

## LETTERS

FROM

THE REVEREND JOHN WESLEY,

TO

VARIOUS PERSONS.

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### I.—*To his Father.*

DEAR SIR,

*Lincoln College, December 19, 1729.*

As I was looking over, the other day, Mr. Ditton's Discourse on the Resurrection of Christ, I found, toward the end of it, a sort of essay on the Origin of Evil. I fancied the shortness of it, if nothing else, would make you willing to read it; though very probably you will not find much in it which has not occurred to your thoughts before.

"Since the supreme Being must needs be infinitely and essentially good, as well as wise and powerful, it has been esteemed no little difficulty to show how evil came into the world. *Unde malum*,\* has been a mighty question." (Page 424.)

There were some who, in order to solve this, supposed two supreme, governing principles; the one a good, the other an evil one: Which latter was independent on, and of equal power with, the former, and the author of all that was irregular or bad in the universe. This monstrous scheme the Manichees fell into, and much improved; but were sufficiently confuted by St. Austin, who had reason to be particularly acquainted with their tenets.

But the plain truth is, the hypothesis requires no more to the confutation of it, than the bare proposing it. Two supreme, independent principles, is next door to a contradic-

\* Whence did evil arise?—EDIT.

tion in terms. It is the very same thing, in result and consequence, as saying two absolute infinites; and he that says two, had as good say ten or fifty, or any other number whatever. Nay, if there can be two essentially distinct, absolute infinites, there may be an infinity of such absolute infinites; that is as much as to say, none of them all would be an absolute infinite, or, that none of them all would be properly and really infinite. "For real infinity is strict and absolute infinity, and only that."

"From the nature of liberty and free-will, we may deduce a very possible and satisfactory (perhaps the only possible just) account of the origin of evil.

"There are, and necessarily must be, some original, intrinsic agreements and disagreements, fitnesses and unfitnesses, of certain things and circumstances, to and with each other; which are antecedent to all positive institutions, founded on the very nature of those things and circumstances, considered in themselves, and in their relation to each other.

"As these all fall within the comprehension of an infinite, discerning mind, who is likewise infinite, essential rectitude and reason; so those on the one side must necessarily (to speak after the manner of men) be chosen or approved of by him, as the other disliked and disapproved; and this on the score of the eternal, intrinsic agreeableness and disagreeableness of them.

"Farther: It noway derogated from any one perfection of an infinite Being, to endow other beings which he made with such a power as we call liberty; that is, to furnish them with such capacities, dispositions, and principles of action, that it should be possible for them either to observe or to deviate from those eternal rules and measures of fitness and agreeableness, with respect to certain things and circumstances, which were so conformable to the infinite rectitude of his own will, and which infinite reason must necessarily discover. Now, evil is a deviation from those measures of eternal, unerring order and reason; not to choose what is worthy to be chosen, and is accordingly chose by such a will as the divine. And to bring this about, no more is necessary, than the exerting certain acts of that power we call free-will. By which power we are enabled to choose or refuse, and to determine ourselves to action accordingly. Therefore, without having recourse to any ill principle, we may fairly account for the origin of evil,

from the possibility of a various use of our liberty ; even as that capacity or possibility itself is ultimately founded on the defectibility and finiteness of a created nature."

I am, dear Sir,

Your dutiful and affectionate son.

II.—*To the Same.*

DEAR SIR,

*January, 1731.*

THOUGH some of the postulata upon which Archbishop King builds his hypothesis of the Origin of Evil be such as very few will admit of, yet, since the superstructure is regular and well contrived, I thought you would not be unwilling to see the scheme of that celebrated work. He divides it into five chapters.

The sum of the first chapter is this :—The first notions we have of outward things are our conceptions of motion, matter, and space. Concerning each of these, we soon observe that it does not exist of itself ; and, consequently, that there must be some first cause, to which all of them owe their existence. Although we have no faculty for the direct perception of this First Cause, and so can know very little more of Him than a blind man of light, yet thus much we know of him, by the faculties we have, that He is one, infinite in nature and power, free, intelligent, and omniscient ; that, consequently, he proposes to himself an end in every one of his actions ; and that the end of his creating the world was, the exercise of his power, and wisdom, and goodness ; which he therefore made as perfect as it could be made by infinite goodness, and power, and wisdom.

Chapter II. But, if so, how came evil into the world ? If the world was made by such an agent, with such an intention, how is it that either imperfection or natural or moral evils have a place in it ? Is not this difficulty best solved by the Manichæan supposition, that there is an evil as well as a good principle ? By no means ; for it is just as repugnant to infinite goodness to create what it foresaw would be spoiled by another, as to create what would be spoiled by the constitution of its own nature : Their supposition therefore leaves the difficulty as it found it. But if it could be proved, that to permit evils in the world is consistent with, nay, necessarily results from, infinite goodness, then the difficulty would vanish ; and to prove this, is the design of the following treatise.

Chapter III. All created beings, as such, are necessarily imperfect; nay, infinitely distant from supreme perfection. Nor can they all be equally perfect; since some must be only parts of others. As to their properties too, some must be perfecter than others; for suppose any number of the most perfect beings created, infinite goodness would prompt the Creator to add less perfect beings to those, if their existence neither lessened the number nor conveniences of the more perfect. The existence of matter, for instance, neither lessens the number nor the conveniences of pure spirits. Therefore, the addition of material beings to spiritual, was not contrary to, but resulted from, infinite goodness.

Chapter IV. As the evils of imperfection necessarily spring from this, that the imperfect things were made out of nothing, so natural evils necessarily spring from their being made out of matter. For matter is totally useless without motion, or even without such a motion as will divide it into parts; but this cannot be done without a contrariety of motions; and from this necessarily flows generation and corruption.

The material part of us being thus liable to corruption, pain is necessary to make us watchful against it, and to warn us of what tends toward it; as is the fear of death likewise, which is of use in many cases that pain does not reach. From these all the passions necessarily spring; nor can these be extinguished while those remain. But if pain and the fear of death were extinguished, no animal could long subsist. Since, therefore, these evils are necessarily joined with more than equivalent goods, the permitting these is not repugnant to, but flows from, infinite goodness. The same observation holds as to hunger, thirst, childhood, age, diseases, wild beasts, and poisons. They are all, therefore, permitted, because each of them is necessarily connected with such a good as outweighs the evil.

Chapter V. Touching moral evils, (by which I mean "inconveniences arising from the choice of the sufferer,") I propose to show, 1. What is the nature of choice or election. 2. That our happiness consists in the elections or choices we make. 3. What elections are improper to be made. 4. How we come to make such elections. And, 5. How our making them is consistent with the divine power and goodness.

1. By liberty, I mean, an active, self-determining power,

which does not choose things because they are pleasing, but is pleased with them because it chooses them.

That God is endued with such a power, I conclude, (1.) Because nothing is good or evil, pleasing or displeasing, to him, before he chooses it. (2.) Because his will or choice is the cause of goodness in all created things. (3.) Because if God had not been endued with such a principle, he would never have created anything.

But it is to be observed, farther, that God sees and chooses whatever is connected with what he chooses in the same instant; and that he likewise chooses whatever is convenient for his creatures, in the same moment wherein he chooses to create them.

That man partakes of this principle I conclude, (1.) Because experience shows it. (2.) Because we observe in ourselves the signs and properties of such a power. We observe we can counteract our appetites, senses, and even our reason, if we so choose; which we can no otherwise account for, than by admitting such a power in ourselves.

2. The more of this power any being possesses, the less subject he is to the impulses of external agents; and the more commodious is his condition. Happiness rises from a due use of our faculties: If, therefore, this be the noblest of all our faculties, then our chief happiness lies in the due use of this; that is, in our elections. And, farther, election is the cause why things please us: He therefore who has an uncontrolled power of electing, may please himself always; and if things fall out contrary to what he chooses, he may change his choice and suit it to them, and so still be happy. Indeed in this life his natural appetites will sometimes disturb his elections, and so prevent his perfect happiness; yet is it a fair step towards it, that he has a power that can at all times find pleasure in itself, however outward things vary.

3. True it is, that this power sometimes gives pain; namely, when it falls short of what it chooses; which may come to pass, if we choose either things impossible to be had, or inconsistent with each other, or such as are out of our power; (perhaps because others chose them before us;) or, lastly, such as necessarily lead us into natural evils.

4. And into these foolish choices we may be betrayed either by ignorance, negligence, by indulging the exercise of

liberty too far, by obstinacy or habit; or, lastly, by the importunity of our natural appetites. Hence it appears how cautious we ought to be in choosing; for though we may alter our choice, yet to make that alteration is painful; the more painful, the longer we have persisted in it.

5. There are three ways by which God might have hindered his creatures from thus abusing their liberty. First, by not creating any being free; but had this method been taken, then, (1.) The whole universe would have been a mere machine. (2.) That would have been wanting which is most pleasing to God of anything in the universe; namely, the free service of his reasonable creatures. (3.) His reasonable creatures would have been in a worse state than they are now: For only free agents can be perfectly happy; as, without a possibility of choosing wrong, there can be no freedom.

The Second way by which God might prevent the abuse of liberty, is, by overruling this power, and constraining us to choose right. But this would be to do and undo, to contradict himself, to take away what he had given.

The Third way by which God might have hindered his creatures from making an ill use of liberty, is, by placing them where they should have no temptation to abuse it. But this too would have been the same, in effect, as to have given them no liberty at all.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate and dutiful son.

### III.—*To the Same.*

June 11, 1731.

OUR walk was not so pleasant to Oxford as from it, though in one respect it was more useful; for it let us see that four or five and twenty miles is an easy and safe day's journey in hot weather as well as cold. We have made another discovery too, which may be of some service; that it is easy to read as we walk ten or twelve miles; and that it neither makes us faint, nor gives us any other symptom of weariness, more than the mere walking without reading at all.

Since our return, our little company that used to meet us on a Sunday evening is shrunk into almost none at all. Mr. Morgan is sick at Holt; Mr. Boyce is at his father's house at Barton; Mr. Kirkham must very shortly leave Oxford, to

be his uncle's Curate; and a young gentleman of Christ Church, who used to make a fourth, either afraid or ashamed, or both, is returned to the ways of the world, and studiously shuns our company. However, the poor at the Castle have still the gospel preached to them, and some of their temporal wants supplied, our little fund rather increasing than diminishing. Nor have we yet been forced to discharge any of the children which Mr. Morgan left to our care: Though I wish they too do not find the want of him; I am sure some of their parents will.

Some, however, give us a better prospect; John Whitelamb in particular.\* I believe with this you will receive some account from himself how his time is employed. He reads one English, one Latin, and one Greek book alternately; and never meddles with a new one in any of the languages till he has ended the old one. If he goes on as he has begun, I dare take upon me to say, that, by the time he has been here four or five years, there will not be such an one, of his standing, in Lincoln College, perhaps not in the University of Oxford.

IV.—*To the Same.*

June 13, 1733.

THE effects of my last journey, I believe, will make me more cautious of staying any time from Oxford for the future; at least till I have no pupils to take care of, which probably will be within a year or two. One of my young gentlemen told me at my return, that he was more and more afraid of singularity; another, that he had read an excellent piece of Mr. Locke's, which had convinced him of the mischief of regarding authority. Both of them agreed, that the observing of Wednesday as a fast was an unnecessary singularity; the Catholic Church (that is, the majority of it) having long since repealed, by contrary custom, the injunction she formerly gave concerning it. A third, who could not yield to this argument, has been convinced by a fever, and Dr. Frewin. Our seven-and-twenty communicants at St. Mary's were on Monday shrunk to five; and the day before, the last of Mr. Clayton's pupils, who continued with us, informed me, that he did not design to meet us any more.

My ill success, as they call it, seems to be what has frightened every one away from a falling house. On Sunday

\* He afterwards married one of Mr. Wesley's sisters.—EDIT.

I was considering the matter a little more nearly; and imagined, that all the ill consequences of my singularity were reducible to three,—diminution of fortune, loss of friends and of reputation. As to my *fortune*, I well know, though perhaps others do not, that I could not have borne a larger than I have; and as for that most plausible excuse for desiring it, “While I have so little, I cannot do the good I would,” I ask, Can you do the good God would have you do? It is enough! Look no further. For *friends*, they were either trifling or serious: If triflers, fare them well; a noble escape: If serious, those who are more serious are left, whom the others would rather have opposed than forwarded in the service they have done, and still do, us. If it be said, “But these may leave you too; for they are no firmer than the others were:” First, I doubt that fact; but, next, suppose they should, we hope then they would only teach us a nobler and harder lesson than they have done hitherto: “It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in man.” And as for *reputation*, though it be a glorious instrument of advancing our Master’s service, yet there is a better than that,—a clean heart, a single eye, a soul full of God! A fair exchange, if by the loss of reputation we can purchase the lowest degree of purity of heart! We beg my mother and you would not cease to work together with us, that, whatever we lose, we may gain this; and that, having tasted of this good gift, we may count all things else but dung and dross in comparison of it.

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V.—*To his Mother.*

June 18, 1725.

You have so well satisfied me as to the tenets of Thomas à Kempis, that I have ventured to trouble you once more on a more dubious subject. I have heard one I take to be a person of good judgment say, that she would advise no one very young to read Dr. Taylor on Holy Living and Dying. She added, that he almost put her out of her senses when she was fifteen or sixteen years old; because he seemed to exclude all from being in a way of salvation who did not come up to his rules, some of which are altogether impracticable. A fear of being tedious will make me confine myself to one or

two instances, in which I am doubtful; though several others might be produced of almost equal consequence. In reference to humility, the Bishop says, "We must be sure, in some sense or other, to think ourselves the worst in every company where we come." And in treating of repentance he says, "Whether God has forgiven us or no, we know not; therefore be sorrowful for ever having sinned." I take the more notice of this last sentence, because it seems to contradict his own words in the next section, where he says, that by the Lord's supper all the members are united to one another, and to Christ the Head. The Holy Ghost confers on us the graces necessary for, and our souls receive the seeds of, an immortal nature. Now surely these graces are not of so little force as that we cannot perceive whether we have them or not; if we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, which he will not do unless we are regenerate, certainly we must be sensible of it. If we can never have any certainty of our being in a state of salvation, good reason it is, that every moment should be spent, not in joy, but in fear and trembling; and then undoubtedly, in this life, we are of all men most miserable. God deliver us from such a fearful expectation as this! Humility is undoubtedly necessary to salvation; and if all these things are essential to humility, who can be humble, who can be saved?

VI.—*To the Same.*

*January, 1727.*

I AM shortly to take my Master's Degree. As I shall from that time be less interrupted by business not of my own choosing, I have drawn up for myself a scheme of studies, from which I do not intend, for some years at least, to vary. I am perfectly come over to your opinion, that there are many truths it is not worth while to know. Curiosity, indeed, might be a sufficient plea for our laying out some time upon them, if we had half a dozen centuries of life to come; but methinks it is great ill-husbandry to spend a considerable part of the small pittance now allowed us, in what makes us neither a quick nor a sure return.

Two days ago I was reading a dispute between those celebrated masters of controversy, Bishop Atterbury and Bishop Hoadly; but must own, I was so injudicious as to break off in the middle. I could not conceive that the

dignity of the end was at all proportioned to the difficulty of attaining it. And I thought the labour of twenty or thirty hours, if I was sure of succeeding, which I was not, would be but ill rewarded by that important piece of knowledge, whether Bishop Hoadly had misunderstood Bishop Atterbury or no.

About a year and a half ago I stole out of company at eight in the evening, with a young gentleman with whom I was intimate. As we took a turn in an aisle of St. Mary's church, in expectation of a young lady's funeral, with whom we were both acquainted, I asked him if he really thought himself my friend; and, if he did, why he would not do me all the good he could. He began to protest; in which I cut him short, by desiring him to oblige me in an instance, which he could not deny to be in his own power; to let me have the pleasure of making him a whole Christian, to which I knew he was at least half persuaded already; that he could not do me a greater kindness, as both of us would be fully convinced when we came to follow that young woman.

He turned exceedingly serious, and kept something of that disposition ever since. Yesterday was a fortnight, he died of a consumption. I saw him three days before he died; and, on the Sunday following, did him the last good office I could here, by preaching his funeral sermon; which was his desire when living.

#### VII.—*To the Same.*

*March 19, 1727.*

ONE advantage, at least, my degree has given me: I am now at liberty, and shall be in a great measure for some time, to choose my own employment. And as I believe I know my own deficiencies best, and which of them are most necessary to be supplied, I hope my time will turn to somewhat better account than when it was not so much in my own disposal.

The conversation of one or two persons, whom you may have heard me speak of, (I hope never without gratitude,) first took off my relish for most other pleasures; so far that I despised them in comparison of that. I have since proceeded a step further; to slight them absolutely. And I am so little at present in love with even company,—the most elegant entertainment next to books,—that, unless the

persons have a religious turn of thought, I am much better pleased without them. I think it is the settled temper of my soul, that I should prefer, at least for some time, such a retirement as would seclude me from all the world, to the station I am now in. Not that this is by any means unpleasant to me; but I imagine it would be more improving to be in a place where I might confirm or implant in my mind what habits I would, without interruption, before the flexibility of youth be over.

A school in Yorkshire was proposed to me lately, on which I shall think more when it appears whether I may have it or not. A good salary is annexed to it. But what has made me wish for it most, is the frightful description, as they call it, which some gentlemen who know the place gave me of it yesterday. "It lies in a little vale, so pent up between two hills, that it is scarcely accessible on any side; so that you can expect little company from without, and within there is none at all." I should therefore be entirely at liberty to converse with company of my own choosing, whom for that reason I would bring with me; and company equally agreeable, wherever I fixed, could not put me to less expense.

The sun that walks his airy way  
 To cheer the world, and bring the day;  
 The moon that shines with borrow'd light;  
 The stars that gild the gloomy night;  
 All of these, and all I see,  
 Should be sung, and sung by me:  
 These praise their Maker as they can,  
 But want and ask the tongue of man.

I am full of business; but have found a way to write, without taking any time from that. It is but rising an hour sooner in the morning, and going into company an hour later in the evening; both which may be done without any inconvenience.

VIII.—*To the Same.*

June 11, 1731.

THE motion and sun together, in our last hundred-and-fifty miles' walk, so thoroughly carried off all our superfluous humours, that we continue perfectly in health, though it is here a very sickly season. And Mr. Kirkham assures us, on the word of a Priest and a Physician, that if we will but take the same medicine once or twice a year, we shall never need any other to keep us from the gout. When we were with

him, we touched two or three times upon a nice subject, but did not come to any full conclusion. The point debated was, What is the meaning of being *righteous over much*, or by the more common phrase of being *too strict in religion*? and what danger there was of any of us falling into that extreme?

All the ways of being too righteous or too strict which we could think of, were these: Either the carrying some one particular virtue to so great a height, as to make it clash with some others; or, the laying too much stress on the instituted means of grace, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law; or, the multiplying prudential means upon ourselves so far, and binding ourselves to the observance of them so strictly, as to obstruct the end we aimed at by them, either by hindering our advance in heavenly affections in general, or by retarding our progress in some particular virtue. Our opponents seemed to think my brother and I [were] in some danger of being too strict in this last sense; of laying burdens on ourselves too heavy to be borne, and, consequently, too heavy to be of any use to us.

It is easy to observe, that almost every one thinks that rule totally needless which he does not need himself; and as to the Christian spirit itself, almost every one calls that degree of it which he does not himself aim at, enthusiasm. If therefore we plead for either, (not as if we thought the former absolutely needful, neither as if we had attained the latter,) it is no great wonder that they who are not for us in practice should be against us. If you, who are a less prejudiced judge, have perceived us faulty in this matter, too superstitious or enthusiastic, or whatever it is to be called; we earnestly desire to be speedily informed of our error, that we may no longer spend our strength on that which profiteth not. Or whatever there may be on the other hand, in which you have observed us to be too remiss, that likewise we desire to know as soon as possible. This is a subject which we would understand with as much accuracy as possible; it being hard to say which is of the worse consequence,—the being too strict, the really carrying things too far, the wearying ourselves and spending our strength in burdens that are unnecessary,—or the being frightened by those terrible words, from what, if not directly necessary, would at least be useful.

IX.—*To the Same.*

February 28, 1732.

ONE consideration is enough to make me assent to his and your judgment concerning the holy sacrament; which is, that we cannot allow Christ's human nature to be present in it, without allowing either CON- or TRANS-substantiation. But that his divinity is so united to us then, as he never is but to worthy receivers, I firmly believe, though the manner of that union is utterly a mystery to me.

That none but worthy receivers should find this effect, is not strange to me, when I observe how small effect many means of improvement have upon an unprepared mind. Mr. Morgan and my brother were affected, as they ought, by the observations you made on that glorious subject; but though my understanding approved what was excellent, yet my heart did not feel it. Why was this, but because it was pre-engaged by those affections with which wisdom will not dwell? because the animal mind cannot relish those truths which are spiritually discerned? Yet I have those writings which the Good Spirit gave to that end! I have many of those which he hath since assisted his servants to give us; I have retirement to apply these to my own soul daily; I have means both of public and private prayer; and, above all, of partaking in that sacrament once a week. What shall I do, to make all these blessings effectual, to gain from them that mind which was also in Christ Jesus?

