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**'[T]o admonish, to inform, comfort and refresh': A Book-Historical Analysis of Nehemiah Wallington's Profitable and comfortabl letters**  
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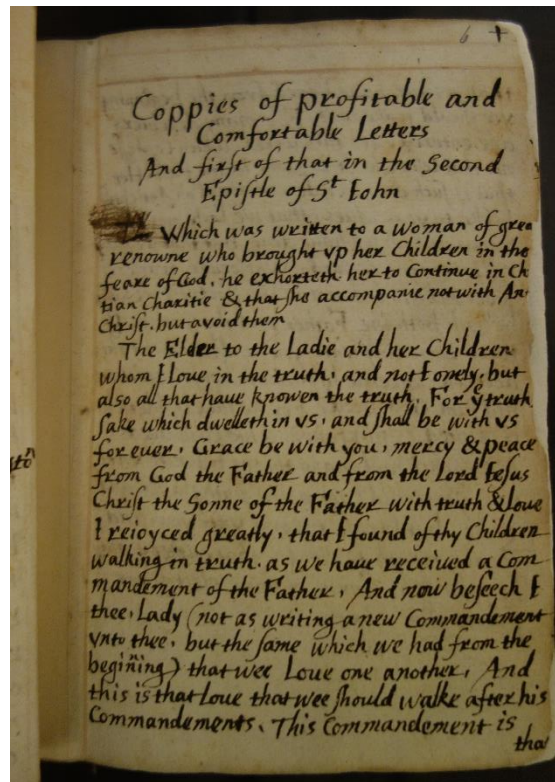
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‘[T]o admonish, to inform, comfort and refresh’:  
 A Book-Historical Analysis of Nehemiah Wallington’s  
*Profitable and comfortabl letters*



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## Introduction

During his lifetime, Nehemiah Wallington (1598–1658), a London-based Puritan wood turner, wrote more than fifty notebooks, seven of which have survived today. They are a varied lot, including, among others, a diary, a collection of letters, and an overview of all the notebooks Wallington ever wrote. Although the titles of the notebooks suggest they are predominantly religious in nature, Wallington believed that everything had religious significance. Thus, these seven remaining notebooks not only provide a unique insight into the mind of a Puritan, but also into one of England's most turbulent times. Additionally, they are also extremely valuable because Wallington 'was literate at a time when literacy was not yet commonplace even among Londoners, artisans, and Puritans'.<sup>1</sup> As such, his notebooks have been of great use to early modernists researching, among other areas, the Commonwealth, Puritanism, the British Civil War, and the daily life of a Puritan London-based artisan.<sup>2</sup> The full list of the surviving works written by Wallington is as follows:

1. *A Record of Gods Marcys, or a Thankfull Remembrance* (Guildhall Library, London, Manuscript 204; begun in 1619);
2. *A Memoriall of Gods Judgments upon Sabbath breakers, Drunkerds and other vile livers* (British Library, Sloane Manuscript 1457; although Wallington has written 1632 on the flyleaf, the notebook records incidents from 1618 until 1655);
3. *A Bundel of Marcys* (British Library, Additional Manuscript 21935; probably written between 1640 and 1646);
4. *The groth of a Christian* (British Library, Additional Manuscript 40883; written between 1641 and 1643);
5. *A Record of marcys continued or yet God is good to Israel* (Tatton Park Manuscript 68.20; begun in 1645 and finished in 1648);
6. *Profitable and comfortabl letters* (British Library, Sloane Manuscript 922; written in 1650);

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<sup>1</sup> P.S. Seaver, *Wallington's World : A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-century London* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Seaver, for example, extensively researched Wallington's life, and Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen and Lucy Busfield (among others) used his work to gain a deeper understanding of early modern Protestantism. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*; L. Busfield, 'Doubt, Anxiety and Protestant Epistolary Counselling: The Letter-Book of Nehemiah Wallington', *Studies in Church History* 52 (2016); J.F. van Dijkhuizen, 'Stoned, Slain, Sawn Asunder: Violence, Consolation and the Meaning of Martyrdom in Early Modern England', *Journal of the Northern Renaissance* issue 11, 2020, n.pag. <https://www.northernrenaissance.org/stoned-slain-sawn-asunder-violence-consolation-and-the-meanings-of-martyrdom-in-early-modern-england/>; J. F. van Dijkhuizen, "'Never Better': Affliction, Consolation and the Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern England", *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5, no. 1 (2018).

7. *An Extract of the passages of my life or the Booke of all my writing books* (Folger Shakespeare Library Manuscript V.a. 436; Wallington has dated this notebook in 1654).<sup>3</sup>

Despite the usefulness of the notebooks for early modernists,<sup>4</sup> no digital versions exist. Instead, researchers wishing to consult one or multiple of the notebooks must either travel to locations where they are held, or settle for the excerpts transcribed by David Booy in his 2007 monograph *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654: A Selection*. It is perhaps for this reason that most of the extant research on Wallington focusses on the contents of his notebooks rather than the notebooks themselves, with Kathleen Lynch's article 'Extraordinarily Ordinary: Nehemiah Wallington's Experimental Method' being a notable exception.<sup>5</sup> In this thesis, I aim to rectify this lack of research by investigating Nehemiah Wallington's *Profitable and comfortabl letters* (British Library, Sloane Manuscript 922). I wish to understand how and why Wallington made this notebook. In order to do so, this thesis will first provide a short overview of Wallington's life before moving on to the properties, contents and intended audience of *Profitable and comfortabl letters* and placing them in the context of notebook writing in the first half of the seventeenth century. To fully understand why and how Wallington set about writing his notebook, it was vital to read and analyse the notebook in full. Additionally, because the notebooks are so hard to access, I have transcribed, edited, and annotated a number of letters from the notebook, thus making them available to the readers of this thesis. This selection also gives the reader a representative taste of what this particular notebook contains.

Wallington's notebook may initially appear as 'a rather peculiar hybrid form, a cross between a record of personal correspondence and a collection of "godly and comfortable" letters'. Unlike printed collections of godly letters, in *Profitable and comfortabl letters*, Nehemiah has collected letters from a number of different writers. He used such printed collections as a source as well as his own letters and letters written by his friends and family.<sup>6</sup> However, the notebook actually fits comfortably within the early modern protestant tradition

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<sup>3</sup> D. Booy, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654: A Selection* (Routledge, 2007), pp.7, 29, 97, 115, 147, 225, 235, 263 and table of contents.

<sup>4</sup> The notebooks may also be of use for other academics. They could prove very useful for historical linguistics, for example, who wish to reconstruct how people like Wallington spoke English. Wallington continuously spells 'mercy' as 'marcy', for example, indicating that rather than /'mɜ:.si/, he must have pronounced the word as /'mɑ:.si/.

<sup>5</sup> The article focuses on Wallington's method of organising and writing his texts. See K. Lynch, 'Extraordinarily Ordinary: Nehemiah Wallington's Experimental Method,' *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell* (Manchester University Press, 2018), pp. 75-91.

<sup>6</sup> J. Daybell, 'Early Modern Letter-Books, Miscellanies, and the Reading and Reception of Scribally Copied Letters', p. 65.

of self-writing as well as Puritan letter-writing. Protestant self-writing allowed the faithful to take stock of their interior lives and see where they needed to improve themselves, whereas Puritan letter-writing had as its aim to strengthen the Puritan community. In Wallington's case, the notebook served a double function: it was a personal spiritual aid, but was also meant to be read and used by others. This double aim influenced the way in which Nehemiah compiled and structured the notebook.

I would like to thank Dr Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen for allowing me to make use of the photographs he took of Wallington's *Profitable and comfortabl letters* held at the British Library in London. All the work done on this manuscript is based on these pictures.

### Nehemiah Wallington: A Life

Nehemiah was born in 1598 in the London parish of St. Leonard as the tenth child (and the fourth son) of the puritan woodworker John Wallington and his wife Elizabeth Hall.<sup>7</sup> Although Nehemiah does not often write about his family – his notebooks are first and foremost devotional – we can gather from what he did write that his father must have been a kind-hearted, generous, charitable man, who often helped neighbours and friends financially and seems to have been deeply involved in his son's life, endeavouring to provide the best possible life for Nehemiah.<sup>8</sup> We know, for example, that he sent Nehemiah to school (although we do not know exactly what kind of education Nehemiah received)<sup>9</sup> and encouraged Nehemiah to write as a form of religious introspection.<sup>10</sup>

Yet despite John's best efforts, two events in Nehemiah's childhood would scar him for life. The first was the death of Nehemiah's mother Elizabeth when he was five. She died a slow, agonizing death, begging God all the while to make the pain stop and asking Him why He would afflict her so.<sup>11</sup> From Nehemiah's vivid description of his mother's death, we can surmise that it must have left a horrible impression on him. After Elizabeth had passed away, John remarried to a widow named Joan Hide, who brought several children from her previous marriage with her, including a boy named Philip. Nehemiah and Philip grew very close, and so his death at age nine of a disease that ravaged the household formed the second traumatising event of Nehemiah's childhood (it did not help that Nehemiah was sent away to live with relatives for a few months to prevent him from becoming ill as well).<sup>12</sup> Joan Hinde passed away ten months after her marriage to John. John married a third time, this time to the widow Alice Harrison, who also had several children from her previous marriage. She and John were to have a daughter, Patience. Thus, Nehemiah had a great many (step)siblings, although it is likely that many of them passed away before reaching adulthood; the fact that many of John's biological children shared names with each other points to a high mortality rate.<sup>13</sup> Although this was not unusual for the period and time, it must still have had an enormous impact on Nehemiah.

In the years of 1618 and 1619, Nehemiah suffered an extreme crisis of faith. Being Puritan, he believed in predestination, i.e. the idea that God has elected a number of people

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<sup>7</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Idem*, pp. 75-78.

<sup>9</sup> K. Lynch, 'Extraordinarily Ordinary: Nehemiah Wallington's Experimental Method,' *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell* (Manchester University Press, 2018), p. 79.

<sup>10</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>12</sup> *Idem*, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 69.

before their birth to go to Heaven, damning the rest. Nehemiah became convinced he was damned because he experienced uncontrollable lust for one of his father's maidservants, a girl named Lidia. To stop himself from being tempted, he ran away from home and tried to commit suicide multiple times,<sup>14</sup> having reasoned that it was better to die quickly than to continue living and commit more sins.<sup>15</sup> Apart from these bouts of suicidal depression, Nehemiah also experienced hallucinations during this period of his life as well as what seems to have been psychoses; he believed family and household members who tried to comfort and protect him were secretly the devil in disguise come to tempt him.<sup>16</sup>

Although periods of despair and thoughts of suicide would continue to plague Nehemiah until he was well into his forties – his final flirtation with suicide seems to have occurred in 1632, the year in which Grace miscarried and they lost their little son Samuel; indeed, whenever Nehemiah lost one of his children, he became greatly depressed<sup>17</sup> – he would never again be as mentally ill as he was during 1618-19. What must have greatly contributed to Nehemiah's sanity were three things. Firstly, his father arranged for him to become a wood turner<sup>18</sup> without an apprenticeship, which was unusual at the time but could be arranged because John was part of the guild. In this way, Nehemiah gained the routine of a profession. Secondly, John ensured for Nehemiah to gain his own independent household. Thirdly, Nehemiah married Grace Rampaigne at the age of twenty-three, unusually young for a Jacobean artisan.<sup>19</sup> Once Nehemiah had settled into married life, he began to write profusely, although he had written from an early age already.<sup>20</sup>

We do not know how he met Grace and how their courtship went; we do know she was also a Puritan, and must have been literate, since Nehemiah wrote four notebooks specifically for her.<sup>21</sup> From what Nehemiah writes of Grace, we can gather that she must have been a calm

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<sup>14</sup> He also contemplated committing suicide many more times than he actually attempted it. What kept him from going through with it in these instances was the love he felt for his family and community, and the blow his death would be to them. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Idem*, pp. 16-22.

<sup>16</sup> Booy, *The Notebooks*, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Of their five children, only their daughter Sarah would survive into adulthood. Their daughter Elizabeth died of a sickness just before she turned three. Their son John seems to have suffered from epilepsy, and died when he was two. Little Nehemiah died before his third birthday. Samuel died when a year old because he 'did not thrive' and also suffered convulsions. Additionally, Grace suffered two miscarriages. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 59, 87-89.

<sup>18</sup> Wood turning is the 'making articles of wood on a lathe', which 'requires considerable skill, but the articles made were by and large humble household or industrial goods', hence why the profession was not a very profitable one. 'Turners produced chairs, wooden bowls, shovels, scoops, bushel measures, washing tubs, wheels, pails, trays, spools, pulleys, blocks, sheaves, deadeyes and other maritime tackle, wooden bandoliers for muskets, and other such commodities'. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>19</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 26.

<sup>20</sup> Booy, *The Notebooks*, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 85.



and pragmatic woman; when, for instance, the Wallingtons discovered that Dorothy Rampaigne, the widow of Grace's brother Zachariah, had been having an affair with an Irish Catholic and was carrying his unborn child, Nehemiah wrote her an angry letter begging her to repent. Grace, however, was more understanding of the situation – Dorothy's Irish Catholic was not merely her lover but also her protector, something she sorely needed after her husband had been murdered and two of her four children died in the following winter of exposure and hunger – and, although she also admonished her sister-in-law, offered a practical solution to Dorothy's problems: she and Nehemiah would take in Charles, her sole surviving child, as an apprentice, thus ensuring his education and leaving Dorothy with one less worry.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from his wife, children, and family members, Nehemiah also had a number of good friends, the two most important ones being James Cole and Francis Wilsmore; with both men, Nehemiah corresponded avidly through letters.<sup>23</sup> What connected the men was their shared religion.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, very little in life was more important to Nehemiah than his faith. He was a regular church-goer, got up early every day to pray, and in 1646 was elected an elder for his church of St. Leonard.<sup>25</sup> Although he surely had some sort of compulsion to write – else there is no way to explain how the head of a household and a busy artisan could fill fifty notebooks – his writing may at least partly be explained through his religion; his notebooks were an aid in his religious life as well as a way to bring glory to God.<sup>26</sup> Apart from his writing, Nehemiah was also a voracious reader.<sup>27</sup>

The next part of this Introduction will explore how Nehemiah set about writing such a notebook by looking at *Profitable and comfortabl letters*, which he began writing in 1650, thus making it one of the last notebooks he wrote. Nehemiah 'turned to the volume as a source of comfort and solace at the end of his life'.<sup>28</sup> I have chosen this specific notebook, because its contents are varied and derive from a number of sources. It must be said that Nehemiah's works are generally intertextual, but none of the other extant works are as intertextual as this

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<sup>22</sup> See the letters 'A letter of N[ehemiah] W[allington] to Mistress M. R. of sharp reprove and loving admonition for living in secret sin' (fos. 155v–158r) and 'Some part of a letter of G[race] W[allington] to M R to take care of her son' (fos. 159r–159v).

<sup>23</sup> Booy, *The Notebooks*, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, 'A letter of Master James Coles (in New England) to N[ehemiah] W[allington] (in old England) encouraging him to stand fast in the hope of the gospel in these times of temptation' (fos. 107r–107v) and 'A letter of F[rancis] W[ilsmore] to Nehemiah Wallington complaining of trouble, desiring of comfort' (fos. 120r–120v).

<sup>25</sup> L. Busfield, 'Doubt, Anxiety and Protestant Epistolary Counselling: The Letter-Book of Nehemiah Wallington', *Studies in Church History* 52 (2016), p. 310.

<sup>26</sup> Booy, *The Notebooks*, p. 9–11.

<sup>27</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 5

Nehemiah kept track of what he read.

<sup>28</sup> Daybell, 'Early Modern Letter-Books,' p. 25.

compilation of divine and personal letters.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, several characteristics of the notebook show that Nehemiah wrote it for more than his eyes alone (even though it may not be clear at a first glance for whom, exactly, he compiled the notebook). Both of these aspects make the question of how and why Nehemiah compiled *Profitable and comfortabl letters* a complicated one, and a question worthy of research.

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<sup>29</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 5.

The Making Of *Profitable and comfortabl letters* (British Library, Sloane Manuscript 922)

In this section, I will investigate how and why Wallington compiled his notebook *Profitable and comfortabl letters*. To do so, I will first look at the notebook's characteristics and then its intended audience.

*The Notebook: Properties and Contents*

Sloane MS 922 is an unlined duodecimo book bound in red leather which Wallington bought pre-made, as he did with all his notebooks. Indeed, Kathleen Lynch found that Wallington had a deep 'commitment to the bound blank book'.<sup>30</sup> This particular bound notebook's size – a duodecimo book is roughly equal in size to modern-day mass-market paperbacks – renders it ideal to carry around, since it fits into one's pocket.<sup>31</sup> It consists of 418 pages, or 209 folios, and is written in a Roman hand, which was a conscious choice; Wallington wished for his notebooks to be easy to read.<sup>32</sup> He wrote the notebook in 1650, a few years before his death.<sup>33</sup>

The notebook begins with a note to all readers filled with good advice on a range of topics, including religious advice ('[t]hink all God's outward favours and provisions the best for you'),<sup>34</sup> advice on time management ('[s]o frame yourself to the time and company, that you may neither serve it, nor sullenly neglect it'),<sup>35</sup> and even fashion advice ('[a]s in apparel, so in actions, know not what is good, but what becomes you').<sup>36</sup> In this note, Nehemiah also explains why he wrote this notebook ('to admonish, to inform, comfort and refresh others')<sup>37</sup> and quotes the second epistle of St John. This epistle – which is one of the shortest books in the Bible – is especially apt for *Profitable and comfortabl letters*, because it gives Christians succinct advice on how to lead good lives. Furthermore, it also directly mentions writing in a way that Nehemiah must have found very fitting: 'Hauing many things to write vnto you, I would not write with paper and inke, but I trust to come vnto you, and speake face to face, that our ioy may be full'.<sup>38</sup>

After the introduction, *Profitable and comfortabl letters* can roughly be divided into two: a collection of letters from Protestant martyrs and divines, and letters from Nehemiah and his friends and family. For this reason, Daybell characterises this notebook as 'a rather peculiar

<sup>30</sup> Lynch, 'Extraordinarily Ordinary', p.76.

