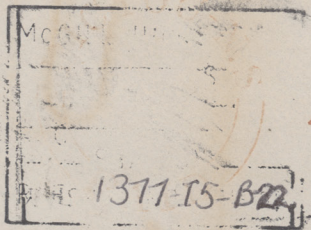
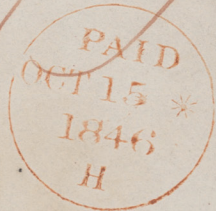


6 Oct. / 46



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Miss Margaret A J Mercer
11 Armiton place
Newington
Edinburgh

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post if I cannot do so without injury to my poor mother -
May the best blessings rest on you all

Your affectionately
J. W. Dawson

I sent a letter of notice by Dr. Cresser
which I hope you have received ere now
Excuse the bad writing of this letter - it had to be done in a hurry.

Proctor Oct 1, 1846

22A

Dear Margaret

I sit down to answer your
last letter, without very certainly knowing
what to say. Most imagine me keeping shop
from morning till night, and besides the selling,
Bookkeeping &c, looking after tenants going out of
and coming into houses, and attending to a hun-
dred other things public and private that use up
hours and minutes; and father the greater part
of the time at his farm, and mother very infirm
in health, and scarcely half the day out of bed;
then say what likelihood there is that I can soon
leave all this, even for a short time. It has
truly been work, work, work, with me for some
time past. Nevertheless I entertain a faint hope
that, towards the approach of winter, there may
be a lull which may enable me to think again
of a run over the water. My mother's weak health
is a serious obstacle. I fear the effects of the
winter on her, in her present state, and even
now there are few days sufficiently fine for
her to venture out, so that there is little oppor-
tunity for her to recruit herself by exercise.

There is a fine large ship now nearly ready
for launching, and which will likely sail about

The middle of this month, and then is a friend of mine going in her as a passenger. If I do not get ready to go in her, I think I must give it up for the present. I will likely be able to let you know by next packet whether I am on the way, or not to go. I fear it will be the latter, as if there is no kind work for me at home as now, I could not feel easy when from home, knowing that those I left behind were overburdened.

You will think, I am sure, that I am overmuch troubled with the cares of the world, and I often think so too; but then I am so situated that almost constant attendance is required, even when there is not much being done; and generally there is a host of things piling upon me to be done which I cannot avoid without a deviation from duty.

I have had little time of late for literary labour of any kind, but by using such portions of evenings as I could snatch, have done some thing; I have however much impudged that I would like to perfect this autumn. I had one little excursion from home, shortly after I last wrote and saw some pretty scenery, of which I hope to show you some sketches when we meet again.

The work ^{in geology} you mention, I have no concern with, and indeed altogether differ from the author in his views of the subject.

MS. B. 55
REF. 15-8-55

I can appreciate your remark on "Julian" in
the respect. There is even now a manifest
tendency among professing christians to ac-
commodate all parts of the scriptures to the
views and prejudices of the day. This I
suspect has always been, and is a natural
fruit of the rebelliousness & perversity of human
nature. It does very markedly appear in the
interpretations of the prophetic parts of scripture, though
in that its effects are not so mischievous as where
it leads to blindness to important practical truth.
In the matter of Christ's second coming, it will scarce
be fair to accuse any of blindness, unless, when
the event happens, they fail to recognize in it the
fulfilment of prophecy; in the mean time dark
views must be treated with leniency, as prophecy itself
is, and I believe was intended to be, obscure. We
would allow a Jew, before the first advent, to have
unpuffed views, which we would consider increas-
able after the apparent contradictions of the old pro-
phies had been reconciled by the fulfilment of
all in the person of the Saviour. So that if you
or I entertain unpounded expectations respecting
unfulfilled prophecy, the chief danger is that we
may thereby be blinded to its real fulfilment.
I will give you two instances of the evil effects of
such views. The first is the tendency to look for the foes

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ACC. NO. 1377

REF. 15-B-22

of church only in popery and the ecclesiastical
tyranny of rules, and to overlook the Anti-
Christian elements existing in our own churches,
or those we may think most pure. The second is
while we look forward with hope to the glorious
things promised to the church on earth, to neglect
the truth that it is only in proportion to the in-
creasing numbers and purity of Christ's true fol-
lowers, that his Kingdom can really come, and
his foes be really overthrown.

I suppose I have seen notices of the anti-slavery
Movements to which you refer. It is a good cause
and will prevail, in spite of the pertinacity of our
neighbours of the Southern States, and of our friends
of the Free Church having "put their foot in it." I see
however one extravagance to which some of its friends
still cling; viz. the attempt to exclude slave-grown
sugar. I do not quarrel with this because it is op-
posed to free trade; because if it were right, free trade would
in this be wrong. But I dislike it because I am
convinced that neither slavery nor any other evil
will be eradicated by refusing to deal with its per-
petrators; but only by rational argument and friendly
persuasion. It is only one form of the mad attempt, so
often made, to drive men into the right way. Have you
read Frederick Douglass's narrative; it is a curious revelation of
the horrors of slavery, and of human nature in a very degraded
state. In conclusion, I do very earnestly long to see Edin-
burgh, but then would it not be wrong to leave my present