To all who give signs of their not being strangers to it, I propose this question,—and why not to you rather than any? Shall I quite break off my pursuit of all learning, but what immediately tends to practice? I once desired to make a fair show in languages and philosophy: But it is past; there is a more excellent way, and if I cannot attain to any progress in the one, without throwing up all thoughts of the other, why, fare it well! Yet a little while, and we shall all be equal in knowledge, if we are in virtue.

You say you "have renounced the world." And what have I been doing all this time? What have I done ever since I was born? Why, I have been plunging myself into it more and more. It is enough: "Awake, thou that sleepest." Is there not "one Lord, one Spirit, one hope of our calling?" one way of attaining that hope? Then I am

to renounce the world, as well as you. That is the very thing I want to do; to draw off my affections from this world, and fix them on a better. But how? What is the surest and the shortest way? Is it not to be humble? Surely, this is a large step in the way. But the question recurs, How am I to do this? To own the necessity of it is not to be humble. In many things you have interceded for me and prevailed. Who knows but in this too you may be successful? If you can spare me only that little part of Thursday evening, which you formerly bestowed upon me in another manner, I doubt not but it would be as useful now for correcting my heart, as it was then for forming my judgment.

When I observe how fast life flies away, and how slow improvement comes, I think one can never be too much afraid of dying before one has learned to live; I mean, even in the course of nature. For were I sure that "the silver cord" should not be violently "loosed;" that "the wheel" should not "be broken at the cistern," till it was quite worn away by its own motion; yet what a time would this give for such a work? A moment to transact the business of eternity! What are forty years in comparison of this? So that were I sure of what never man yet was sure of, how little would it alter the case! How justly still might I cry out,—

"Downward I hasten to my destined place;  
There none obtain thy aid, none sing thy praise!  
Soon shall I lie in death's deep ocean drown'd;  
Is mercy there, is sweet forgiveness found?  
O save me yet, while on the brink I stand;  
Rebuke these storms, and set me safe on land!  
O make my longings and thy mercy sure!  
Thou art the God of power."

X.—*To the Same.*

*August 17, 1733.*

THE thing that gives offence here, is, the being singular with regard to time, expense, and company. This is evident beyond exception, from the case of Mr. Smith, one of our Fellows, who no sooner began to husband his time, to retrench unnecessary expenses, and to avoid his irreligious acquaintance, but he was set upon, by not only all those acquaintance, but many others too, as if he had entered into a conspiracy to cut ~~all~~ their throats; though to this day he

has not advised any single person, unless in a word or two and by accident, to act as he did in any of those instances.

It is true, indeed, that "the devil hates offensive war most;" and that whoever tries to rescue more than his own soul from his hands, will have more enemies, and meet with greater opposition, than if he was content with "having his own life for a prey." That I try to do this, is likewise certain; but I cannot say whether I "rigorously impose any observances on others," till I know what that phrase means. What I do, is this: When I am entrusted with a person who is first to understand and practise, and then to teach, the law of Christ, I endeavour, by an intermixture of reading and conversation, to show him what that law is; that is, to renounce all insubordinate love of the world, and to love and obey God with all his strength. When he appears seriously sensible of this, I propose to him the means God hath commanded him to use, in order to that end; and, a week, or a month, or a year after, as the state of his soul seems to require it, the several prudential means recommended by wise and good men. As to the times, order, measure, and manner, wherein these are to be proposed, I depend upon the Holy Spirit to direct me, in and by my own experience and reflection, joined to the advices of my religious friends here and elsewhere. Only two rules it is my principle to observe in all cases: First, to begin, continue, and end all my advices in the spirit of meekness; as knowing that "the wrath" or severity "of man worketh not the righteousness of God:" And, Secondly, to add to meekness, longsuffering; in pursuance of a rule which I fixed long since,—never to give up any one till I have tried him, at least, ten years. How long hath God had pity on thee?

If the wise and good will believe those falsehoods which the bad invent, because I endeavour to save myself and my friends from them, then I shall lose my reputation, even among them, for (though not perhaps good, yet) the best actions I ever did in my life. This is the very case. I try to act as my Lord commands; ill men say all manner of evil of me, and good men believe them. There is a way, and there is but one, of making my peace: God forbid I should ever take it! I have as many pupils as I need, and as many friends; when more are better for me, I shall have more. If I have no more pupils after these are gone from me, I shall

then be glad of a curacy near you : If I have, I shall take it as a signal that I am to remain here. Whether here or there, my desire is, to know and feel that I am nothing, that I have nothing, and that I can do nothing. For whenever I am empty of myself, then know I of a surety, that neither friends nor foes, nor any creature, can hinder me from being "filled with all the fulness of God." Let not my father's or your prayers be ever slack in behalf of your affectionate son.

XI.—*To the Same.*

*March 18, 1736.*

I DOUBT not but you are already informed of the many blessings which God gave us in our passage ; as my brother Wesley must, before now, have received a particular account of the circumstances of our voyage ; which he would not fail to transmit to you by the first opportunity.

We are likely to stay here some months. The place is pleasant beyond imagination ; and, by all I can learn, exceeding healthful,—even in summer, for those who are not intemperate. It has pleased God that I have not had a moment's illness of any kind since I set my foot upon the Continent ; nor do I know any more than one of my seven hundred parishioners who is sick at this time. Many of them, indeed, are, I believe, very angry already : For a gentleman, no longer ago than last night, made a ball ; but the public prayers happening to begin about the same time, the church was full, and the ball-room so empty, that the entertainment could not go forward.

I should be heartily glad, if any poor and religious men or women of Epworth, or Wroote, would come over to me. And so would Mr. Oglethorpe too : He would give them land enough, and provisions gratis, till they could live on the produce of it. I was fully determined to have wrote to my dear Emmy\* to-day ; but time will not permit. O hope ye still in God ; for ye shall yet give him thanks, who is the help of your countenance, and your God ! Renounce the world ; deny yourselves ; bear your cross with Christ, and reign with him ! My brother Hooper, too, has a constant place in our prayers. May the good God give him the same zeal for holiness which he has given to a young gentleman

\* His sister Emelia.—EDIT.

at Rotterdam, who was with me last night. Pray for us, and especially for, dear mother,

Your dutiful and affectionate son.

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XII.—*To his Brother Samuel.*

*Lincoln College, OXON., April 4, 1726.*

DEAR BROTHER,

I SHOULD have written long before now, had not a Gentleman of Exeter made me put it off from day to day, in hopes of getting some little poems of his, which he promised to write out for me. Yesterday I saw them, though not much to my satisfaction, as being all on very wrong subjects, and run chiefly on the romantic notions of love and gallantry. I have transcribed one which is much shorter than any of the rest, and am promised by to-morrow night, if that will do me any service, another of a more serious nature.

I believe, I have given Mr. Leybourn, at different times, five or six short copies of verses: The latest were a translation of part of the Second Georgic, and an imitation of the sixty-fifth Psalm. If he has lost them, as it is likely he has, in so long a time, I can write them over in less than an hour, and send them by the post.

My father, very unexpectedly, a week ago, sent me, in a letter, a bill on Dr. Morley, for twelve pounds, which he had paid to the Rector's use, at Gainsborough; so that, now several of my debts are paid, and the expenses of my treat defrayed, I have above ten pounds remaining; and if I could have leave to stay in the country till my College allowance commences, this money would abundantly suffice me till then.

As far as I have ever observed, I never knew a College besides ours, whereof the members were so perfectly satisfied with one another, and so inoffensive to the other part of the University. All I have yet seen of the Fellows are both well-natured and well-bred; men admirably disposed as well to preserve peace and good neighbourhood among themselves, as to promote it wherever else they have any acquaintance,

## THE SEVEN FORMER VERSES OF THE FORTY-SIXTH PSALM.\*

ON God supreme our hope depends,  
Whose omnipresent sight  
Even to the pathless realms extends  
Of uncreated night.

Plunged in the' abyss of deep distress,  
To Him we raise our cry ;  
His mercy bids our sorrows cease,  
And fills our tongue with joy.

Though earth her ancient seat forsake,  
By pangs convulsive torn ;  
Though her self-balanced fabric shake,  
And ruin'd nature mourn ;

Though hills be in the ocean lost,  
With all their shaggy load ;  
No fear shall e'er molest the just,  
Or shake his trust in God.

What though the' ungovern'd, wild abyss  
His fires tumultuous pours ;  
What though the watery legions rise,  
And lash the' affrighted shores ;

What though the trembling mountains nod,  
Nor stand the rolling war ;  
Sion, secure, enjoys the flood,  
Loud echoing from afar.

The God most high on Sion's hill  
Has fix'd his sure abode ;  
Nor dare the' impetuous waves assail  
The city of our God.

Nations remote, and realms unknown,  
In vain reject his sway ;  
For, lo ! Jehovah's voice is shown,  
And earth shall melt away.

Let war's devouring surges rise,  
And rage on every side ;  
The Lord of Hosts our refuge is,  
And Jacob's God our guide.

Mr. Le Hunte and Mr. Sherman send their service.

I am

Your loving brother.

I believe I could put off two or three more receipts if I had them. Pray, my love to my brother and sister.

\* The other verses mentioned at the beginning of this letter are omitted, for the reason assigned by Mr. Wesley : They are on a " wrong subject."—EDIT.

On Friday, St. Peter's church in the Baily was beaten down, by the fall of the steeple. Saturday morning, a chandler here murdered two men and wounded a third; in the evening, a fire broke out at the Mitre, but was stopped in a few hours.

XIII.—*To the Same.*

DEAR BROTHER,

[*Without date.*]

I RETURN you thanks for your favourable judgment on my sermon, and for the alterations you direct me to make in it; yet, in order to be still better informed, I take the liberty to make some objections to some of them, in one or two of which I believe you misunderstood me.

I. The reasons why I conceive the Samaritans to have been idolaters, are, First, because our Saviour says of them, "Ye worship ye know not what;" which seems to refer plainly to the object of their worship: And, Secondly, because the old inhabitants of Samaria, who succeeded the Israelites, were undoubtedly so; and I never heard that they were much amended in after-times: "These nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children and their children's children." (2 Kings xvii. 41.)

II. Were the Jews obliged to love wicked men? And is not our commandment extended to some cases to which theirs did not reach? to the excluding some instances of revenge, which were indulged to them?

We are doubtless to love good men more than others; but to have inserted it, where I was only to prove that we were to love them, and not how much, would not, I think, have been to my purpose. Where our Saviour exerts his authority against his opposers, I cannot think it safe for me to follow him. I would much sooner, in those cases, act by his precepts than example; the one was certainly designed for me, the other possibly was not. The Author had power to dispense with his own laws, and wisdom to know when it was necessary; I have neither.

No one would blame a man for using such sharpness of speech as St. Stephen does; especially in a prayer made in the article of death, with the same intention as his.

III. What you understand as spoken of rulers, I expressly say of private men: "As well every ruler as every private man must act in a legal way; and the latter might, with equal reason, apply the civil sword himself, as use violent

means" (by which I here mean reviling, studiously and unnecessarily defaming, or handing about ill stories of wicked men) "to preserve the church."

1. I believe it to be more especially the duty of Governors, to try to amend scandalous offenders. 2. That flagrant immorality is a sufficient reason to shun any one. 3. That to the weak and private Christian, it is an unanswerable reason for so doing. 4. That in many cases a private Christian, in some, a Clergyman, is not obliged to admonish more than once. But this being allowed, still the main argument stands, that the Scripture nowhere authorizes a private person to do more than to shun an heretic, or (which I expressly mention) an obstinate offender. I had not the least thought of any retrospect in them, neither when I wrote or spoke those words: "If Providence has pointed you out," &c.

My mother's reason for my cutting off my hair, is, because she fancies it prejudices my health. As to my looks, it would doubtless mend my complexion to have it off, by letting me get a little more colour, and perhaps it might contribute to my making a more genteel appearance. But these, till ill health is added to them, I cannot persuade myself to be sufficient grounds for losing two or three pounds a year: I am ill enough able to spare them.

Mr. Sherman says, there are garrets somewhere in Peckwater to be let for fifty shillings a year; that there are, too, some honest fellows in College, who would be willing to chum in one of them; and that, could my brother but find one of these garrets, and get acquainted with one of these honest fellows, he might very possibly prevail upon him to join in taking it; and then, if he could but prevail upon some one else to give him seven pounds a year for his own room, he would gain almost six pounds a year clear, if his rent were well paid. He appealed to me, whether the proposal was not exceeding reasonable; but as I could not give him such an answer as he desired, I did not choose to give him any at all.

Leisure and I have taken leave of one another; I propose to be busy as long as I live, if my health is so long indulged to me. In health and sickness I hope I shall ever continue, with the same sincerity,

Your loving brother,

My love and service to my sister.

XIV.—*To the Same.**Lincoln College, November 17, 1731.*

DEAR BROTHER,

CONSIDERING the other changes that I remember in myself, I shall not at all wonder if the time comes when we differ as little in our conclusions as we do now in our premises. In most we seem to agree already; especially as to rising, not keeping much company, and sitting by a fire, which I always do, if any one in the room does, whether at home or abroad. But these are the very things about which others will never agree with me. Had I given up these, or but one of them,—rising early, which implies going to bed early, (though I never am sleepy now,) and keeping so little company, not one man in ten of those that are offended at me, as it is, would ever open their mouth against any of the other particulars. For the sake of these, those are mentioned; the root of the matter lies here. Would I but employ a third of my money, and about half my time, as other folks do, smaller matters would be easily overlooked. But I think *nil tanti est*.\* As to my hair, I am much more sure that what this enables me to do is according to the Scripture, than I am that the length of it is contrary to it.

I have often thought of a saying of Dr. Hayward's, when he examined me for Priest's orders: "Do you know what you are about? You are bidding defiance to all mankind. He that would live a Christian Priest ought to know that, whether his hand be against every man or no, he must expect every man's hand should be against him." It is not strange that every man's hand who is not a Christian, should be against him that endeavours to be so. But is it not hard, that even those that are with us should be against us? that a man's enemies (in some degree) should be those of the same household of faith? Yet so it is. From the time that a man sets himself to his business, very many, even of those who travel the same road, many of those who are before, as well as behind, him, will lay stumbling-blocks in his way. One blames him for not going fast enough; another, for having made no greater progress; another, for going too far, which, perhaps, strange as it is, is the more common charge

\* Nothing is worth such a sacrifice as this.—EDIT.

of the two: For this comes from people of all sorts; not only Infidels, not only half-Christians, but some of the best of men are very apt to make this reflection: "He lays unnecessary burdens upon himself; he is too precise; he does what God has nowhere required to be done." True, he has not required it of those that are perfect; and even as to those who are not, all men are not required to use all means; but every man is required to use those which he finds most useful to himself. And who can tell better than himself, whether he finds them so or no? "Who knoweth the things of a man better than the spirit of a man that is in him?"

This being a point of no common concern, I desire to explain myself upon it once for all, and to tell you, freely and clearly, those general positions on which I ground (I think) all those practices, for which (as you would have seen, had you read that paper through) I am generally accused of singularity. First. As to the end of my being, I lay it down for a rule, that I cannot be too happy, or, therefore, too holy; and thence infer, that the more steadily I keep my eye upon the prize of our high calling, the better, and the more of my thoughts, and words, and actions are directly pointed at the attainment of it. Secondly. As to the instituted means of attaining it, I likewise lay it down for a rule, that I am to use them every time I may. Thirdly. As to prudential means, I believe this rule holds of things indifferent in themselves: Whatever I know to do me hurt, that to me is not indifferent, but resolutely to be abstained from; whatever I know to do me good, that to me is not indifferent, but resolutely to be embraced.

But it will be said, I am whimsical. True; and what then? If by whimsical be meant simply *singular*, I own it; if *singular without any reason*, I deny it with both my hands, and am ready to give a reason to any that asks me, of every custom wherein I wilfully differ from the world. I grant, in many single actions, I differ unreasonably from others; but not wilfully; no, I shall extremely thank any one who will teach me to help it. But can I totally help it, till I have more breeding, or more prudence? to neither of which I am much disposed naturally; and I greatly fear my acquired stock of either will give me small assistance.

I have but one thing to add, and that is, as to my being formal. If by that be meant, that I am not easy and

unaffected enough in my carriage, it is very true; but how shall I help it? I cannot be genteelly behaved by instinct; and if I am to try after it by experience and observation of others, that is not the work of a month, but of years. If by formal be meant, that I am serious, this, too, is very true; but why should I help it? Mirth, I grant, is fit for you; but does it follow that it is fit for me? Are the same tempers, any more than the same words or actions, fit for all circumstances? If you are to "rejoice evermore," because you have put your enemies to flight, am I to do the same while they continually assault me? You are glad, because you are "passed from death to life:" Well, but let him be afraid, who knows not whether he is to live or die. Whether this be my condition or no, who can tell better than myself? Him who can, whoever he be, I allow to be a proper judge, whether I do well to be generally as serious as I can.

John Whitelamb wants a gown much, and I am not rich enough to buy him one at present. If you are willing my twenty shillings (that were) should go toward that, I will add ten to them, and let it lie till I have tried my interest with my friends to make up the price of a new one.

I am, dear brother,

Yours, and my sister's, affectionate brother.

The Rector is much at your service. I fancy I shall, some time or other, have much to say to you about him. All are pretty well at Epworth, my sister Molly says.

XV.—*To the Same.*

DEAR BROTHER,

OXON., *January 15, 1734-5.*

HAD not my brother Charles desired it might be otherwise, I should have sent you only an extract of the following letter.\* But if you will be at the pains, you will soon reduce the argument of it to two or three points, which, if to be answered at all, will be easily answered. By it you may observe my present purpose is founded on my present weakness. But it is not indeed probable that my father should live till that weakness is removed.

Your second argument I had no occasion to mention before. To it I answer, that I do not, nor ever did, resolve

\* Written to his father.—EDIT.

against undertaking a cure of souls. There are four cures belonging to our College, and consistent with a Fellowship : I do not know but I may take one of them at Michaelmas. Not that I am clearly assured that I should be false to my engagement, were I only to instruct and exhort the pupils committed to my charge. But of that I should think more.

I desire your full thoughts upon the whole, as well as your prayers, for,

Dear brother,

Your obliged and affectionate brother.

XVI.—*To the Same.*

DEAR BROTHER,

*February 13, 1734.*

NEITHER you nor I have any time to spare ; so I must be as short as I can.

There are two questions between us ; one relating to being good, the other to doing good. With regard to the former,

1. You allow I enjoy more of friends, retirement, freedom from care, and divine ordinances, than I could do elsewhere ; and I add, (1.) I feel all this to be but just enough : (2.) I have always found less than this to be too little for me ; and therefore, (3.) Whatever others do, I could not throw up any part of it, without manifest hazard to my salvation. As to the latter,

2. I am not careful to answer, what good I have done at Oxford ; because I cannot think of it without the utmost danger. I am careful about what good I may do at Epworth, (1.) Because I can think of it without any danger at all. (2.) Because I cannot, as matters now stand, avoid thinking of it without sin.

3. Another can supply my place at Epworth better than at Oxford ; and the good done here is of a far more diffusive nature. It is a more extensive benefit to sweeten the fountain, than to do the same to particular streams.

4. To the objection, " You are despised at Oxford ; therefore, you can do no good there : " I answer, (1.) A Christian will be despised anywhere. (2.) No one is a Christian till he is despised. (3.) His being despised will not hinder his doing good, but much further it, by making him a better Christian. Without contradicting any of these propositions, I allow that every one to whom you do good directly must esteem you, first or last. N.B. A man may despise you

for one thing, hate you for a second, and envy you for a third.

5. God may suffer Epworth to be worse than before; but I may not attempt to prevent it, with so great hazard to my own soul.

Your last argument is either *ignoratio elenchi*, or implies these two propositions: (1.) "You resolve against any parochial cure of souls." (2.) "The Priest who does not undertake the first parochial cure that offers is perjured." Let us add a third: "The Tutor who, being in orders, never accepts of a parish is perjured;" and then I deny all three.

I am, dear brother,

Your obliged and affectionate brother.

XVII.—*To the Same.*

March 4, 1735.

I HAD rather dispute with you, if I must dispute, than with any man living; because it may be done with so little expense of time and words. The question is now brought to one point, and the whole argument will lie in one single syllogism: "Neither hope of doing greater good, nor fear of any evil, ought to deter you from what you have engaged yourself to do: But you have engaged yourself to undertake the cure of a parish; therefore, neither that hope nor that fear ought to deter you from it." The only doubt which remains is, whether I have so engaged myself or not. You think I did at my ordination, "before God and his High Priest:" I think, I did not. However, I own I am not the proper judge of the oath I then took; it being certain, and allowed by all, *Verbis, in quæ quis jurejurando adigitur, sensum genuinum, ut et obligationi sacramenti modum ac mensuram, præstitui a mente non præstantis sed exigentis juramentum*: "That the true sense of the words of an oath, and the mode and extent of its obligation, are not to be determined by him who takes it, but by him who requires it." Therefore, it is not I, but the High Priest of God before whom I contracted that engagement, who is to judge of the nature and extent of it.

Accordingly, the post after I received yours, I referred it entirely to him, proposing this single question to him,—Whether I had, at my ordination, engaged myself to undertake the cure of a parish or no. His answer runs in these

words: "It doth not seem to me, that, at your ordination, you engaged yourself to undertake the cure of any parish, provided you can, as a Clergyman, better serve God and his Church in your present or some other station." Now, that I can, as a Clergyman, better serve God and his Church in my present station, I have all reasonable evidence.