<sup>31</sup> Daybell, 'Early Modern Letter-Books,' p. 65.

<sup>32</sup> Lynch, 'Extraordinarily Ordinary', p.82

<sup>33</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p.207.

<sup>34</sup> Fol. 3r.

<sup>35</sup> Fol. 3r.

<sup>36</sup> Fol. 3v

<sup>37</sup> Fol. 5r.

<sup>38</sup> 2John 1:12.

hybrid form, a cross between a record of personal correspondence and a collection of “‘godly and comfortable” letters’.<sup>39</sup> Most of the letters from what can be viewed as the first section have been taken from John Foxe’s *The Book of Martyrs* (1563). According to Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, this book ‘was one of the most important books published in early modern England, second in significance only to the English Bible and the Book of Common Prayer for the religious culture of the period’. It was regularly reprinted – the book went through four editions before Foxe’s death in 1587, and spawned a number of abridged versions and derivations after. It was also widely read – as well as read from aloud; many people in this period were illiterate –<sup>40</sup> not only at home, but also in public places, including churches and schools.<sup>41</sup> Thus, it must not have been too hard for Wallington to (temporarily) acquire his own copy, from which he selected letters for his notebook.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Wallington must have been able to either buy or borrow Edward Dering’s *Certaine godly and comfortable Letters* (1614), Joseph Hall’s *Epistles* (1608), and Paul Baynes’ *Christian Letters* (1620); he has included letters from all three of these books.<sup>43</sup> The letters in this first section are organised based on who wrote them; all the letters of Edward Dering are grouped together, for instance.

Besides Protestant authorities, Wallington also included personal correspondence with friends, family members, and fellow Puritans. This we may consider the notebook’s second part, although there is little indication that Wallington thought of his notebook as having two distinct parts; nothing marks the transition from the first to the second part. Wallington wrote letters to friends and family who lived too far away to visit frequently, such as his brother-in-law Livewell Rampaing (who lived first in Burton, Lincolnshire, and later at Broxholme)<sup>44</sup> and his best friend James Cole (who moved to Hartford, Connecticut). However, he also wrote letters to friends and neighbours who lived in the same parish. This may seem peculiar, but Wallington appears to have been a shy man, often tongue-tied, who found it easiest to express himself on paper.<sup>45</sup> It should be stressed that not all the letters in this second part were written

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<sup>39</sup> Daybell, ‘Early Modern Letter-Books’, p. 65.,

<sup>40</sup> R.A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe*. 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2002), p. 34.

<sup>41</sup> J.F. van Dijkhuizen, ‘Stoned, Slain, Sawn Asunder: Violence, Consolation and the Meaning of Martyrdom in Early Modern England’, *Journal of the Northern Renaissance* issue 11, 2020, n.pag.

<https://www.northernrenaissance.org/stoned-slain-sawn-asunder-violence-consolation-and-the-meanings-of-martyrdom-in-early-modern-england/> (9 March 2021).

<sup>42</sup> Paul Sidall Seaver argues that Wallington may have been familiar with *The Book of Martyrs* from a young age; in one of his notebooks, Wallington says that his mother (who died when he was five) knew by heart ‘the stories of the martyrs’, which in all probability refers to the stories from *The Book of Martyrs*. See Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, p.74.

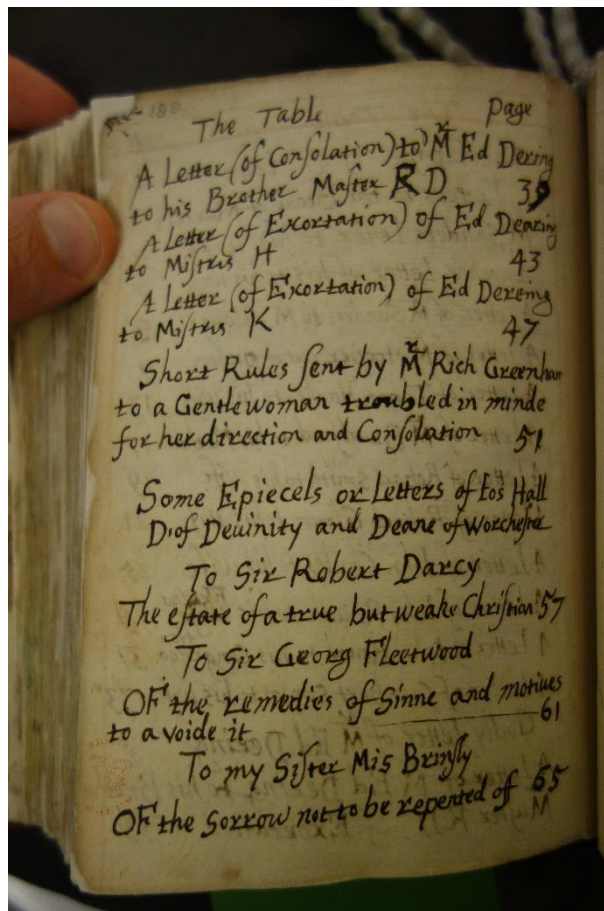
<sup>43</sup> Busfield, ‘Doubt, Anxiety and Protestant Epistolary Counselling’, pp.301, 304, 307

<sup>44</sup> Seaver, *Wallingtons World*, p.73.

<sup>45</sup> *Idem*, pp.12, 105.

by or to Nehemiah; a number of them were written by and addressed to family members, friends, and neighbours.

Contrary to the first section of the notebook, where letters are grouped together based on their author, the letters in this section seem to have been organised chronologically. Interestingly, although the vast majority of this second part of the notebook consists of personal correspondence, Nehemiah has also pasted in a printed sheet written by Thomas Turner (a man whose brother seems to have been an acquaintance of Nehemiah's), and has copied two letters from his notebook *A Bundel of Marcys* (Additional MS 21935, which Wallington began to write in 1630).



	Page
A Letter (of Consolation) to M Ed Dering to his Brother Majr R D	39
A Letter (of Exhortation) of Ed Dering to Mistris H	43
A Letter (of Exhortation) of Ed Dering to Mistris K	47
Short Rules sent by M Rich Greenham to a Gentlewoman troubled in minde for her direction and Consolation	51
Some Epiecelles or Letters of Jos Hall Diof Deuinity and Deane of Worcester	
To Six Robert Darcy	
The estate of a true but weak Christian	57
To Six Georg Fleetwood	
Of the remedies of Sinne and motives to a void it	61
To my Sister Mis Brinsly	
Of the sorrow not to be repented of	65

Figure 1: At the back of *Profitable and comfortabl letters*, Wallington provides a table of contents so the reader may navigate the notebook more easily. Some letters, such as those of Joseph Hall, are grouped together. Image courtesy of Dr J.F. van Dijkhuizen.

After the second collection of letters, Nehemiah provides a table of contents, which is organised chronologically, i.e. the first letter Nehemiah included in the notebook is also the first to be mentioned. Within the table, there are two kinds of entries, depending on whether Nehemiah supposes a letter is part of a subcategory within his notebook. The letters of Joseph

Hall, for example, are grouped together under the header ‘some epistles or letters of Joss [*sic*] Hall, Diof Divinity and Dean of Worchester’. Each entry for his letters then states the addressee, the topic of the letter, and the page number e.g. ‘To Sir Robert Darcy, The estate of a weak but true Christian 57’ (see Figure 1).<sup>46</sup> It seems that Nehemiah did not think of grouping the letters in this manner straight away; the entries for the letters by Edward Dering, for example, all list Dering as the author separately. Entries for letters that are not grouped together provide the author, topic, and page number, and at times also the addressee, e.g. ‘A letter of old Doctor Burges concerning the sudden death of his daughter 125’ and ‘A letter of John Bradshaw to his grandfather Master John Wallington concerning the misery and troubles of [La] Rochelle 140’.<sup>47</sup> In other words, the table always mentions the topic and page number, but has two different ways of naming the author and does not always mention the addressee. The table allows readers to look up the letter they want in multiple ways, namely by topic but also by author or even roughly by where in the notebook the letter can be found, since the table is organised chronologically. By allowing readers to look up letters by topic or author, the table also functions as a kind of index. For a complete overview of the contents of the notebook, see the appendix.

#### *The Notebook’s Intended Audience*

For whom did Nehemiah Wallington write his *Profitable and comfortabl letters*? In order to answer this question, it is helpful to place the notebook into a broader context, namely that of Protestant self-writing and Puritan letter-writing. Self-writing was an early-modern trend fuelled by Protestantism’s core belief in predestination.<sup>48</sup> Predestination posed that God had already decided before a person’s birth whether that person would go to Heaven, i.e. whether this person belonged to the elect. This elite group distinguished themselves from those doomed to a less happy afterlife through certain signs, also known as marks of election. To discover whether one belonged to the elect, one had to look for these marks inside of oneself; thus, Protestantism encouraged introspection and self-examination. Many Protestants employed diaries and other forms of self-writing for this purpose.

Yet the term ‘diary’ does not do justice to this genre of self-writing. As Andrew Cambers argues, diaries were marked by a high level of intertextuality and ‘frequently included other

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<sup>46</sup> Fol. 200v.

<sup>47</sup> Fol. 202r.

<sup>48</sup> A. Cambers, ‘Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England, circa 1580–1720’, *The Journal of British Studies* 46, no. 4 (2007), p. 798.

material – prayers, sermon notes, history, poetry, meditations, lists of providences, and so on – that demonstrate the error in calling the books in which they were contained simply diaries'.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, unlike modern-day diaries, there are clear signs that these early modern diaries as well as other forms of self-writing were written with an audience in mind. Many letters, for example, offer advice so generic that not only the addressee but a broader audience could derive comfort from them.<sup>50</sup> Books collecting such comforting, pious and generic letters were readily available. They include, among others, Coverdale's *Godly, Fruitful, and Comfortable Letters* (1564), Dering's *Certaine Godly and Verie Comfortable Letters* (1590) as well as his *Workes* (1597), Joseph Hall's *Epistles* (1608), Paul Baynes' *Christian Letters* (1620), and John Strype's *Memorials of Cranmer* (1694).<sup>51</sup> As we have seen already, Wallington has included a number of such letters written by Protestant divines in his *Profitable and comfortabl letters*.

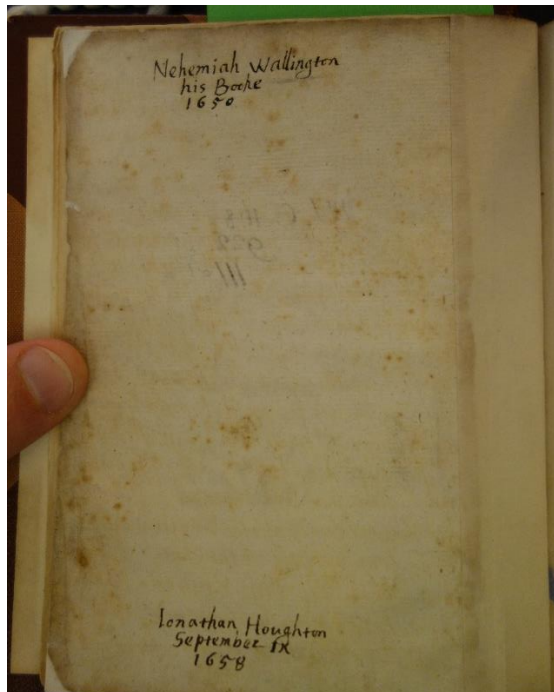


Figure Two: Wallington began to write the notebook in 1650. After his death, his son-in-law, Jonathan Houghton, inherited the notebook, as Nehemiah had wanted. He wrote his name and the date on the flyleaf to indicate the book was now his. Image courtesy of Dr J. F. van Dijkhuizen.

<sup>49</sup> *Idem*, p. 802.

Certainly the one diary of Nehemiah that has survived to this day (*The groth of a Christian*, British Library, Additional Manuscript 40883) contains such other material. In general, Wallington's manuscripts are marked by a high level of intertextuality, although he does not always clearly indicate that he is quoting or copying. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Daybell, 'Early Modern Letter-Books', p. 65.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.



There are other signs that early modern Protestant self-writing was meant for more than the eyes of the writer alone. Such writings often contain a preface addressed to the reader and emulate conventions of printed books such as running titles, indexes, ruled borders, footnotes, manicules (little hands), and the name of the author.<sup>52</sup> Although such characteristics help the writer when writing and are useful for future (re-)readings, they are also helpful to others. Nehemiah Wallington's *Profitable and comfortabl letters* emulates the printed book in more ways than one. To start with, it has a title page with Wallington's name as well as that of his son-in-law, who inherited this notebook and others after Nehemiah's death (see Figure Two). Nehemiah indicated in his will that he wished for the notebooks to be inherited by his son-in-law (and a number by his wife, Grace). This shows Nehemiah's clear intent that his notebooks should continue to be read by others than himself.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, his *Profitable and comfortabl letters* provides a table at the back. This table names the writer and addressee of the letters, as well as their main topic, thus allowing the writer but also readers who are unfamiliar with the notebook to quickly find a letter appropriate to their situation. The size of the notebook renders it easy to carry around and consult whenever one feels the need, which is useful for the writer but also for other readers.

The strongest sign that the notebook was supposed to be read by more people than Nehemiah alone is that Nehemiah at times addresses the reader directly. He gives the reader tips on where to find similar letters to the ones he has copied out: 'you may see many more [letters of those that suffered for the cause of God] at large in the *Book of Martyrs*'<sup>54</sup> and 'also there is a very sweet profitable letter of Doctor Taylor to his wife (...) as also letters very useful of Georg[e] Marsh'.<sup>55</sup> Nehemiah also explains his editorial choices, saying that many letters are too long to be written out in full, or to be copied altogether: 'And in regard, some of the letters be very large; I shall write but some parts of them'<sup>56</sup> and '[t]here be many more of letters of this martyr of Jesus Christ John Hooper, but because they be so large I forbear to copy them out'.<sup>57</sup> Then, there is the preface, called 'to the reader'. In this preface, Wallington provides helpful tips for leading a good life, and also explains why he set out to write this particular notebook,

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<sup>52</sup> Cambers, 'Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England', pp.802-804.

It is worth noting that conventions in print were influenced by conventions of manuscripts, and vice versa. The first printed books, for instance, looked exactly like manuscripts.

<sup>53</sup> A. Cambers, 'Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England, circa 1580–1720', p. 818

Sloane MS 922 became part of the large collection of manuscripts collected by the physician Hans Sloane. This collection is one of the three foundational collections of the British Library. See British Library, 'Collection Guides: Sloane Manuscripts', n.pag. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/sloane-manuscripts> (23 March 2021).

<sup>54</sup> Fol. 7r

<sup>55</sup> Fol. 11v.

<sup>56</sup> Fol. 7r.

<sup>57</sup> Fol. 11v.



namely ‘to admonish, to inform, comfort and refresh others with that comfort I have received by them [the letters]’<sup>58</sup>. Wallington hoped that others may profit from these letters and find comfort in them; hence the title of this notebook. This, then, seems to have been the only criterium Wallington employed when selecting which letters to copy out: the letters were useful to him, and so he supposes they shall be useful to others, too.

With his goal of providing comfort, Wallington declares himself to be a pious Protestant. Although Catholics also produced consolatory literature, Protestantism saw God first and foremost as the great comforter, ready to console His children in their times of suffering.<sup>59</sup> This suffering could range ‘from religious persecution to serious physical illness and from grief to religious doubt, and even economic adversity – experiences which early moderns referred to by means of the capacious term *affliction*’.<sup>60</sup> Suffering, Protestantism posed, brought the afflicted closer to God, and as such was useful and perhaps even desirable.<sup>61</sup> It is for this reason we find Paul Baynes’ letter on the topic of the needfulness of affliction in *Profitable and comfortable letters* (fos. 64r–65r). This particular letter is rather unspecific; we never quite figure out what type of suffering Baynes seeks to alleviate. Many of the letters from the first section of the notebook were written in such a manner; Dering’s letter to a Mistress H, for example, barely gives any insight in the trouble she is experiencing and offers comfort in a more general sense instead. This lack of specificity was a conscious choice: it rendered the letters useful not just to the addressee, but a large audience seeking solace.

So far, the first part of the notebook fits within the tradition of Protestant self-writing; since this part consists of letters copied out of printed collections of Protestant consolatory letters, this make sense. Yet what are we to make of the personal letters included in the notebook? Overall, these lack the vagueness of the letters from the first part, but we know Nehemiah meant for others to read them. Although a number of them seek to comfort,<sup>62</sup> there are also letters that do not seem to be very consoling.<sup>63</sup> Instead, they aim to inform, admonish, and refresh, yet that is not the main goal of other collections of godly letters such as those

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<sup>58</sup> Fol. 5r.

<sup>59</sup> J. F. van Dijkhuizen, “‘Never Better’”: Affliction, Consolation and the Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern England’, *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5, no. 1 (2018), p.7.

<sup>60</sup> *Idem*, p.4.

<sup>61</sup> *Idem*, p.11.

<sup>62</sup> e.g. ‘A Letter sent unto me (Nehemiah Wallington) from my wife’s brother (Livewell Rampaigne) When the hand of God in sickness was in my family in 1625 (fos. 71r–74r)’ and ‘A letter of Master James Coles (in New England) to N[ehemiah] W[allington] (in old England) encouraging him to stand fast in the hope of the gospel in these times of temptation (fos. 107r–107v)’.

<sup>63</sup> E.g. ‘[A typed letter written by Thomas Turner to his parents] (fos. 152r–152v)’ and ‘A letter of N[ehemiah] W[allington] to Mistress M. R. of sharp reprove and loving admonition for living in secret sin (fos. 155v–158r)’, although the latter does offer some sort of comfort at the end.

written by Dering and Hall. How does this second section of the notebook fit within early modern traditions of writing?

