunity afforded him to better and benefit his condition, both in this world and for the world to come; and such being the warning voice to everyone, that "Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with all they might", for there is no art, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest; I, as well as others feel much impressed with these momentous truths, and feel impelled by the reality of these facts, especially at this time, to quickly sedulously, indefatigably to do whatsoever my hands find to do. Especially at this time, I say, for the age to which I have arrived is considered the grand climacteric of life. For the circumstances that now influence the advice and assistance now given by others, the means now possessed, the education now attained, the virtues now cherished, and the vices now indulged or detested, the company and the things now sought or shunned, the persons now loved, and the objects now admired, the steps now taken and the inclination now followed, will influence, and direct, and control all the rest of life on earth and perhaps through all eternity. Such being the urgency of this period of life, I should heed the emphatic words of the Grecian "Deliberate slowly then execute promptly" I should learn a lesson from the experience of others; I should ask the advice of the wise and friendly, and seek the encouragement of those who have manifested an interest in my welfare. Divested of all partiality for self, uninfluenced by the flatteries or disparagements bestowed on me by others, judging of the future by the past I should endeavor to adopt that plan of life, which, the dictates of reason, the convictions of conscience, and the predilection of the mind sanction and encourage

[This is quite a response to what I take to have been a refusal to lend him the \$ so he could go to Andover. I wouldn't be in Mr. Deane's shoes after receipt of so high flown a letter as this!]