XVIII.—*To the Same.*

GRAVESEND, on board the *Simmonds*, October 15, 1735.

DEAR BROTHER,

I PRESENTED "Job"\* to the Queen on Sunday, and had many good words and smiles. Out of what is due to me on that account, I beg you would first pay yourself what I owe you; and if I live till spring, I can then direct what I would have done with the remainder.

The uncertainty of my having another opportunity to tell you my thoughts in this life obliges me to tell you what I have often thought of, and that in as few and plain words as I can. Elegance of style is not to be weighed against purity of heart; purity both from the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. Therefore, whatever has any tendency to impair that purity is not to be tolerated, much less recommended, for the sake of that elegance. But of this sort (I speak not from the reason of the thing only, nor from my single experience) are the most of the classics usually read in great schools; many of them tending to inflame the lusts of the flesh, (besides Ovid, Virgil's "*Æneid*," and Terence's "*Eunuch*,") and more to feed the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, who would have us holy, as he is holy, that you banish all such poison from your school, that you introduce in their place such Christian authors as will work together with you in building up your flock in the knowledge and love of God. For assure yourself, dear brother, you are even now called to the converting of Heathens, as well as I.

So many souls are committed to your charge by God, to be prepared for a happy eternity. You are to instruct them, not only in the beggarly elements of Greek and Latin, but much more in the gospel. You are to labour with all your might to convince them that Christianity is not a negation,

\* A folio volume in Latin, consisting of Dissertations on the Book of Job, by his father, and dedicated to the Queen.—EDIT.

or an external thing, but a new heart, a mind conformed to that of Christ, "faith working by love."

We recommend you and yours to God. Pray for us.

I am

Your affectionate brother and servant in Christ.

XIX.—*To the Same.*

SAVANNAH, November 23, 1736.

O PRAY write, and, if it may be, speak, that they may remember him again, who did run well, but are now hindered!

I think the rock on which I had the nearest made shipwreck of the faith, was, the writings of the Mystics; under which term I comprehend all, and only those, who slight any of the means of grace.

I have drawn up a short scheme of their doctrines, partly from conversations I have had, and letters, and partly from their most approved writers, such as Tauler, Molinos, and the author of "Theologia Germanica." I beg your thoughts upon it, as soon as you can conveniently; and that you would give me them as particularly, fully, and strongly as your time will permit. They may be of consequence not only to all this province, but to nations of Christians yet unborn.

"All means are not necessary for all men; therefore each person must use such means, and such only, as he finds necessary for him. But since we can never attain our end by being wedded to the same means; therefore, we must not obstinately cleave unto anything, lest it become a hinderance, not a help.

"Observe, further, when the end is attained, the means cease. Now, all the other things enjoined are means to love; and love is attained by them who are in the inferior way, who are utterly divested of free-will, of self-love, and self-activity, and are entered into the passive state. These deified men, in whom the superior will has extinguished the inferior, enjoy such a contemplation as is not only above faith, but above sight, such as is entirely free from images, thoughts, and discourse, and never interrupted by sins of infirmity, or voluntary distractions. They have absolutely renounced their reason and understanding; else they could not be guided by a divine light. They seek no clear or particular

knowledge of anything ; but only an obscure, general knowledge, which is far better. They know it is mercenary to look for a reward from God, and inconsistent with perfect love.

“Having thus attained the end, the means must cease. Hope is swallowed up in love. Sight, or something more than sight, takes place of faith. All particular virtues they possess in the essence, being wholly given up to the divine will, and therefore need not the distinct exercise of them. They work likewise all good works essentially, not accidentally, and use all outward means, only as they are moved thereto ; and then to obey superiors, or to avoid giving offence ; but not as necessary or helpful to them.

“Public prayer, or any forms, they need not ; for they pray without ceasing. Sensible devotion in any prayer they despise ; it being a great hinderance to perfection. The Scripture they need not read ; for it is only His letter with whom they converse face to face. And if they do read it now and then, as for expounders, living or dead, reason, philosophy, (which only puffs up, and vainly tries to bind God by logical definitions and divisions,) as for knowledge of tongues, or ancient customs, they need none of them, any more than the Apostles did, for they have the same Spirit. Neither do they need the Lord’s supper ; for they never cease to remember Christ in the most acceptable manner ; any more than fasting, since, by constant temperance, they can keep a continual fast.

“You that are to advise them that have not yet attained perfection, press them to nothing, not to self-denial, constant private prayer, reading the Scriptures, fasting, communicating. If they love heathen poets, let them take their full swing in them ; speak but little to them, in the mean time, of eternity. If they are affected at any time with what you say, say no more ; let them apply it, not you. You may advise them to some religious books, but stop there ; let them use them as they please, and form their own reflections upon them without your intermeddling. If one who was religious falls off, let him alone. Either a man is converted to God, or not : If he is not, his own will must guide him, in spite of all you can do ; if he is, he is so guided by the Spirit of God, as not to need your direction.

“You that are yourselves imperfect, know love is your end. All things else are but means. Choose such means as lead

you most to love; those alone are necessary for you. The means that others need are nothing to you: Different men are led in different ways. And be sure be not wedded to any means. When anything helps you no longer, lay it aside; for you can never attain your end, by cleaving obstinately to the same means: You must be changing them continually. Conversation, meditation, forms of prayer, prudential rules, fixed return of public or private prayer, are helps to some; but you must judge for yourself. Perhaps fasting may help you for a time, and perhaps the holy communion. But you will be taught by the Holy Spirit, and by experience, how soon, how often, and how long it is good for you to take it. Perhaps too you may need the Holy Scripture. But if you can renounce yourself without reading, it is better than all the reading in the world. And whenever you do read it, trouble yourself about no helps: The Holy Ghost will lead you into all truth.

“As to doing good, take care of yourself first. When you are converted, then strengthen your brethren. Beware of (what is incident to all beginners) an eager desire to set others a good example. Beware of an earnestness to make others feel what you feel yourself. Let your light shine as nothing to you. Beware of a zeal to do great things for God. Be charitable first; then do works of charity; do them when you are not dissipated thereby, or in danger of losing your soul by pride and vanity. Indeed, till then, you can do no good to men’s souls; and without that, all done to their bodies is nothing. The command of doing good concerns not you yet. Above all, take care never to dispute about any of these points. Disputing can do no good. Is the man wicked? Cast not pearls before swine. Is he imperfect? He that disputes any advice, is not yet ripe for it. Is he good? All good men agree in judgment; they differ only in words, which all are in their own nature ambiguous.”

May God deliver you and yours from all error, and all unholiness! My prayers will never, I trust, be wanting for you.

I am, dear brother,

My sister’s and your most affectionate brother.

Pray remember me to Philly.

XX.—*To the Same.*

DEAR BROTHER,

BRISTOL, April 4, 1738.

I REJOICE greatly at the temper with which you now write, and trust there is not only mildness but love also in your heart. If so, you shall know of this doctrine, whether it be of God; though, perhaps, not by my ministry.

To this hour you have pursued an *ignoratio elenchi*. Your assurance and mine are as different as light and darkness. I mean, an assurance that I am now in a state of salvation; you, an assurance that I shall persevere therein. The very definition of the term cuts off your Second and Third observation. As to the First, I would take notice, 1. No kind of assurance, (that I know,) or of faith, or repentance, is essential to their salvation who die infants. 2. I believe God is ready to give all true penitents who fly to his free grace in Christ a fuller sense of pardon than they had before they fell. I know this to be true of several: Whether these are exempt cases, I know not. 3. Persons that were of a melancholy and gloomy constitution, even to some degree of madness, I have known in a moment (let it be called a miracle, I quarrel not) brought into a state of firm, lasting peace and joy.

My dear brother, the whole question turns chiefly, if not wholly, on matter of fact. You deny that God does now work these effects; at least, that he works them in such a manner. I affirm both, because I have heard those facts with my ears, and seen them with my eyes. I have seen, as far as it can be seen, very many persons changed in a moment from the spirit of horror, fear, and despair, to the spirit of hope, joy, peace; and from sinful desires, till then reigning over them, to a pure desire of doing the will of God. These are matters of fact, whereof I have been, and almost daily am, eye or ear witness. What (upon the same evidence, as to the suddenness and reality of the change) I believe, or know, touching visions and dreams. This I know: Several persons in whom this great change from the power of Satan unto God was wrought either in sleep, or during a strong representation to the eye of their minds of Christ, either on the cross or in glory. This is the fact. Let any judge of it as they please. But that such a change was then wrought, appears, not from their shedding tears only, or sighing, or

singing psalms, as your poor correspondent did by the woman of Oxford, but from the whole tenor of their life, till then many ways wicked; from that time holy, just, and good.

Saw you him that was a lion till then, and is now a lamb; he that was a drunkard, but now exemplarily sober; the whoremonger that was, who now abhors the very lusts of the flesh? These are my living arguments for what I assert,—that God now, as aforetime, gives remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, which may be called visions. If it be not so, I am found a false witness; but, however, I do and will testify the things I have both seen and heard.

I do not now expect to see your face in the flesh. Not that I believe God will discharge you yet; but I believe I have nearly finished my course. O may I be found in him, not having my own righteousness!

When I thy promised Christ have seen,  
And clasp'd him in my soul's embrace,  
Possess'd of thy salvation, then,  
Then may I, Lord, depart in peace.

The great blessing of God be upon you and yours.

I am, dear brother,

Your ever affectionate and obliged brother.

I expect to stay here some time, perhaps as long as I am in the body.

XXI.—*To the Same.*

MARIENBOURN, near Frankfort, July 7, (O.S.) 1738.

DEAR BROTHER,

GOD has given me at length the desire of my heart. I am with a Church whose conversation is in heaven, in whom is the mind that was in Christ, and who so walk as he walked. As they have all one Lord and one faith, so they are all partakers of one Spirit, the spirit of meekness and love, which uniformly and continually animates all their conversation. O how high and holy a thing Christianity is! and how widely distant from that (I know not what) which is so called; though it neither purifies the heart, nor renews the life after the image of our blessed Redeemer!

I grieve to think how that holy name by which we are called, must be blasphemed among the Heathen, while they see discontented Christians, passionate Christians, resentful Christians, earthly-minded Christians; yea, (to come to what we are apt to count small things,) while they see Christians

judging one another, ridiculing one another, speaking evil of one another, increasing, instead of bearing, one another's burdens. How bitterly would Julian have applied to these, "See, how these Christians love one another!" I know I myself, I doubt you sometimes, and my sister often, have been under this condemnation. O may God grant we may never more think to do Him service, by breaking those commands which are the very life of his religion! But may we utterly put away all anger, and wrath, and malice, and bitterness, and evil-speaking.

I was much concerned when my brother Charles once incidentally mentioned a passage that occurred at Tiverton: "Upon my offering to read," said he, "a chapter in the *Serious Call*, my sister said, 'Who do you read that to? Not to these young ladies, I presume; and your brother and I do not want it.'" Yes, my sister, I must tell you, in the spirit of love, and before God, who searcheth the heart, you do want it; you want it exceedingly. I know no one soul that wants to read, and consider deeply, so much the chapter of *Universal Love*, and that of *Intercession*. The character of *Susurrus* there, is your own. I should be false to God and you, did I not tell you so. O may it be so no longer; but may you love your neighbour as yourself, both in word and tongue, and in deed and truth!

I believe in a week Mr. Ingham and I shall set out for *Hernhuth*, about three hundred and fifty miles from hence. O pray for us, that God would sanctify to us all those precious opportunities, that we may be continually built up more and more in the spirit of power, and love, and of a sound mind!

I am, dear Brother,

Your most affectionate friend and brother.

XXII.—*To the Same.*

DEAR BROTHER,

LONDON, *October 30, 1738.*

THAT you will always receive kindly what is so intended, I doubt not. Therefore I again recommend the character of *Susurrus* both to you and my sister, as (whether real or feigned) striking at the root of a fault, of which both she and you were, I think, more guilty than any other two persons I have known in my life. O may God deliver both you and me from all bitterness and evil-speaking, as well as from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism!

With regard to my own character, and my doctrine likewise, I shall answer you very plainly. By a Christian, I mean one who so believes in Christ, as that sin hath no more dominion over him: And in this obvious sense of the word, I was not a Christian till May the 24th last past. For till then sin had the dominion over me, although I fought with it continually; but surely, then, from that time to this it hath not;—such is the free grace of God in Christ. What sins they were which till then reigned over me, and from which, by the grace of God, I am now free, I am ready to declare on the house-top, if it may be for the glory of God.

If you ask by what means I am made free, (though not perfect, neither infallibly sure of my perseverance,) I answer, By faith in Christ; by such a sort or degree of faith as I had not till that day. My desire of this faith I knew long before, though not so clearly till Sunday, January the 8th last, when being in the midst of the great deep, I wrote a few lines, in the bitterness of my soul, some of which I have transcribed; and may the good God sanctify them both to you and me!

By the most infallible of all proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced,

1. Of unbelief; having no such faith in Christ, as will prevent my heart's being troubled; which it could not be if I believed in God, and rightly believed also in him.

2. Of pride throughout my life past; inasmuch as I thought I had what I find I had not. Lord, save, or I perish! Save me,

(1.) By such a faith in thee and in thy Christ as implies trust, confidence, peace in life and in death.

(2.) By such humility as may fill my heart, from this hour for ever, with a piercing, uninterrupted sense, *Nihil est quod hactenus feci*;\* having evidently built without a foundation.

(3.) By such a recollection, that I may cry to thee every moment, but more especially when all is calm, (if it should so please thee,) “Give me faith, or I die! Give me a lowly spirit, otherwise, *mihî non sit suave vivere.*”† Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!  $\Upsilon\iota\epsilon\ \Delta\alpha\upsilon\iota\delta\delta,\ \epsilon\lambda\epsilon\eta\sigma\omicron\nu\ \mu\omicron\iota.$ ‡

\* What I have been hitherto doing amounts to nothing.—EDIT.

† May life itself no longer be pleasant to me.—EDIT.

‡ Son of David, have mercy upon me.—EDIT.

Some measure of this faith, which bringeth salvation, or victory over sin, and which implies peace, and trust in God through Christ, I now enjoy by his free mercy; though in very deed it is in me but as a grain of mustard-seed: For the *πληροφορια πισσεως*,—the seal of the Spirit, the love of God shed abroad in my heart, and producing joy in the Holy Ghost, “joy which no man taketh away, joy unspeakable and full of glory;” this witness of the Spirit I have not, but I patiently wait for it. I know many who have already received it; more than one or two in the very hour we were praying for it. And having seen and spoken with a cloud of witnesses abroad, as well as in my own country, I cannot doubt but that believers who wait and pray for it will find these scriptures fulfilled in themselves. My hope is, that they will be fulfilled in me: I build on Christ, the Rock of Ages; on his sure mercies described in his word, and on his promises, all which I know are yea, and amen. Those who have not yet received joy in the Holy Ghost, the love of God, and the plerophory of faith, (any or all of which I take to be the witness of the Spirit with our spirit, that we are the sons of God,) I believe to be Christians in that imperfect sense wherein I may call myself such; and I exhort them to pray that God would give them also “to rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” and to feel “His love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them.”

On men I build not, neither on Matilda Chipman’s word, whom I have not talked with five minutes in my life; nor on anything peculiar in the weak, well-meant relation of William Hervey, who yet is a serious, humble-acting Christian. But have you been building on these? Yes; I find them, more or less, in almost every letter you have written on the subject. Yet were all that has been said on “visions, dreams, and balls of fire,” to be fairly proposed in syllogisms, I believe it would not prove a jot more on one than on the other side of the question.

O brother, would to God you would leave disputing concerning the things which you know not, (if indeed you know them not,) and beg of God to fill up what is yet wanting in you! Why should not you also seek till you receive “that peace of God which passeth all understanding?” Who shall hinder you, notwithstanding the manifold temptations, from rejoicing “with joy unspeakable, by reason of

glory?" Amen! Lord Jesus! May you, and all who are near of kin to you, (if you have it not already,) feel his love shed abroad in your heart, by his Spirit which dwelleth in you; and be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of your inheritance.

I am

Yours and my sister's most affectionate brother.

XXIII.—*To the Same.*

*November 30, 1738.*

I BELIEVE every Christian who has not yet received it, should pray for the witness of God's Spirit with his spirit that he is a child of God. In being a child of God, the pardon of his sins is included; therefore I believe the Spirit of God will witness this also. That this witness is from God, the very terms imply; and this witness I believe is necessary for my salvation. How far invincible ignorance may excuse others, I know not. But this, you say, is delusive and dangerous, because it encourages and abets idle visions and dreams. It encourages,—true; accidentally, but not essentially. And that it does this accidentally, or that weak minds may pervert it to an idle use, is no objection against it; for so they may pervert every truth in the oracles of God; more especially that dangerous doctrine of Joel, cited by St. Peter: "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Such visions, indeed, as you mention are given up: Does it follow that visions and dreams in general "are bad branches of a bad root?" God forbid. This would prove more than you desire.

XXIV.—*To the Same.*

DEAR BROTHER,

BRISTOL, *May 10, 1739.*

THE having abundance of work upon my hands is only a cause of my not writing sooner. *The* cause was rather my unwillingness to continue an unprofitable dispute.

The Gospel promises to you and me, and our children, and all that are afar off, even as many of those whom the Lord our God shall call, as are not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, "the witness of God's Spirit with their spirit, that they are the children of God;" that they are

now, at this hour, all accepted in the Beloved; but it witnesses not that they shall be. It is an assurance of present salvation only; therefore, not necessarily perpetual, neither irreversible.

I am one of many witnesses of this matter of fact, that God does now make good this his promise daily, very frequently during a representation (how made I know not, but not to the outward eye) of Christ either hanging on the cross, or standing on the right hand of God. And this I know to be of God, because from that hour the person so affected is a new creature, both as to his inward tempers and outward life. "Old things are passed away; and all things become new."

A very late instance of this I will give you: While we were praying at a society here, on Tuesday the 1st instant, the power of God (so I call it) came so mightily among us, that one, and another, and another, fell down as thunder-struck. In that hour many that were in deep anguish of spirit, were all filled with peace and joy. Ten persons, till then in sin, doubt, and fear, found such a change, that sin had no more dominion over them; and instead of the spirit of fear, they are now filled with that of love, and joy, and a sound mind. A Quaker who stood by was very angry at them, and was biting his lips and knitting his brows, when the Spirit of God came upon him also, so that he fell down as one dead. We prayed over him, and he soon lifted up his head with joy, and joined with us in thanksgiving.

A bystander, one John Haydon, was quite enraged at this, and, being unable to deny something supernatural in it, laboured beyond measure to convince all his acquaintance, that it was a delusion of the devil. I was met in the street the next day by one who informed me that John Haydon was fallen raving mad. It seems he had sat down to dinner, but wanted first to make an end of a sermon he was reading. At the last page he suddenly changed colour, fell off his chair, and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground. I found him on the floor, the room being full of people, whom his wife would have kept away; but he cried out, "No; let them all come; let all the world see the just judgment of God." Two or three were holding him as well as they could. He immediately fixed his eyes on me, and said, "Ay, this is he I said deceived the people;

but God hath overtaken me. I said it was a delusion of the devil; but this is no delusion." Then he roared aloud, "O thou devil! Thou cursed devil! Yea, thou legion of devils! Thou canst not stay in me. Christ will cast thee out. I know his work is begun. Tear me to pieces if thou wilt. But thou canst not hurt me." He then beat himself again, and groaned again, with violent sweats, and heaving of the breast. We prayed with him, and God put a new song in his mouth. The words were, which he pronounced with a clear, strong voice, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made: We will rejoice and be glad in it. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from this time forth for evermore." I called again an hour after. We found his body quite worn out, and his voice lost. But his soul was full of joy and love, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

I am now in as good health (thanks be to God!) as I ever was since I remember, and I believe shall be so as long as I live; for I do not expect to have a lingering death. The reasons that induce me to think I shall not live long [enough to be] old are such as you would not apprehend to be of any weight. I am under no concern on this head. Let my Master see to it.

O may the God of love be with you and my sister more and more!

I am, dear brother,  
Your ever affectionate brother.

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XXV.—*To a Friend.*

DEAR SIR,

October 10, 1735.

I HAVE been hitherto unwilling to mention the grounds of my design of embarking for Georgia, for two reasons;—one, because they were such as I know few men would judge to be of any weight;—the other, because I was afraid of making favourable judges think of me above what they ought to think: And what a snare this must be to my own soul, I know by dear-bought experience.

But, on farther reflection, I am convinced that I ought to speak the truth with all boldness, even though it should appear foolishness to the world, as it has done from the

beginning; and that, whatever danger there is in doing the will of God, he will support me under it. In his name, therefore, and trusting in his defence, I shall plainly declare the thing as it is.

My chief motive, to which all the rest are subordinate, is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel of Christ by preaching it to the Heathen. They have no comments to construe away the text; no vain philosophy to corrupt it; no luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its unpleasing truths, to reconcile earthly-mindedness and faith, the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. They have no party, no interest to serve, and are therefore fit to receive the Gospel in its simplicity. They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God; and, consequently, they shall know of every doctrine I preach, whether it be of God. By these, therefore, I hope to learn the purity of that faith which was once delivered to the saints; the genuine sense and full extent of those laws which none can understand who mind earthly things.