Although the second part does not immediately seem very similar to other letters written in the tradition of Protestant self-writing, it does fit in with another early modern writing trend: that of Puritan letter-writing. Johanna Harris has argued that, for Puritans, letter-writing ‘was a primary means of uniting and maintaining a self-identifying community’ as well as ‘an indispensable, lively mode of conveying ideas whilst simultaneously putting into practice the concern that faith be coupled with experience’.<sup>64</sup> She uses Lady Brilliana Harley, a contemporary of Wallington and a fellow Puritan, as an example. Similarly to Wallington and the others who wrote the letters he included in his notebook, Harley writes about current events, family matters, and her religion. In a letter addressed to her eldest son, for example, she discusses ‘the errors of thos that terme themselves the fathers of the church [bishops]’;<sup>65</sup> Wallington writes to a minister to encourage him to be more stern to his congregation: ‘And ah, Sir, that you would now be a son of thunder as you have been of consolation, even now in these woeful and wicked times wherein all manner of sins breaks forth with a violent stream’.<sup>66</sup>

Although both write about similar topics, this particular example also shows an important difference between Harvey and Wallington:<sup>67</sup> Harvey’s letters are often intensely philosophical, drawing on classical texts such as those written by Seneca,<sup>68</sup> whereas the personal letters in *Profitable and comfortabl letters* are often more practical and do not draw from classical authorities. Since their writers, unlike Lady Harvey, did not have a classical education, this makes sense. When we take into account that Wallington ‘was literate at a time when literacy was not yet commonplace even among Londoners, artisans, and Puritans’ – meaning that it was also uncommon for the other writers included in the notebook such as James Cole and Francis Wilshire –<sup>69</sup> it becomes clear that the topics and goals of these letters may fit into a broader trend of Puritan letter-writing, yet their form is rather unique.

Unlike the letters in the first part of the notebook, which are often so unspecific that they might apply to any of us, the personal letters are clearly written for the addressee first and foremost. Thus, Grace’s letter to her sister-in-law Dorothy discusses a plan for Dorothy’s son

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<sup>64</sup> J. Harris, ‘Lady Brilliana Harley’s Letters and Puritan Intellectual Culture’, *Literature Compass* 9, no. 3 (2012), p. 262.

<sup>65</sup> *Idem*, p. 264.

<sup>66</sup> Fol. 165r.

<sup>67</sup> And the other writers Wallington has included in his notebook.

<sup>68</sup> Harris, ‘Lady Brilliana Harley’s Letters and Puritan Intellectual Culture’, p. 265.

<sup>69</sup> P.S. Seaver, *Wallington’s World : A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-century London* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.1.

Charles' future, and Livewell tries to comfort Nehemiah with the loss of his daughter. Yet similarly to the letters in the first part of the notebook, the personal letters may well have been written for more than the addressee's eyes alone. James Cole, for instance, wrote a letter to his wife, but the letter itself addresses his children, parents, and friends as well: 'O my dear wife and my tender and sweet children together with my loving and well-wishing parents, both father and mother, with kinsman Thomas Cole, and my familiar Losex and unfeigned friend Nehemiah Wallington and the rest of my faithful friends and many more'.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, if we consider that Puritans viewed letter-writing as a way to strengthen bonds with other Puritans, it seems likely that they wrote their letters knowing that fellow Puritans would want to read them. Knowing this, it becomes clear that *Profitable and comfortabl letters* in its entirety was meant to be read not by just anyone, but specifically by others within the Puritan community. Letter-writing as a way of strengthening a small and close-knit community also explains why Wallington aims to not only comfort his reader, but also to admonish and inform them: he wishes to be helpful to his community in more ways than one, namely by consoling them, by informing them, and by warning them of their sins and in this way exhorting them to better themselves. This explains the inclusion of such letters as the fiery letter to his sister-in-law and the letter by his cousin about La Rochelle. Thus, we may view his *Profitable and comfortable letters* as a kind of DIY collection of godly letters that goes beyond providing mere comfort, but also functions as a way to tighten the bonds between members of the same community. This may explain why Wallington did not seek out a publisher to print his book; most of his fellow Puritans lived close by and could either borrow the volume or visit to read it and perhaps copy out the letters they themselves found useful. It also explains why this notebook, unlike the other collections of letters mentioned above, contains letters written by many different people.

### *The Letters*

As mentioned above, *Profitable and comfortabl letters* contains a wide variety of Christian consolatory letters taken from books written by Protestant authorities as well as Nehemiah's personal correspondence. One reason for this is that Wallington and many of his contemporaries actively sought comfort for their 'afflictions', a term they understood broadly. Indeed, many of the letters Nehemiah has included in his notebook have as their main topic affliction and how to cope with it. In this sense, the notebook fits within a larger trend of protestant consolatory writing. However, not all of the letters aim to comfort; Nehemiah also wished to inform and

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<sup>70</sup> Fol. 94r.

admonish his readers. We may understand these goals when we know that Puritan letter-writing also functioned as a way to strengthen the Puritan community. Thus, Wallington wishes to provide multiple ways to help his fellow Puritans, namely by comforting them, but also by giving them helpful information and to warn them and in this way try and encourage them to lead better lives.

Because the aim of this thesis is to study the notebook as a whole in order to try and understand its intention and to place its production and form within contemporary practices of writing and dissemination of texts in the early modern period, I have attempted to do justice to the varied contents of the notebook in two ways. Firstly, I have included letters from John Foxe's *The Life of Martyrs*, Edward Dering's *Certaine godly and comfortable Letters*, Joseph Hall's *Epistles*, and Paul Baynes' *Christian Letters* as well as a broad range of personal letters to and from Nehemiah and letters from and to family members and friends, to show the diverse sources from which Wallington drew when composing the notebook. Secondly, I have also endeavoured to include letters on many different topics to show the breadth of the notebook's subject matter. Due to the size of this present study, it was not possible to transcribe and annotate every single letter.

The majority of personal letters I have chosen concern Wallington's family members and close friends. However, *Profitable and comfortabl letters* also contains a number of letters to Henry Roborough/Robrough, the minister of Wallington's church St Leonard in Eastcheap, London. I have decided not to include these letters for one simple reason: David Booy's *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654: A selection* already contains annotated transcriptions of almost all of these letters.<sup>71</sup> For a similar reason, I have not included the two letters copied from Additional MS 21935 in the British Library (fos. 129r–131v); they, too, have already been transcribed and published, namely in the two-volume book *Historical Notices of Events Occurring Chiefly in the Reign of Charles I.*<sup>72</sup>

In the end, I have chosen to transcribe and annotate the following letters<sup>73</sup>:

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<sup>71</sup> This book also contains the letter '02673 – 02680 A letter of N[ehemiah] W[allington] to Mistress M. R. of sharp reprove and loving admonition for living in secret sin', which I did transcribe. I have decided to include this particular letter because of how unique it is. Unlike Booy's transcription, my transcription has modernised Nehemiah's spelling. Furthermore, I have provided an introduction to the letter as well as footnotes with information that Booy did not include.

<sup>72</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 210.

<sup>73</sup> The titles of the letters mentioned here are the original titles given to them by Wallington.

### Part one: Letters from Protestant divines

An excerpt of Nehemiah's introduction 'To the reader' [fos. 4v–5v]<sup>74</sup>

In this particular excerpt, Nehemiah explains his intentions for writing the notebook. The rest of the introduction is a large collection of good advice from Nehemiah to the reader, which I have chosen not to include.

Laurence Saunders, his letter to his wife a little before his burning [folio 9r]

This letter was taken from John Foxe's *The Life of Martyrs*. Laurence Saunders was one of the many victims of the Marian persecutions.<sup>75</sup> Nehemiah never faced religious persecution of this kind, but religious persecution in general (one of the many meanings of 'affliction') was vital for the early modern understanding of the Protestant identity.<sup>76</sup> Nehemiah often contemplated how and why he was spared such persecution, which allowed him to feel particularly grateful to God.

A letter by Master Edward Dearing to a Mistress H of Exhortation [fos. 25r–26v]

Taken from Edward Dering's *Certaine godly and comfortable Letters*, this letter talks of the need to undergo affliction to comfort a certain Mistress H. The letter is so general that anyone may derive comfort from it. Indeed, it is never particularly clear what kind of affliction Mistress H has suffered apart from some general references to domestic troubles relating to her husband and son. We might suppose that advice to a wife would not be of particular interest to Nehemiah (nor would the advice on how to cope with a wayward son, since he only had one daughter who survived into adulthood), yet he must have derived something from this letter; else, he would not have included it.

To Master I/J. A. Merchant, against sorrow for worldly losses [fos. 45r – 45v]

Taken from John Hall's *Epistles*, this letter shows that affliction could also be understood as the loss of wealth. Nehemiah struggled with money for most of his life, which may explain why he found comfort in this letter.

Some part of a letter for patiently bearing the death of a child [fos. 60r–61v]

Taken from Paul Baynes' *Christian Letters*, this letter shows how to deal with losing a child. Since four of Nehemiah's five children did not survive into adulthood, this letter must have been of prime personal importance to him. Indeed, this is one of the few letters that has little hands called manicules added in the margins, which suggests that

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<sup>74</sup> I have used the folio numbers pencilled onto the pages by a later hand rather than Wallington's own page numbers; it is usual to refer to these folio numbers rather than Wallington's page numbers when discussing his notebooks.

<sup>75</sup> The Marian persecutions being the religious persecutions of Protestants carried out by the Catholic Queen Mary I.

<sup>76</sup> van Dijkhuizen, 'Never Better', p.3.

Nehemiah read it often (see Figure Three). The manicules function as a reading aid, highlighting important points within the letter.

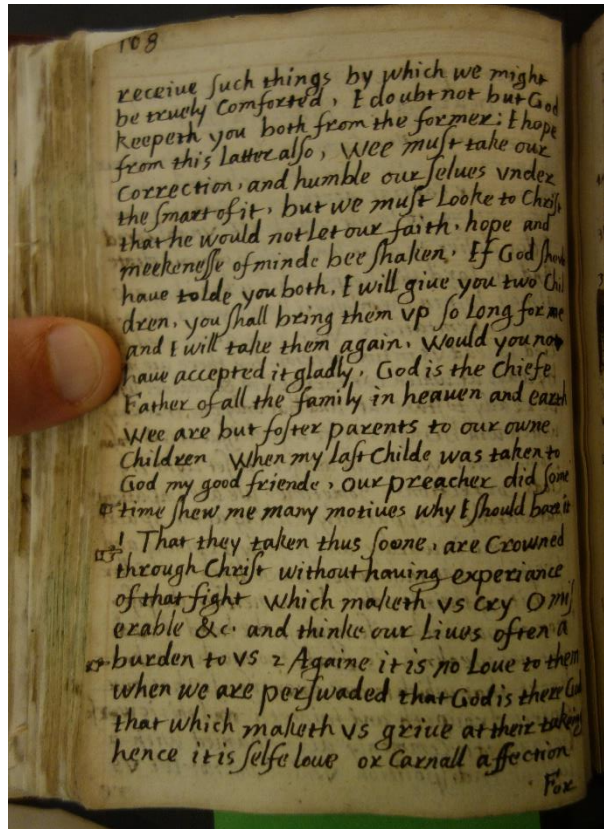


Figure Three: Nehemiah Wallington added little hands (manicules) to the letter of his brother-in-law, which suggests he read the letter often. Image courtesy of Dr J. F. van Dijkhuizen.

## Part Two: Personal Correspondence

A letter sent unto me (Nehemiah Wallington) from my wife's brother (Livewell Rampaigne) when the hand of God in sickness was in my family in 1625 [fos. 71r–74r] Livewell wrote this letter in reply to a letter of Nehemiah's in which Nehemiah told him of the death of his eldest child and the sickness of his wife, Grace, who was so ill that they thought she might die. Livewell offers ways for Nehemiah to understand and cope with these traumatic events. Nehemiah and Livewell were very close until Livewell's death, after which his widow and children came to live with Nehemiah.

A letter from my cousin John Bradshaw to his grandfather Master John Wallington, concerning the misery and troubles of [La] Rochelle [fos. 76v–77v] La Rochelle was a Huguenot city under siege by Catholic French. This letter therefore deals with the affliction of religious persecution on which much of the Protestant English identity was based. It might have been meaningful to Nehemiah, because it showed him that religious persecution of fellow Protestants was far from over, and that he should be grateful it had not happened to him, and stay vigilant.

A letter of Master James Cole to his wife, concerning his present sad condition which was some cause of his departing from home [fos. 94r–95v]

James Cole was a friend of Nehemiah's. He fled London because of his debts. In this letter, he aims to justify his decision and gives instructions to his wife and children. The opening lines suggest that this letter was meant to be read to more people than Cole's wife and children alone.

A letter of James Cole to his father and mother[-in-law] complaining of his inward sorrows and onward troubles [fos. 99r–100v]

James clearly sought counsel and comfort from family members (he mentions having written to his own parents, and this letter is addressed to his in-laws). This letter also shows how the religious community became involved in what we might nowadays think of as a private matter, which it clearly was not at the time; because James had abandoned his wife and children, he had left them at the mercy of friends, neighbours, and the parish.

A letter of Master James Coles (in New England) to N[ehemiah] W[allington] (in old England) encouraging him to stand fast in the hope of the gospel in these times of temptation [fos. 107r – 107v]

At some point after 1635 and before 1642, James Cole has emigrated to New England, as did many Puritans after William Laud, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, began to root out dissenters in the church.<sup>77</sup> Nehemiah clearly talked about religious matters to James and the two sought comfort and advice from each other.

A letter of F[rancis] W[ilsmore] to Nehemiah Wallington complaining of trouble, desiring of comfort [fos. 120r –120v]

Frances Wilsmore was a close friend of Nehemiah's who lived in Nottinghamshire.<sup>78</sup>

This letter is about affliction and the desire of comfort and consoling. It shows how members of the Puritan religious community sought comfort and counsel from each other. I have included this letter because, at a first glance, it may seem rather bland because it is unspecific, yet Nehemiah clearly thought otherwise.

A printed letter written by Thomas Turner to his parents [fos 152r–152v]

This letter is extremely interesting, because it is the only printed letter in the entire notebook and seems to have been pasted in. Furthermore, Nehemiah comments on it on the next page. It is a letter by Thomas Turner – the minister of Wormingford, Essex – to his parents, which he wrote when he believed he was dying. Nehemiah comments on

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<sup>77</sup> R.B. Brooks, 'The Great Puritan Migration', *History of Massachusetts Blog* (24 May 2017), n.pag., <https://historyofmassachusetts.org/the-great-puritan-migration/> (16 April 2021).

<sup>78</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp.101-102.



it, saying that Turner became convinced he would die and indeed died only a few days later; Nehemiah knew Thomas' brother, and so came by this story. To the modern reader, this letter in combination with Nehemiah's commentary reads more like a ghost story than anything else. However, for Wallington, who saw the hand of God all around him – the notebooks Sloane MS 1457 and parts of Additional Ms 21935 are full of anecdotes of sinners being divinely punished, e.g. through being struck by lightning –<sup>79</sup> this particular incident, although certainly caused by higher powers, must not have seemed out of the ordinary.

A letter of N[ehemiah] W[allington] to Mistress M. R. of sharp reprove and loving admonition for living in secret sin [fos. 155v–158r]

Mistress M. R. is Wallington's sister-in-law Dorothy Rampaigne, and she has been having an affair with an Irish Catholic after her husband's death; Nehemiah has discovered this through intercepted letters. The affair is particularly painful for Nehemiah for three reasons. Firstly, Zachariah was killed by Irish Catholic rebels; secondly, Wallington saw the Irish rebellion as a Popish plot against 'the children of God', i.e. the elect, rather than a way for Ireland to try and rid itself of English rule;<sup>80</sup> thirdly, Wallington took great pride in helping family members (the widow of his other brother-in-law, Livewell, lived with Nehemiah for almost twenty years), and might have felt that he had failed his sister-in-law. It is likely that Nehemiah did not help her because he only heard of her troubles in 1643, since he recounts it among other grim news of that year.<sup>81</sup>

Although a large number of letters aim to comfort, we must not forget that Nehemiah also included letters to admonish, as indeed he does in this letter, quoting heavily from the Bible and asking his sister-in-law to repent.

Some part of a letter of G[race] W[allington] to M R to take care of her son [fos. 159r–159v]

This letter forms an interesting contrast with the previous one. Grace, Nehemiah's wife, also admonishes her sister-in-law but, unlike Nehemiah, she offers a practical solution to the problem at hand. Her solution would have a profound effect on the lives of the Wallingtons: they took on Charles, Dorothy's sole remaining child, as an apprentice, and he lived with them until a few years before Nehemiah's death.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>80</sup> *Idem*, p. 166.

<sup>81</sup> Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 168.

<sup>82</sup> *Idem*, pp. 83-84.



A letter of T L to his daughter Susan Lithall, loving instructions to behave herself in service [fos. 164r–164v]

Nehemiah stated in his note to the reader that he also wanted to ‘inform’ his readers, although he remained vague as to what, exactly, he wished to inform them on. This letter, however, makes his wish to inform more concrete: it provides information for young girls as to how to behave in service. Wallington probably found it useful, because for a while he contemplated for his surviving daughter Sarah to go into service. In the end, however, he decided to find her a husband instead.<sup>83</sup>

A letter by Nehemiah Wallington to Master Griffith, Minister, to tell people of their sins [fos. 165r–165v]

Nehemiah found it his duty to admonish his neighbours and point out their sins to them so that they might reform their lives. In this letter, he writes to Minister Griffith and aims to convince him to be more strict in his preaching, pointing out the sins of his parishioners. George Griffith was an Independent who preached on fast days. Wallington did not like the Independents, because he considered them cowards who would not tell their congregation of their errors.

