Religious Language in Olivia Fairfield's Correspondence

The Woman of Colour (1808)

Olivia's remarks, remarks by others in italics

Broadview p.	Religious language / idea	Narrative context
53	"Almighty Maker"; humanity as children of "one common Parent"	Olivia grounds human racial equality in divine creation in her first letter.
54–55	Marcia becomes a Christian; the Gospel; "altogether a Christian"; "command of Heaven"; "distributions of Providence"	Olivia interprets her mother's rejection of her sexual relationship with Fairfield through Christianity and Providence.
56	"consolations of religious hope"	Olivia imagines instructing and consoling enslaved people in Jamaica.
56	"that Almighty Pilot"	She interprets the safe progress of the ship providentially.
61	Prayer for deliverance; Him who "walketh on the wings of the wind"; request for a "patient and contented spirit"	During the storm at sea; includes a scriptural allusion.
62	Mercy of the Being who preserved her; Psalm 107; "an atheist half believes a God"	After the storm, Olivia explicitly interprets preservation religiously.
64–65	Gratitude to Him who enables endurance of afflictions; Olivia finds "God in every thing"	The theology of adversity is already present during the voyage, well before the central catastrophe.
68	"I shall have your prayers—I shall offer my own"; "realms of bliss"	Olivia anticipates the decision concerning her marriage.
79–80	"The same God that made you made me"; "God chose"; "God Almighty created them men"	Olivia teaches young George about racial equality through divine creation.
80–81	"the principles of my religion"; "as a Christian"; prayer for the end of the slave trade	Olivia explicitly grounds her opposition to the slave trade in Christianity.
82–83	"heavenly Father"; "superintending Providence"; "destitute of religion"; "firm faith in God"; rites of religion; worship; Sabbath, church-going bell	An unusually concentrated profession of religious faith before her marriage and before the central calamity.
84	"I bless God"	Olivia associates her habitual cheerfulness with gratitude to God.
88	"Heaven alone can tell"	Her future happiness is placed beyond her own knowledge.
93	"spirit of piety and resignation"; reciprocal prayer	Olivia praises Mrs Honeywood's religious resignation and refers explicitly to prayer.
95	"I secretly besought the blessing of Heaven"	At her wedding to Augustus.
96	Places of public worship; "words of inspiration"; preacher's "piety"	Religious worship is included among Olivia's London experiences.

98–99	"Word of God"; biblical citation; "exercise of religious duties"; "Almighty bestower" "man's life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (30 Luke 12:1) "Who is sufficient for these things? (Corinthians 2:16).	Religion forms part of Olivia's imagined ideal of married country life.
99	*"but no matter, God Almighty provides for his own"*	*Dido resigning herself to life in England.*
101	*"I have now raised your curiosity I know, for you were always one of Eve's genuine daughters"*	*Letitia Merton to her friend, referencing Eve being curious to eat the apple in the Garden of Eden.*
103	*"Heaven is my witness" "can I refuse Olivia, and see her eating the bitter bread of sorrow and dependence under my brother and his wife.—Oh, Monkland! I have seen the "tender mercies" of this woman!*	*Biblical language from Augustus.*
105	Church attendance; sermon described as "devout and impressive"	Olivia expects moral and religious benefit from the clergyman's acquaintance.
106	"Christian benevolence"; "thankful to Heaven"; prayer for Augustus's happiness	During the period of Olivia's greatest domestic happiness.
108	"Heaven preserve me from such an unchristian-like vision!"	Olivia invokes Christian charity while judging other people's faults.
110-111	"Old Testament" 'I dwell amongst my own people!'	Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4:13 to defend her belief that women should stay quietly at home.
120–21	Regular church attendance; "Piety, true fervid piety"	Olivia praises the devotion she observes.
122	*Observing the Sabbath by not engaging in frivolous activities, pun on* vice *and* vicious *"I do verily believe that you are become a methodist," said Miss Danby*	*Augustus makes a pun on the vice, or clamp, which Miss Danby uses to hold her netting taut.* *Augustus is being too strict in religious observance, like a dissenting Methodist.*
122	"we cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24)	Olivia says Mr. Lumley can't help thinking about money sometimes since he lives on a narrow income.
123	"thank God"	Expression of gratitude concerning Caroline Lumley.
126–27	"Christian forbearance"; "pray for those who despitefully use us"(Matthew 5:44)	Olivia explicitly applies Christian teaching to her treatment of Mrs George Merton.
135	"where the rich and the poor meet together (Psalms 22:2) "having born the burden and the heat of the day'" (Matthew 20:12),	Discusses Mr. Bellfield and the way he is treated by the Ingots.
136	Daily prayer; divine "mercy"; prayer for humility and compassion; fear of forgetting "my God"	At the height of Olivia's prosperity, immediately before the disastrous revelation.
136–37	Prayer to the Almighty; His "chastising rod"; "true spirit of Christianity"; "consolations of religion"; "piety and resignation"	Olivia explicitly connects her earlier prayer in prosperity with her religious response to adversity.
138	Trust in the Almighty; prayer for those endangered by the storm	The night of the revelation.
141	*"Accursed, accursed" "we will pray to a good God Almighty, to teach you and me to forget that we was ever set foot on English land!"*	*Dido calls for God's retribution on those who conspired against Olivia.*