A right faith will, I trust, by the mercy of God, open the way for a right practice; especially when most of those temptations are removed which here so easily beset me. Toward mortifying "the desire of the flesh," the desire of sensual pleasures, it will be no small thing to be able, without fear of giving offence, to live on water and the fruits of the earth. This simplicity of food will, I trust, be a blessed means, both of preventing my seeking that happiness in meats and drinks, which God designed should be found only in faith, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and will assist me to attain such purity of thought, as suits a candidate for the state wherein they are as the angels of God in heaven.

Neither is it a small thing to be delivered from so many occasions, as now surround me, of indulging "the desire of the eye." They here compass me in on every side; but an Indian hut affords no food for curiosity, no gratification of the desire of grand, or new, or pretty things:—Though, indeed, the cedars which God has planted round it may so gratify the eye as to better the heart, by lifting it to Him whose name alone is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth.

If by "the pride of life" we understand the pomp and

show of the world, that has no place in the wilds of America. If it mean pride in general, this, alas! has a place everywhere: Yet there are very uncommon helps against it, not only by the deep humility of the poor Heathens, fully sensible of their want of an instructor; but by that happy contempt which cannot fail to attend all who sincerely endeavour to instruct them, and which, continually increasing, will surely make them, in the end, as the filth and off-scouring of the world. Add to this, that nothing so convinces us of our own impotence, as a zealous attempt to convert our neighbour: Nor, indeed, till he does all he can for God, will any man feel that he can do nothing.

Further: A sin which easily besets me is, unfaithfulness to God in the use of speech. I know that this is a talent intrusted to me by my Lord, to be used, as all others, only for his glory. I know that all conversation which is not seasoned with salt, and designed at least to administer grace to the hearers, is expressly forbid by the Apostle, as "corrupt communication," and as "grieving the Holy Spirit of God;" yet I am almost continually betrayed into it, by the example of others striking in with my own bad heart. But, I hope, from the moment I leave the English shore, under the acknowledged character of a Teacher sent from God, there shall be no word heard from my lips but what properly flows from that character: As my tongue is a devoted thing, I hope from the first hour of this new era to use it only as such, that all who hear me may know of a truth, the words I speak are not mine, but His that sent me.

The same faithfulness I hope to show, through His grace, in dispensing the rest of my Master's goods, if it please him to send me to those who, like his first followers, have all things common. What a guard is here against that root of evil, the love of money, and all the vile attractions that spring from it! One in this glorious state, and perhaps none but he, may see the height and depth of the privilege of the first Christians, "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

I then hope to know what it is to love my neighbour as myself, and to feel the powers of that second motive to visit the Heathens, even the desire to impart to them what I have received,—a saving knowledge of the Gospel of Christ; but this I dare not think on yet. It is not for me, who have

been a grievous sinner from my youth up, and am yet laden with foolish and hurtful desires, to expect God should work so great things by my hands ; but I am assured, if I be once converted myself, he will then employ me both to strengthen my brethren, and to preach his name to the Gentiles, that the very ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God.

But you will perhaps ask, "Cannot you save your own soul in England, as well as in Georgia?" I answer, No ; neither can I hope to attain the same degree of holiness here, which I may there ; neither, if I stay here, knowing this, can I reasonably hope to attain any degree of holiness at all : For whoever, when two ways of life are proposed, prefers that which he is convinced in his own mind is less pleasing to God, and less conducive to the perfection of his soul, has no reason from the Gospel of Christ to hope that he shall ever please God at all, or receive from him that grace whereby alone he can attain any degree of Christian perfection.

To the other motive,—the hope of doing more good in America, it is commonly objected, that "there are Heathens enough in practice, if not theory, at home : Why, then, should you go to those in America?" Why, for a very plain reason : Because these Heathens have Moses and the Prophets, and those have not ; because these who have the Gospel trample upon it, and those who have it not earnestly call for it ; "therefore seeing these judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, I turn to the Gentiles."

If you object, further, the losses I must sustain in leaving my native country, I ask, Loss of what ? of anything I desire to keep ? No ; I shall still have food to eat, and raiment to put on ;—enough of such food as I choose to eat, and such raiment as I desire to put on ;—and if any man have a desire of other things, or of more food than he can eat, or more raiment than he can put on, let him know, that the greatest blessing that can possibly befall him, is, to be cut off from all occasions of gratifying those desires, which, unless speedily rooted out, will drown his soul in everlasting perdition.

"But what shall we say to the loss of parents, brethren, sisters, nay, of the friends which are as my own soul, of those who have so often lifted up my hands that hung down, and strengthened my feeble knees, by whom God hath often

enlightened my understanding, and warmed and enlarged my heart?" "What shall we say?" Why, that if you add the loss of life to the rest, so much the greater is the gain. For though "the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, the word of our God shall stand for ever;" saying, that when human instruments are removed, He, the Lord, will answer us by his own self. And the general answer which he hath already given us to all questions of this nature is, "Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath left father, or mother, or lands, for my sake, but shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life."

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XXVI.—*To Mr. Oglethorpe.*

SAVANNAH, *April 20, 1736.*

SAVANNAH never was so dear to me as now. I believe, knowing by whom I send, I may write as well as speak freely. I found so little either of the form or power of religion at Frederica, that I am sincerely glad I am removed from it. Surely, never was any place, no, not London itself, freer from one vice, I mean hypocrisy.

*O curvæ in terris animæ, et cælestium inanes! \**

"Jesus, Master, have mercy upon them!" There is none of those who did run well, whom I pity more than Mrs. Hawkins: Her treating me in such a manner would indeed have little affected me, had my own interests only been concerned. I have been used to be betrayed, scorned, and insulted, by those I had most laboured to serve. But when I reflect on her condition, my heart bleeds for her. Yet with Thee nothing is impossible!

With regard to one who ought to be dearer to me than her, I cannot but say, that the more I think of it, the more convinced I am that no one, without a virtual renouncing of the faith, can abstain from the public as well as the private worship of God. All the Prayers usually read morning and evening at Frederica and here, put together, do not last seven minutes. These cannot be termed long prayers: No Christian assembly ever used shorter: Neither have they any

\* O grovelling souls bent to the earth, and void of heavenly good!—*EDIT.*

repetitions in them at all. If I did not speak thus plainly to you, which I fear no one else in England or America will do, I should by no means be worthy to call myself, Sir,

Yours, &c.

XXVII.—*To the Same.*

SIR,

*February 24, 1737.*

You apprehended strong opposition before you went hence ; and, unless we are misinformed, you have found it. Yesterday morning I read a letter from London, wherein it was asserted that Sir Robert had turned against you ; that the Parliament was resolved to make a severe scrutiny into all that has been transacted here ; that the cry of the nation ran the same way ; and that even the Trustees were so far from acknowledging the service you have done, that they had protested your bills, and charged you with misapplying the moneys you had received, and with gross mismanagement of the power wherewith you was intrusted. Whether these things are so, or no, I know not ; for it is ill depending on a single evidence. But this I know, that if your scheme was drawn (which I shall not easily believe) from that first-born of hell, Nicholas Machiavel, as sure as there is a God that governs the earth, he will confound both it and you. If, on the contrary, (as I shall hope, till strong proof appear,) your heart was right before God, that it was your real design to promote the glory of God, by promoting peace and love among men ; let not your heart be troubled ; the God whom you serve is able to deliver you. Perhaps in some things you have shown you are but a man ; perhaps I myself may have a little to complain of : But O what a train of benefits have I received to lay in the balance against it ! I bless God that ever you was born. I acknowledge his exceeding mercy in casting me into your hands. I own your generous kindness all the time we were at sea : I am indebted to you for a thousand favours here. Why, then, the least I can say, is, Though all men should revile you, yet, if God shall strengthen me, will not I : Yea, were it not for the poor creatures whom you have as yet but half redeemed from their complicated misery, I could almost wish that you were forsaken of all ; that you might clearly see the difference between men of honour, and those who are, in the very lowest rank, the followers of Christ Jesus.

O where is the God of Elijah? Stir up thy strength, and come and help him! If the desire of his heart be to thy name, let all his enemies flee before him! Art thou not He who hast made him a father to the fatherless, a mighty deliverer to the oppressed? Hast thou not given him to be feet to the lame, hands to the helpless, eyes to the blind? Hath he ever withheld his bread from the hungry, or hid his soul from his own flesh? Then, whatever thou withholdest from him, O thou Lover of men, satisfy his soul with thy likeness; renew his heart in the whole image of thy Christ; purge his spirit from self-will, pride, vanity, and fill it with faith and love, gentleness and long-suffering. Let no guile ever be found in his mouth; no injustice in his hands! And, among all your labours of love, it becomes me earnestly to entreat Him, that He will not forget those you have gone through for, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant.

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XXVIII.—*To Mr. Hutcheson.*

*July 23, 1736.*

By what I have seen during my short stay here, I am convinced that I have long been under a great mistake, in thinking no circumstances could make it the duty of a Christian Priest to do anything else but preach the Gospel. On the contrary, I am now satisfied, that there is a possible case wherein a part of his time ought to be employed in what less directly conduces to the glory of God, and peace and good-will among men. And such a case, I believe, is that which now occurs; there being several things which cannot so effectually be done without me; and which, though not directly belonging to my ministry, yet are, by consequence, of the highest concern to the success of it. It is from this conviction that I have taken some pains to inquire into the great controversy now subsisting between Carolina and Georgia; and in examining and weighing the letters wrote, and the arguments urged, on both sides of the question. And I cannot but think that the whole affair might be clearly stated in few words. A Charter was passed a few years since, establishing the bounds of this province, and empowering the Trustees therein named to prepare

laws, which, when ratified by the King in Council, should be of force within those bounds. The Trustees have prepared a law, which has been so ratified, for the regulation of the Indian trade, requiring that none should trade with the Indians who are within this province, till he is so licensed as therein specified. Notwithstanding this law, the governing part of Carolina have asserted, both in conversation, in writing, and in the public newspapers, that it is lawful for any one not so licensed, to trade with the Creek, Cherokee, or Chicasaw Indians: They have passed an ordinance, not only asserting the same, but enacting that men and money shall be raised to support such traders; and in fact they have themselves licensed and sent up such traders, both to the Creek and Chicasaw Indians.

This is the plain matter of fact. Now, as to matter of right, when twenty more reams of paper have been spent upon it, I cannot but think it must come to this short issue at last: 1. Are the Creeks, Cherokees, and Chicasaws within the bounds of Georgia or no? 2. Is an Act of the King in Council, in pursuance of an Act of Parliament, of any force within these bounds, or not? That all other inquiries are absolutely foreign to the question, a very little consideration will show. As to the former of these, the Georgian Charter, compared with any map of these parts which I have ever seen, determines it: The latter I never heard made a question of, but in the neighbourhood of Carolina.

Mr. Johnson's brother has been with us some days. I have been twice in company with him at Mr. Oglethorpe's; and I hope there are in Carolina, though the present proceeding would almost make one doubt it, many such gentlemen as he seems to be; men of good nature, good manners, and understanding. I hope God will repay you seven-fold for the kindness you have shown to my poor mother, and in her to, Sir,

Your most obliged, most obedient servant.

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XXIX.—*To Mr. Vernon.*

*July, 1736.*

As short a time as I have for writing, I could not pardon myself, if I did not spend some part of it in acknow-

ledging the continuance of your goodness to my mother; which indeed neither she nor I can ever lose the sense of.

The behaviour of the people of Carolina finds much conversation for this place. I dare not say, whether they want honesty or logic most: It is plain a very little of the latter, added to the former, would show how utterly foreign to the point in question all their voluminous defences are. Here is an Act of the King in Council, passed in pursuance of an Act of Parliament, forbidding unlicensed persons to trade with the Indians in Georgia. Nothing therefore can justify them in sending unlicensed traders to the Creek, Cherokee, and Chicasaw Indians, but the proving either that this Act is of no force, or that those Indians are not in Georgia. Why then are these questions so little considered by them, and others so largely discussed? I fear, for a very plain, though not a very honest, reason; that is, to puzzle the cause. I sincerely wish you all happiness in time and in eternity, and am,

Sir, &c.

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XXX.—*To Mr. —, of Lincoln College.*

SAVANNAH, AMERICA, February 16, 1736-7.

DEAR SIR,

MR. INGHAM has left Savannah for some months, and lives at a house built for him a few miles hence, near the Indian town. I have now no fellow-labourer but Mr. Delamotte, who has taken the charge of between thirty and forty children. There is therefore great need that God should put it into the hearts of some to come over to us, and labour with us in his harvest. But I should not desire any to come, unless on the same views and conditions with us,—without any temporal wages, other than food and raiment, the plain conveniences of life. For one or more, in whom was this mind, there would be full employment in the province, either in assisting Mr. Delamotte or me, while we were present here, or in supplying our places when abroad, or in visiting the poor people in the smaller settlements, as well as at Frederica, all of whom are as sheep without a shepherd.

By these labours of love might any that desired it be

trained up for the harder task of preaching the Gospel to the Heathen. The difficulties he must then encounter, God only knows; probably martyrdom would conclude them; but those we have hitherto met with have been small, and only terrible at a distance. Persecution, you know, is the portion of every follower of Christ, wherever his lot is cast; but it has hitherto extended no farther than words with regard to us; (unless in one or two inconsiderable instances;) yet it is sure, every man ought, if he would come hither, to be willing and ready to embrace (if God should see good) the severer kinds of it. He ought to be determined not only to leave parents, sisters, friends, houses, and land, for his Master's sake, but to take up his cross too, and cheerfully submit to the fatigue and danger of (it may be) a long voyage, and patiently to endure the continual contradiction of sinners, and all the inconveniences which it often occasions.

Would any one have a trial of himself, how he can bear this? If he has felt what reproach is, and can bear that for but a few weeks as he ought, I shall believe he need fear nothing. Other trials will afterwards be no heavier than that little one was at first; so that he may then have a well-grounded hope, that he will be enabled to do all things through Christ strengthening him.

May the God of peace himself direct you to all things conducive to his glory, whether it be by fitter instruments, or even by

Your friend and servant in Christ.

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XXXI.—*To Mrs. Chapman.*

*March 29, 1737.*

TRUE friendship is doubtless stronger than death, else yours could never have subsisted still in spite of all opposition, and even after thousands of miles are interposed between us. In the last proof you gave of it, there are a few things which I think it lies on me to mention: As to the rest, my brother is the proper person to clear them up, as I suppose he has done long ago.

You seem to apprehend, that I believe religion to be inconsistent with cheerfulness, and with a sociable, friendly

temper. So far from it, that I am convinced, as true religion or holiness cannot be without cheerfulness, so steady cheerfulness, on the other hand, cannot be without holiness or true religion. And I am equally convinced, that religion has nothing sour, austere, unsociable, unfriendly in it; but, on the contrary, implies the most winning sweetness, the most amiable softness and gentleness. Are you for having as much cheerfulness as you can? So am I. Do you endeavour to keep alive your taste for all the truly innocent pleasures of life? So do I likewise. Do you refuse no pleasure but what is a hinderance to some greater good, or has a tendency to some evil? It is my very rule; and I know no other by which a sincere reasonable Christian can be guided. In particular, I pursue this rule in eating, which I seldom do without much pleasure. And this I know is the will of God concerning me; that I should enjoy every pleasure that leads to my taking pleasure in him, and in such a measure as most leads to it. I know that, as to every action which is naturally pleasing, it is his will that it should be so; therefore, in taking that pleasure so far as it tends to this end, (of taking pleasure in God,) I do his will. Though, therefore, that pleasure be in some sense distinct from the love of God, yet is the taking of it by no means distinct from his will. No; you say yourself, It is his will I should take it. And here, indeed, is the hinge of the question, which I had once occasion to state in a letter to you; and more largely in a sermon, On the Love of God. If you will read over those, I believe you will find, you differ from Mr. Law and me in words only. You say, the pleasures you plead for are distinct from the love of God, as the cause from the effect. Why, then, they tend to it; and those which are only thus distinct from it no one excepts against. The whole of what he affirms, and that not on the authority of men, but from the words and example of God incarnate, is, There is one thing needful,—to do the will of God; and his will is our<sup>d</sup> sanctification: Our renewal in the image of God, in faith and love, in all holiness and happiness. On this we are to fix our single eye, at all times, and in all places; for so did our Lord. This one thing we are to do; for so did our fellow-servant, Paul, after his example: “Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God.” In other words, we are to do

nothing but what, directly or indirectly, leads to our holiness, which is his glory; and to do every such thing with this design, and in such a measure as may most promote it.

I am not mad, my dear friend, for asserting these to be the words of truth and soberness; neither are any of those, either in England or here, who have hitherto attempted to follow me. I am and must be an example to my flock; not, indeed, in my prudential rules, but, in some measure, (if, giving God the glory, I may dare to say so,) in my spirit, and life, and conversation. Yet all of them are, in your sense of the word, unlearned, and most of them of low understanding; and still, not one of them has been as yet entangled in any case of conscience which was not solved. And as to the nice distinctions you speak of, it is you, my friend, it is the wise, the learned, the disputers of this world, who are lost in them, and bewildered more and more, the more they strive to extricate themselves. We have no need of nice distinctions; for I exhort all, dispute with none. I feed my brethren in Christ, as He giveth me power, with the pure, unmixed milk of his word. And those who are as little children receive it, not as the word of man, but as the word of God. Some grow thereby, and advance apace in peace and holiness: They grieve, it is true, for those who did run well, but are now turned back; and they fear for themselves, lest they also be tempted; yet, through the mercy of God, they despair not, but have still a good hope that they shall endure to the end. Not that this hope has any resemblance to enthusiasm, which is a hope to attain the end without the means: This they know is impossible, and therefore ground their hope on a constant, careful use of all the means. And, if they keep in this way, with lowliness, patience, and meekness of resignation, they cannot carry the principle of pressing toward perfection too far. O may you and I carry it far enough! Be fervent in spirit. "Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks." Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. Abound more and more in all holiness, and in zeal for every good word and work.

XXXII.—*To the Rev. William Law.**Lincoln College, OXON., June 26, 1734.*

REVEREND SIR,

I MUST earnestly beg your immediate advice, in a case of the greatest importance. Above two years since, I was intrusted with a young gentleman of good sense, and even generous temper, and pretty good learning. Religion he had heard little of; but Mr. Jackson's "Practice of Devotion," your two treatises, and Thomas à Kempis, by the blessing of God, awakened him, by degrees, to a true notion and serious practice of it. In this he continued sensibly improving till last Lent; at the beginning of which, I advised him to do as he had done the year before, namely, to obey the order of the Church, by using such a sort and measure of abstinence as his health permitted, and his spiritual wants required. He said he did not think his health would permit to use that abstinence which he did the year before. And, notwithstanding my reply, that his athletic habit could be in no danger by only abstaining from flesh, and using moderately some less pleasing food, he persisted in his resolution of not altering his food at all. A little before Easter, perceiving he had much contracted the time he had till then set apart for religious reading, I asked him whether he was not himself convinced that he spent too much time in reading secular authors. He answered, he was convinced any time was too much; and that he should be a better Christian, if he never read them at all. I then pressed him earnestly to pray for strength, according to that conviction; and he resolved to try for a week. When that was expired, he said his desire of classical reading was not inflamed, but a little abated: Upon which, I begged him to repeat his resolution for a week or two longer. He said, it signified nothing; for he could never part with the classics entirely. I desired him to read that which you say in the "Christian Perfection," on reading vain authors. He readily agreed to every word of it, but still, in his practice, denied it; though appearing, in most other particulars, an humble, active, zealous Christian. On Tuesday, April 3, being one of the days the statutes require us to communicate at St. Mary's, I called upon him just before church, being to set out for Lincolnshire as soon as the service was over. I asked

whether he still halted between two opinions; and, after exhorting him as I could to renounce himself, and serve his Master with simplicity, I left him. He did not communicate that day. On my return, May 21, I immediately inquired what state he was in, and found he had never communicated since, which he used to do weekly; that he had left off rising early, visiting the poor, and almost all religious reading, and entirely given himself up to secular. When I asked him why he had left off the holy eucharist, he said fairly, because to partake of it implied a fresh promise to renounce himself entirely, and to please God alone; and he did not design to do so. I asked whether he was well convinced he ought to do so. He said, "Yes." Whether he wished he could design it. He answered, No, he did not desire it.

From time to time, particularly a few days ago, I wished him to tell me upon what he grounded his hope of salvation. He replied, after some pause, that "Christ died for all men; but if none were saved by him without performing the conditions, his death would not avail one in a thousand, which was inconsistent with the goodness of God." But this answer, and every part of it, he soon gave up; adding, with the utmost seriousness, that he cared not whether it was true or no; he was very happy at present, and he desired nothing further.

This morning I again asked him what he thought of his own state. He said he thought nothing about it. I desired to know whether he could, if he considered it ever so little, expect to be saved by the terms of the Christian covenant. He answered, he did not consider it at all: Nor did all I could say in the least move him. He assented to all, but was affected with nothing. He grants, with all composure, that he is not in a salvable state, and shows no degree of concern, while he owns he cannot find mercy.