Why and how did Nehemiah Wallington write *Profitable and comfortabl letters*? By placing the notebook into its early modern context, I hope to have shown that *Profitable and comfortabl letters* served multiple purposes. Firstly, the notebook was useful for Nehemiah himself. It provided information and comfort as well as a way to reflect on his life and his religion. Secondly, Nehemiah wrote the notebook for a broader audience; his table of contents, note to the reader and direct addresses to the reader (among other things) point to this. In this sense, the notebook can be seen as a home-made example of a collection of letters offering consolation; many such collections existed in print, e.g. *Certaine Godly and Verie Comfortable Letters* by Edward Dering, which Nehemiah used as a source. The reason Nehemiah set out to write his own version of such a collection probably lies in the fact that he wrote the notebook for other members of the Puritan community. This was not unusual; letter-writing was a way for Puritans to strengthen their community, and the notebook draws heavily upon the correspondence of Puritans Nehemiah knew. Knowing this, we may now understand why Wallington has not only included letters to comfort, as do other collections of godly letters, but also letters to inform, admonish and refresh. Therefore, *Profitable and comfortabl letters* fits comfortably within both Protestant self-writing and Puritan letter-writing.

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<sup>83</sup> *Idem*, p. 208.

## Editorial Procedure

### *Footnotes*

In order to aid the reader, I have added footnotes to each letter. I have employed three types of footnotes. Firstly, I have used footnotes that provide context; footnotes that explain historical events, for example, (footnote 145 reads as follows: ‘The French Huguenot city of La Rochelle, which was under siege by the Catholic French from September 1627 – October 1628 and eventually fell. More than eighty per cent of the town’s population died due to famine and disease during the siege’) or provide more information as to who the addressee or writer is (e.g. footnote 95: ‘Laurence Saunders’ (also spelled as Lawrence Saunders) story is recounted in John Foxe’s *The Lives of Martyrs*. He was burned at the stake on the 8th of February 1555 after having preached against Catholicism’).

Secondly, there are footnotes that explain the meaning of a word. Some words in *Profitable and comfortabl letters* have become obsolete, or else their modern-day meaning is not the same as its early-modern meaning. Thus, these footnotes explain how such a word should be interpreted (see e.g. footnote 103: “‘estate’ is an archaic word which means ‘state’ or ‘condition’”). Similarly, it may not always be clear at a first reading who or what a writer means when using a specific word; footnotes aim to rectify this (footnote 110, for example: ‘With “goods of outward estate”, Hall refers to worldly goods and riches’).

Thirdly, I have made use of footnotes whenever the letters reference the Bible. This category can be subdivided into two smaller categories, the first simply giving the official Bible quote as well as the chapter and verse if this has not been given in the text already (footnote 173 refers to Proverbs 6:16, which has already been mentioned within the text, and so the footnote only gives the actual quote: “‘These sixe things doeth the Lord hate; yea seuen are an abomination vnto him’”). I have made use of the 1611 version of the King James Bible, which is accessible online. I have opted not to modernise its spelling.<sup>84</sup> Secondly, the letters at times mention particular biblical stories or characters. The footnotes that accompany such instances explain what the Biblical story is about or who the character is (footnote 128, for example, reads: ‘The Biblical Hannah was unable to have children, for which her husband’s other wife, Peninnah, reproached her. Hannah prayed to God for a child, vowing that, should she have a child, she would dedicate him to God. She gave birth to Samuel, and, once he was weaned, left him in the care of Eli, the high priest of Shiloh’).

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<sup>84</sup> I have made use of the following website to access this particular version of the Bible: <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-Bible/> .

*Spelling, Abbreviations, Contractions, Grammar, Syntax, Punctuation, Insertions and Deletions*

I have modernised Wallington's spelling to make it easier for modern readers to read his work. More concretely, this means I have modernised his use of 'v'/'u' and 'i'/'j' as well as the use of capitalisation (Nehemiah often capitalises nouns, and with certain letters, it is not easy to distinguish between capital and non-capital letters). I have also changed words that we would nowadays spell differently, e.g. 'plainely' has been changed to 'plainly'.<sup>85</sup> Wallington often uses 'then' when he means 'than', and 'here' when he means 'hear'; these instances I have corrected.

Wallington uses Roman numerals for dates. These I have changed to their Arabic counterparts. When quoting Bible verses, Wallington often uses a combination of Roman numerals and Arabic numerals, and an abbreviation of the title of the book he refers to, e.g. 'Mat xviii 15'.<sup>86</sup> In these cases, I have decided to use the modern way of referencing Bible verses and chapters. Furthermore, because the abbreviations Nehemiah uses are not always the same as the ones we use today (the book of Matthew should be abbreviated as Matt) and because not every reader will be familiar with the Bible, I have decided to write out each chapter's title in full. Thus, 'Mat xviii 15' has become 'Matthew 18:15'.

Similarly, I have written out abbreviations in full. Thus, in keeping with early modern forms of address, 'Mr; and 'Mrs' have become 'Master' and 'Mistress'. The ampersand I have changed to 'and'.

I have maintained Wallington's grammar and syntax as much as possible. I have therefore not changed his use of (the nowadays archaic) 'thine', 'thee', etc., nor have I changed the spelling of his verbs when he uses the 'th' or 'st' ending, e.g. in 'let him do what seemeth him good'.<sup>87</sup> This is partly because Wallington predominantly makes use of these endings when quoting from the Bible (in which case we, too, may still utilise these endings) and partly because they do not inhibit our understanding of the text.

I have changed Wallington's punctuation from time to time. His punctuation is rather erratic. He often uses commas rather than full stops, or does not use punctuation altogether. I have added punctuation where necessary. In this way, 'according to the command of God in Leui xix 17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but thou shalt plainely rebuke thy neighbor and Suffer him not to sinne' has become 'According to the command of God in

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<sup>85</sup> Fol. 155v.

<sup>86</sup> Fol. 155v.

<sup>87</sup> Fol. 72r.

Leviticus 19:17,<sup>88</sup> thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but thou shalt plainly rebuke thy neighbour and suffer him not to sin'.<sup>89</sup>

Words that Wallington crossed out, I have not kept in my transcriptions (compare, for example, Figure Four with my edited transcription on the page following the image). I have also endeavoured to keep insertions to a bare minimum. However, there are parts of the manuscript that have been damaged, causing letters to be lost. In this case, I have added the missing letters between square brackets. Similarly, I have at times added letters between square brackets when it is clear that a mistake has been made, e.g. in the following sentence: 'Nature must not be suffered to take it[s] own time for an end of lamenting, time is heathens' physick that wears out the greatest griefs'.<sup>90</sup>

Finally, whenever I refer to pages within *Profitable and comfortabl letters*, I use the folio numbers that have been pencilled in by a later hand than Nehemiah's rather than Nehemiah's own page numbers. These pencilled folio numbers are the standard way of referencing pages, hence why I have chosen these over the page numbers Nehemiah himself used.

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<sup>88</sup> 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sinne vpon him'.

<sup>89</sup> Fol. 155v.

<sup>90</sup> Fol. 71v.

*Profitable and Comfortable Letters:*<sup>91</sup> A Selection

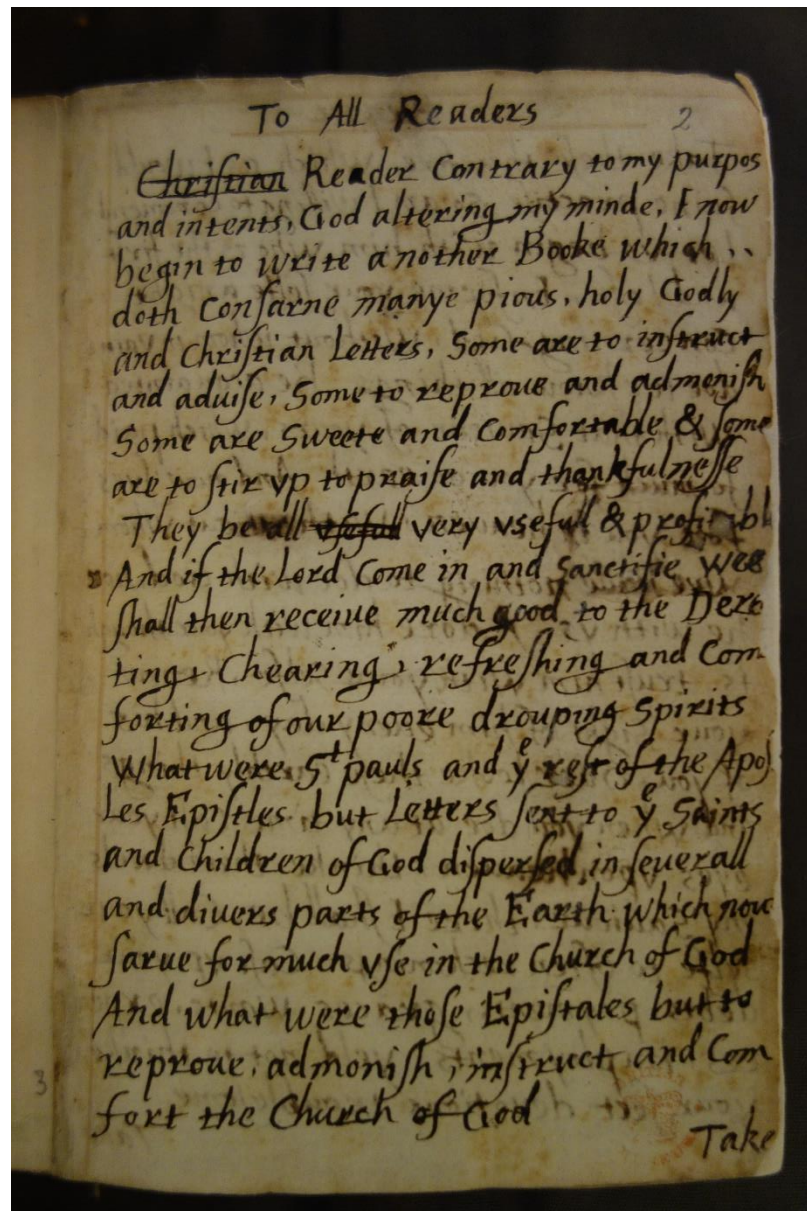


Figure Four: The opening page of *Profitable and comfortabl letters*, which begins with a direct address to the reader. Image courtesy of Dr J.F. van Dijkhuizen.

<sup>91</sup> The original title of the manuscript is 'Profitable and comfortabl letters'.

## An Excerpt of 'To the reader' [fos. 4v–5v]

My intent was to write out all my useful letters, but there are many sweet and comfortable and useful letters that I have sent to others, as unto Alderman Adams when his daughter was taken away and he came and gave me kind thanks for it. [fol. 5r] As also a letter of comfort to my sister Hinde<sup>92</sup> at Chelensford<sup>93</sup> when her dear brother Master Crosse was sick to the death. As also comfortable letters to my loving friend Goodman Wilsmore at Nottingham and to Goodman Prestland at Takeley in Essex and to diverse others. As also many very sweet and profitable letters I have received from diverse others which now are through negligence lost, which now is some trouble and grief unto me, but yet so many as I can find on I do intend, God assisting me, for to write out in this book, that they might be some means, with God's blessing, to admonish, to inform, comfort and refresh others with that comfort I have received by them through the mercy of my God in the blessing of them unto me. Therefore, gentle Reader, weigh and consider of them well, for [fol. 5v] these letters (which now are here written) are springs from the fountain.<sup>94</sup> I will first begin to write an epistle out of the fountain the word of God, which is the second epistle of St John, and then of the Springs as God shall bring to my mind and enable me. They be all very useful to admonish and to comfort the troubled spirit and if thou receivest any good by them, give the glory to God and pray for me, your weak brother

May            Nehemiah Wallington  
1650

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<sup>92</sup> After Nehemiah's mother, Elizabeth Hall, died, his father married a widow named Joan Hinde who already had two from her previous marriage, namely a son and a daughter. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p.69.

<sup>93</sup> Nehemiah probably means the town of Chelmsford in Essex.

<sup>94</sup> The fountain here refers to the scriptures. In Protestantism, it is believed that 'the scriptures are the origin of all consolation'; as such, they are the fountain from which all other consolation flows. See van Dijkhuizen, 'Never Better', p.8.

Laurence Saunders<sup>95</sup> his letter to his wife<sup>96</sup> a little before his burning [fol. 9r]

Grace and comfort in Christ Amen.

Dear wife, be merry in the mercies of our Christ and yea also, my dear friends. Pray, pray for us, everybody. We be shortly to be despatched hence unto our good Christ: Amen, Amen. Wife, I would you send me my shirt which you know whereunto it is consecrated.<sup>97</sup> Let it be sowed<sup>98</sup> down on both sides and not open. Oh my heavenly Father, look upon me in the face of thy Christ, or else I shall not be able to abide thy countenance, such is my filthiness.<sup>99</sup> He will do so, and therefore I will not be afraid, what sin, death, hell and damnation can do against me. O wife, always remember the Lord. God bless you, yea he will bless thee, good wife and thy poor boy<sup>100</sup> also, only cleave thou unto Him<sup>101</sup> and he will give thee all things pray, pray, pray.

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<sup>95</sup> Laurence Saunders' (also spelled as Lawrence Saunders) story is recounted in John Foxe's *The Lives of Martyrs*. He was burned at the stake on the 8th of February 1555 after having preached against Catholicism. See T. Betteridge, 'Saunders, Lawrence (d. 1555), protestant martyr', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004, n.pag. <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-24700> (16 April 2021).

<sup>96</sup> Joanna.

<sup>97</sup> Saunders wants his wife to send him a specific shirt which he 'consecrated', i.e. set apart specifically to die and be martyred in.

<sup>98</sup> Sown.

<sup>99</sup> Saunders does not mean that he is literally filthy, but that he is full of sin and therefore not able to look straight into Christ's glorious, heavenly face unless given divine aid. This fits in with the Protestant tenet of *sola gratia*, 'by faith alone', which holds that salvation may only be obtained through divine aid, humans being too sinful to reach a state of salvation without divine intervention.

<sup>100</sup> Joanna's and Laurence's son, Samuel.

<sup>101</sup> God. The command to cleave unto God occurs often in the Bible, e.g. in Deuteronomy 4:4.



A letter by Master Edward Dering<sup>102</sup> to a Mistress H of Exhortation [fos. 27r – 28v]

Grace and peace.

I have heard of your heavy estate,<sup>103</sup> that in many troubles the Lord doth exercise you, but I trust you are also taught to say always before God: ‘Thy will be done’.<sup>104</sup> And if this be your prayers, then know that nothing happeneth, but by his appointment. And be contented with all that he hath done so that your heart may bear you witness that of all things the Lord is most dear unto you. And for your troubles, give only your heart to love the Lord, and they shall seem neither great nor strong unto you. For what can be great, if our heart be prepared to say with S<sup>t</sup> Paul, that we reioyce in afflictions because they shall breed in us a hope which shall never make us ashamed?<sup>105</sup> Or what can be great, if God have taught us that the momentary afflictions of this world they are not worthy of the glory that shall be revealed unto us? Or what can be great if we say with the apostle<sup>106</sup>, Bretheren, reioyce in affliction, [fol. 27v] Reioyce exceedingly when ye fall into many and great tribulations.<sup>107</sup> Surely, good Mistress H., all is nothing for a frail body, a short life, a sinful creature? What can come unto it that should dismay it, nay how should we not be glad if death also were at our bed’s side, that we might at once see the outmost malice of the devil and after for ever more be delivered from him? A great cloud of witnesses are cited in the eleventh to the Hebrews<sup>108</sup> of which every one should be our example to bear all crosses that the Lord doth send, knowing that he is delighted with us when we be faithful to abide these light chastisments: Job,<sup>109</sup> David,<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Edward Dering (c. 1540–1576) was a clergyman and evangelical priest. This letter is from his work *Certaine godly and comfortable letters*. See P. Collinson, ‘Dering, Edward (c. 1540–1576), Church of England clergyman and evangelical preacher’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004, n.pag., [https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7530](https://www.oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7530) (18 April 2021).

<sup>103</sup> estate’ is an archaic word which means ‘state’ or ‘condition’.

<sup>104</sup> Matthew 6:10: ‘Thy kingdome come. Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven’.

<sup>105</sup> 2Corinthians 2:4: ‘For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote vnto you with many teares, not that you should bee grieued, but that yee might knowe the loue which I haue more abundantly vnto you’.

<sup>106</sup> Saint Paul.

<sup>107</sup> Romans 5:3: ‘And not onely so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience’.

<sup>108</sup> The Biblical book ‘Hebrews’.

<sup>109</sup> The Biblical story of Job is a theodicy, i.e. a vindication of God’s goodness in the face of the existence of evil. God allows Satan to inflict many afflictions on the once-prosperous and God-fearing Job in order to test whether Job’s faith will hold strong even in hard times. Although Job initially rails against his afflictions because he feels they are undeserved, he eventually has to admit that he as a mere human being can never understand the power and intentions of an almighty God. The Protestant understanding of affliction closely corresponds to the understanding presented in this story, especially to that of the character of Elihu, who explains to Job that suffering brings the sufferer closer to God. See J.F. van Dijkhuizen, ‘Never Better’, pp 15-17.

<sup>110</sup> David’s son Absalom rebelled against his father and was killed during the battle of Ephraim’s woods, despite David’s explicit instructions not to kill him.



Paul,<sup>111</sup> our Saviour himself,<sup>112</sup> how many things suffered they? How are we not ashamed to refuse the cause which they have borne? And weigh well your own case, what it is, and you shall see little cause of sorrow in it, or if you compare it with other[s] none at all. Hath your husband been unkind to you, bear it and you shall win him at the last. If not [fol. 28r], thank God that you can continue loving and obedient, even unto an unkind husband, and I assure you: in this one virtue, there is more comfort and joy, than there can be grief in all the discourtesies of men. And what is that cross of yours in respect of that which Abigail<sup>113</sup> did so long and patiently beare? But your son hath grieved you much, yeah but you have not the hundred part of the grief that David had for his son Absalom, and will you be more grieved than he? And what if God take from you the comfort of one child, leaving again unto you the comfort of a great many. Will you, or can you repine against the loving kindnes of the Lord? How glad would David have been of other good children in the loss of one evil, yet you have lost none, neither is your son known to be so evil, but you may rejoyce in him again, yeah if all things were as evil as you could imagine, what then? Where is our love to Jesus Christ that gave his precious body to the death upon the cross for our sins if we will not leave son nor daughter and our own life for his sake? [fol. 28v] Can one hair fall from your son's head but at Christ commandements? Is not he head of the Church, and all things happen they not unto us as he will? Herein you shall know you love God above all: when you can forget the child of your womb for his sake. And therefore give not yourself to any inordinate affections to offend God and hurt yourself: but say and think: Thy will be done O Lord. And when the time shall come of our latter end, we shall never have end of the blessed life, which God shall give unto you and to all his Saints in that day. Thus in haste I am constrained to write, but I will not cease to pray that God may bless you and give you his joyfull Spirit, to fill you with all spiritual comfort against the temptations of the world and all the envy of the devil And pray for me, I beseech you, that I may account all the world to be but dung to the end, that I may win Christ Jesus, the living and eternal God. I commit you for ever Amen.

