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The Reverend Mr Joseph Bellamy

of Bathlem
in Woodbury, Essex

Dear Sir

Longbrooke Feb 11 - 1721

I receive the line you sent me by Mr Knight with satisfaction but long of some possession had permitted I have seen you only in the view of it I have been so humil of late and especially the week with a guest from Southeyton has been waiting for me to go with him that I desisted of writing to you before I left the place being ready also to write of absolute necessity but divine provision has given me this opportunity for want of words to state what I really entertain and is that my time in writing and your in reading these lines may be spent for the glory of your blessed Lord and Master who takes an account of every word and every act we do and will bring every word into the judgment and every secret thought to light and my whole time since I left Oxford has been spent in one continued series of spiritual distress and inward conflict though I have taken a journey to the distance of seven miles I preached now and then and sometimes with some success, tenderness and some degree of fervor and piety; all the pains be to the great desire of being good and perfect yet what I have learned in my soul is perfectly begun, imperfect and the corruption of my heart that still feels the same but still just but at some of my writings frequently I seem to be glad also in the midst of my ^{inward} distress or empty heart, void of any thing that satisfies, Heaven and earth are perfectly desolate, your former exhortation of my soul blessedness and the eternal God, methinks if there be any such thing which indeed I cannot conceive to be, yet methinks is not sufficient to make my poor immortal soul happy, and hence I fall into a great degree of despair, so that I am cast, & wish to be some other, which yet is not equal to me, and sometimes in the case I do like a creature under heavy of conscience, who cannot stand still or confine himself to any place, so distressed I cant eat or drink but feel like a condemned malefactor going to his place of execution - It seems as if my distress was of the very nature of the damned

Compl.

the men consists wholly in position, and being unable to bear the
distress I am greatly inclined to avoid ~~travelling~~ and some near coun-
cils or writings like, while my conscience says no to the criminal
employment of time, as well as to attempting to please myself and
any thing else of God. Sometimes I feel so bitterly woe that I
cant but think God will let loose mankind upon me to destroy me
and I soon tremble at the shaking of a leaf and sometimes when I
am going to preach, I suddenly look round to see if nobody is
coming to stop me, and in the case of ministers or people show
me kindness or respect, I am pained for them that they are so secure
in us. I cant think them hearty in their opposition to me
and thus I think with regard to the hearing, for those words Job 34
can be said at any one's heart. Sometimes faith ventures to say, these
things are all the effect of covenant law and designed to make us
wiser, but that which disturbs me above all is, I feel something within
me reply, I dont want to be wiser, I dont want to be fitted for any great
service for God and the interest of, as yet to be delivered from my
present frame, tho I am in a squawk and bitterness of soul. But
however the promise, God has done and will do me good by these trials
Nothing could ever have shown so much of my unthankfulness to make myself
happy, that our blessedness is not a whole or in any part of it in us
from ourselves, but from God alone as these dispensations have done.
Nothing will counsel pure and self conceit like it, nothing destroy a
prouder confident separatist spirit like it; so that ^{many have} ~~we~~ are
dark and brought and to infinitely ^{our} ignorant, instead of saying
God knows and is true as God lives, &c. we shall be ready to say,
I dont know, I am a poor dark, ignorant, brought down, & the Lord
only knows, &c. further, nothing makes me so soft and tender toward
mankind in general and toward those we esteem to be our fellow
Christians in particular, tho they and we differ widely in sentiment
in some respects. Tho I have found by experience to a remarkable
degree of calm, when I have had any degree of divine light, & that I can
now love a close religious hypocrite in the midst of all the most
heinous actions.

But against Brother I'm afraid of extreme every where, I'm
afraid whether you and I have been too separatist and regard to
our own frame and feelings, as set him up as standards, at
least too much, to try them by, tho I dare not say we have
but what I write (say) is, I am more and more that God has
dealt with all his children as with me.

Sometimes I feel so dark with ignorance and darkness that
I'm almost a fool, I dont know anything but when I reflect on the
strange uncertainty of my mind, I grow afraid of learning English.
I see there's danger every where and tis nothing but God can
keep us from running into the wildest confusion.

I know I'm very dead and feel but little of the power of
God and were it not that I have felt it myself heretofore,
I should think persons distracted by troubling themselves in that
way which has been improved and abundantly blessed of God in
the late glorious revival of religion calling sinners to come
to Christ, looks foolishness to me. I dont feel any desire
that any should be converted or love to hear of any remarkable
conversion among sinners. Tho I feel frequently but a few days ago
the Lord let me feel as if I could have heaven down on sinners
heads! Tho ^{with} not coming to God and that should explain that
while I was wrestling against all for a sense of that inward
power there was in it, I might fall into an extreme that way. O the
Lord keep us, our Father, & we shall want the cause of Christ
some way or other.

In my late small circuit, I met with Mr. Bush, spent some
time with him and preached my sermon on Cant 82 before him. I
love him dearly, but I see the Lord has not dealt with him just
as he has with me. Last week I preached for Mr. Bush of Huntington.
The Lord kept me to be all love there, tho I was undermining
false religion, & tho if they had any inclination to quarrel with
me, the Lord kept me to love them as to each there was much
false zeal among them, so that some began to separate from that
dear man.

