

The SUFFICIENCY of the Holy Scriptures,

A

S E R M O N

Preached at *SALTER'S-HALL,*

L O N D O N ;

On *WEDNESDAY September 11, 1782;*

IN BEHALF OF THE

BIBLE SOCIETY.

By *ROBERT ROBINSON.*

L O N D O N :

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2 TIMOTHY iii. 15.

The Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

IF ever there were a publick charity, to the support of which persuasion was unnecessary, this, which I have the honour to propose to you to-day, in the name of the BIBLE-SOCIETY, is one. *It commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* My design, therefore, is more to confirm such as do support this benevolent institution, than to convert those who do not. If, indeed, we were infidels, and denied the truth of the proposition contained in the text; or if we were immoral persons, insensible of the worth of virtue, and its companion, felicity; if we were unanimated with the manly passion of diffusing happiness among all our species by means of virtue, and of producing virtue by communicating knowledge; then should we remain dead to all the holy emotions inspired by the text: but as we believe what our apostle affirms for truth, believe it as he, who affirmed it,

it, did, our faith, like his, must work by love to all mankind. Let us hear him.

The holy scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. By the holy scriptures the apostle means, as he informs us in the next verse, *all writings given by inspiration of God.* In these, the apostle suggests in the text, agreeably to his express declarations in many other passages, *Jesus Christ* is the chief subject, and makes the principal figure, everywhere projecting to meet the eye of the reader. Moses writes of him; of him bear all the prophets witness; and with evangelists and apostles he is all in all. The holy scriptures, which thus hold forth to publick view the Lord Jesus Christ, *are able to make men wise*, that is, to teach them to judge rightly of God, a wisdom which is *unto salvation*, for it begins by saving us from error, vice, and misery, and it ends in the salvation, that is, the resurrection of the body, and the perfection of the soul. These benefits, the apostle adds, are communicated to us *through faith*, in other words, the holy scriptures exhibit a prophet, whose doctrine must be understood, a priest, whose merit must be trusted, a prince, whose laws must be obeyed; or, in words yet more plain, ignorant and vicious men become wise, and good, and happy, by reading.

reading, hearing, examining, understanding, and believing the truths taught in the holy scriptures.

If we thus enter into the sentiments of the inspired writer of our text, we shall be confirmed in the pious resolution of continuing to support this institution, a charity extracted from the very spirit of the text. The objects of your benevolence are the lower orders of military men, the soldiers in the army, and the sailors in the navy; a brave, I wish I could add a pious set of men; for skill and courage the glory, but for profligacy the shame of Britain. This useful order of men, however, deserve respect, and you have wisely expressed your esteem for them by presenting them with the BIBLE, for all the qualities of good military men are inculcated there; and there they are so inculcated as to render additional instruction not absolutely necessary to salvation, so that your society do honour to their own understandings by presenting the bible ONLY, for *the holy scriptures, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ALONE, are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.*

What the apostle affirms of the inspired writings in general, that they make the good man perfect, and thoroughly furnish him unto all
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good works, may with the strictest propriety be applied to this particular class of men. Let us, first, examine what are the necessary qualities of a military man, and let us inquire whether the holy scriptures inculcate such dispositions.

We begin with *piety*, or the worship of God. To be pious is to entertain just notions of God, to exercise proper affections towards him, and to perform such publick actions as express our dependence on him, and our reverence for him. Even pagans thought this so necessary, that they neither begun nor ended a war without publick sacrifices expressive of their attention to the supreme power, that governed the universe. Men, who live among fires and flames, sieges and battles, storms and tempests, and shipwrecks and instruments of death, how can such men dispense with the obligations of piety? If all men ought to fear and worship God for their own sakes, how much more this class of men, who are exposed to more deaths than others, and who have fewer hopes than others have of the cool, deliberate moments of conversion in their last agonies? A principle of religion is necessary, too, for our sakes, for we arm and empower these men to guard our lives, liberties, and properties, and we are only so far happy under their protection as they appear to possess such qualities as render them

them proper objects of our confidence. A man who fears God may be trusted: but he, who doth not fear him, seldom pays a proper regard to his fellow citizens, his conscience is not bound by the religion of an oath.