Yours in the Lord Jesus,

Edward Dearing

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<sup>111</sup> Paul was blinded for three days after experiencing a vision in which the Lord asked him why he persecuted Christians. After converting to Christianity, Paul travelled to spread Christianity further, for which he was eventually executed through decapitation, thus making him a martyr.

<sup>112</sup> Jesus Christ, who suffered and died for humanity's sins.

<sup>113</sup> Before being married to David, Abigail (also spelled as Abigail) was married to Nabal, who was greedy, selfish, and stupid.

To Master I/J. A. Merchant, against sorrow for worldly losses [from Joseph Hall]<sup>114</sup>  
[fos. 45r–45v]

It is fitter for me to begin with chiding than with advice. What means this weak distrust? Go on, and I shall doubt whether I write to a Christian. You have lost your heart together with your wealth. How can I feare, least this Mammon<sup>115</sup> was your God? Hence was God's jealousy in removing it and hence your immoderate tears for losing it. If thus, God had not loved you, if he had not made you poor. To some, it is an advantage to lose. You could not have been at once thus rich and good<sup>116</sup>: Now heaven is open to you which was shut before, and could never have given you entrance, with a load of iniquity. If you be wise in managing your affliction, you have changed the world for God, a little dross<sup>117</sup> for heaven.

But you might have at once retained both. God saw you could not hold him so strongly while one of your hands was so fastened on the world. It is a shame for a Christian to see an Heathen philosopher<sup>118</sup> laugh at his own shipwreck while himself howls out as if all his felicity were embarked with his substance. [fol. 45v] What are those, you have lost, but false friends, miserable comforters? Else they had not left you. Oh slight and fickle. Stay that winds could bereave you of, grieve more for your fault than for your loss. If your negligence, your riotous misspence<sup>119</sup> had impaired your estate<sup>120</sup>, there Satan had impoverished you. Now would I have added to your grief, for your sin, not for your affliction, but now, since winds and waters have done it<sup>121</sup>, as the officers of their Maker, why should you not say with me, as

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<sup>114</sup> Joseph Hall (1574–1656) was bishop of Norwich and an avid writer. This letter comes from his work *Epistles*. See R.A. McCabe, 'Hall, Joseph (1574–1656), bishop of Norwich, religious writer, and satirist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004, n.pag. <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11976> (18 April 2021).

<sup>115</sup> Mammon is referred to in the New Testament and is commonly believed to mean money or wealth, or any kind of entity that promises money and/or wealth.

<sup>116</sup> This refers to Matthew 6:24: 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon'.

<sup>117</sup> Dregs, rubbish.

<sup>118</sup> Hall probably refers to the philosopher Zeno here, who, after being shipwrecked, found himself in Athens, where he discovered the works of Socrates and consequently became a philosopher himself. He reportedly joked that being shipwrecked had put him on a good journey, namely on the journey that would lead him to discover philosophy.

<sup>119</sup> According to the OED, the 'improper or wasteful use of money or time'.

<sup>120</sup> 'estate' is an archaic word which means 'state' or 'condition'.

<sup>121</sup> From this as well as the reference to Zeno we may infer that this merchant's ship or ships have been wrecked.

I with Job<sup>122</sup>: ‘The Lord hath taken.’<sup>123</sup> Use your loss well and you shall find that God hath crossed you with a blessing. If you now repine at an easy correction, you are worthy of severity. Beware the next [correction], if you grudge and swell at this. It is next to nothing which you suffer. What can be further from us then these goods of outward estate?<sup>124</sup> You need not abate either health, or mirth, for their sakes, if you do now draw the affliction nearer than he which sent it. If, while God visits your estate, you fetch it home to your body, to your mind, thank yourself that you will needs be miserable. But if you love not to fare ill, take crosses as they are sent and go lightly away with an easy burden.

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<sup>122</sup> The Biblical story of Job is a theodicy, i.e. a vindication of God’s goodness in the face of the existence of evil. God allows Satan to inflict many afflictions on the once-prosperous and God-fearing Job in order to test whether Job’s faith will hold strong even in hard times. Although Job initially rails against his afflictions because he feels they are undeserved, he eventually has to admit that he as a mere human being can never understand the power and intentions of an almighty God. The Protestant understanding of affliction closely corresponds to the understanding presented in this story, especially to that of the character of Elihu, who explains to Job that suffering brings the sufferer closer to God. See J.F. van Dijkhuizen, ‘Never Better’, pp. 15-17.

<sup>123</sup> Job 1:21: ‘And said, Naked came I out of my mothers wombe, and naked shall I returne thither: the Lord gaue, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord’.

<sup>124</sup> With ‘goods of outward estate’, Hall refers to worldly goods and riches.

Some part of a letter for patiently bearing the death of a child [by Paul Baynes]<sup>125</sup> [fos. 60r–61v]

Sir,

your letter came in the chiefest of our harvest. Since the time, the first week, you know our carrier goeth not. I can no longer be wanting to leave your letter unanswered; I do desire to have some feeling of your estate. And the Lord that keepeth his when they are almost lost in themselves, keep you in this and all other temptations. We have great need of God to lead us in time of trial. For there are many byways at which our corruption and weakness will be ready to start out and but only one true way which will bring us to see a good issue in Gods season. Sometimes we are in danger, to set light by Gods corrections. Sometimes we are impatient outwardly and apparently kicking at the spur, sometime inwardly and secretly repining and fretting like those horses which digest their collar by biting their bridles. If we neither despise, nor impatiently rise against the hand of God, yet our weakness is ready too much to take to heart that which is our exercise, so that our spirit droupeth and fainteth and this is worse, because it is commonly accompanied with a wilful indisposition which will not let us [fol. 60v] receive such things by which we might be truly comforted. I doubt not but God keepeth you both from the former: I hope from this latter also. We must take our correction, and humble ourselves under the smart of it, but we must look to choose that he would not let our faith, hope and meekness of mind be shaken. If God should have told you both, I will give you two children, you shall bring them up so long for me and I will take them again, would you not have accepted it gladly? God is the chief Father of all the family in heaven and earth; we are but foster parents to our own children. When my last child was taken to God, my good friend our preacher did some time shew me many motives why I should bear it:

1. That they [being] taken thus soon, are crowned through Christ without having experience of that fight which maketh us cry O miserable and think our lives often a burden to us;
2. Again, it is no love to them when we are persuaded that God is their God, that which maketh us grieve at their taking hence it is selflove or carnal affection. [fol.

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<sup>125</sup> Paul Baynes (c. 1573–1617) was a godly divine. This letter comes from his work *Christian Letters*. See C.S. Knighton, 'Baynes, Paul (c. 1573–1617), godly divine' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004, n.pag. <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-1780> (18 April 2021).

61r] For Christ told his disciples, ‘If ye loved me ye would be glad because I go to the Father,’<sup>126</sup> and what measure do we offer God, who can send our children far from us, where we are never like to see them again, if they may do well with man, and yet cannot well bear to have them taken out of sight by the Lord though we are persuaded their Spirits are with him? We must labour for such good hearts as may not be content perforce to let him take, but may willingly yield even our children to him, who hath not thought his only begotten too dear for us but hath given him to death for our sakes.<sup>127</sup> If God should have riven the Tree asunder – I mean severed you one from another – it must have been taken thankfully, but much more when he leaveth the Tree, and taketh but the fruit, yea but parts of that, leaving the one half yet with you;

3. Finally, it is a token we felt not his love, nor received them not from his hand as we ought to have done, if we should not thankfully give them back again.

[H]anna[h] received Samuel as a gift gotten by petition from God, did readily part with him to God again.<sup>128</sup> So Abram with his seed, which by faith in the promise he had obtained.<sup>129</sup> [fol. 61v] I know we are ready to think, these things are true, but a parentlike affection cannot easily shake hands with and yield up things so dearly beloved. It is true indeed that, while we plead love to our children, what unkindness do we bewray towards God. If my heart did not so love them, I could give them thee. Calmly to think on this which is contained in that exception above named were able to make one blush that his heart should be so cold in his love to Godward as not to part willingly with anything it loveth at God’s call. Alas, to yield that we greatly care not for, is not God a mercy. But I hope God’s love doth not make his hand grievous, neither would I have thus late written thus much, but that it is good to be provided against all things to come. For as when fire catcheth, we see how far it is gone but know not where it will stay, so when the fire of affliction (in which faith is proved) is once kindled. The second messenger told not

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<sup>126</sup> John 14:28: ‘Ye haue heard how I saide vnto you, I goe away, and come againe vnto you. If ye loued mee, yee would reioyce, because I said, I go vnto the Father: for my Father is greater then I’.

<sup>127</sup> Jesus Christ, God’s only son whom he sacrificed so that humanity may reach salvation from their sins.

<sup>128</sup> The Biblical Hannah was unable to have children, for which her husband’s other wife, Peninnah, reproached her. Hannah prayed to God for a child, vowing that, should she have a child, she would dedicate him to God. She gave birth to Samuel, and, once he was weaned, left him in the care of Eli, the high priest of Shiloh.

<sup>129</sup> Abram/Abraham became the father of Isaac when he was one hundred years old, and his wife Sarah ninety. God tests Abraham’s obedience by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham is willing to comply, but before he can kill his son, a Godly messenger intervenes and provides Abraham with a ram to sacrifice instead.

Job all his sorrow at once.<sup>130</sup> It is wisdom still to provide for the worst; the best will save itself.

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<sup>130</sup> To test his faith, God allowed Satan to take away Job's wealth and kill his children and servants. This news was brought to him by messengers.

A Letter sent unto me (Nehemiah Wallington) from my wife's brother (Livewell Rampaigne) When the hand of God in sickness was in my family in 1625 [fos. 71r–74r]

Loving Brother,<sup>131</sup>

My best love remembered to you. With hope of your prayers as mine are for your health and yours I have received two letters which you sent, the last whereof drowns the memory of the former. It was dated October the 16<sup>th</sup> and it was the end of September before I received it, and then too soon, so unwelcome was the news. But the good pleasure of your merciful Father as it must be obeyed necessarily, so we ought to submit to it even willingly I write doubtfully, because I know not how it hath pleased God to dispose of my sister,<sup>132</sup> who was then under his correcting hand.<sup>133</sup> If he have of his infinite goodness withdrawn his hand restored her health to her, and her to us, we have just cause of joy and thanksgiving; if otherwise, as I much fear by your postscript, if he have taken her to Himself we have just matter of humiliation and exercise for Christian patience and courage. [fol.71v]

And yet my confidence is that God hath in the midst of judgment remembered mercy, that if she be dead, she is dead in the Lord and hath now the happy performances of all these gracious promises which are the comfort of our miserable lives. And as God hath not forgot to temper his judgment with mercy, so it concerns us not to forget to temper our tears with thankfulness not to move as men without hope, but so to grieve for her temporal death as with all we rejoice and give thanks for her gain of eternal life. Your daughter<sup>134</sup> is dead, and I fear her mother,<sup>135</sup> a loss doubled upon an indulgent father and a loving husband. How dear they were to you I presume I know and the love of things appears most, when we have lost them. As was the love, so will be the grief: great, and if not moderate, hurtful and sinful. To mourn overmuch is to murmur and repine against the decrees of the Almighty, which is both unsafe and unjust. Nature must not be suffered to take it[s] own time for an end of lamenting, time is heathens' physick that wears out the greatest griefs. [fol. 72r] Grace must restrain and limit inordinate sorrow and apply comforts to our fainting hearts. It is the Lord, let him do what

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<sup>131</sup> Livewell Rampaigne was the brother of Grace, Nehemiah's wife. However, neither Nehemiah nor Livewell seems to have distinguished between biological siblings and in-laws, as evident by the fact that neither use the term 'in-law'. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 79.

<sup>132</sup> Grace Wallington née Rampaigne.

<sup>133</sup> Grace is ill. 1625 was a plague year, and so she may have been ill with the plague. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 82.

<sup>134</sup> Elizabeth Wallington, Nehemiah and Grace's eldest child.

<sup>135</sup> Livewell had no way of knowing that Grace would, in fact, survive her illness.

seemeth him good, he hath given and he hath taken away<sup>136</sup> and yet he hath not taken so much as he hath given, for he hath left pledges of his bount[iful] love behind. It is the Lord that is a God of purity and will not suffer sin to escape unpunished in his dearest servants, but will chastise them in their dearest things, and strike them where they shall smart most. It is the Lord that cannot be contradicted, opposed or resisted, who will be feared even in his mercies, and loved in his judgments, and will be yet more angry if we be stubborn, and do not kiss the rod with which he hath drawn blood of us. It is the Lord that hath a whole controversy with the whole land and first begun with the chief city, which he hath overcome with his sore judgments, the messenger of his fierce displeasure desolating whole families and sweeping away at once whole houses. And if you suffer a blow or two at his angry hand you cannot complain as singled out, or set up for a mark as Job<sup>137</sup> speaks: since the calamity is common as deserved by all, so felt by the most.

Yet for all this, it is that Lord that is merciful and gracious and of tender compassion, [fol. 72v] who is as it were afflicted in our afflictions and grieves that he is compelled by the danger of our miscarriage to make us to grieve: who graciously inflicts no more upon us than is fit for us, and wisely ministers no other physick then is good for us, how bitter or harsh soever it seem[s] unto us. And if it became him to make the captain of our salvation<sup>138</sup> perfect through sufferings, how it is not fit to bring many son[s] the same way unto glory? And if he learn obedience by the things which he suffered, though we were a son we may not refuse to learn in the same school and to grow better under the rod, that with David<sup>139</sup> we may say: 'It is good for us that we have been afflicted'. Compare your afflictions with the heavy crosses which have befallen many prophets, apostles, saints and servants of God in scripture and you shall find yours gentle and mild in respect of others Take my brothers the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord that the Lord is very plentiful and oftender mercy I am sure [fol. 73r] they were as dear to God as any of us, and yet none of us have suffered so much from him as they. The beginning is bitter, we end sweet. Whatsoever the Lord seems to be to flesh and blood

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<sup>136</sup> Job 1:21: 'And said, Naked came I out of my mothers wombe, and naked shall I returne thither: the Lord gaue, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord'.

<sup>137</sup> In the Biblical story of Job, God allows Satan to inflict many afflictions on the once-prosperous and God-fearing Job in order to test whether Job's faith will hold strong even in hard times. Job loses his wealth, his servants, and his ten children.

<sup>138</sup> Jesus Christ.

<sup>139</sup> David's son Absalom rebelled against his father and was killed during the battle of Ephraim's woods, despite David's explicit instructions not to kill him.



when he frowns upon us as an enemy, yet in the end he will appear to be pitiful<sup>140</sup> and of tender mercy. No chastening indeed, for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous. Nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby, wherefore lift up your hands that hang down and the feeble knees. Despise not the chastening of the Lord, for it proceeds from Love and it brings profit with it. Neither be weary of his correction, for whom he loveth he correcteth as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Be not weary, but though he continue to correct, continue to be patient and rejoice in as much as you are partakers of saints' sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy, and cast your whole care and grief upon him who will ever take care for all his chosen ones. What benefit, uses, ends, God works intends and propoundeth to himself in correcting his servants, you are not ignorant of. God hath not left himself without witness of his fatherly care of us, nor us without comfort and his ministers his worthy, his so[ul], his spirit all [fol. 73v] speak comfort and encouragement.

It is now no time for me to teach, or you to learn it is a time of practising, What we have or should have learned in time of peace and rest against this day. Now is the time of trial, now is the day of visitation, now God calls to repetition and demands the fruits of his much teaching and long preparing us. God grant that we may express our thankfulness to him for his long instructing of us in our true and sincere submission to his good pleasure. This God looks for at our hands, this our profession challengeth of us, and this he make us able to do exceeding abundantly above all: that we ask or think, 'Amen'. If he that joined my Sister to you in marriage, hath now separated and deprived you of a wife, me of a Sister, we must forgo our titles to her with patience. She is I hope with Him that hath the most right to her. The bond betwixt you and I shall not on my part be broken, but by death, and I shall ever be most willing and ready to my utmost strength to perform any Christian or brotherly office which shall be of any use to you or yours.

I am glad it hath pleased God to spare my Sister Sarah and [fol. 74r] and Patience<sup>141</sup> and your son John whose healths I pray may be long continued. I had written [a] long time since<sup>142</sup> if I had had a convenient messenger. I desire to hear from you. I pray you remember my best loves to my sisters, to your father and mother and brethren and sisters and to all our friends. My humble prayers shall be earnestly and continually poured out unto the Lord for

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<sup>140</sup> Full of pity.

<sup>141</sup> Technically Sarah was Nehemiah's half-sister, the daughter of his father John and his third wife Alice Harrison. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 69.

<sup>142</sup> A long time ago

you, that you may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according unto his glorious power unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness to whose blessed protection I commend you all, resting

Burton near Lincoln[shire]<sup>143</sup>

December 6 1625

your affectionate Brother

Livewell Rampai[g]n[e]

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<sup>143</sup> Livewell was a minister at Burton in Lincolnshire. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 73.