I am now entirely at a loss what step to take: Pray he cannot, or will not. When I lent him several prayers, he returned them unused, saying, he does not desire to be otherwise than he is, and why should he pray for it? I do not seem so much as to understand his distemper. It appears to me quite incomprehensible. Much less can I tell what remedies are proper for it. I therefore beseech you, Sir, by the mercies of God, that you would not be slack,

according to the ability He shall give, to advise and pray for him; and am,

Reverend Sir,  
Your most obliged servant.

XXXIII.—*To the Same.*

REVEREND SIR,

May 14, 1738.

IT is in obedience to what I think to be the call of God, that I, who have the sentence of death in my own soul, take upon me to write to you, of whom I have often desired to learn the first elements of the Gospel of Christ.

If you are born of God, you will approve of the design, though it may be but weakly executed. If not, I shall grieve for you, not for myself. For as I seek not the praise of men, so neither regard I the contempt either of you or of any other.

For two years (more especially) I have been preaching after the model of your two practical treatises; and all that heard have allowed, that the law is great, wonderful, and holy. But no sooner did they attempt to fulfil it, but they found that it is too high for man: And that by doing "the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified."

To remedy this, I exhorted them, and stirred up myself, to pray earnestly for the grace of God, and to use all the other means of obtaining that grace, which the all-wise God hath appointed. But still, both they and I were more and more convinced, that this is a law by which a man cannot live; the law in our members continually warring against it, and bringing us into deeper captivity to the law of sin.

Under this heavy yoke I might have groaned till death, had not a holy man, to whom God lately directed me, upon my complaining thereof, answered at once, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all thy heart, and nothing shall be impossible to thee. This faith, indeed, as well as the salvation it brings, is the free gift of God. But seek, and thou shalt find. Strip thyself naked of thy own works, and thy own righteousness, and fly to him. For whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out."

Now, Sir, suffer me to ask, How will you answer it to our common Lord, that you never gave me this advice? Did you never read the Acts of the Apostles, or the answer of

Paul to him who said, "What must I do to be saved?" Or are you wiser than he? Why did I scarce ever hear you name the name of Christ? never, so as to ground anything upon "faith in his blood?" Who is this who is laying another foundation? If you say, you advised other things as preparatory to this; what is this, but laying a foundation below the foundation? Is not Christ then the first, as well as the last? If you say you advised them because you knew that I had faith already, verily you knew nothing of me; you discerned not my spirit at all. I know that I had not faith, unless the faith of a devil, the faith of Judas, that speculative, notional, airy shadow, which lives in the head, not in the heart. But what is this to the living, justifying faith in the blood of Jesus? the faith that cleanseth from sin; that gives us to have free access to the Father; to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" to have "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" which dwelleth in us; and "the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God?"

I beseech you, Sir, by the mercies of God, to consider deeply and impartially, whether the true reason of your never pressing this upon me was not this,—that you had it not yourself? whether that man of God was not in the right, who gave this account of a late interview he had with you?—"I began speaking to him of faith in Christ: He was silent. Then he began to speak of mystical matters. I spake to him of faith in Christ again: He was silent. Then he began to speak of mystical matters again. I saw his state at once." And a very dangerous one, in his judgment, whom I know to have the Spirit of God.

Once more, Sir, let me beg you to consider, whether your extreme roughness, and morose and sour behaviour, at least on many occasions, can possibly be the fruit of a living faith in Christ? If not, may the God of peace and love fill up what is yet wanting in you!

I am, Reverend Sir,  
Your humble servant.

XXXIV.—*To the Same.*

REVEREND SIR,

May 30, 1738.

I SINCERELY thank you for a favour I did not expect, and presume to trouble you once more.

How I have preached all my life,—how qualified or unqualified I was to correct a translation of Kempis, and to translate a preface to it,—whether I have now, or how long I have had, a living faith,—whether Peter Böhler spoke truth in what he said, when two others were present besides me,—are circumstances on which the main question does not turn, which is this and no other: “Whether you ever advised me, or directed me to books that did advise me, to seek first a living faith in the blood of Christ; and that thereby alone I could be justified.”

You appeal to three facts to prove that you did: 1. That you put into my hands “*Theologia Germanica*.” 2. That you published an answer to “*The plain Account of the Sacrament*.” And, 3. That you are governed through all that you have written and done by these two fundamental maxims of our Lord: “Without me ye can do nothing;” and, “If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me.”

The facts I allow, but not the consequence. In “*Theologia Germanica*,” I remember something of Christ our Pattern, but nothing express of Christ our Atonement. The answer to “*The plain Account of the Sacrament*” I believe to be an excellent book, but not so as to affect the main question. Those two maxims may imply, but do not express, the thing itself,—“He is our propitiation, through faith in his blood.”

But how are you “chargeable with my not having had this faith!” If you intimate, that you discerned my spirit, then you are chargeable thus: 1. You did not tell me plainly I had it not. 2. You never once advised me to seek or to pray for it. 3. Your advice to me was only proper for such as had faith already; advices which led me further from it, the closer I adhered to them. 4. You recommended books to me which had no tendency to this faith, but a direct one to destroy good works.

However, “Let the fault be divided,” you say, “between me and Kempis.” No; if I understood Kempis wrong, it was your part, who discerned my spirit, and saw my mistake, to have explained him, and to have set me right.

I ask pardon, Sir, if I have said anything inconsistent with the obligations I owe you, and the respect I bear to your character.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient servant.

XXXV.—*To Count Zinzendorf, at Marienborn.*

MAY our gracious Lord, who counteth whatsoever is done to the least of his brethren as done to himself, return seven-fold to you and the Countess, and to all the brethren, the kindnesses you did to us! It would have been a great satisfaction to me, if I could have spent more time with the Christians who love one another. But that could not be now; my Master having called me to work in another part of his vineyard. Nor did I return hither at all before the time; for though a great door and effectual had been opened, the adversaries had laid so many stumbling-blocks before it, that the weak were daily turned out of the way. Numberless misunderstandings had arisen, by means of which the way of truth was much blasphemed: And thence had sprung anger, clamour, bitterness, evil-speaking, envyings, strifes, railings, evil surmises; whereby the enemy had gained such an advantage over the little flock, that “of the rest durst no man join himself to them.”

But it has now pleased our blessed Master to remove, in great measure, these rocks of offence. The word of the Lord again runs and is glorified; and his work goes on and prospers. Great multitudes are everywhere awakened, and cry out, “What must we do to be saved?” Many of them see that there is only one name under heaven whereby they can be saved: And more and more of those who seek it, find salvation in his name: And these are of one heart and one soul. They all love one another, and are knit together in one body and one spirit, as in one faith and one hope of their calling. The love and zeal of our brethren in Holland and Germany, particularly at Hernhuth, has stirred up many among us, who will not be comforted till they also partake of the great and precious promises. I hope, if God permit, to see them at least once more, were it only to give them the fruit of my love, the speaking freely on a few things which I did not approve, perhaps because I did not understand them. May our merciful Lord give you a right judgment in all things, and make you to abound more and more in all lowliness and meekness, in all simplicity and godly sincerity, in all watchfulness and seriousness; in a word,—in all faith and love, particularly to those that are without; till you are merciful, as your Father which is in

heaven is merciful! I desire your constant and earnest prayers, that he would vouchsafe me a portion of the same spirit.

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XXXVI.—*To the Church of God which is in Hernhuth, JOHN WESLEY, an unworthy Presbyter of the Church of God in England, wisheth all grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

October 14, 1738.

GLORY be to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his unspeakable gift! for giving me to be an eye-witness of your faith, and love, and holy conversation in Christ Jesus! I have borne testimony thereof with all plainness of speech, in many parts of Germany, and thanks have been given to God by many on your behalf.

We are endeavouring here also, by the grace which is given us, to be followers of you, as ye are of Christ. Fourteen were added to us, since our return, so that we have now eight bands of men, consisting of fifty-six persons; all of whom seek for salvation only in the blood of Christ. As yet we have only two small bands of women; the one of three, the other of five persons. But here are many others who only wait till we have leisure to instruct them, how they may most effectually build up one another in the faith and love of Him who gave himself for them.

Though my brother and I are not permitted to preach in most of the churches in London, yet (thanks be to God!) there are others left, wherein we have liberty to speak the truth as it is in Jesus. Likewise every evening, and on set evenings in the week at two several places, we publish the word of reconciliation, sometimes to twenty or thirty, sometimes to fifty or sixty, sometimes to three or four hundred persons, met together to hear it. We begin and end all our meetings with singing and prayer; and we know that our Lord heareth our prayer, having more than once or twice (and this was not done in a corner) received our petitions in that very hour.

Nor hath he left himself without other witnesses of his grace and truth. Ten Ministers I know now in England, who lay the right foundation, "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Over and above whom I have found one

Anabaptist, and one, if not two, of the Teachers among the Presbyterians here, who, I hope, love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and teach the way of God in truth.

O cease not, ye that are highly favoured, to beseech our Lord that he would be with us even to the end; to remove that which is displeasing in his sight, to support that which is weak among us, to give us the whole mind that was in him, and teach us to walk even as he walked! And may the very God of peace fill up what is wanting in your faith, and build you up more and more in all lowliness of mind, in all plainness of speech, in all zeal and watchfulness; that He may present you to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that ye may be holy and unblamable in the day of his appearing.

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XXXVII.—*To the Bishop of Bristol.*

MY LORD,

October 13, 1741.

SEVERAL persons have applied to me for baptism. It has pleased God to make me instrumental in their conversion. This has given them such a prejudice for me, that they desire to be received into the Church by my ministry. They choose likewise to be baptized by immersion, and have engaged me to give your Lordship notice, as the Church requires.

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XXXVIII.—*To Mr. John Smith.\**

SIR,

September 28, 1745.

1. I WAS determined, from the time I received yours, to answer it as soon as I should have opportunity. But it was

\* The person who addressed a series of letters to Mr. Wesley in manuscript under the assumed name of John Smith, and to whom the following answers were directed, there is reason to believe, was Dr. Thomas Secker, at that time Bishop of Oxford, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. Secker was born in 1693. The writer of these letters says, "I was confirmed about the age of fourteen. What childish apprehensions I might have had before that time I cannot well say, but for about forty years since," &c.—These two periods added together will give us fifty-four years, or rather fifty-three, from his word "about." Let this be added to 1693, the year of Secker's birth, and it gives us 1746, the exact date of his letter. His letters are given entire in the Appendix to Moore's Life of Mr. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 475, &c.; and some account of the correspondence will be found in the same volume, p. 95, &c.—EDIT.

the longer delayed, because I could not persuade myself to write at all, till I had leisure to write fully. And this I hope to do now, though I know you not, no, not so much as your name. But I take for granted you are a person that fears God, and that speaks the real sentiments of his heart. And on this supposition I shall speak, without any suspicion or reserve.

2. I am exceedingly obliged by the pains you have taken to point out to me what you think to be mistakes. It is a truly Christian attempt, an act of brotherly love, which I pray God to repay sevenfold into your bosom. Methinks I can scarce look upon such a person, on one who is "a contender for truth and not for victory," whatever opinion he may entertain of me, as an adversary at all. For what is friendship, if I am to account him my enemy who endeavours to open my eyes, or to amend my heart?

I. 3. You will give me leave (writing as a friend rather than a disputant) to invert the order of your objections, and to begin with the third, because, I conceive, it may be answered in fewest words. The substance of it is this: "If in fact you can work such signs and wonders as were wrought by the Apostles, then you are entitled (notwithstanding what I might otherwise object) to the implicit faith due to one of that order." A few lines after you cite a case related in the Third Journal, page 88,\* and add: "If you prove this to be the fact, to the satisfaction of wise and good men, then I believe no wise and good men will oppose you any longer. Let me therefore rest it upon your conscience, either to prove this matter of fact, or to retract it. If upon mature examination it shall appear that designing people imposed upon you, or that hysterical women were imposed upon themselves, acknowledge your zeal outran your wisdom."

4. Surely I would. But what, if on such examination it shall appear that there was no imposition of either kind?—to be satisfied of which, I waited three years before I told the story. What, if it appear by the only method which I can conceive, the deposition of three or four eye and ear witnesses, that the matter of fact was just as it is there related, so far as men can judge from their eyes and ears; will it follow, that I am entitled to demand the implicit faith which was due to an Apostle? By no means. Nay, I know

\* Vol. I., p. 231, of the present edition.—EDIT.

not that implicit faith was due to any or all of the Apostles put together. They were to prove their assertions by the written word. You and I are to do the same. Without such proof I ought no more to have believed St. Peter himself, than St. Peter's pretended successor.

5. I conceive, therefore, this whole demand, common as it is, of proving our doctrine by miracles, proceeds from a double mistake: (1.) A supposition, that what we preach is not provable from Scripture;—for if it be, what need we farther witnesses? “To the law and to the testimony!” (2.) An imagination, that a doctrine not provable by Scripture might nevertheless be proved by miracles. I believe not. I receive the written word as the whole and sole rule of my faith.

II. 6. Perhaps what you object to my phraseology may be likewise answered in few words. I throughly agree, that it is best to “use the most common words, and that in the most obvious sense;” and have been diligently labouring after this very thing for little less than twenty years. I am not conscious of using any uncommon word, or any word in an uncommon sense; but I cannot call those uncommon words which are the constant language of holy writ. These I purposely use; desiring always to express Scripture sense in Scripture phrase. And this I apprehend myself to do, when I speak of salvation as a present thing. How often does our Lord himself do thus! how often his Apostles, St. Paul particularly! Insomuch that I doubt whether we can find six texts in the New Testament, perhaps not three, where it is otherwise taken.

7. The term “faith” I likewise use in the scriptural sense, meaning thereby “the evidence of things not seen.” And, that it is scriptural, appears to me a sufficient defence of any way of speaking whatever. For however the propriety of those expressions may vary which occur in the writings of men, I cannot but think those which are found in the book of God will be equally proper in all ages. But let us look back, as you desire, to the age of the Apostles. And if it appear that the state of religion now is, according to your own representation of it, the same, in substance, as it was then, it will follow that the same expressions are just as proper now, as they were in the apostolic age.

8. “At the time of the first preaching of the Gospel,” (as

you justly observe,) "both Jews and Gentiles were very negligent of internal holiness, but laid great stress on external rites, and certain actions, which if they performed according to the due forms of their respective religions, they doubted not but those works would render them acceptable to God. The Apostles therefore thought they could not express themselves too warmly against so wicked a persuasion, and often declare that we cannot be made righteous by works; (that is, not by such outward works as were intended to commute for inward holiness;) but 'by faith in Christ;' that is, by becoming Christians both in principle and practice."

9. I have often thought the same thing, namely, that the Apostles used the expression, "salvation by faith," (importing inward holiness by the knowledge of God,) in direct opposition to the then common persuasion of salvation by works; that is, going to heaven by outward works, without any inward holiness at all.

10. And is not this persuasion as common now as it was in the time of the Apostles? We must needs go out of the world, or we cannot doubt it. Does not every one of our churches (to speak a sad truth) afford us abundant instances of those who are as negligent of internal holiness, as either the Jews or ancient Gentiles were? And do not these at this day lay so great a stress on certain external rites, that, if they perform them according to the due forms of their respective communities, they doubt not but those works will render them acceptable to God? You and I therefore cannot express ourselves too warmly against so wicked a persuasion; nor can we express ourselves against it in more proper terms than those the Apostles used to that very end.

It cannot be denied that this apostolical language is also the language of our own Church. But I wave this. What is scriptural in any Church, I hold fast: For the rest, I let it go.

III. 11. But the main point remains: You think the doctrines I hold are not founded on holy writ. Before we inquire into this, I would just touch on some parts of that abstract of them which you have given.

"Faith (instead of being a rational assent and moral virtue, for the attainment of which men ought to yield the utmost attention and industry) is altogether supernatural,

and the immediate gift of God." I believe, (1.) That a rational assent to the truth of the Bible is one ingredient of Christian faith. (2.) That Christian faith is a moral virtue in that sense wherein hope and charity are. (3.) That men ought to yield the utmost attention and industry for the attainment of it. And yet, (4.) That this, as every Christian grace, is properly supernatural, is an immediate gift of God, which he commonly gives in the use of such means as he hath ordained.

I believe it is generally given in an instant; but not arbitrarily, in your sense of the word; not without any regard to the fitness (I should say, the previous qualifications) of the recipient.

12. "When a man is pardoned, it is immediately notified to him by the Holy Ghost, and that (not by his imperceptibly working a godly assurance, but) by such attestation as is easily discernible from reason or fancy."

I do not deny that God imperceptibly works in some a gradually increasing assurance of his love; but I am equally certain, he works in others a full assurance thereof in one moment. And I suppose, however this godly assurance be wrought, it is easily discernible from bare reason, or fancy.

"Upon this infallible notification he is saved, is become perfect, so that he cannot commit sin."

I do not say, this notification is infallible in that sense, that none believe they have it, who indeed have it not, neither do I say that a man is perfect in love, the moment he is born of God by faith. But even then, I believe, if he keepeth himself, he doth not commit (outward) sin.

13. "This first sowing of the first seed of faith, you cannot conceive to be other than instantaneous, (ordinarily,) whether you consider experience, or the word of God, or the very nature of the thing. Whereas all these appear to me to be against you. To begin with experience: I believe myself to have as steady a faith in a pardoning God as you can have; and yet I do not remember the exact day when it was first given."

Perhaps not. Yours may be another of those exempt cases, which were allowed before.

But "the experience," you say, "of all the pious persons" you "are acquainted with, is the very same with" yours. You will not be displeased with my speaking freely. How

many truly pious persons are you so intimately acquainted with, as to be able to interrogate them on the subject? with twenty? with ten? If so, you are far happier than I was for many years at Oxford. You will naturally ask, with how many truly pious persons am I acquainted, on the other hand. I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not: I am acquainted<sup>r</sup> with more than twelve or thirteen hundred persons, whom I believe to be truly pious, and not on slight grounds, and who have severally testified to me with their own mouths that they do know the day when the love of God was first shed abroad in their hearts, and when his Spirit first witnessed with their spirits, that they were the children of God. Now, if you are determined to think all these liars or fools, this is no evidence to you; but to me it is strong evidence, who have for some years known the men and their communication.

14. As to the word of God, you well observe, "We are not to frame doctrines by the sound of particular texts, but the general tenor of Scripture, soberly studied and consistently interpreted." Touching the instances you give, I would just remark, (1.) To have sin, is one thing; to commit sin, is another. (2.) In one particular text it is said, "Ye are saved by hope;" perhaps in one more, (though I remember it not,) "Ye are saved by repentance, or holiness." But the general tenor of Scripture, consistently interpreted, declares, "We are saved by faith." (3.) Will either the general tenor of Scripture, or your own conscience, allow you to say that faith is the gift of God in no other or higher sense than riches are? (4.) I entirely agree with you that the children of light walk by the joint light of reason, Scripture, and the Holy Ghost.

15. "But the word of God appears to" you "to be manifestly against such an instantaneous giving of faith; because it speaks of growth in grace and faith as owing to the slow methods of instruction." So do I. But this is not the question. We are speaking, not of the progress, but of the first rise, of faith. "It directs the gentle instilling of faith, by long labour and pious industry." Not the first instilling; and we speak not now of the continuance or increase of it. "It compares even God's part of the work to the slow produce of vegetables, that, while one plants and another waters, it is God all the while who goes on giving

the increase." Very true. But the seed must first be sown, before it can increase at all. Therefore, all the texts which relate to the subsequent increase are quite wide of the present question.

Perhaps your thinking the nature of the thing to be so clearly against me may arise from your not clearly apprehending it. That you do not, I gather from your own words: "It is the nature of faith to be a full and practical assent to truth." Surely no. This definition does in nowise express the nature of Christian faith. Christian saving faith is a divine conviction of invisible things; a supernatural conviction of the things of God, with a filial confidence in his love. Now, a man may have a full assent to the truth of the Bible, (probably attained by the slow steps you mention,) yea, an assent which has some influence on his practice, and yet not have one grain of this faith.

16. I should be glad to know to which writings in particular of the last age you would refer me, for a thorough discussion of the Calvinistical points. I want to have those points fully settled; having seen so little yet wrote on the most important of them, with such clearness and strength as one would desire.

17. I think your following objections do not properly come under any of the preceding heads: "Your doctrine of momentaneous illapse, &c., is represented by your adversaries as singular and unscriptural; and that these singularities are your most beloved opinions and favourite tenets, more insisted upon by you than the general and uncontroverted truths of Christianity: This is their charge." And so, I doubt, it will be to the end of the world: For, in spite of all I can say, they will represent one circumstance of my doctrine (so called) as the main substance of it. It nothing avails, that I declare again and again, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." I believe this love is given in a moment. But about this I contend not. Have this love, and it is enough. For this I will contend till my spirit returns to God. Whether I am singular or no, in thinking this love is instantaneously given, this is not my "most beloved opinion." You greatly wrong me when you advance that charge. Nay, I love, strictly speaking, no opinion at all. I trample upon opinion, be it right or wrong. I want, I value, I preach, the love of God and man. These are my

“favourite tenets,” (if you will have the word,) “more insisted on” by me ten times over, both in preaching and writing, than any or all other subjects that ever were in the world.

18. You will observe, I do not say (and who is there that can ?) that I have no singular opinion at all ; but this I say, that, in my general tenor of preaching, I teach nothing, as the substance of religion, more singular than the love of God and man : And it was for preaching this very doctrine, (before I preached or knew salvation by faith,) that several of the Clergy forbade me their pulpits.