Aware of the necessity of piety, we present a bible to military men, as the book, of all others in the world, the best constructed to form in the mind just notions of God, andso to excite pious emotions in the heart, and to regulate the actions of life. Here the first cause of all things visible and invisible displays his true and real character, as the creator, the preserver, the redeemer, the judge of mankind, diffusing his perfections through all his works. In one doctrine he is an object of fear, in another of love; in one event he displays his power, in another his pity, in all his infinite tenderness for the noblest of all his creatures, man. So far hath God carried his condescension to us, that he hath given us his own express image in the person of Jesus Christ, *God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

That display of the character of God, which the holy scriptures exhibit in the person of Christ, most powerfully impels men to piety.

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His advent was foretold by prophets, and prophecy is a grand display of the omniscience of God. His presence was announced by miracles, and miracles wrought on the winds and the waves, the diseased and the dead are noble exhibitions of omnipotence. His doctrine is an emanation of the purest and most perfect wisdom. His holy example exhibits moral excellence in a manner impellent and irresistible. In one word, *God in Christ* is God *reconciling the world unto* the purity of his nature, and the perfection of his government. As, then, piety becomes a military man, because he is under all the obligations that bind other men, and some others peculiar to himself, so the bible is calculated to excite him to discharge these duties, by exhibiting to him a supreme being, who places his glory in guarding the liberties, and preserving the lives of mankind.

Secondly, we call *magnanimity* a military virtue, and we affirm, the bible is calculated to inspire men with it. Magnanimity is elevation of soul, a great and noble way of thinking. It is owing to the poverty of language, that we apply the terms great and little to the soul ; however, there is a truth in the fact of which we speak ; for whether it be owing to a particular construction of the body, or to modes of education, or to condi-

conditions of life, or to any other cause, certain it is, some men have diminutive ideas of every thing, and others an enlarged sublime habit of thinking. Gentlemen in a military line of life have more opportunities than others of obtaining great and manly ideas, for they are familiar with men and manners in wide extremes, with winds and waves, and heights and depths, and dangers and pleasures, of which inexperience has no idea. They are often in conditions, which require sudden and singular exertions, and such circumstances draw out the latent powers of the soul. It is not the acquisition of an acre, it is the protection of a kingdom; it is not the decline of an individual, it is the subversion of an empire; it is not a journey of a day, it is a voyage round the globe, that occupy the minds of such men. A mean, selfish soul, enslaved by vulgar prejudices, and bound by sordid interest to one patron, or one party, is not fit to inhabit the body of a Briton in arms; he could neither enter into the views of his constituents, nor discharge the duties of his office, nor encounter the difficulties of his condition. Such a man's mind should be the residence of all those just and generous ideas, which make the universe happy, and which go to make up the genuine British constitution.

The holy scriptures are admirably adapted to enlarge the minds of men. The historical part carries them back to the most remote antiquity, and the prophecies of the New Testament set them a thinking of long periods yet to come. The doctrine of God gives them an object to contemplate infinite and unfearchable. The doctrine of providence gives them the whole universe to study, in wide extremes, from the properties of angels to the instincts of reptiles, the whole intermediate spaces occupied by various orders of beings, *heavens covered with his glory, earth full of his praise.* The doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the world, the highest happiness in heaven, the utmost misery in hell, all these train up the disciples of revelation in a habit of thinking truly sublime.

To men conversant with eternity, how short doth human life appear! To a mind surveying the world, comparing being with being, and rationally giving the superiority to intelligence, how natural is the exclamation, *what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul! or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

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As the doctrines of the holy scriptures expand and elevate the mind, as objects of pleasure and pain exhibited there excite noble emotions in the heart, so the duties of religion imply noble exertions every way worthy of a great and good man. To *rule our own spirits*—to deny *ourselves*—to *cut off* a right hand—to forgive *our enemies*—to bless them that *curse us*—never to *forget* to do good and to communicate—to flee from *wrath to come*—to *lay hold* on eternal life—to live, yet not to live, but to have *Christ* live in us—all these duties demand great exertions, and all imply superior habits of thinking, in a word, christian magnanimity. If magnanimity be a virtue, christian magnanimity is that virtue in its most refined state; and what is it in a military man but an imitation of that friend of mankind, who exposed his life to inconveniences and hardships, and who expired in the prime of his days on a cross for the publick good?