A letter from my cousin<sup>144</sup> John Bradshaw to his grandfather Master John Wallington, concerning the misery and troubles of [La] Rochell[e]<sup>145</sup> [fos. 76v–77v]

Loving Grandfather,

Duty and love remembered, I now having the opportunity of sending to you by this one ship the amity which only is sent to England, I thought good to write unto you to let you understand the passages of our later designs, which are these briefly: on the 13th of this present,<sup>146</sup> my Lord General gave order to shoot of a pease of ordinance and to put out a pennant<sup>147</sup> in the fore top mast head to make sign to the leading ships to weigh anchor and to fall on the third time, but we were forced to lead way in the Sir George<sup>148</sup> and we did linger for the leading ships to fall on, which at  $\frac{3}{4}$  flood came on but did now as they did the second time shooting off many pieces to small purpose. And the tides being at the lowest after two hours' fight came all of again and nothing done. On the 19th of this month, there was called a council of war and a new way propounded for the attempting of the enemy which was to go up side by side by the enemy with the men of war and to send in a [fol. 77r] main ship to the wall side. But God which disposeth of all things had otherwise determined of the event, for on the twentieth in the afternoon there came news that [La] Rochell[e] had surrendered in the morning and that the King<sup>149</sup> had entered with two regiments of soldiers, promising them their conscience,<sup>150</sup> their lives, their meanes, but he would raze their walls and that all Frenchmen which were in our fleet should have 8 days to come in and if they did not come in in that time to be held as traitors, but as for Monsieur Sabiz and Count Navarre,<sup>151</sup> Monsieur Sabey, his mother and her household he would give them no quarter. There died in this siege of famine sixteen thousand persons, the rest enduring a world of misery, most of their food being hides, leather and old glove, other provisions which were very scarce at an excessive rate:

- A bushel of wheat at twenty pounds
- A pound of bread at twenty shillings

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<sup>144</sup> Actually his nephew, the child of Nehemiah's sister Elizabeth and her husband Richard Bradshaw. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 72.

<sup>145</sup> The French Huguenot city of La Rochelle, which was under siege by the Catholic French from September 1627 – October 1628) and eventually fell. More than eighty per cent of the town's population died due to famine and disease during the siege.

<sup>146</sup> The 13th of October, 1628

<sup>147</sup> Banner

<sup>148</sup> A ship.

<sup>149</sup> Louis XIII, King of France.

<sup>150</sup> Their religious freedom as dictated by the Edict of Nantes.

<sup>151</sup> Henry of Navarre, one of the two former leaders of the Huguenots.

- A quarter of mutton at five pounds of money
- A pound of butter at thirty shillings
- An egg at eight shillings
- An ounce of sugar at two shillings sixpence
- A dried fish at twenty shillings
- A pint of wine at twenty shillings
- A pound of grapes at twenty shillings
- A pint of milk at thirty shillings

Also, it is reported that through the famine young [fol. 77v] maids of 14 or 16 years old did look like old women of a hundred years old. This famine was such that the poor people would cut of the buttocks of dead men as they lay in the churchyard unburied. All the English that came out looked like anatomies.<sup>152</sup> They lived two months with nothing but cow hides and goats' skins boiled, the dogs, cats, mice and frogs being all spent.<sup>153</sup> And this with a world of misery besides did they suffer in hope our relieving them, thus much I thought good to let you understood. The 28 of this month all day and night we had [an] exceeding great storm that 3 or 4 of our small men being cast away, but this day it pleased God to send us a fair wind, but our barge being at [La] Rochel[le] and many ships not ready, we were constrained to remain here still, but if the wind continue we shall be at home with all expetio, for we have great want of beer and other provision through the whole fleet; most part of the fleet have drunk water this fortnight and some this month. I thank God I have had my health all this voyage and I hope I have lost no time in it having got some experience and knowing some hardness and some pleasure, some wants and some plenty. I have kept a journal of all occurrences this voyage which you shall see when I come home if it please God. Thus desiring your blessing and prayers to Almighty God for me and [the] whole fleet, with remembrance of my love to my uncle John and his wife, with all my kindred and friends in general, I take leave and rest,

From George Island	your obedient
aboard the George	grandchild
30 October 1628	John Bradshaw

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<sup>152</sup> i.e. skeletons.

<sup>153</sup> i.e. gone.

A letter of Master James Cole<sup>154</sup> to his wife, concerning his present sad condition which was some cause of his departing from home [fos. 94r–95v]

O my dear wife and my tender and sweet children together with my loving and well-wishing parents, both father and mother, with kinsman Thomas Cole, and my familiar Losex and unfeigned friend Nehemiah Wallington and the rest of my faithful friends and many more which I do entirely love yet cannot express them by name, but rather do remember them before the throne of Grace, which is upon a suffering condition in their estates by reason of my absences,

I know dear wife that I cannot escape much reproach and great revilings for that I cannot help; the Lord doth know my sorrowful heart for my poor and miserable condition. Good wife, let my estate be divided amongst them equally as it will reach to the uttermost. And let us trust steadfastly in the Lord our good God for future success in our callings. And if God do bless me with any estate for to pay them their due to a token; in the meantime, my prayers and endeavours shall be to that purpose. [fol. 94v] O wife, now I do see more by my absence from my wife and children and servants to doleful heaviness and sinking sorrows which my sins have brought me unto. O my dear wife, the thoughts of you and of my children doth pinch my heart and weaken my strength, which ought to be preserved for the comfort of you all. My heart is so disabled that to return I do beseech you not to desire me, but rather that you would come unto me wherein by a letter you shall hear I am settled. In the meantime, I pray you, good wife, catechise<sup>155</sup> my children and nurture them in the fear of God. O dear and loving wife, that I could hear how you do and who is most sufferable unto you in this most woeful estate of yours and mine, for certain it is that, if God do bless me, that they of all other shall be soundest discharged. I am at this present at Ipswich but do not intend there for to stay but rather bend to another place of more conveniency. [fol. 95r] I do beseech you for to deal with my creditors in fair words and not in bad terms, and pray them for to rest with patience. One God for my raising, which casteth down and raiseth up again at his pleasure. And thus I commend you to God and to the word of his great beseeching him of his grace for to bless us

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<sup>154</sup> James Cole was a good friend of Nehemiah's, a tradesman who was roughly of an age with Nehemiah. At the time he wrote this letter, he had fled London because of a great number of debts. Nehemiah includes several letters written by and to Cole pertaining to his leaving. Everyone writing to Cole tries to persuade him to come home. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>155</sup> The catechism is a summary of the Christian principles. It takes the form of question and answers, and is used as a tool to instruct people into religious doctrines.

and our children and servants and for to give us all an inheritance amongst them which be sanctified.

To my son William Edwards and to my servants and my maid Marie, hear you my counsel, which doth write these lines with tears and much sorrow. My son, hear thou the counsel of thy father and do not despise thy mother nor forget her counsel which tends to Gods glory and thy good. If lewd ones entice thee, do not go with them, but refrain thy feet from evil. All of you labour for to be a comfort to your disconsolate governess, your mistress, and fear God and serve him, love him and obey him with all your might. And so shall you [fol. 95v] honour God and get yourselves a good report amongst men that are godly.

To my little dear daughter Abigall, being here at a stay and astonished, fear and your God. Learn to pray and learn the creed and commandments and obey your God and your mother. Break of your sullen qualities and be very teachable and obedient to the Lord your God and your mother.

And for my last and dearest little one, Timothy, the good Lord of heaven bless thee and thy poor mother. And so the good Lord bless you all with the best blessing of heaven and earth. And so not able for to hold my pen any longer, nor my sight further to give me liberty being burdened with salt tears, for this time I rest,

June 30        your faithful Husband  
 1634        to the death  
                  James Cole

You may hear of me at Ipswich  
 in Stevens Laine at a glazers  
 one Robert Hinde

A letter of James Cole to his Father and Mother[in-law] complaining of his inward sorrow and onward troubles [fos. 99r–100v]

Father, mother,

my duty remembered unto you and to my sorrowful and grieved mother which is a fellow feeler of my afflictions, and hath had her part in the temptations of Satan, but dear mother consider of your distressed son-in-law, having not only inward temptations, but outward miseries: in great debts and dangers which hath lain heavily upon me many years. My sins hath caused me for to be in heaving and when I do remember my sins, which is the cause of all my afflictions, my soul hath them in remembrance and is humbled within me, yet when I do consider that miseries comes not forth of the dust, neither doth afflictions spring out of the earth but from the Lord, my good God, which knows what is best for his dearest servants, this stays my heart in the hardest trouble. And so, I beseech, let it stay yours.

The greatest adversities that can befall me is but for the cherishing of faith, and in very deed, were it not for the power of faith, my father's letter, which he sent me with Satan's temptations to second it, would have dashed in pieces all my comfort. Now he that is in misery ought to be comforted of his friends, but men have forgotten the fear of the Almighty. My neighbour Scott's letter stood me in much stead [fol. 99v] against my father's writings. The Lord reward him and his wife for it. The Lord do good to him and his house for it, for he is not ashamed of my chain of so great troubles. Mother, my father doth accuse me that I have no care of my wife and children. I desire that he would not take part with my grand enemy<sup>156</sup> against me, for in this extremity if I had so limited to imprisonment, I could not much have wanted, neither did I much fear it, but therein should I have had little hope either to have relieved my family or to have paid my debts which now there is some hope of both. And where my Father doth accuse me and blame me for alleging<sup>157</sup> of Scripture, I am content to bear the blame of his reproof. My father minds me of that place, that he that cares not for his family is worse than an infidel and denies the faith that admonition is welcome to me, but let my Father take heed that he doth not apply in a wrong manner against me, an innocent man, for I desire to have my family with me and it shall be full sore against my will for to let any one of them remain for to be a trouble to anybody else but myself.<sup>158</sup> And I do hope that God

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<sup>156</sup> Satan

<sup>157</sup> citing

<sup>158</sup> Because James Cole has abandoned his wife and children, the community must take care of their needs in his stead.

will so provide that ere long for to send for [fol. 100r] them to me to abide with me where now I am, or else for to go further with me as God in his wisdom hath appointed.

As for my neighbour Scott, I can never make him amends for his kindness to me and my wife and my son William when he came unto me, for he wrote for my wife to me,<sup>159</sup> went to the carriers, spent his money there and gave my son a shilling when he came unto mee, the Lord reward his kindness a hundredfold. I do desire for to have one letter more from him and I do desire to have one letter from Master Nehemiah Wallington and some others whom I do love most dearly. I would fain know how the Gospel flourishes in London. With us where I do now sojourn there be two congregations, that is in two grey men's hands, where there is neither crosses nor surplus, nor kneeling at the sacrament nor the book of Common Prayer<sup>160</sup> nor any other behaviour but reading the word, singing of psalms, prayer before and after sermon with catechism, which I did think it had not been in any congregation in this Kingdom if I had not seen it and through Gods mercy have been partakers with them in the use of God's ordinances, which if I have not a competency and good means from my Lord, which is not [fol. 100v] to be feared. If I could have peace, I should content myself with poor means. So I might enjoy such Christian liberty. And thus I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build further and for to give you an inheritance amongst them that be sanctified,

Warwick

James Cole

1634

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<sup>159</sup> This suggests that, unlike her husband, James Cole's wife was not literate.

<sup>160</sup> Puritans had no love for the Bok of Common Prayer for two reasons. Firstly, the book was based on the Catholic *Sarum Rite*, and as such was inherently suspect. Secondly, Puritans felt that set prayers (set in the sense that they were repeated and thus could be learned by heart and said by rote) were boring and not heartfelt and thus meaningless. See the UK National Archives, "Book of Common Prayer", n.pag., <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-english-reformation-c1527-1590/book-of-common-prayer/> (16 April 2021).



A letter of Master James Coles (in New England)<sup>161</sup> to N[ehemiah] W[allington] (in old England) encouraging him to stand fast in the hope of the gospel in these times of temptation [fos. 107r–107v]

Health and happiness to you and yours, both in this world that which to come.

My entire and ever loving friend and dear brother<sup>162</sup> Nehemiah Wallington, when I do behold thy constant love and faithfulness, in standing so constantly both in times past and all the time present in the performance of all Christian duties in such faithfulness and love, protecting that love to God and to all the saints with that zeal, plainness, humility and meekness of wisdom according to the faith of God's elect which I have all ways found in thy ancestors<sup>163</sup> and now in thee, being comforted thereby in all my troubles, refreshed in all my sorrows, with the comforts of the same spirit of Christ that dwelleth in us, when I meditate upon thy covetous desires after my unworthy letters, I am ashamed of my own inability, when I see thy excellency. But when such a friend as thou art importunate for three Loves and I have half a Love yet your importunity on one side, and my Love on the other side constraineth me to bring out what I have. But hearing of the forlorn conditions of England it striketh sadness into our hearts [fol. 107v] and paleness into our faces. And therefore desire to mourn with you that mourn for Zion's<sup>164</sup> desolation, and to rejoice together also at Zion's consolation. And in a special manner I am thankful to God for holding thy heart so close to himself in this hour of temptation. Watch and stand fast and be entire, lacking nothing, and never be moved from the hope of the Gospel, for he that will come, will come and will not tarry and his reward is with him.

In my weak apprehension, I cannot discern but that God will force many of his out of Old England to furnish New England till the cup of his indignation be overpast. Which, if it be thy share to come hither among us, I hope God will keep our hearts so together that what the one hath, the other shall not want. And if it be the will of God, that thing I do much desire. Thus with my hearty thank[s] for your pains and tokens, with my prayers to God for you and all the Church of God

I rest  
your brother in Christ  
in what I can till death

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<sup>161</sup> James Cole settled in Hartford, Connecticut. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 98.

<sup>162</sup> Brother in Christ, not brother by blood.

<sup>163</sup> Nehemiah's parents were both Puritans.

<sup>164</sup> Jerusalem's.

Hartford in  
Connecticut

James Cole

A letter of F[rancis] W[ilsmore]<sup>165</sup> to Nehemiah Wallington complaining of trouble, desiring of comfort [fos. 120r–120v]

Master Wallington,

I have been long ere I returned an answer to you for your love and your loving letters by reason of my great troubles that I have had both at home and abroad by reason of my sons that ran away from their master<sup>166</sup>. And I was forced to seek them, and found them in great misery within 13 miles of London, and I was so filled with perplexity that I could not come to London, but made home with them as soon as I could, but it did not a little trouble me to see them in such perplexity and that I could not have the time to see you, but by reason of the troubles of the times I have been put off from writing to you. But the greatest trouble of all is I have not an enlarged heart, which hath been the greatest cause. But now I do desire to write a few words unto you to hear of your affairs, though your old letters are a comfort to me, yet I desire to have some renewed letters and lines of your love to me, and let not the withdrawing of my love hinder the passage of your love. God hath taken away our dear and reverend Pastor Master Coates, which hath been and is no small grief unto me, but the wise God hath done it. But I desire that you would intreat the Lord to supply our wants, for there is a division amongst us Gods people: some are for Paul and some are for Apollos, and so we know not what to do. I pray you, good Sir, seek unto the Lord for us in this particular. [fol. 120v] We hear of hopeful times and we hear of your faith which hath shined throughout the world, for which you will be honoured of all good men, but especially of God, for then who honours God, God will honour. I do desire to hear of some certainty how things goeth. As for my son that was at London, I look for nothing but rebellion from him. He is now at home with me, which is the heart's break of me. He will neither fear God, nor reverence man. I know not what course to take with him. I pray you, let me hear from you as soon as you can, and to certify me something what you would have advise me to do concerning my son. I thank you for your kind tokens which I received. Thus hoping of your good health I commit you to the wise providence and direction of the Ancient of days, and rest

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<sup>165</sup> One of Nehemiah's friends. Seaver states that it 'seems probable that Wilsmore was one of the provincial suppliers of wares sold in Nehemiah's shop', which is how the two may have met. Their primary connection, however, was their shared religion. Their friendship lasted until Wilsmore's death in 1643, when he was shot 'with a bullet from the castle (...) as he was in the town [of Nottingham]'. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>166</sup> Wallington had helped one of Wilsmore's sons to become an apprentice with one of Wallington's neighbours in the previous year. In a later letter, both of Wilsmore's sons have joined the army. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 102 and 139.

Nottingham

Decem[ber] 28

1640

your Loving and obliged friend

Francis Wilsmore

[A typed letter written by Thomas Turner to his parents] [fos. 152r–152v]

Most dear Father and Mother,

I am very desirous to see your faces in the flesh once more; my departure is at hand, my sins are pardoned, my assurance is sealed and delivered, and my soul must be separated from my body within a short time, both at length shall be united, and eternally saved. Let this be your comfort, that you have brought into the world, and bred up such a son, who shall be an heir in Heaven, and so soon put into possession of so glorious an inheritance. I writ[e] this letter without shaking, for assurance settles a man in Soule and Body. These things are all true, therefore make haste, lose no time, take the first opportunity of coming, and the Lord be your guide to lead you in the way, and your guard to defend you, and your glory to reward you, according to all your love extended toward mee upon all occasions

*So prayeth*

Your sick son, ere long not  
to be seen more in the flesh

*Thomas Turner.*

I was forced to write this, and could not write otherwise  
The last Letter that I shall send from *Wormingford*,  
*Aug. 20.* by candle-light, about 8 of the clock.

I can write no more but make haste

[fol. 152v]

[Here, Nehemiah's comments on the printed letter begin.]

This Master Thomas Turner was Minister of Wormingford and as I hear by his Brother that when he did write this letter he was not very well, but he was walking in his study very melancholy, and then hearing the bell toll for one of his parishioners, he was strongly persuaded that he himself should live but a little while, which was the cause of the writing of this letter to his father and mother which dwelt in Rood Lane in London. So his Father went speedily that night to him, and his mother and brother went the next day to him (being Saturday). And his brother did find him very melancholy and asked him how he did and he answered him that his head did ache, and that he should live but a little while with them; whereupon his brother said, 'why should you so persuade yourself? Put away these fantasies, you may live long and do God service.' But on the Lord's day he did not preach. And his

mother and brother, seeing him in some good health not likely to die, they did take their leave of him on Monday, (and left his father with him) and so came to London, but on the next day they were sent for again to come to his burial for he was dead.

He was married the Whitsuntide<sup>167</sup> before.

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<sup>167</sup> Whitsuntide is the week in which Whitsun, also known as Pentecost, is celebrated. This Christian feast day celebrated on the seventh day after Easter commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the other followers of Christ, after which they began to spread the word of Christ. As such, Pentecost is seen as the birth day of the Christian church.