143	*"I trust, that Heaven, in its own good time, will bring to light the projectors and the executors of an almost unheard-of cruelty"*	*Mr. Lumley as go-between the three afflicted people.*
146	*"Your name will be held in contempt, and every tear of the forlorn and helpless Olivia, will he [sic] measured against your cruelty at the awful day of retribution."* "under Heaven" she will draw her consolations	*Augustus tells George not to be greedy and take Olivia's fortune, God will judge him. "will be measured… at the awful day of" judgment.* Olivia explicitly locates consolation in divine as well as human support.
148	Trust in the Almighty; her mother's response to "that holy religion which you preach", "bright hope of futurity"	Olivia models her own renunciation of Augustus upon Marcia's Christian self-denial, hope of heaven.
149	"God bless you"	Closing devotional formula to Mrs Milbanke.
151–53	"I thank God"; beseeches Heaven; prayer for Angelina; "super-intending Providence"; submission to its "chastisements"	In the confrontation with Augustus, Olivia explicitly explains her conduct through Providence.
154–55	"part of my religious duty"; "all-wise dispensations of the Most High"; "faith and hope"; future state; prayer	Olivia gives an extended theological explanation of why she must relinquish Augustus.
156	Kneels at "the throne of mercy"; beseeches the Almighty; "divine grace"; scriptural interpretation of loss	One of the novel's most explicit representations of Olivia actually praying.
158	"I thank God"; purposeful employment rather than despondency	Olivia expressly rejects fruitless and blameable despondency.
160	Prayer that the Almighty soften Mr Merton's heart; forgiveness from a "heavenly Father"	Olivia prays for reconciliation among the Mertons.
161	"dispensations of an all-wise and all-just God"; afflictions prepare humans for another world and "eternal bliss"	Olivia states substantially the providential theology later summarized by the editor.
162	"I thank God"; "the comforts of religion have supported me, and do continue to support me"	Olivia explicitly identifies religion as the source of her endurance.
168	"Pray heaven"; prayer for Augustus's peace and happiness	Continued prayer on behalf of Augustus and Angelina.
169–70	"thank God"; "grateful to that God" who has softened the sinner's heart	Olivia interprets reconciliation and repentance providentially.
173	*Religion had been firmly planted in the mind of Angelina Forrester "bear and forbear," the hardest duty.*	*Angelina must patiently endure being the household Cinderella.*
180	*her faith in the promises of God, firmly planted in her mind, she looked forwards to a happy futurity with chastened hope!*	*Angelina, believing that Augustus deceived her into a false marriage, looks forward to salvation.*
182	"Heaven is my witness"; "duty—religion—even honour"	Religious obligation remains one of Olivia's stated reasons for relinquishing Augustus.
188	England as a country "where religion is to be found in all its beautiful purity"; "Heaven forbade it"	Olivia's final letter ends with explicitly religious interpretation of her fate.

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