We call *love of his country* a third qualification of a military man; and if there be a country which demands the warmest affection of men bearing arms, it is this, of which we have the happiness to be natives. I do not mean an attachment to soil and seasons, nor a fondness for the language, the dress, the customs, the amusements of our native spot; a high regard for all

these would be, perhaps, commendable, at least excusable in us; nor do I intend a preference to the learning, politeness, and refinements of our native district: but I mean love to that in our country, which only renders a country desirable, A FREE CONSTITUTION.

In countries where despotism debases human nature, the people are held in slavery by fear, and on this principle the military is a distinct order, bred to the profession of arms. There a standing army is necessary to the splendour, perhaps to the being of a tyrant, who, divested of this engine of government, would become the ridicule or the execration of mankind. In such a state, the accomplishment of a soldier is not love of his country: but servile submission to sovereign caprice.

In our free constitution, the direct end of which is civil liberty, our laws know no such state as that of a perpetual standing soldier. With us military men are fellow citizens, who for a while, when the representatives of the people require it, take up arms to defend a country both theirs and ours. The safety and happiness of the whole state is the grand principle, on which we allow force necessary to a free people; and on this principle we employ military

tary men, not to inspire us with fear, nor to restrain us from any lawful pursuit, nor even to enforce our laws; but to guard our liberties, lives, and properties, from all invaders.

Some have pretended to accuse the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for not inculcating patriotism. Benevolence; say they, universal love, citizenship of the world, is the doctrine of your gospel; your gospel therefore is not divine. We grant, revealed religion does inculcate universal love; but if we be taught to love the whole, we are necessarily taught to love each component part, and consequently we are taught to love that part, which gave us birth. We allow, the gospel doth not inspire us with enthusiasm for local circumstances; it teacheth us to despise the magick of names, so fatal to Greeks, Romans, and Jews, and it bids us take him for *a Jew, who is one inwardly, whose circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit; and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God*; it directs us to unite with all wise and good men for all the social purposes, for which Jesus Christ came into the world. Christianity, we allow, is a religion; and not a system of civil government: but this religion, destructive of all sin, spends much of its force in eradicating those sinful principles, which

which support despotism, and in cherishing such virtuous dispositions as uphold a free constitution of civil government.

How easy it would be to enlarge on this subject ! how easy to place in publick view the dispositions of a tyrant and a slave, and the spirit of christianity, in direct opposition to both ! How easy to justify, on the principles of the gospel, all the noble exertions of the citizens of free states for obtaining and perpetuating civil liberty ! Let it suffice, at present, to observe in brief, that the whole of christianity was not proposed in the form of a code of law, by ambassadors from heaven, to earthly princes, to be incorporated into systems of civil government : but, on the contrary, it was in its miracles an address to the senses, and it continues to be in its doctrines an appeal to the reason of all mankind. In the former supposition religion would have been enforced by authority, and submission to orders would have been instead of faith and obedience ; and this would have made christianity congenial to arbitrary government. In the latter case, which is ours, a British citizen may give a Bible to a British soldier in perfect consistency with all the principles that constitute a new testament church, and a free state. A soldier,

dier, by reading, will soon discover, that the principal interposition of God in the Old Testament was to bring a nation out of that *house of bondage*, Egypt, into the liberty of being governed by laws of their own; and that the principal event in the New Testament was the appearance of a special messenger from heaven to announce redemption to all mankind. With the strictest propriety, then, we conclude, that, as love of a *free* country is a military virtue, so the Bible is calculated to inspire it.

It would be inexcusable to omit, in the next place, *courage*, as a necessary accomplishment of a military man; and it would be unjust to the Bible to say, it inculcated timidity. Fortitude includes strength of body, and firmness of mind; the holy scriptures inculcate the first by teaching us temperance, and they inculcate the last by directing all men to act on principle, on good principle, on principle of their own.