“But if it be notorious, that you are frequently insisting on controverted opinions.” If it be, even this will not prove the charge ; namely, “that those are my most beloved opinions, and more insisted upon by me, than the uncontroverted truths of Christianity.”

“No singularities,” is not my answer ; but that no singularities are my most beloved opinions ; that no singularities are more, or near so much, insisted on by me, as the general, uncontroverted truths of Christianity.

19. “Another objection,” you say, “I have to make to your manner of treating your antagonists. You seem to think you sufficiently answer your adversary, if you put together a number of naked scriptures that sound in your favour. But remember, the question between you and them is, not whether such words are Scripture, but whether they are to be so interpreted.”

You surprise me ! I take your word, else I should never have imagined you had read over the latter Appeal ; so great a part of which is employed in this very thing, in fighting my ground, inch by inch ; in proving, not that such words are Scripture, but that they must be interpreted in the manner there set down.

20. One point more remains, which you express in these words : “When your adversaries tax you with differing from the Church, they cannot be supposed to charge you with differing from the Church as it was a little after the Reformation, but as it is at this day. And when you profess great deference and veneration for the Church of England, you cannot be supposed to profess it for the Church and its Pastors in the year 1545, and not rather in the year 1745. If, then, by ‘the Church of England’ be meant (as ought to

be meant) the present Church, it will be no hard matter to show that your doctrines differ widely from the doctrines of the Church."

Well, how blind was I! I always supposed, till the very hour I read these words, that when I was charged with differing from the Church, I was charged with differing from the Articles or Homilies. And for the compilers of these, I can sincerely profess great deference and veneration. But I cannot honestly profess any veneration at all for those Pastors of the present age, who solemnly subscribe to those Articles and Homilies which they do not believe in their hearts. Nay, I think, unless I differ from these men (be they Bishops, Priests, or Deacons) just as widely as they do from those Articles and Homilies, I am no true Church-of-England man.

Agreeably to those ancient records, by "Christian" or "justifying faith" I always meant, faith preceded by repentance, and accompanied or followed by obedience. So I always preached; so I spoke and wrote. But my warm adversaries, from the very beginning, stopped their ears, cried out, "An heretic! An heretic!" and so ran upon me at once.

21. But I let them alone: You are the person I want, and whom I have been seeking for many years. You have understanding to discern, and mildness to repeat, (what would otherwise be,) unpleasing truths. Smite me friendly and reprove me: It shall be a precious balm; it shall not break my head. I am deeply convinced that I know nothing yet as I ought to know. Fourteen years ago, I said, (with Mr. Norris,) "I want heat more than light;" but now I know not which I want most. Perhaps God will enlighten me by your words. O speak and spare not! At least, you will have the thanks and prayers of

Your obliged and affectionate servant.

XXXIX.—*To the Same.*

SIR,

*December 30, 1745.*

I AM obliged to you for your speedy and friendly answer; to which I will reply as clearly as I can.

1. If you have leisure to read the last Appeal, you will easily judge, how much I insist on any opinions.

2. In writing practically, I seldom argue concerning the meaning of texts; in writing controversially, I do.

3. In saying, "I teach the doctrines of the Church of England," I do, and always did, mean, (without concerning myself, whether others taught them or no, either this year, or before the Reformation,) I teach the doctrines which are comprised in those Articles and Homilies to which all the Clergy of the Church of England solemnly profess to assent, and that in their plain, unforced, grammatical meaning.

As to the Seventeenth Article, Mr. Whitefield really believes that it asserts absolute predestination: Therefore, I can also subscribe to it with sincerity. But the case is quite different with regard to those who subscribe to the Eleventh and following Articles; which are not ambiguously worded, as the Seventeenth (I suppose, on purpose) was.

4. When I say, "The Apostles themselves were to prove their assertions by the written word," I mean the word written before their time, the Law and the Prophets; and so they did. I do not believe the case of Averel Spencer was natural; yet, when I kneeled down by her bed-side, I had no thought at all of God's then giving any "attestation to my ministry." But I asked of God, to deliver an afflicted soul; and he did deliver her. Nevertheless, I desire none to receive my words, unless they are confirmed by Scripture and reason. And if they are, they ought to be received, though Averel Spencer had never been born.

5. That we ought not to relate a purely natural case in the Scripture terms that express our Lord's miracles; that low and common things are generally improper to be told in Scripture phrase; that scriptural words which are obsolete, or which have changed their signification, are not to be used familiarly, as neither those technical terms which were peculiar to the controversies of those days; I can easily apprehend. But I cannot apprehend that "salvation" or "justification" is a term of this sort; and much less that "faith" and "works," or "spirit" and "flesh," are synonymous terms with "Christianity" and "Judaism." I know this has frequently been affirmed; but I do not know that it has been proved.

6. However, you think there is no occasion now for the expressions used in ancient times; since the persuasions which were common then are now scarcely to be found. For "does any Church-of-England man," you ask, "maintain anything like this, that men may commute external works,

instead of internal holiness?" Most surely: I doubt whether every Church-of-England man in the nation, yea, every Protestant (as well as Papist) in Europe, who is not deeply sensible that he did so once, does not do so to this day.

I am one who, for twenty years, used outward works, not only as "acts of goodness," but as commutations, (though I did not indeed profess this,) instead of inward holiness. I knew I was not holy. But I quieted my conscience by doing such and such outward works; and therefore I hoped I should go to heaven, even without inward holiness. Nor did I ever speak close to one who had the form of godliness without the power, but I found he had split on the same rock.

Abundance of people I have likewise known, and many I do know at this day, who "are so grossly superstitious as to think devotion may be put upon God instead of honesty;" as to fancy, going to church and sacrament will bring them to heaven, though they practise neither justice nor mercy. These are the men who make Christianity vile, who, above all others, "contribute to the growth of infidelity." On the contrary, the speaking of faith working by love, of uniform, outward religion, springing from inward, has already been the means of converting several Deists, and one Atheist, (if not more,) into real Christians.

7. "Infallible testimony" was your word, not mine: I never use it; I do not like it. But I did not object to your using that phrase, because I would not fight about words. If, then, the question be repeated, "In what sense is that attestation of the Spirit infallible?" any one has my free leave to answer, In no sense at all. And yet, though I allow that some may fancy they have it, when in truth they have it not; I cannot allow that any fancy they have it not, at the time when they really have. I know no instance of this. When they have this faith, they cannot possibly doubt of their having it; although it is very possible, when they have it not, they may doubt whether ever they had it or no. This was Hannah Richardson's case; and it is, more or less, the case with many of the children of God.

That logical evidence, that we are the children of God, I do not either exclude or despise. But it is far different from the direct witness of the Spirit; of which, I believe, St. Paul

speaks in his Epistle to the Romans; and which, I doubt not, is given to many thousand souls who never saw my face. But I spoke only of those I personally knew, concerning whom, indeed, I find my transcriber has made a violent mistake, writing 13,000, instead of 1,300: I might add, those whom I also have known by their writings. But I cannot lay so much stress on their evidence. I cannot have so full and certain a knowledge of a writer, as of one I talk with face to face; and therefore I think the experiences of this kind are not to be compared with those of the other.

One, indeed, of this kind I was reading yesterday, which is exceeding clear and strong. You will easily pardon my transcribing part of his words. They are in St. Austin's Confessions: *Intravi in intima mea, duce te: Et potui, quoniam factus es adjutor meus. Intravi et vidi qualicumque oculo animæ meæ, supra eundem oculum animæ meæ, supra mentem meam, lucem Domini incommutabilem: Non hanc vulgarem, conspicuam omni carni; nec quasi ex eodem genere grandior erat,—non hoc illa erat, sed aliud; aliud valde ab istis omnibus. Nec ita erat supra mentem meam, sicut cælum super terram. Sed superior, quia ipsa fecit me. Qui novit veritatem, novit eam. Et qui novit eam, novit æternitatem. Caritas novit eam.*

*O æterna Veritas! Tu es Deus meus! Tibi suspiro die ac nocte. Et cum te primum cognovi, tu assumpsisti me, ut viderem esse quod viderem.—Et reverberasti infirmitatem aspectus mei, radians in me vehementer; et contremui amore et horrore: Et inveni me longe esse a te.—Et dixi, Nunquid nihil est veritas? Et clamasti de longinquo: Immo vero; Ego sum, qui sum. Et audivi, sicut auditur in corde, et non erat prorsus unde dubitarem. Faciliusque dubitare vivere me, quam non esse veritatem.\* (Lib. 7, cap. 10.)*

\* "Under thy guidance and direction, I entered into my inward parts: And I was enabled to enter, because thou wast my Helper. I entered, and saw, with the eye of my soul, (such as it is,) the unchangeable light of the Lord [shining] above this very eye of my soul, and above my mind. I perceived that the light was not of this common kind, which is obvious to all flesh: Neither did it appear as if it was a larger light of the same kind. It was not a light of this description, but of another; a light that differed exceedingly from all these. Nor was it above my mind, in such a manner as the heavens are above the earth: But it was superior, because it made me. He who knows the truth is acquainted with this light; and he who knows it, knows eternity. Charity [or love] knows it.

"O eternal Truth! Thou art my God. Day and night I sigh after thee. And when I obtained my first knowledge of thee, thou didst take me to see that

9. From many such passages as these, which I have occasionally read, as well as from what I have myself seen and known, I am induced to believe that God's ordinary way of converting sinners to himself is, by "suddenly inspiring them with an immediate testimony of his love, easily distinguishable from fancy." I am assured thus he hath wrought in all I have known, (except, perhaps, three or four persons,) of whom I have reasonable ground to believe that they are really turned from the power of Satan to God.

10. With regard to the definition of faith, if you allow, that it is such "an inward conviction of things invisible, as is the gift of God in the same sense wherein hope and charity are," I have little to object; or, that it is "such an assent to all Christian truths as is productive of all Christian practice." In terming either faith, or hope, or love supernatural, I only mean that they are not the effect of any or all of our natural faculties, but are wrought in us (be it swiftly or slowly) by the Spirit of God. But I would rather say, Faith is "productive of all Christian holiness," than "of all Christian practice;" because men are so exceeding apt to rest in practice, so called; I mean, in outside religion; whereas true religion is eminently seated in the heart, renewed in the image of Him that created us.

11. I have not found, in any of the writers you mention, a solution of many difficulties that occur on the head of predestination. And, to speak without reserve, when I compare the writings of their most celebrated successors, with those of Dr. Barrow and his contemporaries, I am amazed: The latter seem to be mere children compared with the former writers; and to throw out such frothy, uncooked trifles, such indigested crudities, as a man of learning, fourscore or a hundred years ago, would have been ashamed to set his name to.

12. Concerning the instantaneous and the gradual work,

there was something which I might behold. Thou didst likewise beat back the weakness of my own sight, and didst thyself powerfully shine into me. I trembled with love and with horror; and I found myself at a great distance from thee.—I exclaimed, 'Is truth a nonentity?'—And thou didst reply from afar, 'No, indeed! I AM THAT I AM!'—I heard this, as we are accustomed to hear in the heart; and there was no ground whatever for doubting. Nay, I could more easily doubt of my existence itself, than that it was not the Truth.—  
 EDIT.

what I still affirm is this : That I know hundreds of persons, whose hearts were one moment filled with fear, and sorrow, and pain, and the next with peace and joy in believing, yea, joy unspeakable, full of glory ; that the same moment they experienced such a love of God, and so fervent a good-will to all mankind, (attended with power over all sin,) as till then they were wholly unacquainted with ; that nevertheless the peace and love thus sown in their hearts, received afterward a gradual increase ; and that to this subsequent increase the scriptures you mention do manifestly refer. Now, I cannot see that there is any quibbling at all in this. No ; it is a plain, fair answer to the objection.

Neither can I apprehend that I have given an evasive answer to any adversary whatever. I am sure I do not desire to do it ; for I want us to understand each other. The sooner the better : Therefore let us, as you propose, return to the main point.

“The charge is,” your words are, “that the Methodists preach sundry singular and erroneous doctrines ; in particular three,—unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection. ‘They set up,’ say their adversaries, ‘their own schemes and notions as the great standard of Christianity, so as to perplex, unhinge, terrify, and distract the minds of multitudes, by persuading them that they cannot be true Christians but by adhering to their doctrines.’ This is the charge. Now you ask, ‘What do you mean by their own schemes, their own notions, their own doctrines?’ It is plain, we mean their unconditional predestination, their perceptible inspiration, and their sinless perfection.”

The charge then is, that the Methodists preach unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection. But what a charge ! Shall John Wesley be indicted for murder, because George Whitefield killed a man ? Or shall George Whitefield be charged with felony, because John Wesley broke a house ? How monstrous is this ! How dissonant from all the rules of common sense and common honesty ! Let every man bear his own burden. If George Whitefield killed a man, or taught predestination, John Wesley did not : What has this charge to do with him ? And if John Wesley broke a house, or preached sinless perfection, let him answer for himself. George

Whitefield did neither: Why then is his name put into this indictment?

Hence appears the inexcusable injustice of what might otherwise appear a trifle. When I urge a man in this manner, he could have no plea at all, were he not to reply, "Why, they are both Methodists." So when he has linked them together by one nickname, he may hang either instead of the other.

But sure this will not be allowed by reasonable men. And if not, what have I to do with predestination? Absolutely nothing: Therefore set that aside. Yea, and sinless perfection too. "How so? Do not you believe it?" Yes, I do; and in what sense, I have shown in the sermon on Christian Perfection. And if any man calls it an error, till he has answered that, I must say, "Sir, you beg the question." But I preach, perhaps, twenty times, and say no more of this, than even a Calvinist would allow. Neither will I enter into any dispute about it, any more than about the millennium.

Therefore the distinguishing doctrines on which I do insist in all my writings, and in all my preaching, will lie in a very narrow compass. You sum them all up in perceptible inspiration. For this I earnestly contend; and so do all who are called Methodist Preachers. But be pleased to observe what we mean thereby. We mean that inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, whereby he fills us with righteousness, peace, and joy, with love to Him and to all mankind. And we believe it cannot be, in the nature of things, that a man should be filled with this peace, and joy, and love, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, without perceiving it as clearly as he does the light of the sun.

This is (so far as I understand them) the main doctrine of the Methodists. This is the substance of what we all preach. And I will still believe, none is a true Christian till he experiences it; and, consequently, "that people, at all hazards, must be convinced of this; yea, though that conviction at first unhinge them ever so much, though it should in a manner distract them for a season. For it is better that they should be perplexed and terrified now, than that they should sleep on and awake in hell."

I do not therefore, I will not, shift the question; though I know many who desire I should. I know the proposition

I have to prove, and I will not move a hair's breadth from it. [It is this: "No man can be a true Christian without such an inspiration of the Holy Ghost as fills his heart with peace, and joy, and love; which he who perceives not, has it not." This is the point for which alone I contend; and this I take to be the very foundation of Christianity.]

14. The answer, therefore, which you think we ought to give, is that [which] we do give to the charge of our adversaries: "Our singularities (if you will style them so) are fundamental, and of the essence of Christianity;" therefore we must "preach them with such diligence and zeal as if the whole of Christianity depended upon them."

15. It would doubtless be wrong to insist thus on these things if they were "not necessary to final salvation:" But we believe they are; unless in the case of invincible ignorance. In this case, undoubtedly many thousands are saved who never heard of these doctrines: And I am inclined to think, this was our own case, both at Oxford and for some time after. Yet I doubt not but had we been called hence, God would first, by this inspiration of his Spirit, have wrought in our hearts that holy love without which none can enter into glory.

16. I was aware of the seeming contradiction you mention at the very time when I wrote the sentence. But it is only a seeming one: For it is true, that from May 24, 1738, "wherever I was desired to preach, salvation by faith was my only theme;"—that is, such a love of God and man, as produces all inward and outward holiness, and springs from a conviction, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, of the pardoning love of God: And that when I was told, "You must preach no more in this church," it was commonly added, "because you preach such doctrine!" And it is equally true, that "it was for preaching the love of God and man, that several of the Clergy forbade me their pulpits" before that time, before May 24, before I either preached or knew salvation by faith.

17. We are at length come to the real state of the question, between the Methodists (so called) and their opponents. "Is there perceptible inspiration, or is there not? Is there such a thing (if we divide the question into its parts) as faith producing peace, and joy, and love, and inward (as well as outward) holiness? Is that faith which is productive of these

fruits wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, or not? And is he in whom they are wrought necessarily conscious of them, or is he not?" These are the points on which I am ready to join issue with any serious and candid man. Such I believe you to be. If, therefore, I knew on which of those you desired my thoughts, I would give you them freely, such as they are; or (if you desire it) on any collateral question. The best light I have, I am ready to impart; and am ready to receive farther light from you. My time, indeed, is so short, that I cannot answer your letters so particularly, or so correctly, as I would. But I am persuaded you will excuse many defects where you believe the design is good. I want to know what, as yet, I know not. May God teach it me by you, or by whom he pleaseth! "Search me, O Lord, and prove me! Try out my reins and my heart! Look well if there be error or wickedness in me; and lead me in the way everlasting!"

January 3, 1745-6.

XL.—*To the Same.*

SIR,

LONDON, June 25, 1746.

AT length I have the opportunity, which I have long desired, of answering the letter you favoured me with some time since. O that God may still give us to bear with each other, and to speak what we believe is the truth in love!

I. I detest all zeal which is any other than the flame of love. Yet I find it is not easy to avoid it. It is not easy (at least to me) to be "always zealously affected in a good thing," without being sometimes so affected in things of an indifferent nature. Nor do I find it always easy to proportion my zeal to the importance of the occasion; and to temper it duly with prudence, according to the various and complicated circumstances that occur. I sincerely thank you for endeavouring to assist me herein, to guard me from running into excess. I am always in danger of this, and yet I daily experience a far greater danger of the other extreme. To this day, I have abundantly more temptation to lukewarmness than to impetuosity; to be a saunterer *inter sylvas Academicas*,\* a philosophical sluggard, than an itinerant Preacher. And, in fact, what I now do is so exceeding little, compared with what I am convinced I ought to do, that I am

\* Among the shades of Academic groves.—EDIT.

often ashamed before God, and know not how to lift up mine eyes to the height of heaven!

2. But may not love itself constrain us to lay before men "the terrors of the Lord?" And is it not better that sinners "should be terrified now, than that they should sleep on, and awake in hell?" I have known exceeding happy effects of this, even upon men of strong understanding; yet I agree with you, that there is little good to be done by "the profuse throwing about hell and damnation;" and the best way of deciding the points in question with us is, cool and friendly argumentation.

I agree, too, "That scheme of religion bids fairest for the true, which breathes the most extensive charity." Touching the charity due to those who are in error, I suppose, we both likewise agree, that really invincible ignorance never did, nor ever shall, exclude any man from heaven. And hence, I doubt not, but God will receive thousands of those who differ from me, even where I hold the truth. But still, I cannot believe He will receive any man into glory (I speak of those under the Christian dispensation) "without such an inspiration of the Holy Ghost as fills his heart with peace, and joy, and love."

3. In this Mr. Whitefield and I agree; but in other points we widely differ. And therefore I still apprehend it is inexcusably unjust to link us together, whether we will or no. For by this means each is constrained to bear, not only his own, but another's, burden. Accordingly, I have been accused a hundred times of holding unconditional predestination. And no wonder: For wherever this charge is advanced,—"The Methodists preach sundry erroneous doctrines; in particular three, unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection," the bulk of mankind will naturally suppose, that the Methodists in general hold these three doctrines. It will follow, that if any of these afterwards hears, "Mr. Wesley is a Methodist," he will conclude, "Then he preaches unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection." And thus one man is made accountable (by others, if not by you) for all the errors and faults of another.

4. The case of many who subscribe to the Eleventh and following Articles, I cannot yet think, is exactly the same with the case of Mr. Whitefield and me subscribing the

Seventeenth. For each of us can truly say, "I subscribe this Article in that which I believe from my heart is its plain, grammatical meaning." Twenty years ago, I subscribed the Fifteenth Article likewise, in its plain, unforced, grammatical meaning. And whatever I do not now believe in this sense, I will on no terms subscribe at all.

5. I speak variously, doubtless, on various occasions; but I hope not inconsistently. Concerning the seeming inconsistency which you mention, permit me to observe, briefly, (1.) That I have seen many things which I believe were miraculous; yet I desire none to believe my words, any further than they are confirmed by Scripture and reason. And thus far I disclaim miracles. (2.) That I believe, "he that marrieth doeth well; but he that doth not, (being a believer,) doeth better." However, I have doubts concerning the tract on this head, which I have not yet leisure to weigh thoroughly. (3.) That a newly justified person has, at once, in that hour, power over all sin; and finds from that hour the work of God in his soul slowly and gradually increasing. And, lastly, that many, who, while they have faith, cannot doubt, do afterwards doubt whether they ever had it or no. Yea, many receive from the Holy Ghost an attestation of their acceptance, as perceptible as the sun at noon-day; and yet those same persons, at other times, doubt whether they ever had any such attestation; nay, perhaps more than doubt, perhaps wholly deny, all that God has ever done for their souls; inasmuch as, in "this hour and power of darkness," they cannot believe they ever saw light.