A letter of N[ehemiah] W[allington] to Mistress M. R.<sup>168</sup> of sharp reprove and loving admonition for living in secret sin [fos. 155v–158r]

Loving sister,

According to the command of God in Leviticus 19:17,<sup>169</sup> thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but thou shalt plainly rebuke thy neighbour and suffer him not to sin. And our Saviour saith, If thy Brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone (Matthew 18:15).<sup>170</sup> Now sister, out of the obedience to God's command and the love I bear to your soul, I make bold to deal plainly and lovingly with you, showing you your woeful and miserable condition that you are in, (for) that you are poor, without one drop of true saving grace. Blind, you do not see your miserable condition, and naked, for you lie open to all the wrath of almighty God. Except you get the white robes of Jesus Christ, you are for ever undone (Revelations 3:17).<sup>171</sup> And although you may hide your sin from man and blear the eyes of man with an outside show of holiness, yet the truth is you cannot hide your sin from God and blear the eyes of the Almighty. Read the Psalm 139:3<sup>172</sup>: Lord, thou compassest my paths and my lying down and art accustomed to all my ways. [fol. 156r] Now consider how God did see you in Ireland, when you did lie down with that Irish Rebel and with whom you did lie with besides. Let your own conscience be judge, and consider that the ways of man (and woman) are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondreth all his paths (Proverbs 6:16).<sup>173</sup> Consider what the word saith in Hebrews 14:4<sup>174</sup>: Marriage is honourable

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<sup>168</sup> Mistress M. R. is Wallington's sister-in-law Dorothy Rampaigne. Dorothy is the widow of Wallington's brother-in-law, Zachariah (brother to his wife Grace), who was killed by Irish rebels (Brian Maguire's rebels) in 1641. He must have been a wealthy planter 'with a considerable estate in county Fermanagh near Enniskillen'. He was brutally murdered on the road to the coast, his four children being witnesses. Two of the children died in the first winter from exposure and starvation; two survived, as well as Zachariah's second wife Dorothy, who in the next year 'acquired an Irish Catholic protector and lover', all of which Nehemiah found out when intercepting her love letters after she had come to England to liquidate what was left of the Rampaigne estate. Wallington saw the Irish rebellion as a Popish plot against 'the children of God', i.e. the elect, rather than a way for Ireland to try and rid itself of English rule. In one of his journals, he relates an account of the murder of his brother-in-law Zachariah in October 1641. However, it is likely Nehemiah only heard of it in 1643, since he recounts it among other grim news of that year. This may also account for his lack of help. See Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 83, 166, 168.

<sup>169</sup> 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sinne vpon him'.

<sup>170</sup> 'Moreouer, if thy brother shall trespasse against thee, goe and tell him his fault betweene thee and him alone: if he shall heare thee, thou hast gained thy brother'.

<sup>171</sup> 'Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and haue need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and my lying downe, and art acquainted with all my wayes'.

<sup>172</sup> 'Thou compassest my path, and my lying downe, and art acquainted with all my wayes'.

<sup>173</sup> 'These sixe things doeth the Lord hate; yea seuen are an abomination vnto him'.

<sup>174</sup> The actual verse Nehemiah is referencing here is Hebrew 13:4 rather than 14:4 (which does not exist): 'Mariage is honorable in all, and the bed vndefiled: but whoremongers, and adulterers God will iudge'.

among all, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulteries God will judge. The fearful and the abominable and whoremongers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 22).<sup>175</sup> All lying, whoredom and dissembling and all other sins and abominations are naked and open unto his eyes with whom we have to do (Hebrews 4:13).<sup>176</sup> And our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29).<sup>177</sup> And go into Ireland and where you will if you continue in your sin and wicked ways without repentance a guilty conscience, and God's just judgment will go with you to your destruction. Whither shall I go from thy presence? If I flee to the uttermost parts of the sea yet thither shall thy hand lead me. If I say yet the darkness shall hide me, even [fol. 156v] the night shall be light about me, yea the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and light are both alike (Psalms 139:9-10).<sup>178</sup>

Sister, give heed to these truths that I write out of God's word and believe and tremble at them, or else you are worse than the devil, for it is said the devils believe and tremble, (James the 2:19).<sup>179</sup> Unto the wicked saith God, what hast thou to do to declare mine ordinances that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest to be reformed and hast cast my word behind thee? For when thou seest a thief (or a rebel), thou runnest with him and thou art partaker with the adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil and with thy tongue thou forgest deceit: These things hast thou done and I held my tongue, therefore thou thoughtst that I was like thee, but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thee. O consider this, ye that forget God. lest I tear you in pieces and there be none that can deliver you (Psalms 50:16).<sup>180</sup> Because sentence against an evil work is not exegeted<sup>181</sup> speedily, therefore the heart of the children of men is fully set to do evil (Ecclesiasticus 8:2).<sup>182</sup> Rejoice, o young man, in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy

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<sup>175</sup> Nehemiah probably refers to Revelation 21:8 here: 'But the fearefull, and vnbeleeuing, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all lyars, shall haue their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death'.

<sup>176</sup> 'Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked, and opened vnto the eyes of him with whome wee haue to doe'.

<sup>177</sup> 'For our God is a consuming fire'.

<sup>178</sup> 'If I take the wings of the morning: and dwell in the vttermost parts of the Sea (10) Euen there shall thy hand leade me: and thy right hand shall hold me'.

<sup>179</sup> 'Thou beleueest that there is one God, thou doest well: the deuils also beleeu, and tremble'.

<sup>180</sup> Psalms 50:16: 'But vnto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to doe, to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldest take my Couenant in thy mouth?' The actual Bible verse Nehemiah quotes is Psalms 50:22: 'Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I teare you in pieces, and there be none to deliuer'.

<sup>181</sup> To exegete means to explain a text, usually the Bible.

<sup>182</sup> 'I counsell thee, to keepe the kings commandement, and that in regard of the oath of God'.



youth and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes, [fol. 157r] but know for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment (Ecclesiasticus 11:9).<sup>183</sup>

For God will bring every work unto judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil (Ecclesiasticus 12:14: Deuteronomy 29:19-20).<sup>184</sup> If there be any man or woman that, when he heareth the words of this curse, he blesse[s] himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace although I walk according to the stubbornness of my own heart, thus adding drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not be merciful unto him, but then the wrath of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man and every curse that is written in this book<sup>185</sup> shall light upon him. And the Lord shall put out his name from under heaven, and the Lord shall separate him unto evil. Wherefore as the holy Ghost saith today, if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, according to the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your father tempted me (Hebrews 3:7).<sup>186</sup>

Much more might be said, but in a word to the wise is enough. The heavenly God sanctify this to thy soul. O think of this in time, for yet heaven's gates are open, yet there is a day that you may make your peace with God and God is ready to forgive. He hath made many gracious promises that if a sinner repent and turn, he will have mercy upon him [fol. 157v] Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed and make you a new heart and a new Spirit. For why will ye die, oh house of Israel, for I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord, cause therefore one another to return and live yee (Ezekiel 18:31).<sup>187</sup>

And thus with my earnest desires and prayers to God to blesse and sanctify these wholesome instructions which he hath put in my mind to speak to you, and once more the God of heaven set this home to your heart that it may do you as much good as I desire, And so will he pray that is

1647            your sad and grieved brother

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<sup>183</sup> 'Reioyce, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheere thee in the dayes of thy youth, and walke in the wayes of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into iudgement'.

<sup>184</sup> 'So one that goeth to a sinner, and is defiled with him in his sinnes, who will pitie?' and 'And it come to passe when he heareth the wordes of this curse, that hee blesse himselfe in his heart, saying, I shall haue peace, though I walke in the imagination of mine heart, to adde drunkennesse to thirst: (20) The Lord wil not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his ielousie shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this booke shall lie vpon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from vnder heauen'.

<sup>185</sup> The Bible.

<sup>186</sup> 'Wherefore as the holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will heare his voyce', and Hebrews 3:8-9: 'Harden not your hearts, as in the prouocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: (9) When your fathers tempted me, proued me, and saw my works forty yeres'.

<sup>187</sup> 'Cast away from you all your transgressions, wherby yee haue transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will yee die, O house of Israel'.

## Nehemiah Wallington

Sister, you may wonder how I do come to know of these your wicked doings. The truth is, your two letters which you sent into Ireland were opened and sent back through two or three hands before they come to ours. They did come back to your much disgrace and shame. And they make us ashamed and tremble at your sinful ways, and your characters were read as plain as yourself, for there you write you were with quick child<sup>188</sup> and shall be delivered in May, and said you had not yet revealed it to any. Yet now see that God that seeth in secret hath brought it to light. [fol. 158r] And though you desire him not to call to mind your defect in the particular, yet that God that brought it to light to him will call you to account for it also. And though you count it the greatest unhappiness to lose his affection, yet behold a greater unhappiness to lose the love of God, for if you do not in time repent be sure that God will grant you your wish, which is that the mercy of God may forsake you. And now that which you write in your other letter that you could not hide, which would be to your everlasting disgrace and ruin, which will come on you apace if you repent not. You write that no misdemeanour of yours might make any dislike, which proceedeth from a great deal of weakness for which you have repented. But had you truly repented, as it was a great sin against God, then it would have been seen in the newness of life. And that you desire the mercy of God may forsake you. And that you may never prosper in what you take in hand, this wish you have in some part already, for your secret sins are and do come to light. And that you have sent eleven or twelve letters and have no answer, for God suffers them not to prosper, for as the child is so like the father, so is every wicked man and woman like the devil. And God takes notice of all your lying and dissembling in giving yourself [fol. 158v] three several names as Ra, Ric and Fa,<sup>189</sup> and Livewell<sup>190</sup> is quit forgot. And you prove such love what you will do for your child, and yet you do what you can to get all the plate and money<sup>191</sup> you can to carry to the Irish Rebel in Ireland, which I am persuaded God will blast and bring it to nought. Oh sister, my heart aches and trembles to consider of your sad and miserable condition (not so much in regard of the miseries and shame it may bring you in this life but) in regard of your poor soul, for as the tree falleth, so it lyeth. And as your Saviour saith, if you die in your sin you perish, if you die in your sin without repentance, you drop

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<sup>188</sup> Nehemiah does not mean a quick child; rather, once a child has quickened, the mother can feel it move around. Thus, Dorothy is saying her pregnancy is advanced enough for her to feel the child move.

<sup>189</sup> 'Ra' probably stands for 'Rampaigne'; the others are likely abbreviations for other surnames that Dorothy has used.

<sup>190</sup> Livewell was Dorothy's brother.

<sup>191</sup> Dorothy was in London, probably to liquidate what remained of the Rampaigne estate, i.e. convert her possessions into money and plate.

into torment past all recovery. And therefore, sister, give me leave to say to you as Daniel said to King Nebuchadnezzar, oh sister, let my counsel be accepted unto thee and break of thy sins by righteousness and thine abominations by mercies to thy soul.<sup>192</sup> Lo, let there be an healing of thine error or wounds of thy soul. And therefore, if you will be saved, you must repent. And therefore, sister, get into some bycorner alone, down there, upon your knees, cry mightily and pray earnestly to God for a sight and sense of your sin, as it is against God, as David saith against thee, against thee have I sinned and done evil in my sight.<sup>193</sup> In such and such a place I committed adultery<sup>194</sup> in the dark when I thought no eye did see mee, thus and thus I did lie and dissemble, a wretch that I am. What shall I do? I have deserved not only all my miseries in this life, but hell fire in the life to come for ever. Dear sister, let me once more say to you: your sin is not so great but if you truly repent [fol. 159r] and forsake it you may find mercy. Without faith and repentance, you cannot be saved, for there is no salvation under heaven but by faith in Jesus Christ. Yet heaven's gates is open, you have time, take hold of it, before it be too late.

I could be a great deal larger to you in this my counsel, but this may suffice for the present. Thus, sister, I have in part discharged my conscience to God's command, which lay upon me to perform to you. Now do you discharge you your duty to God to harken and to perform this that he requires of you. But if you slight and reject this his forewarning of you, then you are left without excuse. And this letter, do with it what you will, tear it, burn it; it will rise up in judgment against you at the great day and therefore regard it and lay it up in your heart that it may go well with you for ever, sister it may be you are much troubled that this your sinful doings is come to light (yet there is hope to recover in this life), but oh, what will you do (in the life to come) in the great day of account when all sins shall be set? I order and maid known to men and angels and your own conscience as a thousand witnesses shall be against you, and you past all hope of recovery. I tremble to think of it. Once again, repent, repent and got into Christ while it is called today, now this may be the last call of God to you. If you will not hear his call, the time may come when you will call and God will not hear you: consider what God saith in Proverbs 1:24<sup>195</sup>.

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<sup>192</sup> Daniel 4:27: 'Wherefore, O King, let my counsell be acceptable vnto thee, and breake off thy sinnes by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poore; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillitie'.

<sup>193</sup> Daniel 9:8: 'O Lord, to vs belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers; because we haue sinned against thee'.

<sup>194</sup> The early modern times, 'adultery' referred to sex outside of marriage. Thus, an unmarried person such as Dorothy Rampaigne committed adultery when engaging in sex.

<sup>195</sup> 'Because I haue called, and yee refused, I haue stretched out my hand, and no man regarded'.

1647.

Some part of a letter of G[race] W[allington] to M R to take care of her son [fos. 159r–159v]

Dear sister,

My love to you remembered, this is to satisfy you that I have received your letter and I am sorry that you be so backward for your own child's good, which both God and nature binds you to have a special care of the soul and body of it. I am sure he had a tender and careful father<sup>196</sup> that was an honest man and you were precious in his eyes, and now through covetousness do you so little regard his and your child. It would have been more for your comfort not to have gone into Ireland but to have tarried here and have seen the education of your children, and so abiding here in your place where God hath set you, it might have saved your own estate, and God's blessing might have been on you and yours. God hath left you now but one child, yet you, like an unnatural mother, do not care for it nor what becomes of that so you may save money in hugger-mugger,<sup>197</sup> but although you may seem to blind and deceive man, you cannot deceive the All-seeing God who knows your heart and knows wherefore you went into Ireland and what you did there.<sup>198</sup> I pray, sister, read the 139th psalm and consider it well: O Lord, thou knowest my sitting and my rising, thou understandest my thoughts my thoughts a far of and are accustomed to all my ways,<sup>199</sup> Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I dwell in the uttermost part of the (earth or) sea (or go into Ireland) yet thither shall thy hand lead me. If I say the darkness shall hide me, even the night shall be light about me.<sup>200</sup>

And [fol. 159v] oh, be well advised what you do, for it is you that shall give account to God for your child's soul and body. Oh, let his soul be precious in your eyes. And have a care to put your child to some good trade that he is most capable of. Sister, I speak this in love for your good and comfort hereafter and therefore I hope you will not be offended with this my good counsel. I hope you will not forget him that is gone, that you was so dear unto,<sup>201</sup> but to be mindful of his and your child, for the good of his soul and body, lest your conscience terrify in time of affliction, for God will require the good of the child at your hands. I say

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<sup>196</sup> Zachariah Rampaigne, Grace's brother, who was murdered in 1641 by Irish rebels.

<sup>197</sup> i.e. in secret.

<sup>198</sup> Dorothy had an affair with an Irish Catholic rebel, and was carrying his child.

<sup>199</sup> Psalms 139:2-3: 'Thou knowest my downe sitting, and mine vprising: thou understandest my thought afarre off. (3) Thou compassest my path, and my lying downe, and art acquainted with all my wayes'.

<sup>200</sup> Psalms 139:9-11: 'If I take the wings of the morning: and dwell in the vttermost parts of the Sea: (10) Euen there shall thy hand leade me: and thy right hand shall hold me. (11) f I say, Surely the darkenes shall couer me: euen the night shall bee light about me'.

<sup>201</sup> Zachariah.

again, remember there is a God above that sees and knows all your intents and doings, and will call you to account.

I have one child of my own,<sup>202</sup> besides, my sister Rampaigne and her two children<sup>203</sup> have none to go to for help but to us,<sup>204</sup> and my husband hath poor kindred of his own and can do no more than he can, yet because my affection is to the child, being the child of him who I so dearly loved, I will persuade him to take but twenty pound<sup>205</sup> and so to take the care of his learning and bringing up. And therefore, for your own comfort and the good of your child, do not you refuse this my kind offer, but bring up the twenty pound with the child, and I do not question but my husband will take the charge of him till he come to age and his portion come to his own hand. Thus with my prayers to God to direct you for the best in haste I rest,

London, March	your loving and affectionate
the 29th	sister Grace Wallington
1647	

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<sup>202</sup> A daughter, Sarah. The four other children Grace had given birth to had passed away by this point.

<sup>203</sup> The widow of Livewell Rampaigne and their two children.

<sup>204</sup> They lived with the Wallingtons until the children were grown and until the widow passed away after nineteen years.

<sup>205</sup> Grace is offering for Nehemiah to take Charles on as an apprentice for only twenty pounds, evidently a smaller sum than is usual.

A letter of T[obias] L[isle]<sup>206</sup> to his daughter Susan Lithall, loving instructions to behave herself in service<sup>207</sup> [fos. 164r–164v]

Daughter Susan,

You may perceive by this enclosed paper the cost the care and love of your father and mother for your outward accommodation for the service of that noble and virtuous gentlewoman whom God hath called you to wait upon. My earnest prayer is unto the same God that he will clothe your mind and spirit with all those graces that may make you serviceable unto her in that humble, grave, and sober frame of heart as becomes the Gospel of Christ Jesus. And to that end your father, according to my duty, do in the fear of God exhort you that you do obey her commands readily, observe her instructions carefully, bear her reproof patiently. Let your words be few, your carriage<sup>208</sup> humble, sober, grave, peaceable, your countenance be cheerful, your diligence evident to the whole family, that your Mistress may have cause to say when her servant is bidden ‘Go’, she goeth, and when she is bidden ‘Doe this’, she doth it.