A religion, that chafes away ignorance, and lays down fixed truths, to be examined, believed, and placed as grounds of action; a religion that takes away guilt, and publishes pardon of sin; a religion, that opens immediate happiness even in this life to every one of its disciples; a religion, that weighs the world in a scale, and all
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that men call glory in a balance, and estimates every particle according to its true value ; a religion, that disarms death, closes hell, and opens a heaven of ineffable bliss ; a religion, that proposes so many eminent examples of fortitude to our imitation ; a religion, that declares *all things shall work together for good to them that love God, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* ; such a religion may well inspire its disciples with fortitude, it may well make them face all dangers in the path of duty, it may well *make the feeble like Davids, and Davids like angels of God*, it may well embolden each to exclaim, with an eminent hero of old, *Should such a man as I flee?*

Lastly, to omit many, we consider *humanity* as an accomplishment necessary to soldiers and sailors. Kind and gentle affections are not incompatible with that stern heroism, which some offices of life require, yea, history affords us numerous examples of humane and generous actions performed by men of the most resolute and daring abilities, nor have great warriors ever confounded war and cruelty together, the first is often necessary, the last never. The lives
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of military men are spent among objects of distress; abroad, straits and difficulties innumerable; wants, diseases, and deaths in a thousand shapes preying upon themselves and their companions, fading and destroying the flower of mankind; at home, greyheaded merit overlooked and unrewarded, or, if rewarded, sacrificing the last days of a life spared by miracle in temples of debauchery and excess. What occasions for the exercise of humane dispositions? Even among enemies, when a man is sent as an instrument to execute the just resentment of a whole injured nation against foreign invaders of their rights, how necessary is humanity, especially toward the innocent, who are not unfrequently involved in the calamities of the guilty!

Let such a man take up the holy scriptures, and read, and let him not start at those parts of Jewish history, in which humanity in war seems to have no place. The same book, that relates these exploits, informs us, that he, who never acts without the most consummate reason, gave extraordinary commands to those heroes to suspend in these particular cases the exercise of humanity. Dreadful commission! *Thou shalt consume all the people, thine eye shall have no pity upon them.* At present we have no extraordinary commissions;

commissions : but we have a general law of justice and humanity, *whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them, for this is the law and the prophets.*

In fine, the holy scriptures are able *thoroughly to furnish* all military men *to every good work*, they are able to do more, they *are able to make them wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus* ; and on this principle we praise this society for giving our soldiers and sailors bibles *only*.

Far be it from us to depreciate the labours of learned, or pious men. Their publications have their worth, because they have their use. Far be it from us to insinuate, that human expositions of divine truths are useless ; they do good both heard and read. We only affirm, that uninspired writings are not necessary to salvation, and that to men, in such circumstances as the military are, the bible alone is sufficient to answer every desirable purpose, and more would be an inconvenience.

When we affirm, the holy scriptures *alone* are able to make us wise unto salvation, we do not mean to exclude divine influence. Much is daily said concerning the work of the holy spirit : but, the truth is, we have no dispute concerning

cerning the work of the holy spirit, for divine influence is allowed on all hands : but our difference is concerning the *mode* of the work in question. Doth the holy spirit convert the soul by a positive act of power, or doth he inform the mind, and change the heart by means of scripture truths? A positive act of power would produce an occult quality, for which we have no name, and of which we know no use. A scripture truth, demonstrating itself to the understanding, produces a just idea in the mind, a picture of itself, and then the doctrine stands true in the mind, or becomes our faith. The belief of this truth produces proper emotions in the heart. If it be the truth of divine forgiveness, so admirably adapted to excite pleasure, we hope and rejoice : if it be the truth of divine displeasure, so well calculated to inspire fear, we tremble and flee from wrath to come. This plain and artless process wants nothing to recommend it to many christians except perplexity and mystery, too long habituated, alas ! to consider obscurity as a character of piety !

According to our best divines, the work of the holy spirit consists of two parts, the first they call external, this is the proposing of the truths of revelation either by speaking or writing : the other they call internal, and this is the disposing of the mind and heart to receive truths of revelation

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tion. As I may avoid fire : but cannot approach it without feeling its effects, so I may avoid the truths of christianity, but I cannot admit them without admitting at the same time the effects, which the belief of these truths never fails to produce. On these principles the apostle in the text connects salvation with faith alone, because faith is not alone, but is inseparably connected with repentance, and love, and zeal, and good works, and every other christian excellence : and on these principles we praise the understandings of those, who give sailors bibles *only*, because the gift implies several just and honourable principles, principles, I mean, which do honour to the understandings and hearts of those, who admit them.

