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[Johnson, Joseph], 1751?-1777.

Letter from J - h J - n [Mar. 29, 1772].

[New London, 1772.] 8 pp.

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LETTER from J---h J----n,
one of the Mohegan Tribe of
Indians, to his Countryman,
Moses Paul, under Sentence
of Death, in New-Haven Goal.

Mohegan, in New-London County, A.D. 1772, March 29.

MY dear fellow traveller into a vast eternity; listen unto me a-while. I am an Indian, known by the name of J---HJ----N, a native of this land and of the Mohegan tribe. I am one who am truly sorry for your misfortune, but so it was fore-ordained by an all-wise God; and so you see it is by woeful experience, but who knows what God has designed by it, perhaps to the good of your immortal soul.

My dear fellow mortal, it is too evident (that there is a God) for us to deny a being of a God, than we say we believe there is a God of almighty power, who has created all things by the word of his power, and he preserves all things both in heaven and earth; and he over-rules all things by his secret Providence, though we see him not, we do his will, and fulfil his word: Perhaps not designedly, yet he is glorified by us, or will be, either by our eternal salvation, or condemnation. And from this great God's hands no one can deliver; whomsoever he sees fit to save, none can destroy or pluck out of his hands. And we hear likewise, that this great God is angry with the wicked every day. And he makes a dismal place of torments to put the wicked in, which is called HELL; a place prepared for the devil and his angels, and it burns with unquenchable fire and brimstone; there God Almighty makes himself known by the displays of his eternal wrath which is poured upon the wicked, without the least mixture of mercy. I say we hear of such a place, but do

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...rears... sacred truth. If we do, should it not be our highest concern to know how we might escape that place of torments. Methinks you at once say yes, so do I too; well let us be sincere, and act the wiser part, and examine ourselves, until we convince ourselves that we are by nature the children of wrath, and more so by practice: and if we die as we were born, and as we have liv'd in times past, HELL must be our eternal home. And who that has a reasonable soul, can think of that dreadful place without horror and amazement? If there was no way found out, that we might escape this place of misery, then we must necessarily bear it as other unavoidable misfortunes. But glory be given to that God, who is good and gracious, in whom we believe; that he has in infinite wisdom found out a glorious way, not only to be saved from hell torments, but to give eternal life and glory that shall not away; and true happiness to every true, humble, penitent, believing soul, by the gift of his only begotten Son JESUS CHRIST.

You have heard of this JESUS CHRIST, the only Son of the ever living and true GOD; you was brought up in a Christian land, where CHRIST was named and worshipped, and loved, trusted and adored. We have heard that GOD so loved the world, that he gave this CHRIST his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. Well, come and let us believe in this Jesus Christ the glorious Son of GOD, that we may not perish, but have eternal life. I do really wish your soul well, and I hope that you will sincerely seek an interest in the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Precious is your time indeed, if you did but know it: it is certain you have not a long continuance here, and the time is drawing nigh, when you must step out of time, into eternity. We hear that you are condemned by the Judges of this Colony, and that your life must be taken away by the execution of justice. Justice must, or ought to be done; and all that men can do is to kill the body: for our blessed Saviour said in the days of his flesh, Mat. x. 28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not

not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell, that is GOD. If you are interested in the favour of GOD, and have his Son JESUS CHRIST for your friend and advocate, it will be well with you after death and the second death will have no power over you, that is spiritual and eternal death. I therefore, as a well-wisher to your never dying soul, advise you to seek GOD's favour, and pray to him in the name of the Lord JESUS CHRIST to pardon, and forgive your soul, and give you his holy Spirit to sanctify, and purify your heart, and make you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Pray for true, and genuine conviction, such a conviction as GOD gives unto his true children; pray for true repentance, that which is unto life, and faith which purifies the heart; and pray for every grace of a true christian believer in the Lord Jesus Christ: Who knows but GOD will have mercy upon you, and hear you, and pardon and forgive you at last, for he is a merciful GOD, delighteth in forgiving iniquities, transgressions and sins, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ. Perhaps you are not past hope as to your salvation, for Christ said in his day, in xii, 31 of Mat. Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin, and blasphemy, shall be forgiven unto men; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. These are the words of him who cannot lie. Heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot, or tittle of his word shall pass; he has said this also, and may we not believe him? My spirit mourned within me, when I heard that you was unconcerned about your soul's eternal welfare. But I hope by this time you are of another mind, and things eternal your chiefest concern. Do you not desire to be made forever happy hereafter? Well, repent and believe, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; believe that he is an all-sufficient Saviour, able to purge away thy sins, many and foul as they are; just such a one as you want and must have, or be eternally