6. I think St. Austin's description of his own case (whether it prove anything more or less) greatly illustrates that light, that assurance of faith, whereof we are now speaking. He does not appear, in writing this confession to God, to have had any adversary in view, nor to use any rhetorical heightening at all; but to express the naked experience of his heart, and that in as plain and unmetaphorical words as the nature of the thing would bear.

7. I believe firmly, and that in the most literal sense, that "without God we can do nothing;" that we cannot think, or speak, or move a hand or an eye, without the concurrence of the divine energy; and that all our natural faculties are God's gift, nor can the meanest be exerted without the assistance of his Spirit. What then do I mean

by saying that faith, hope, and love, are not the effect of any, or all, our natural faculties? I mean this: That supposing a man to be now void of faith, and hope, and love, he cannot effect any degree of them in himself by any possible exertion of his understanding, and of any or all his other natural faculties, though he should enjoy them in the utmost perfection. A distinct power from God, not implied in any of these, is indispensably necessary, before it is possible he should arrive at the very lowest degree of Christian faith, or hope, or love. In order to his having any of these, (which, on this very consideration, I suppose St. Paul terms the "fruits of the Spirit,") he must be created anew, throughly and inwardly changed by the operation of the Spirit of God; by a power equivalent to that which raises the dead, and which calls the things which are not as though they were.

8. The "living soberly, righteously, and godly" in this present world, or the uniform practice of universal piety, presupposes some degree of these "fruits of the Spirit," nor can possibly subsist without them. I never said men were too apt to rest on this practice. But I still say, I know abundance of men, who quiet their conscience without either faith or love, by the practice of a few outward works; and this keeps them as easy and contented, though they are without hope and without God in the world, as either the doctrine of irresistible decrees could do, or any theory whatsoever.

Now, what is this but using outward works as commutations for inward holiness? For, (1.) These men love not inward holiness; they love the world; they love money; they love pleasure or praise: Therefore, the love of God is not in them; nor, consequently, the Christian love of their neighbour. Yet, (2.) They are in nowise convinced that they are in the broad way which leads to destruction. They sleep on, and take their rest. They say, "Peace, peace," to their soul, though there is no peace. But on what pretence? Why, on this very ground, because, (3.) They do such and such outward works; they go to church, and perhaps to the Lord's table; they use, in some sort, private prayer; they give alms; and therefore they imagine themselves to be in the high road to heaven. Though they have not "the mind that was in Christ," yet they doubt not but all is safe, because they do thus and thus, because their lives are not

as other men's are. This is what I mean by using outward works as commutations for inward holiness. I find more and more instances every day of this miserable self-deceit. The thing is plain and clear. But if you dislike the phrase, we will drop it, and use another.

Nearly allied to this is the "gross superstition of those who think to put devotion upon God, instead of honesty." I mean, who practise neither justice nor mercy, and yet hope to go to heaven because they go to church and sacrament. Can you find no such men in the Church of England? I find them in every street. Nine times in ten, when I have told a tradesman, "You have cheated me; sold me this for more than it is worth, which I think is a breach both of justice and mercy. Are you a Christian? Do you hope to go to heaven?" his answer, if he deigned any answer at all, has been to this effect: "As good a Christian as yourself! 'Go to heaven!' Yes, sure; for I keep my church as well as any man."

Now, what can be plainer, than that this man keeps his church, not only as an act of goodness, but as a commutation instead of goodness; as something which he hopes will do as well, will bring him to heaven, without either justice or mercy? Perhaps, indeed, if he fell into adultery or murder, it might awaken him out of his dream, and convince him, as well as his neighbours, that this worship is not a mitigation, but an aggravation, of his wickedness: But nothing short of this will. In spite of all your reasoning and mine, he will persist in thinking himself a good Christian; and that if his "brother have aught against him," yet all will be well, so he do but constantly "bring his gift to the altar."

I entreat you, Sir, to make the experiment yourself; to talk freely with any that come in your way. And you will surely find it is the very thing which almost destroys the (so called) Christian world. Every nominal Christian has some bit or scrap of outward religion, either negative or positive: Either he does not do, in some respect, like other men, or he does something more than they. And by this, however freely he may condemn others, he takes care to excuse himself; and stifles whatever convictions he might otherwise have, "that the wrath of God abideth on him."

After a few impartial inquiries of this kind, I am persuaded you will not say, "As a commutation, surely no Protestant

ever did [receive the sacrament] but yourself." Is there not something wrong in these words, on another account; as well as in those, "You should not treat others as the children of the devil, for taking the same liberty which you and Mr. Whitefield take, who continue, notwithstanding, to be the children of God?" Is there not in both these expressions (and perhaps in some others which are scattered up and down in your letters) something too keen? something that borders too much upon sarcasm? upon tartness, if not bitterness? Does not anything of this sort, either make the mind sore, or harden it against conviction? Does it not make us less able to bear plainness of speech? or at least less ready to improve by it? Give me leave to add one word more, before I proceed. I cannot but be jealous over you. I fear you do not know, near so well as you suppose, even what passes in your own mind. I question not but you believe, that without inward holiness no man shall see the Lord; but are you sure you never once entertained a thought that something else might be put upon him in the stead? Perhaps not grossly, not if it appeared just in that shape: No, nor have I, for these twenty years. But I find the same thought to this day, stealing in continually, under a thousand different forms. I find a continual danger of stopping short of a full renewal in the image of God; a continual propensity to rest in whatever comes between; to put some work or other that I do, even for God's sake, or some gift that I receive, in the stead of that great work of God, "the renewal of my soul after his likeness in righteousness and true holiness."

9. One point of doctrine remains: "Is there any such thing as perceptible inspiration or not?" I asserted, "There is;" but at the same time subjoined, "Be pleased to observe what we mean thereby: We mean, that inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, whereby he fills us [every true believer] with righteousness, and peace, and joy; with love to him and all mankind. And we believe it cannot be, in the nature of things, that a man should be filled with this peace, and joy, and love, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, without perceiving it as clearly as he does the light of the sun."

You reply, "You have now entirely shifted the question." I think not. You objected, that I held perceptible inspiration. I answered, "I do;" but observe in what sense;

otherwise I must recall my concession : I hold, God inspires every Christian with peace, joy, and love, which are all *perceptible*. You reply, "*The question is not, whether the fruits of inspiration are perceptible, but whether the work of inspiration itself be so.*" This was not my question ; nor did I till now understand that it was yours. If I had, I should have returned a different answer, as I have elsewhere done already.

When one warmly objected, near two years ago, "All reasonable Christians believe that the Holy Spirit works his graces in us in an imperceptible manner ;" my answer was, "You are here disproving, as you suppose, a proposition of mine. But are you sure you understand it? By the operations [inspirations or workings] of the Spirit, I do not mean the manner in which he operates, but the graces which he operates [inspires or works] in a Christian."

If you ask, But do not you hold, "that Christian faith implies a direct, perceptible testimony of the Spirit, as distinguishable from the suggestion of fancy, as light is distinguishable from darkness ; whereas we suppose he imperceptibly influences our minds?" I answer, I do hold this. I suppose that every Christian believer, over and above that imperceptible influence, hath a direct perceptible testimony of the Spirit, that he is a child of God.

As I have little time, I must beg you to read and consider what I have already spoken upon this subject, in the First Part of the "Farther Appeal," at the thirty-eighth and following pages ;\* and then to let me know what kind of proof it is which you expect in a question of this nature, over and above that of Scripture, as interpreted by the writers of the earliest Christian church.

I have not studied the writings of the Quakers enough, (having read few of them beside Robert Barclay,) to say precisely what they mean by perceptible inspiration, and whether their account of it be right or wrong. And I am not curious to know ; since between me and them there is a great gulf fixed. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper keep us at a wide distance from each other ; insomuch that, according to the view of things I have now, I should as soon commence Deist as Quaker.

I would just add, that I regard even faith itself, not as an

\* Vol. VIII., p. 76, &c., of the present edition.—EDIT.

end, but a means only. The end of the commandment is love, of every command, of the whole Christian dispensation. Let this love be attained, by whatever means, and I am content; I desire no more. All is well, if we love the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.

10. I am aware of one inconvenience, in answering what you say touching the consequences of my preaching. It will oblige me to speak what will try your temper beyond anything I have said yet. I could, indeed, avoid this by standing on my guard, and speaking with great reserve. But had you not rather that I should deal frankly with you, and tell you just what is in my heart?

I am the more inclined to do this, because the question before us is of so deep importance; insomuch that, were I convinced you had decided it right, there would be an end at once of my preaching. And it lies in a small compass, as you say, "I am not making conjectures of what may happen, but relating mischiefs which actually have happened." These, then, "the mischiefs which have actually happened," let us consider as calmly as possible.

But first we may set aside the "thousands whom (it is said) we should have had pretending a mission from God, to preach against the wickedness of the great, had not the rebels been driven back." The rebels, blessed be God, are driven back.\* So that mischief has not actually happened. We may wave, also, "the legion of monstrous errors and wickednesses, the sedition, murder, and treason of the last century;" seeing, whatever may be hereafter, it is certain these mischiefs also have not yet actually happened. Nor have I anything to do with that poor madman, (I never heard of any more than one such,) who came some time since, "preaching in London streets against Prelacy" and Methodism; and "denouncing curses against George Whitefield, John Wesley, and all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

I was more nearly concerned in what has actually happened at Wednesbury, Darlaston, and Walsal. And these were "shameful disorders" indeed. Publish them not in Gath or Askelon! Concerning the occasion of which I may speak more freely to you than it was proper to do to the public.

When I preached at Wednesbury first, Mr. Egginton

\* Referring to the discomfiture of the Pretender's forces in the year 1745.—  
EDIT.

(the Vicar) invited me to his house, and told me, that the oftener I came, the welcomer I should be; for I had done much good there already, and he doubted not but I should do much more. But the next year I found him another man. He had not only heard a vehement visitation-charge, but had been informed that we had publicly preached against drunkards, which must have been designed for satire on him. From this time, we found more and more effects of his unwearied labours, public and private, in stirring up the people on every side, "to drive these fellows out of the country." One of his sermons I heard with my own ears. I pray God I may never hear such another! The Minister of Darlaston, and the Curate of Walsal, trod in the same steps. And these were they who (not undesignedly) occasioned all the disorders which followed there.

You add: "In countries which you have not much frequented, there have appeared Antinomian Preachers, personating your disciples." These have appeared most in countries I never frequented at all, as in the west of Lancashire, in Dorsetshire, and in Ireland. When I came, they disappeared, and were seen no more there; at least, not personating our disciples. And yet, by all I can learn, even these poor wretches have done as little harm as good. I cannot learn that they have destroyed one soul that was before truly seeking salvation.

But you think, I myself "do a great deal of harm, by breaking and setting aside order. For, order once ever so little set aside, confusion rushes in like a torrent."

What do you mean by order? a plan of church-discipline? What plan? the scriptural, the primitive, or our own? It is in the last sense of the word that I have been generally charged with breaking or setting aside order; that is, the rules of our own Church, both by preaching in the fields, and by using extemporary prayer.

I have often replied, (1.) It were better for me to die, than not to preach the Gospel of Christ; yea, and in the fields, either where I may not preach in the church, or where the church will not contain the congregation: (2.) That I use the Service of the Church every Lord's day; and it has never yet appeared to me, that any rule of the Church forbids my using extemporary prayer on other occasions.

But methinks I would go deeper. I would inquire, What

is the end of all ecclesiastical order? Is it not to bring souls from the power of Satan to God; and to build them up in his fear and love? Order, then, is so far valuable, as it answers these ends; and if it answers them not, it is nothing worth. Now, I would fain know, where has order answered these ends? Not in any place where I have been; not among the tanners in Cornwall, the keelmen at Newcastle, the colliers in Kingswood or Staffordshire; not among the drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers of Moorfields, or the harlots of Drury-lane. They could not be built up in the fear and love of God, while they were open, barefaced servants of the devil; and such they continued, notwithstanding the most orderly preaching both in St. Luke's and St. Giles's church. One reason whereof was, they never came near the church; nor had any desire or design so to do, till, by what you term "breach of order," they were brought to fear God, to love him, and keep his commandments.

It was not, therefore, so much the want of order, as of the knowledge and love of God, which kept those poor souls for so many years in open bondage to a hard master. And, indeed, wherever the knowledge and love of God are, true order will not be wanting. But the most apostolical order, where these are not, is less than nothing and vanity.

But you say, "Strict order once set aside, confusion rushes in like a torrent." It has been so far from rushing in where we have preached most, that the very reverse is true. Surely, never was "confusion worse confounded," than [it] was a few years since in the forest of Kingswood. But how has it been since the word of God was preached there, even in this disorderly manner?

Confusion heard his voice; and wild uproar  
 Stood ruled; and order from disorder sprung.

O Sir, be not carried away with the torrent; the clamour either of the great vulgar, or the small! Re-examine your very first notions of these things; and then review that sentence, "The devil makes use of your honest zeal, to his dishonest and diabolical purposes. He well knows, you do him more service by breach of order, than dis-service by all your laborious industry." I hope not, (1.) Because I bring the very order you contend for into places where it never was before: And, (2.) Because I bring (yet not I, but the

grace of God) that knowledge and love of God also, in conjunction wherewith order is of great price, but without them a worthless shadow.

I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, by faith that is in him.

XLI.—*To the Same.*

SIR,

NEWCASTLE, *March 25, 1747.*

1. IN your last, I do not find much reason to complain either of tartness or bitterness. But is it so serious as the cause requires? If it be asked,—

*Ridentem dicere verum*

*Quis vetat?\**

I think the nature of the things whereof we speak should forbid it. For surely, it is a very serious concern, whether we dwell in the eternal glory of God, or in the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

2. If those who subscribe the Eleventh and following Articles do subscribe in what they believe from their hearts to be the plain, unforced, grammatical meaning of the words, then they are clear before God. I trust you can answer for yourself herein; but you cannot for all our brethren.

3. I am glad that our dispute concerning commutations in religion proves to be “entirely verbal:” As we both agree, (1.) That abundance of those who bear the name of Christians put a part of religion for the whole; generally some outward work or form of worship: (2.) That whatever is thus put for the whole of religion, (in particular, where it is used to supersede or commute for the religion of the heart,) it is no longer a part of it, it is gross irreligion, it is mere mockery of God.

4. When you warned me against “excess of zeal,” I did not say, this was not my weak side; that it was not one weakness to which I am exposed. My words were: “I am always in danger of this; and yet I daily experience a far greater danger of the other extreme.” I do. I am, to this day, ashamed before God, that I do so little to what I ought to do. But this you call “over-done humility,” and suppose

\* This quotation from Horace is thus translated by Francis:—

“Yet may not truth in laughing guise be dress’d?”—EDIT.

it to be inconsistent with what occurs in the ninety-third and ninety-fourth paragraphs of the "Earnest Appeal." I believe it is not at all inconsistent therewith; only one expression there is too strong,—“all his time and strength;”—for this very cause, “I am ashamed before God.” I do not spend all my time so profitably as I might, nor all my strength; at least, not all I might have, if it were not for my own lukewarmness and remissness; if I wrestled with God in constant and fervent prayer.

You mention four other instances of self-contradiction. The first: “You claim and you disclaim miracles. You claim them, as having seen many miraculous attestations to your ministry. You disclaim them, desiring none to believe your words further than they are confirmed by Scripture and reason;” that is, you claim them in one sense, and disclaim them in another. Perhaps so; but this is no contradiction. (2.) “You are not at leisure yet, either to permit or forbid to marry.” Indeed I am. Although I commend those who are as “eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake;” yet I know “all men cannot receive this saying,” and that “it is better to marry than to burn.” (3.) “The newly-justified has at once, in that hour, power over all sin, and finds, from that hour, the work of God in the soul slowly and gradually increasing. What, until he has power over more than all sin?” No; but until he has more power over all sin; the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit gradually decreasing; and till he has more peace, more joy in the Holy Ghost, more of the knowledge and love of God. (4.) “But surely, the tip-top of all inconsistencies is what follows, even as explained in your own way: Many receive from the Holy Ghost an attestation of their acceptance, as perceptible as the sun at noon-day; and yet these same persons, at other times, doubt or deny that they ever had such attestation.”

The fact stands thus: (1.) A man feels in himself the testimony of God’s Spirit, that he is a child of God; and he can then no more deny or doubt thereof, than of the shining of the sun at noon-day. (2.) After a time, this testimony is withdrawn. (3.) He begins to reason within himself concerning it; next, to doubt whether that testimony was from God; and, perhaps, in the end, to deny that it was. And yet he may be, all this time, in every other

respect, "of sound memory as well as understanding." Now, whether these propositions are true or false, they are not contradictory to each other. They cannot, unless it were affirmed, that the same person has and has not the same testimony at the same time.

5. However, you think I assert a thing impossible. What is impossible? that the Spirit of God should bear a clear, perceptible witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God? Surely no! Whether this be the fact or not, no man of reason will say it is impossible. Or that the Spirit of God should cease to bear this witness? Neither can the possibility of this be denied. The thing, then, which is supposed impossible is this, that a man who once had it should ever doubt, whether he had it or no; that is, (as you subjoin,) "if he continue sound in mind" (or understanding) "and memory." Right! "If he continue:" But the very supposition is, that, in this respect, he does not continue so. While he did so continue, he could not doubt. But his understanding is now darkened, and the very traces of that divine work well-nigh erased out of his memory. Nor can I think, "it is vain to have recourse here to the *εσπερυσια* of the power of darkness." I verily believe, as it was the God of heaven who once shone in his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; so it is the god of this world who hath now blinded his heart, so that the glorious light cannot shine upon it.

6. If the Quakers hold the same perceptible inspiration with me, I am glad; and it is neither better nor worse for their holding it: Although, if I "distinguish it away," I do not hold it at all. But do I distinguish it away? or any point which I believe to be the truth of God? I am not conscious of this. But when men tack absurdities to the truth of God with which it hath nothing to do, I distinguish away those absurdities, and let the truth remain in its native purity.

It was several months before my correspondence with you, that I thus distinguished away perceptible inspiration; declaring to all men, "by 'perceiving' or 'feeling the operations of the Spirit,' I mean, being inwardly conscious of them." "By 'the operations of the Spirit,' I do not mean the 'manner' in which he operates in a Christian."

This I mentioned in my last. But it is certain, over and

above those other graces which the Holy Spirit inspires into, or operates in, a Christian, and over and above his imperceptible influences; I do intend all mankind should understand me to assert, (what I therefore express in the clearest language I am master of,) every Christian believer hath a perceptible testimony of the Spirit, that he is a child of God. I use the phrase, "testimony of the Spirit," rather than "inspiration," because it has a more determinate meaning. And I desire men to know what I mean, and what I do not; that I may not fight as one that beateth the air.

7. Is there "not one word said of this, either in the 'Farther Appeal,' or in any one place in the Bible?" I think there is in the Bible; in the sixteenth verse of the eighth chapter to the Romans. And is not this very place proved to describe the ordinary privilege of every Christian believer in the "Farther Appeal," from the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth, and from the fifty-sixth to the fifty-ninth page? \*

Give me leave to remind you of some of the words. In the forty-ninth page the argument concludes thus: "It will follow, that this witness of the Spirit is the private testimony given to our own consciences, which, consequently, all sober Christians may claim, without any danger of enthusiasm." In the fifty-seventh page are these words: "Every one that is born of God, and doth not commit sin, by his very actions, saith, 'Our Father which art in heaven;' the Spirit itself bearing witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God. According to Origen, therefore, this testimony of the Spirit is not any public testimony by miracles, but an inward testimony belonging in common to all that are born of God." Once more: In the fifty-eighth page are these words: "He brings yet another proof of the superiority of those who had this Spirit of adoption: 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' 'I prove this,' says he, 'not only from the voice itself, but also from the cause whence that voice proceeds. For the Spirit suggests the words while we thus speak, which he hath elsewhere expressed more plainly, *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!* But what is, *The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit?*' He means the Paraclete by the gift given unto

\* Vol. VIII., pp. 83—87, and 93—95, of the present edition.—EDIT.

us." (But that this was an extraordinary gift, we have no intimation at all, neither before nor after.) "And when the Spirit beareth witness, what doubt is left? If a man or an angel spake, some might doubt; but when the Most High beareth witness to us, who can doubt any longer?"

I am mistaken if this does not come home to the point, to the question now before us; describing a perceptible testimony of the Holy Ghost, "directly felt to be worked by himself."

8. But I will wave all authorities, that of Origen and Chrysostom, as well as of Hannah Richardson (though not a weak woman, but eminently the reverse) and Averel Spencer (though not a wicked one); only observing, that your argument proves too much. I am as fully assured to-day, as I am of the shining of the sun, that the Scriptures are of God. I cannot possibly deny or doubt of it now; yet I may doubt of it to-morrow; as I have done heretofore a thousand times, and that after the fullest assurance preceding. Now, if this be "a demonstration that my former assurance was a mere fancy," then farewell all revelation at once!