First, this donation implies, that, in the opinion of the donors, the bible is a *plain*, easy book ; either that all the truths of revelation are simple, plain, and clear, or that such truths as are essential to salvation are so. This is a very just notion of revelation, for a revelation intended, as this is by its divine author, to be universally read, examined and understood by all orders of men, if it wanted perspicuity, would not answer the end of the writer. Perspicuity is a character of all good writing, and the holy scriptures bear this mark in the most conspicuous manner. The subjects are clear,
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the language is plain, the imagery is just and striking. The nature and perfections of God, the superintendence of providence, the folly, the guilt, the misery of sin, the purity and perfection of the law, the depravity of human nature, the imperfection of unassisted knowledge and obedience, the nature and offices of Christ, the place and use of scripture, the influence of the holy spirit, the nature and necessity of faith and obedience, the promise of eternal life to the righteous, the threatening of endless punishments to the wicked, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment, how clear and explicit are the oracles of God on all these important subjects ! Strictly speaking, there are no mysteries in revelation to be believed, for where nothing is affirmed, there is nothing to be believed or denied. That the dead shall rise is affirmed, the resurrection of the dead is therefore an article of the christian faith : but with what body the dead shall come is not declared, and therefore the mode of the resurrection is not a mystery to be believed, but a subject to be left, where revelation leaves it, to be unfolded by the event itself at the last day. The same may be said of many other articles, which custom hath taught us to call mysteries. Some pretended mysteries are not scripture propositions at all ;

all : but mere creatures of the schools. Others called mysteries are contained in scripture, but are not mysteries, the Lord's supper never was accounted a mystery till transubstantiation made it so. Other articles, again, are revealed in the truth of the fact, but not in the mode of effecting it. One doctor of learned leisure may start points, and raise difficulties, another of the same class may investigate them, a third may defend, and a fourth may deny, and all in the eagerness of disputing particulars may miss the general design of revelation : while the plain, blunt sailor, happily unacquainted with their insurmountables, by the mere exercise of his own good sense, will take in the general design of the book, and firmly believe, that *without* evangelical holiness no man shall see the Lord.

Secondly, the donation of only a bible implies, that each reader hath *a right of private judgment*. This is another just notion, truly scriptural, and entirely protestant. To give a man a book to read, and to deny him the right of judging of its meaning, seems the summit of absurdity. What pity, that such absurdity should not be universally exploded ! A right founded in nature, attached inalienably by the God of nature to the very existence of mankind, openly avowed and confirmed by scripture,

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ture, constantly exercised by all, even by such as deny it (for who does not think for himself?) this right, I say, cannot be evaded without the greatest inconsistency. It is not a favour conceded by one man to another, it is a right inherent, held immediately of the God of nature, the property and the dignity of all mankind. The utmost exercise of this right cannot endanger either any of the great principles of morality, or any of the essential doctrines of christianity, or any of the noble principles, that constitute the happiness of civil society. I will not affirm the same of scholastick theses, and human inventions: but of what vast importance are they! Suppose a sailor should not think of them? what then?

To close, The donation of a bible only argues *a freedom from party zeal*. Here the great design of God in giving a revelation of his mind and will is kept in view. No little selfish ends are proposed. The inspired writers are not retained, and disguised, to serve secular views. They are left to make their own way, to tell their own tale, to support their own credit, or, to speak more properly, to maintain the honour of that God, who gave them such credentials as his infinite wisdom and his tenderest compassion thought best fitted to effect the purpose of their mission.

mission. That christian seems to me to enter thoroughly into the spirit of revelation, who dare trust the holy scriptures alone to convince and convert a sinner from the error of his way.

Christians, we have been considering the *sufficiency* of the holy scriptures, with a particular view to our soldiers and sailors, and, I flatter myself, I have not wandered very far from the design of this society, who, in the papers put into your hands to day, give it as their opinion; that “the bible is the infallible word of God, which when attended with a divine blessing, will be the means of making the army and the navy better members of society, and inspire them with real courage to defend their country, especially in times of danger.” With this view the society, which was only instituted in 1780, have distributed, at the charge of upwards of fifteen hundred pounds, more than eleven thousand bibles among our regiments and ships crews. May God crown their efforts with success, and may an hundred fold be returned into their bosoms!

