

Hardwick Pars. Aug. 5/65

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My dear young friend

I write with Red Ink, most certainly not in  
shew of Controversy! but just because it is in the  
room, & the black is out of it - to thank you most  
sincerely & affectionately for your truly kind letter. It  
gives me great comfort to know that you have at any  
rate not thought unworthy of consideration some things I  
mentioned - and I hope chiefly for the pleasure of knowing  
that my dear young friend agrees with me - a poor notice  
in comparison, truly - <sup>but</sup> ~~so~~ from the hope that he may there  
ultimately find himself in accordance with the principles  
of truth & goodness - which change not, amid the variations  
of this strangely mutable world. Nothing can be more gratify-  
ing to me than the thought that you are more decided as to  
keeping out of temptation - Things which I have since  
heard respecting the case of one but little older than yourself  
at Oxford, not Cambridge, & personally unknown to both of  
us, - make me still more thankful that you have resolved  
to watch against the miserable sceptical spirit of the day.



I don't know how the poor young man in question be-  
gan - but he has ended by giving up prayer as use-  
less! or rather I sh<sup>d</sup>. have said ended - for who can  
say there such a course may end! - Thro' his case how-  
ever I have become acquainted with the alleged fact -  
which is well worth bearing in mind - that two of  
the arguents of the highly-praised writers on the sceptical  
side - & men who are thought to be "such good men"  
are really of immoral principles. (I believe however this  
does not apply to Dowell.) "By their fruits ye shall know  
them". The wick that there sh<sup>d</sup>. have judgement is often  
the strongest argument against the Being of the Judge.  
As to what you have been pleased to say about myself, (to  
Mrs. Webb) I hardly know what to say - but that I can  
not possibly love you the less for the mistaken opinion  
you have formed - I can only feel greatly ashamed of  
myself - & pray that your kind & loving feeling may  
never be the means of your being misled in anything.



However, don't suppose I can't understand you. For I have  
myself before now admired people greatly for no very suffici-  
ent reason - & when I found out things which shook my  
opinion of them, still did not ~~not~~ succeed in discounting  
my feelings - or perhaps attempt to do it. - I have but  
one fault to find with your most kind & greatly prized  
letters - you have told us nothing about your dear mother. But  
I think your silence is a sufficient proof that your anx-  
iety about her is at an end - & we are truly thankful for  
it. - I recollect (it has just come into my head) your  
saying something to me about the eternity of punishment  
of which I took no notice, from forgetfulness, which you  
were here - let me then take this opportunity - lest I sh<sup>d</sup>.  
forget again - of saying that it appears to me, that as to  
positive & arbitrary infliction, we have no data ex-  
cepting such as we find in God's word - but there is  
another view of the subject which ought to be considered  
& which has great weight with me. Holiness, we are agreed,  
is essentially & necessarily (not arbitrarily or depend-  
ing on positive enactment,) happiness. And there-  
fore sin must be essentially & necessarily (not arbi-



travily or depending on positive enactment) miserable. And therefore the sinner must continue miserable, as long as he continues such. But the Scripture contains not the least intimation of any change of moral disposition in the sufferer: <sup>hereafter</sup> therefore there is no revealed hope of any end of his torments. I can easily understand, in the abstract, a mitigation, or termination, of an arbitrary & positive punishment - but that would avail little as long as the nature continued wicked & estranged from God. It w<sup>d</sup>. be merely like releasing from prison a poor wretch tortured by an incurable disease, who w<sup>d</sup>. be equally in pain everywhere. - This wife has written, she has a message for you, thanking you much for the Crests. Coloured ones are what she wants, & she will be very thankful for any that you may happen to have at any time, as she is also collecting for little Helen. She is very much obliged for your opinion about the Ferns - & when she does them she will adopt your advice, & you will be the first to have a presentation copy. She has just finished painting you a little picture w<sup>ch</sup> she begs you will accept with her affectionate love - she will send it off on Wednesday noon, or on way to Devon if the frame is ready in time -



& sh<sup>d</sup>. there be a difficulty in paying Carriage all the way (liked enough,  
since they refuse to pay to Cheltenham!) she will enclose Postage Stamps  
to the amount of 2s with the Picture, & sh<sup>d</sup>. its worth to more she will  
depend upon your letting her know. When you have rec<sup>d</sup>. it, please let her  
know how you like it, as she particularly wishes to contribute another  
larger one for the benefit of the <sup>any</sup> Bible Women; if it sh<sup>d</sup>. turn out good  
enough to sell - you are not on <sup>any</sup> account to give away (excepting to your  
wife) what she has painted expressly for you. Between you & me I think  
you will be pleased with it. - We have been looking at Knott's crimson  
Star, a very interesting object, not very unlike the colour of this book.



Can you not get access to the Northumbrian Telescope? I sh<sup>d</sup>.  
think it w<sup>d</sup>. not be difficult. The obj. is not first rate, but such a  
big fellow cannot fail to show wonders in his own way.

Believe me, My dear young friend,

yours very affectionately

J. W. Webb.