Let the fear of the great God be always before you. Read the whole Scripture often. [fol. 164v] Pray unto your god frequently, fervently and believingly, hear his word preached attentively, consider and meditate therein daily. Let not your spirit exalt itself above your station, be courteous, loving, kind to all in the family. If I hear this good report of you, you will accomplish my hope. Answer my prayers, rejoice my heart, increase my contentments, yea lengthen my days, and recompense your mother for her labour of love to you both first and last. Oh, let me reap this harvest of comfort from you for all the travail of my soule and labour of my hands and head for your good almost this twenty years. I am in the hope thereof, as the husband man is that soweth his seed in winter and looks for fruit in due season. Lay these lines by you, and let my counsel take hold of your heart, because it comes from my heart, and the same love of a father working in me which hath been ever towards you as you know.

I am the longer in these expressions because you must not expect that I shall visit you often. I am abundantly satisfied in the godly Christian and loving government by which your religious and pious mistress will rule over you and have in your presence given you up wholly

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<sup>206</sup> Tobias Lisle was a neighbour of Nehemiah’s. See Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, p. 208.

<sup>207</sup> Seaver mentions that Nehemiah probably copied this letter so he knew what to tell his daughter Sarah, should he ever decide to send her into service. However, this never happened; instead, he decided to find Sarah a good husband when she was eighteen. See Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, p. 91.

<sup>208</sup> i.e. the way in which you carry yourself.

to her tuition. Let her commands be your rule, and your obeying of them will be your peace and your father's content.

1648



A letter of N[ehemiah] W[allington] to Master Griffith,<sup>209</sup> Minister, to tell people of their sins [fos. 165r–165v]

Sir,

I cannot but make bold to write a few of my sudden thoughts to you, as first praising God for his great mercy in sending you unto us, as also giving you hearty thanks for your labour and pains in the ministry with us. And ah, Sir, that you would now be a son of thunder as you have been of consolation, even now in these woeful and wicked times wherein all manner of sins breaks forth with a violent stream. Take your brethren the prophets and apostles, which have spoken in the name of the lord for your example, nay, your Lord and Master Jesus Christ whose ambassador you are and whose example you ought to follow, that as he was full of comfort and consolation in that he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flare, so he did sharply reprove and pronounce judgments four several times in one chapter, saying, ‘woe be to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites (Matthew 24:14).<sup>210</sup>

The prophet Hosea saith, ‘By swearing and lying and killing and blood toucheth blood, therefore shall the land mourn and everyone that dwelleth therein shall be cut off’ (Hosea 4:23).<sup>211</sup>

And the prophet Amos saith, ‘Here this, yee that swallow up the poor’ (Amos 8).<sup>212</sup> And the prophet Isaiah pronounceth, ‘Woe unto them that join house to house,’ (Isaiah 5:8).<sup>213</sup>

And the apostle saith, ‘Fashion not yourselves like unto the world’ (Romans 12:2).<sup>214</sup> [fol. 165v] I need not heap up places of scripture in this kind, because you are better acquainted with them than I am. And oh, that all the ministers of Christ would now in these wicked sinful days stir up themselves to thunder out God’s judgments against all horrible covenant breakers that promised reformation, and never was their such a deformation as

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<sup>209</sup> George Griffith was an Independent who preached on fast days. Wallington did not like the Independents, because he considered them cowards who would not tell their congregation of their errors. See Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, p. 107.

<sup>210</sup> Nehemiah means to quote Matthew 23:14: ‘Woe vnto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for yee deuoure widowes houses, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore ye shall receiue the greater damnation’.

<sup>211</sup> Nehemiah means Hosea 4:2-3; there is no Hosea 4:23. Hosea 4:2-3: ‘By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adulterie, they breake out, and blood toucheth blood. (3) Therefore shall the land mourne, and euery one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beastes of the field, and with the foules of heauen, yea the fishes of the Sea also shall be taken away’.

<sup>212</sup> Nehemiah means Amos 8:4: ‘Heare this, O ye that swallow vp the needy, euen to make the poore of the land to faile’.

<sup>213</sup> Isaiah 5:8: ‘Woe vnto them that ioyne house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth’.

<sup>214</sup> Romans 12:2: ‘And bee not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renuing of your minde, that ye may proue what is that good, that acceptable and perfect will of God’.

profaning the Lord's day, despising the word and condemning and reproaching God's faithful ministers. Abominable pride with naked breasts and spotted faces, with many antick new-fangled fashions and that taken up by professors and those that count themselves more than ordinary wise. And doth not the Land mourn for this? And will not the Lord be avenged on such a people as we are? Oh Sir, methinks I hear the Lord saying to you (and the rest of the ministers of Christ) as once he said to the prophet Isaiah, 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet and share my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins' (Isaiah 58:1).<sup>215</sup> Oh, show them their errors, heresy, oh show them their divisions, strife and contentions, their contempt of the gospel and ministers of Christ, their covenant breaking, their apostacy, their pride, covetousness, with the loss of liberty which is now broke out in a most fearful manner among us, and threaten an utter destruction to us all.

Sir, I hope you will pardon my boldness in putting you in mind of so weighty a matter as this is, of which you know far more than I can tell you. Hoping you will consider all that I have said to the best, for I do reverence you and highly esteem of you, thus not to trouble you any further, but with my earnest prayers to God for you and the whole Church of God I rest

yours at command

February 25, 1649 in my account

Such as he is

Nehemiah Wallington

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<sup>215</sup> Isaiah 58:1: 'Crie aloude, spare not, lift vp thy voice like a trumpet, and shewe my people their transgression, & the house of Iacob their sins'.

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## Appendix: Contents of Sloane MS 922

Here follows an overview of the contents of the notebook. The letters that can be found in David Booy's *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654: A Selection* have been bolded. The two letters copied from Additional MS 21935 in the British Library (fos. 129r–131v) and published in the two-volume book *Historical Notices of Events Occurring Chiefly in the Reign of Charles I* have been italicised. Finally, the letters I have selected for this thesis I have underlined. These are not the official titles of the letters as they appear in the notebook; rather, they aim to show the writer, addressee, and topic of the letters.

- 'To the reader' (fos.1r–5v);<sup>216</sup>
- The second Epistle of St John (fos. 6r–6v);
- Letters copied out of John Foxe's *The Book of Martyrs* (fos. 7r–22v);
  - Excerpts of a letter by Laurence Saunders to his wife (fos. 7r–8v);
  - A letter by Laurence Saunders to his wife before he was burned to death (fol. 9r);
  - A letter by Laurence Saunders to Master Robert and John Gover, the morning he was burned to death (fol. 9v);
  - A letter by Master Hooper to a number of his friends, written whilst he was in prison (fos. 10v–12v);
  - Excerpts of a letter written by Thomas Hawkes to his wife (fos. 12r–13v);
  - Excerpts of a letter by Master Bradford to his mother, siblings, and other friends living in Manchester, written whilst he was in prison (fos. 14r–14v);
  - A letter by Robert Smith to his wife Anne (fos. 15r–15v);
  - Excerpts from a letter by Master Robert Glover to his wife, in which he talks about his troubles whilst he is in prison and his conflicts between the bishop and him about religion (fos. 16r–17v);
  - A letter by John Careles to his wife, written a short while before he was executed (fos. 18r–19v);
  - A letter written by John Rough to some of his godly friends (fos. 20r–20v);
  - Excerpts from another letter by John Rough, this time addressed to his congregation, two days before he was executed (fos. 21r–21v);

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<sup>216</sup> I have only included an excerpt from the introduction rather than the whole introduction.

- A letter written by Cutbert Symson to his wife (fos. 22r–22v);
- Letters by Edward Dering (fos. 23r–30v);
  - A letter to his brother, in which he encourages his brother to be a good Christian (fos. 23r–24v);
  - Another letter to his brother, this time a letter of consolation (fos. 25r–26v);
  - A letter to Mistress H, the subject being ‘exhortation’ (fos. 27r–28v);
  - A consolatory letter written to Mistress K (fos. 29r–30v);
- A letter by Richard Greenham (fos. 31r–33v);
- Letters by Joseph Hall (fos. 34r–51v);
  - A letter to Sir Robert Darcy, on how to cope with weakness (fos. 34r–35v);
  - A letter to sir George Fleetwood, on how to remedy sin and why one should avoid sin (fos. 36r–37v);
  - A letter of consolation to his sister, Mistress B (fos. 38r–39v);
  - A letter to Sir Edmund Bacon (fos. 40r–41v);
  - A letter to Josh Hall’s father-in-law, bidding him to be cheerful (fos. 41v–42v);
  - A letter to Master Robert Hay, on how to be a good Christian (fos. 43r–43v);
  - A letter to Mistress A.P., on the signs and proofs of the true faith (fos. 44r–44v);
  - A letter to Master I/J. A. Merchant, on how to cope with the loss of worldly riches (fos. 45r–45v);
  - A letter to Sir Richard Lea, since deceased, on the remedies for all afflictions (fos. 46r–47v);
  - A letter to Master Thomas Buriz, on how to cope with the grief caused by the death of friends (fos. 48r–50r);
  - A letter to Master I/J.B., on the topic of the fear of death (fos. 50r–51v);
- Letters by Paul Baynes (fos. 52r–68v);
  - A letter of instruction (fos. 52r–53v);
  - Another letter of instruction (fos. 53v–54v);
  - A letter of admonition written to his brother (fos. 55r–57v);
  - A letter ‘interogatory concerning the estate of the soul’ (fos. 57v–58r);
  - A letter on how to cope with the death of a wife (fos. 58v–59v);
  - Excerpts of a letter on how to bear the death of a child (fos. 60r–61v);

- Excerpts of a letter of admonition against the passionate lamenting of the death of a brother (fos. 62r–63v);
- A letter about the need of afflictions (fos. 64r–65r);
- Excerpts of a letter with as its topic the comfort and instruction in affliction (fos. 65v–68v);
- A letter by doctor John Burges after the sudden death of his daughter (fos. 69r–70r);
- A letter from Livewell Rampaigne, Wallington's brother-in-law, to comfort and console Nehemiah after the loss of his eldest child and the sickness of his wife Grace (fos. 71r–74r);
- A letter from Henry Roborough, Nehemiah's minister, written around the same time (fos. 74r–74v);
- Another letter from Livewell to Nehemiah to comfort and instruct (fos. 75r–76r);
- A letter by John Bradshaw, Wallington's nephew, to John Wallington senior, Wallington's father, about the siege of the French Huguenot city La Rochelle (fos. 76v–77v);
- A letter by Livewell to Nehemiah, with as its main topic the uses that they should make of the mysteries of La Rochelle, and also to encourage him to patiently bear and make use of afflictions (fos. 78r–80r);
- Another letter by Livewell to Nehemiah, this time to comfort his troubled spirit (fos. 80v–84v);
- A letter of admonition by John Wallington senior to John Bradshaw (fos. 85r–86r);
- Fol. 86v is empty
- A letter by Nehemiah to his father John Wallington, with advice on how to choose an appropriate husband for their daughter (fos. 87r–89v);
- A letter from the minister Thomas Weld from New England to his congregation in Terling, Essex (fos. 90r–93v);
- Letters from and to James Cole after he has fled London due to his debts (fos. 94r–107v);
  - A letter to his wife in which he explains why he left home (fos. 94r–95v);
  - Another letter to his wife in which he explains why he does not want to come home (fos. 96r–96v);
  - **A letter by Nehemiah to James, advising him to come home (fos. 97r–98v);**

- A letter from James Cole to his parents-in-law, complaining of his inward sorrow and onward troubles (fos. 99r–100v);
- Another letter to his wife, in which he endeavours to make use of his afflictions (fos. 101r–101v);
- A letter by Nehemiah's father, John Wallington, advising James to go home (fos. 102r–103v);
- **A letter by Nehemiah to James, who has since moved to New England, to comfort him after his miseries (fos. 104r–106v);**
- A letter to Nehemiah sent after Cole emigrated to Connecticut, to encourage him to withstand temptation (fos. 107r–107v)
- A letter by John Wallington Senior to his nephew John Allen, who was a minister (fos. 108r–108v);
- Excerpts of a letter by Anthony Thatcher in New England to his brother Peter Thatcher in Old England describing a shipwreck (fos. 109r–115v);
- Letters from Francis Wilsmore
  - A letter from Francis Wilsmore to Nehemiah, with as its main topic gratefulness (fol. 116r)
  - Another letter from Francis Wilsmore to Nehemiah, of troubles and afflictions (fos. 116v–117v);
- **A letter to Henry Roborough, Nehemiah's minister at the church of St Leonard, Eastcheap (fos. 118r–120r);**
- Correspondence with Francis Wilsmore (fos. 120v–121v);
  - A letter to Nehemiah, complaining of trouble and asking for comfort (fos. 120r–120v);
  - Another letter to Nehemiah, telling him to be sensible of the estate of the Church of God (fol. 121r);
  - A few lines from another letter, with the same topic as the previous letter (fol. 121v);
- **Correspondence with Henry Roborough (fos. 122r–126r);**
  - **A letter from Nehemiah to Henry, concerning the fruit and comfort by the sacrament (fos. 122r–123r);**
  - **Another letter from Nehemiah to Henry, with as its main topic gratefulness and encouragement (fos. 123r–126r);**
- Correspondence with Francis Wilsmore (fos. 126v–128v);



- A letter from Francis to Nehemiah, telling him about his love and desire to be with the children of God (fol. 126v);
- A letter from Francis to Nehemiah, in which he complains of his troubles and wishes he had a sanctified use for them (fos. 127r–127v);
- Another letter from Francis to Nehemiah, concerning of trouble and the desire to profit (fos. 128r–128v);
- *A letter Nehemiah copied from his notebook Additional MS 21935, titled ‘A Letter from York to a friend at London in the sad beginnings of war’ (fos. 129r–129v),*<sup>217</sup>
- *A letter Nehemiah copied from his notebook Additional MS 21935 from the inhabitants of Hull to the High Sheriff and others at York (fos. 130r–131v),*<sup>218</sup>
- **A letter to Abraham Colfe, the parson of St. Leonard’s Eastcheap, to have a care of souls (fos. 132r–134r)**
- A letter of admonition to Master Waddington, a neighbour of Wallington (fos. 134v–138v);
- A letter by Mathew Godscot to Nehemiah, offering comfort in a time of affliction (fos. 139r–139v);
- A letter from Nehemiah to Henry Roborough, for some reasons and proofs out of God’s word for a government in his church (fos. 140r–141v);
- **A letter by Nehemiah to his friend ‘Goodman Cox’, advising him to serve God sincerely (fos. 142r–144r);**
- Correspondence with Edward Browne (fos. 144v–147v);
  - **A letter by Edward Brown to Nehemiah, encouraging him to undergo afflictions (fos. 144v–145r);**
  - A letter from Nehemiah to Edward, concerning the sadness of their times in regard of war (fos. 145v–147v);
- A letter by Nehemiah to Master Wade, an old friend, telling of his miserable condition and lovingly reproofing him for his sinful life (fos. 148r–151v);
- A typed letter from Thomas Turner to his parents, written when he believes he is about to die. On fol. 151v, Nehemiah comments on the letter (fos. 152r–152v);
- **A letter to Captain Player, a neighbour, encouraging him to hold the place of an Elder (fos. 153r– 154v);**
- Letters to Dorothy Rampaigne, Nehemiah’s sister-in-law (fos. 155v–159v);

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<sup>217</sup> P.S. Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, p. 207.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibidem*.

- **A letter from Nehemiah to Dorothy, of sharp reprove and loving admonition for having become the lover of an Irish Catholic rebel (fos. 155v–158r);**
- Excerpts of a letter from Grace (Nehemiah's wife) to Dorothy, admonishing her and proposing to take care of her son Charles (fos. 159r–159v);
- A letter to Nehemiah's cousin John Wallington, reproving him for great sins and asking him to repent (fos. 160r–162v);
- A letter from Tobias Lisle (one of Nehemiah's neighbours) to his daughter Susan, on how to behave in service (fos. 164r–164v);
- A letter from Nehemiah to the minister Griffith, encouraging him to tell people of their sins (fos. 165r–165v);
- A letter of admonition from Nehemiah to his cousin Nathaniel Church (fos. 166r–168r);
- **A letter from Nehemiah to Minister Barker, complementing him for his sweet and pleasing preaching (fos. 168v–170v);**
- A letter from a T. S. to Mistress House, of comfort and consolation (fos. 171r–172r);
- Fol. 172v is empty;
- **A letter from Nehemiah James Cole after he has moved to Hartford, Connecticut in New England, about wars and inward comfort (fos. 173r–176v);**
- Letters from Master Fr Wa t his wife A W (fos. 177r–180r);
  - A letter of Master Fr Wa to his wife A W (who had separated from him because of his sins) of his sorrow for his sinful ways (fos. 177r–178v);
  - Another letter by Master Fr Wa to his wife A W, on the same topic as the previous letter (fos. 179r–180r);
- Fol. 180v is empty
- Letters from Kat Lanes to her friend An Wade (fos. 181r–186v);
  - A comforting letter by Kat Lanes, with as its main topic how to bear and profit by afflictions (fos. 181r–182v);
  - Another comforting letter by Kat Lanes sent to her friend An Wade (fos. 183r–186v);
- Letters from Mary Lawrence to A W (fos. 187r–191v);

- A comforting letter by Mary Lawrence to A W to stay and uphold her heart on God's promise (fos. 187r–189v)
- Another comfortable letter sent by Mary Lawrence to A W to show her how she may know that her suffering is for Christ (fos. 189v–191v)
- Correspondence between Master and Mistress Love (fos. 192r–198r);
  - A letter of exhortation from Mistress Love to her husband, prisoner in the tower (fos. 192r–193v);
  - Another letter sent by Mistress Love to her husband in the tower the day before he was executed (fos. 193v–195r);
  - A letter by Master Love (minister of Jesus Christ) to his wife (on the day he was beheaded) concerning good counsel (fos. 195v–198r)
- Fol. 198v is empty
- A letter by Robert House, age 13, sent to his master to comfort him after the death of his brother (fos. 199r–199v);
- A table of contents (fos. 200r–205v);
- A funeral speech made by Master Aldridge at the funeral of old Father Stamminate (fos. 206r–208v).