eternally miserable. Except him for my whole Saviour. Oh that you might be happy, as to have a true change wrought in you, and really obtain a full and free pardon, from the great God in heaven, through Jesus Christ his beloved Son, in whom he is ever well pleased. I say, if this was your happy case, I might pronounce you blessed indeed. And what joy and peace would it create in every heart of a true Christian, where-ever you might be ever heard of! And what comfort and satisfaction would rest upon your soul, to think that in a few days I must remove from hence, and enter in those regions of bliss which are above, and there to dwell forever before a holy and pure God, who is at peace with me; and to be with Christ our Saviour in his kingdom, to behold his glory; the glory of an only begotten Son of God! O, what a pleasing prospect would consequently open! What must I, who am bound in these fetters, in this dark and lonesom prison, or dungeon, be set at liberty, and be admitted into that blessed company above! There angels of mighty power, in all their royal robes, with their golden harps, and starry crowns, are bowing and worshipping before our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. There likewise shall I see the spirits of just men made perfect; Moses and Aaron, and all the holy prophets and apostles and saints of every age, some of all nations, an innumerable company; and all exercised in one work of praise. What must I indeed enter into that holy city, the New-Jerusalem, which is described in the 21st chapter of Revelations! Methinks if this was your happy case, you would thus reason with yourself, and should be impatient, until that glorious hour should appear when that welcome messenger death should come, which shall carry you from hence, to the place of our God the Father, and to be received into the perfect enjoyment of him, which is a complete heaven. But if on the other hand, you have this great God, and Jesus Christ, his Son to be against you, you are, and must be eternally miserable. You cannot have any pleasing thoughts

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of approaching death, judgment and eternity: neither of these can you escape. Death is certain, and so certain as death is, so is judgment and eternity; and there is but two places made known to us in the word of God, where all the children of men are to meet, that is heaven and hell; and in these two different places we must all find ourselves one day, sooner, or later. And be assured, if you fall short of heaven, into hell you must be turned: and I doubt not, but this is the earnest prayer and desire of many, who have a prejudice against the Indian nations, and wish no better of your soul, than to endure God's eternal wrath, and even rejoice that one of the devilish Indians, (as many express themselves) are suffered to act such a part; and wish that all were as nigh their end. But such as these it is to be feared, know but little of God, or have never had God's love shed abroad in their hearts; and therefore are liable to endure God's eternal wrath. But there are some, I doubt not, who know the great worth of souls, is praying from day to day to God, that he would give you repentance, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and their earnest desire is, that your soul may be saved from God's eternal wrath. It is the desire of my heart, that we might hear, that you have obtained God's forgiveness. And if you are not assured as yet, as to your state, I should be glad to hear that you were in earnest, seeking the favor of God. And it is the greatest happiness that we mortals can obtain in this life, to be assured of the favor of God, and JESUS CHRIST our Lord; then come what will, we are safe. If God is for us, who can be against us? My fellow traveller into a vast eternity, I want that you would put on consideration, and consider the word *eternity*. Think of heaven and hell—think of the great God against whom you have sinned, and Jesus Christ his Son. Also think of the devil; that is the serpent, that was the cause of the fall of our first parents; and brought God's wrath upon us. He is a deceiver, and the truth is not in him. He is miserable, and wants us to be miserable too.

