

E Plainfield Oct 23 64

My dear E

You will think it a long while to wait for an answer to your letter, but trust you will excuse me, as you know of some events that have transpired since receiving it

For a long time after I heard of poor dear Georgie's death my mind was so much occupied with it I was unfit for writing, But no doubt you have heard of our contemplated move before this and if I would answer yours, I must do it soon, I have rec'd several letters from L of later, the last about a week ago, And last Sabbath I rec'd one from our long lost Josy my heart was made exceeding glad in consequence, To God I would give all the praise for it is through his abounding mercy and goodness that his life has been spared

I hope we shall all have the privilege of seeing J before many weeks but you will hear more concerning him soon But you will allow me to tell you that I feel very anxious concerning the state of mind you are in, you may think there is no cause for anxiety but dear E if you are in the wrong path it will end wrong, But be sure you are in the right one and then you need not fear if you only follow on, But you say you have never felt the striving of God's spirit to be sensible of it, and I really fear you have never seen the p^lague of your own heart, and according to the teaching of God's word it is absolutely indispensable in order that we may understand his word, Now you will allow me to be plain, and it is one of the strongest evidences of an unregenerate heart that we have no real love for his word, and you admit you do not enjoy it

But E I will tell you what I think is the greatest difficulty in your case, you have spent too much of your time in reading light and useless reading, and I cant help thinking you have violated your conscience in so doing, I sent a little pamphlet to Julia that treats upon such reading and its effects) which I would like to have you get and read carefully and prayerfully. You ask if ~~you~~ all do not fail in their attempts to live a Christian life, I would answer yes more or less, but none should rely upon their good works for salvation No [no*] but faith in the ~~mer~~ merits of a crucified Redeemer and good works will be the fruits of such faith, You name some of the sins of individuals and ^{ask} if it not enough to sicken any one of [professors*] while they will pray for you and exhort you to get religion, and you know they are practicing what you would not, No I do'nt think it ought, for the Bible teaches that there are hypocrites and self deceivers, and it also teaches that there are those that are walking in the fear of God and enjoy his smiles and approbation. Now I really fear you are looking too much at the imperfections of professors, (and they are altogether too imperfect) instead of searching after your own duty, But you say you do'nt know how to take the first step, now I think the first step for you would be repentance towards God, You may say you do'nt know what to repent of, so I will just give an illustration, You say you love your husband dearly and if he should die it would kill you, now supposing the letters he sends you, you should treat with indifference and neglect to read them, do you suppose I could have much faith in your love for him?...

[fragment letter ends here]