How pleasing, at least, how alleviating and mollifying are the reflections, which rise out of the doctrine of the sufficiency of the holy scriptures,

tures, under the misfortunes, to which we often hear our brave countrymen are exposed. I sometimes fancy I see an old British sailor, having spent his days in the service of his country, sink under the weight of age and infirmities, and, during a voyage, sickening, and hastening to die. Alone in his hammock he reviews his life, and conscience condemns it as *evil, only evil continually*. God, who till now had not been in all his thoughts, seems to summon him to an impartial judgment. He feels he cannot live, and he knows he is not fit to die. Great is his misery upon him. The pains of dissolving nature are aggravated by the agonies of his mind oppressed with an intolerable load of guilt. Recollections of blasphemies, debaucheries, and cruelties cleave his soul asunder. In this moment an honest messmate comes, pity in his heart, and frankness in his eye, bringing in his hand the holy scriptures, the message of Almighty God to the wretched, communicated by your charity to the ship, and reads him these words, *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, if he turn from his sin, he shall not die, none of his sins, that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him. God so loved the world, that he gave his only be-*

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gotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Come now, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Instantly a new world opens to his view. God is no longer the inexorable judge, he speaks the language of a compassionate parent, vehemently concerned for the welfare of his child. This rebellious son melts at his voice, repents and believes the gospel, throws himself into the arms of divine clemency, and with his last breath mixes his adorations of God with blessings on you his benefactors, by whose means the scriptures made him wise unto salvation. All this is possible. I ask no more. The possibility of administering such relief to a fellow-creature in such distress is enough for me.

I sometimes fancy I see a shipwreck, all the crew except one lost, and he thrown upon a desolate island, the waters casting up along with him one of your bibles upon the beach. What can the bible do for this poor man? Let us pause. After his first excesses have subsided, after he hath found what at first he could not comprehend, that he could live on the fruits, and sleep
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in the shade, which the island affords, let us suppose him sitting under a bush, and reading; *The most high doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou? The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The Lord is nigh unto all them, that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.* Would not such information as this put into his heart, if not a joy unspeakable and full of glory, yet a calm resignation to the will of providence, which in his condition would be of more value than the whole world. Were such a man to enter into the spirit of the holy scriptures, when he saw the carcases of his late companions floating on the waves, he would hear one voice saying to him, *Be still, and know that I am God*, and another subjoining, *Behold the goodness and severity of God, on them severity, but towards thee goodness.* I repeat it again, all this is possible, and possibility is ground of action here.

Brethren, was it a prospect of possible good, or was it a foresight of the late unhappy fate of the
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Royal George, that induced you to act as you did? That was the first ship, to which you gave bibles. When she sunk, there were four hundred bibles aboard. Whether the men made a proper use of them or not, you have done your part. I am happy to be able to say, that, by letters from some on board that ship, written before the sad event, and which I have been reading again this morning, there is sufficient ground to believe that the holy scriptures had made some of that crew wise unto salvation. *When the sea shall give up her dead*, perhaps you may have the honour of saying to the judge, *Behold us, and the children, which thou hast given us!* Had you read the book of fate, and foreseen this melancholy event, you could not have acted a more friendly part than to prepare the sufferers for death by means of the holy scriptures. If such men must sink to rise no more, if the sea must devour, if that great grave must never say, *it is enough*, the least we can do is to prepare men, who for our sakes live suspended by a thread over it, to *die daily*. And you widows and orphans of this lost family, left, many of you, to publick charity, flee to the holy scriptures as to the only refuge of the distressed. We will not irritate your griefs, by examining your wounds. There is, they say, something sacred in misery. We, like Job's friends, will *sit down*

down with you, none will speak a word to you; but each will rend his mantle, and sprinkle dust upon his head toward heaven. Hard is the heart that does not feel for you, and harder still is that heart, which feels nothing for thousands, who may be next month in the condition of your departed relations, sunk in the merciless ocean beyond recovery, sunk to rise no more,

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