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I am so far from discouraging you, that I will conclude this letter with a few passages out of the holy word of God, for your encouragement: first a glorious invitation, from Christ Jesus our Lord, which is in Mat. xi. 28. Christ saith, come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He does not say, may be I will give you rest, but I will give you rest. And he saith in another place; and he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out, Joh. vi. 37. Is not this a great encouragement when we consider that Christ spoke it, the Son of God that cannot lie. Let us then believe him. Again, he reasons with us in Isaiah i. 18. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. And further he saith, in Mat. xii. chap. 31st ver. Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy, shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto men. And also in Ezek. xviii. 23. Have I any pleasure at all, that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his wicked ways and live? Again, Isa. xliii. chap. 24, 25, vers. Though thou hast made me to serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own sake, will not remember thy sins. Also, in Amos v. 4. 6. For thus saith the Lord, seek ye me, and ye shall live, seek the Lord and ye shall live, lest he break out like fire, and there be none to quench it. Seek him that made the seven Stars, and turneth the shadow of death into morning, and maketh the day dark with night, the Lord is his name. Luke vi. 36. A merciful God.

All I can say is, don't be discouraged, but resign yourself to that merciful God, and be willing to be disposed of by him, as seemeth him good; and ever say, Thy will be done. There is many precious promises, in God's book, called the holy scriptures, which I advise you to

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search diligently, there you may see the great promises of salvation. There you may learn, all those glorious characters of our exalted Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Neither doth he bear these blessed characters in vain. He said he came not for the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Mat. xi. 17. They that are whole, need not a physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Then Christ came for such as you and me, who are sinners. Should not we then rejoice that we have heard of the way of salvation in our day; which many have been, and are to this day denied; some who have never once heard of this blessed Jesus. It seems my soul delights to hear of his name! I desire you would take notice of what I have in so broken a manner hinted unto you. I mean to be sincere.—But I am incapable of expressing myself, or writing as some may who have been favoured with great learning, and have had great experiences, and those who know all sorts of sciences, neither can I speak as those who are acquainted with the deep mysteries of the kingdom of God. But this I know, that we must be born again, or never enter into the kingdom of God; for our exalted Lord Jesus Christ said in the days of his humiliation, John iii. 5. 7. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And soon after, he says, marvel not that I said unto thee, you must be born again. Take heed how you hear, and try to understand the meaning of these words, for they proceed from the mouth of our exalted Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God. But if you will not regard my advice, and truly repent before God, but hear all these warnings, and encouragements, with indifferency (for I trust and hope, these may be delivered you) remember that this letter, tho' it is in a broken manner wrote, will be a witness against you one day. But if you accept it, that is, whatever you find in it, that agrees with the holy word of God, and if it has effect upon your mind, try to lay it

it up in your heart, and practise it in your life ; and if you receive any help from it, give God the glory ; but what ever you find that is contrary to the word of God, reject it as an error. For we have a sure word of prophecy, which we do well to adhere, as unto a light that shineth in darkness.

I know that such a discourse, or letter, written to one, who is earthly minded, and has no spiritual understanding, I say, to such a one, it is nonsense ; it appears to him to be foolishness, and idle story, not worth his notice ; but rather ridicule it, and learn some of it to use it as a proverb, or as we say, a by-word. . But one who is truly sensible, truly awakened, and sees his true condition by nature, that he is and must be lost eternally ; to such a one, Jesus Christ is precious, and his ears, and heart is open to hear all advice, warnings and encouragements ; the promises are precious unto him, and he seeks the favor of God, with his whole heart. I hope that this is your disposition now. I have not much more to say, but I tell you that there is no other Name given unto men under heaven, whereby they may be saved but by the name of Jesus ! That through his death and suffering alone, I say, through faith in his name, we must enter into rest. Therefore seek his favour, for the favour of man avails nothing before the sight of God ; for it is said he has no respect of persons. Well I must conclude. I fear I have already wearied you ! only if you will utterly refuse all the gospel invitations, you must hear Jesus Christ pronounce the word, Depart. Methinks he is pleading still with you, and says you will not come unto me, that you might have life. But I end.

I am your soul's well-wisher.

TO MOSES PAUL,
NEW-HAVEN.

J---h J-----n,

A native of the Monegan tribe.