But to come closer yet, and weigh the point in debate in the balance of plain reason: You must allow there is a testimony of the Spirit with our spirit, that we are the children of God. "But," you say, "it is not a perceptible one." How is this? Let us examine it thoroughly. It is allowed, (1.) The Spirit of God, (2.) Bears testimony to my spirit, (3.) That I am a child of God. But I am not to perceive it. Not to perceive what? the first, second, or third particular? Am I not to perceive what is testified,—that I am a child of God? Then it is not testified at all. This is saying and unsaying in the same breath. Or am I not to perceive, that it is testified to my spirit? Yea, but I must perceive what passes in my own soul. Or, lastly, am I to perceive that I am a child of God, and that this is testified to my spirit; but not to perceive who it is that testifies, not to know it is the Spirit of God? O Sir, if there really be a man in the world who hath this testimony in himself, can it be supposed that he does not know who it is that testifies? who it is that speaks to his heart? that speaks in his inmost soul as never man spake? If he does not, he is ignorant of the whole affair. If you are in this state, I pray God you

may say from the heart, "Lord, what I know not, teach thou me." How much better were this, than to canonize your own ignorance, as the only knowledge and wisdom; and to condemn all the generation of God's children of "idiotism and madness!"

9. Under your last head, you do not confine yourself now within the bounds you at first proposed; when you said, "I am not making conjectures of what may happen, but relating mischiefs which actually have happened." Take care you do not grow warm when I reply to this: You will have need of all your patience to bear it.

You begin: "Will you ask what I mean by 'order?'" Was it not manifest I meant to speak against lay-preaching?" It was: But not against that alone. Therefore, before I entered upon the question, I defined the term in a wider sense, so as to include both this and every irregularity you had objected. You go on: "How could you give so strange an answer, 'I bring this order you contend for into places where it never was before?'" I reply, This is not my whole answer; it is but one, and that the most inconsiderable, part of it: But it is strictly true. "Do you then bring in the ministry of regularly ordained Ministers, where, before, people were used to the preaching of lay brethren?" Yes; them who were before used to no preaching at all, or to that of those whom you would term lay brethren, I bring to attend on the ministry of those regular Preachers who have the charge of their several parishes.

But very "ill consequences" of our irregular preaching, you say, have "actually happened: A number of unsent persons going about the kingdom, and preaching the worst of heresies." "A number!" Where? Within these nine years past, I have heard of two, and no more, (besides that lunatic Clergyman,) who have gone about thus, though I doubt sent neither of God nor man. But I have heard of no heresy which they preached; only a little smooth, undigested nonsense. Nor can the ill done by these balance the thousandth part of the good already done by the preaching of other laymen; namely, the turning so many bold, barefaced servants of the devil, into humble, holy servants of God.

However, evil "will happen if any State faction shall join

the irregulars." If they shall! Yea, if they shall attempt it, (which is far enough off,) the irregulars will not join them. We bless God that the Government is at present very fully convinced of this.

"But if unsent, well-meaning laymen may preach, unsent ill-meaning laymen will, upon the first opportunity, spread sedition like wild-fire." Yea, and Clergymen as well as laymen, sent as well as unsent. Thus it ever was, and I presume ever will be.

10. That "the irregularities of Mr. Cartwright did more harm in the course of a century, than all the labours of his life did good," is by no means plain to me: And the less so, because I cannot learn from Mr. Strype, or any other impartial writer, (whatever his mistakes in judgment were,) that he fell into any irregularities at all. I look upon him, and the body of Puritans in that age, (to whom the German Anabaptists bore small resemblance,) to have been both the most learned and most pious men that were then in the English nation. Nor did they separate from the Church; but were driven out, whether they would or no. The vengeance of God which fell on the posterity of their persecutors, I think, is no imputation on Mr. Cartwright or them; but a wonderful scene of divine Providence, visiting the sins of the fathers upon their children, (when they also had filled up the measure of their iniquities,) unto the third and fourth generation.

I am not careful for what may be a hundred years hence. He who governed the world before I was born, shall take care of it likewise when I am dead. My part is to improve the present moment. And, whatever may be the fruits of lay-preaching, when you and I are gone to our long home, every serious man has cause to bless God for those he may now see with his eyes; for the saving so many souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. The instances glare in the face of the sun. Many indeed God hath taken to himself; but many more remain, both young and old, who now fear God and work righteousness.

11. Perhaps a parallel drawn from physic may hold more exactly than you was apprized of. For more than twenty years I have had numberless proofs that regular Physicians do exceeding little good. From a deep conviction of this, I have believed it my duty, within these four months last past,

to prescribe such medicines to six or seven hundred of the poor as I knew were proper for their several disorders. Within six weeks, nine in ten of them who had taken these medicines were remarkably altered for the better; and many were cured of diseases under which they had laboured for ten, twenty, forty years. Now, ought I to have let one of these poor wretches perish, because I was not a regular Physician? to have said, "I know what will cure you: But I am not of the College: You must send for Dr. Mead?" Before Dr. Mead had come in his chariot, the man might have been in his coffin. And when the Doctor was come, where was his fee? What! he cannot live upon nothing! So, instead of an orderly cure, the patient dies; and God requires his blood at my hands!

12. But you think "if one should look out of his grave in the middle of the next century, he would find the orderly preaching at St. Luke's and St. Giles's church had done more good than the disorderly preaching at Kennington." I cannot learn by all the inquiries I have made, that at present it does any good at all; that either Dr. B. or Dr. G. has, in all these years, converted one sinner to God. And if a man saves no souls while he is alive, I fear he will save few after he is dead.

But "it does abundance less harm." Perhaps not so, neither. "He that gathereth not with me scattereth;" more especially if he be a Preacher. He must scatter from Him, if he does not gather souls to God. Therefore, a lifeless, unconvertng Minister is the murderer-general of his parish. He enters not into the kingdom of heaven himself, and those that would enter in he suffers not. He stands in the gap between them and true religion. Because he has it not, they are easy without it. Dead form contents him, and why not them? "Sure, it is enough if we go as far as our guide!" And if he is not outwardly vicious, he the more effectually secures them from all inward, solid virtue. How choice a factor for hell is this! destroying more souls than any Deist in the kingdom! I could not have blamed St. Chrysostom, if he had only said, "Hell is paved with the skulls of such Christian Priests!"

13. I must be short on what remains. You suppose the impression made on men's minds by this irregular way of preaching is chiefly owing to "the force of novelty." I

believe it was to obviate this very supposition, that my preaching has so rarely made any impression at all, till the novelty of it was over. When I had preached more than sixscore times at this town, I found scarce any effect; only that abundance of people heard, and gaped and stared, and went away much as they came. And it was one evening, while I was in doubt if I had not laboured in vain, that such a blessing of God was given, as has continued ever since, and I trust will be remembered unto many generations.

You ascribe it likewise in part to "a natural knack of persuasion." If either by a natural or an acquired power of persuasion I can prevail upon sinners to turn to God, am I to bury even that talent in the earth? "No; but try if you cannot do more good in a College or in a parish." I have tried both, and I could not do any substantial good, either to my pupils or my parishioners. Among my parishioners in Lincolnshire, I tried for some years; but I am well assured I did far more good to them by preaching three days on my father's tomb, than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit.

But you "know no call I have to preach up and down; to play the part of an itinerant Evangelist." Perhaps you do not. But I do: I know God hath required this at my hands. To me, his blessing my work is an abundant proof; although such a proof as often makes me tremble. But "is there not pride or vanity in my heart?" There is; yet this is not my motive to preaching. I know and feel that the spring of this is a deep conviction, that it is the will of God, and that were I to refrain, I should never hear that word, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" but, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

XLII.—*To the Same.*

SIR,

ST. IVES, July 10, 1747.

I You put me in mind of an eminent man, who, preaching at St. James's, said, "If you do not repent, you will go to a place which I shall not name before this audience." I cannot promise so much, either in preaching or writing, before any audience, or to any person whatever. Yet I am not conscious of doing this very often,—of "profusely flinging about everlasting fire;" though it is true,

I mentioned it in my last letter to you, as I have done now, a second time; and perhaps I may mention it yet again. For, to say the truth, I desire to have both heaven and hell ever in my eye, while I stand on this isthmus of life, between these two boundless oceans; and I verily think the daily consideration of both highly becomes all men of reason and religion.

2. I think likewise, (or I would not spend five words upon the head,) that these are nearly concerned in our present question. To touch only on one branch of it: If I live in wilful sin, in a sinful "deviation from established order," am I not in the way to hell? I cannot take it any otherwise. I cannot help "blending these two inquiries together." I must therefore speak seriously, or not at all; and yet, I trust, "without losing my temper." Do you complain of this first, that I may not complain? It appears to me that you show more eagerness of spirit, more warmth and resentment, in your last than you ever have done from the beginning.

3. You spoke of "a number of unspent persons going about and preaching the worst of heresies." I answered, "Within these nine years I have heard of two, and no more, who have gone about thus, though I doubt neither sent of God nor man." Their names were Jonathan Wildboar, and Thomas Smith, *alias* Moor, *alias* I know not what; for I fear he changed his name as often as his place. It is not unlikely that either of these might steal as well as lie, which they have done abundantly, particularly in claiming acquaintance with Mr. Whitefield or me, wherever they judged it would recommend them to their hearers. I should not be surprised to hear of two more such; but I have not yet, in all the counties I have gone through between London and Berwick-upon-Tweed, or between Deal and the Land's-End.

4. I would to God, all the Clergy throughout the land were "zealous for inward, solid virtue." But I dare not say one in ten of those I have known are so in any degree. The two Clergymen of this place, on a late public occasion, were led home at one or two in the morning in such a condition as I care not to describe. One of them is Rector of Lelant also, (a parish east of St. Ives,) of Twidnack, to the south, and Zennor, to the west. At Zennor he keeps another

assistant, and one who is just as sober as himself, and near as zealous,—not indeed for inward or outward virtue, but against these “scoundrels that pretend to preach in his parish.”

5. I never “attempted to deny” that the novelty of our manner of preaching has induced thousands and ten thousands to hear us, who would otherwise never have heard us at all, nor perhaps any other Preacher. But I utterly deny that “the effects wrought on many of them that heard were owing to novelty, and that only.” The particular effects wrought at Epworth were these: Many drunkards, many unjust and profane men, on whom both my father and I had for several years spent our strength in vain, from that time began to live, and continue so to do, a sober, righteous, and godly life. Now, I deny that this effect can be owing to novelty, or to any principle but the power of God.

If it be asked, But were there not “the same hearers, the same Preachers, and the same God to influence, in the church, as on the tomb-stone?” I answer, (1.) There were not all the same hearers in the church; not above one third of them. (2.) There was the same Preacher in the church, but he did not then preach the same doctrine; and therefore, (3.) Though there was the same God, there was not the same influence, or blessing from him.

6. The sum of what I offered before, concerning perceptible inspiration, was this: “Every Christian believer has a perceptible testimony of God’s Spirit, that he is a child of God.” You objected, that there was not one word said of this, either in the Bible, or in the “Appeal,” to which I referred. I replied, “I think there is in the Bible, in the sixteenth verse of the eighth chapter to the Romans. And in the ‘Farther Appeal,’ this place is proved to describe the ordinary privilege of every Christian believer.”

This is there shown, both by Scripture, by reason, and by authority, particularly that of Origen and Chrysostom, whom his Lordship of Lichfield had cited in his Charge, as asserting just the contrary. But waving authorities, I reasoned thus: “You allow there is a testimony of the Spirit with our spirit, that we are the children of God. But you say, it is not a perceptible one. How is this? Let us examine it throughly. It is allowed, (1.) The Spirit of God, (2.) Bears testimony to my spirit, (3.) That I am a child of God. But

I am not to perceive it. Not to perceive what? the first, second, or third particular? Am I not to perceive what is testified; that I am a child of God? Then it is not testified at all. This is saying and unsaying in the same breath. Or am I not to perceive, that it is testified to my spirit? Yea, but I must perceive what passes in my own soul! Or, lastly, am I to perceive that I am a child of God, and that this is testified to my spirit, but not to perceive who it is that testifies? not to know it is the Spirit of God? O Sir, if there be really a man in the world who hath this testimony in himself, can it be supposed that he does not know who it is that testifies; who it is that speaks to his heart?"

7. Instead of giving a direct answer to this, you have recourse to the same supposition with his Lordship of Lichfield and Coventry; namely, that there was once an inward, perceptible testimony of the Spirit, but that it was peculiar to the early ages of the church.

"There are three ways," say you, "in which the Holy Spirit may be said to bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (1.) By external, miraculous attestations. (2.) By internal, plainly perceptible whispers." (I must add, "not in words, at least not always, but by some kind of impressions equivalent thereto.") "(3.) By his standing testimony in the holy Scriptures. The Apostles had all these three. Origen and Chrysostom, probably the two latter. But if St. Bernard, several hundred years after, pretended to any other than the third, his neighbours would naturally ask for proof, either that it should be so by Scripture, or that it was so by facts."

Well, then, let us suppose St. Bernard, and one of his neighbours, to be talking together on this subject. On St. Bernard's saying, "The Spirit of God bears witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God;" his neighbour replies, "I suppose he does, but not by an inward, plainly perceptible testimony."—"Yes, by an inward, plainly perceptible testimony. I now have this testimony in myself; I plainly perceive that I am a child of God, and that it is his Spirit who testifies it to my spirit."—"I fear you are somewhat enthusiastically given. I allow God's standing testimony in the Scriptures; but I cannot allow that there is now any such thing as this inward testimony, unless you can either prove by Scripture that it should be so, or by facts that it is

so.”—“Are not these words Scripture: ‘The Spirit itself beareth testimony with our spirit, that we are the children of God?’”—“Yes, but the question is, how they are to be understood; for I deny that they speak of an inward testimony. They speak of the outward, standing testimony of God in the holy Scriptures.”—“You put a manifest force upon the text. You cannot prove that it speaks of any outward testimony at all. But the words immediately preceding prove to a demonstration, that it speaks of an inward testimony: ‘Ye have not received the spirit of bondage unto fear;’ (is not fear an inward thing?) ‘but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!’ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, even the same Spirit which ‘God hath sent forth into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!’”—“I do not deny that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit. But I deny your peculiar interpretation of this text. I deny that this text at all favours an inward, perceptible testimony.”—“The Spirit which God hath sent into my heart, and which now cries in my heart, ‘Abba, Father,’ now beareth testimony with my spirit, that I am a child of God. How can these words be interpreted at all, but of an inward, perceptible testimony?”—“I tell you, of God’s standing testimony in Scripture.”—“This is a palpable violence to the words. They no more speak of Scripture, than of miracles. They manifestly speak of what passes in the heart, the spirit, the inmost soul of a believer, and that only.”

8. But you would say, “Suppose this scripture to prove that it should be so, can you show by facts that it is so?” Not if you take it for granted, that every one who speaks of having this witness in himself is an enthusiast. You are then in no danger of proof from this quarter. You have a short answer to every fact which can be alleged.

But you turn the tables. You say it is I who allow that “many of God’s children do not continue in sound mind and memory.” I allowed, (1.) A man feels the testimony of God’s Spirit, and cannot then deny or doubt his being a child of God. (2.) After a time this testimony is withdrawn: Not from every child of God; many retain the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end. (3.) Then he may doubt whether that testimony was of God, and perhaps, at length, deny that it was; especially if his heart be hardened

by the deceitfulness of his sin. And yet he may be all this time, in every other respect, of "sound memory, as well as understanding." In this respect I allowed he is not; that is, "his understanding is now darkened, and the very traces of that divine work well-nigh erased out of his memory." So I expressly determined the sense wherein I allowed "he does not continue in sound mind and memory." But did I allow that even then he was *non compos mentis*,—a madman, in the common sense? Nothing less: I allowed no more, than, the divine light being withdrawn, his mind was again dark as to the things of God; and that he had forgotten *τε καθαρισμὸν τῶν παλαιῶν αὐτοῦ ἀμαρτιῶν*,\* (2 Peter i. 9,) well nigh, as if it had never been.

9. But you say, "If variable facts be produced, to-day asserted, to-morrow denied"—Nay, the facts, whether asserted or denied, are still invariable. "But if they be ever doubted or denied, they never were plainly perceptible." I cannot discern any force in that consequence: However, if they are afterward "denied, they are not from Him 'in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'" Neither is this consequence good. Though God is ever the same, man may either assert or deny his works. "The spirit of man, and his fancies or opinions, may vary; but God and his facts cannot." Thus far they can and do: God does not now bear witness as he did before. And this variation of the fact makes way for a variation in the judgment of him who had that witness, but now hath it not. "You may be fully of opinion to-day, that the Scriptures are of God, and doubt of this to-morrow. But what is this to the purpose?" Very much. I am as fully convinced to-day that the Scriptures are of God, as that the sun shines. And this conviction (as every good gift) cometh from the Father of lights. Yet I may doubt of it to-morrow. I may throw away the good gift of God. "But we were speaking not of man's opinions, but of God's facts." We were speaking of both; of man's opinions, or judgment, concerning God's facts. "But could he to whom Christ said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' ever doubt or deny that Christ said so?" I question not but in process of time he might; particularly if he drew back unto perdition. But however that be, it is no "blasphemous supposition," but a plain, undeniable truth, that the god of

\* The purification from his former sins.—EDIT.

this world can obliterate what the God of heaven has strongly imprinted upon the soul; yea, and that he surely will, unless we stir up the gift of God which is in us, by earnestly and continually watching unto prayer.

I presume, you do not deny that a believer, one who has the witness in himself, may make "shipwreck of the faith;" and, consequently, lose the witness (however it be explained) which he once had of his being a child of God. The darkness which then covers his soul again, I ascribe (in part) to the energy of Satan, who *ενεργει*,—"worketh," according to the Apostle, in the children of unbelief, whether they did once believe or no. And has he not much power even on the children of God? to disturb, though not to destroy? to throw fiery darts without number; especially against those who, as yet, are but weak in the faith? to inject doubts and fears? sometimes unbelieving, sometimes even blasphemous thoughts? And how frequently will they be wounded thereby, if they have not put on the whole armour of God!

10. You add: "If we reply, There are enthusiasts in the world, you can keep your temper no longer; and the only answer is, If we perceive not that witness in ourselves, we are ignorant of the whole affair, and doomed to the 'everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'" I said not so. I can keep my temper (blessed be God) if you call me an hundred enthusiasts; if you affirm, I am ten times more of an enthusiast than that poor Quaker probably was. The sharpest word I said, was, "If a man does not know who it is that testifies with his spirit he is a child of God, he is ignorant of the whole affair." But I felt no anger when I said this. Nor do I now. Though I still think (because you say it yourself) that you are ignorant of this whole affair, of the inward testimony for which I contend. Yet am I far from dooming you to everlasting fire. What you know not, I trust God will reveal unto you. Least of all, was this my "only answer" to your supposition, "that this perceptible testimony is only an imagination, unless I am altogether in a dream." I have given some other answer, and a pretty full one, to the objection; such an one, I think, as the nature of the thing admits, at least as my capacity would allow.

11. I have largely considered, both in the Third Part of the Appeal, and in the latter part of the Second Letter to

Mr. Church, the unreasonableness of the common demand, to prove our doctrine by miracles. I cannot but refer you to those tracts, having neither time nor inclination *actum agere*.\* Only I would weigh what you have now advanced, in support of that demand. "If the enthusiast is as confident of his inspiration, as one really inspired is of his, a third person has a right to call for other proof than confident assertions;" that is, for miracles. So you explain yourself in the following sentence. Let us try how this consequence will hold in a particular instance: "The Spirit said unto Paul, Go not into Macedonia." When he related this to his companions, ought they to have replied, "We call for other proof of this than your confident assertion; seeing enthusiasts are as confident of theirs, as you are of this revelation?" If you say, "They had seen his miracles at other times;" I know not that: Perhaps they had, perhaps they had not. But to step a little forward: "If, in the days of Origen and Chrysostom, external miraculous powers were ceased, while internal inspiration still remained," what becomes of your demand here? It is totally excluded; although there were, in those days also, pretenders to what they had not.

And yet there might have been other sufficient reasons for believing the assertion of Origen, Chrysostom, and St. Bernard too, that they had this internal testimony. Such was, besides the holiness of their lives, that great and standing miracle,—their saving so many souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins.

12. There are at least as many pretenders to the love of God, as there are to the witness of his Spirit. But does this give me a right, if a man asserts, he loves God, to demand his proving that assertion by miracles? Not so; but by their fruits I shall know a real and a pretended love of God. And in the same manner may I know him that has the witness of God's love, from an enthusiastic pretender to it. But if a man disclaims it, he sets himself out of the question. It is beyond dispute that he has it not.

Neither do I want miracles in order to determine my judgment with regard to scriptures variously interpreted. I would not say, in this case, "Show me a sign;" but, "Bring

\* To do the same thing repeatedly.—EDIT.

forth your strong reasons ;” and according to these, weighed in an even, impartial scale, would I incline to one side or the other.

13. From the beginning of our correspondence, I did not expect you to alter your judgment touching those points wherein we differed. But I was willing (and am so still) to hear and consider whatever you should advance concerning them ; and so much the rather, because in the greatest points we do agree already ; and in the smaller we can bear with each other, and speak what we apprehend to be the truth in love. Let us bless God for this, and press on to the mark. It cannot be long before we shall be quite of one mind ; before the veil of flesh shall drop off, and we shall both see pure light, in the unclouded face of God.

XLIII.—*To the Same.*

SIR,

DUBLIN, *March 22, 1747-8.*

I REJOICE to find that in some points we come nearer each other, and that we can bear with each other where we do not. I entirely agree that hell was designed only for stubborn, impenitent sinners, and, consequently, that it would be absurd to “threaten damnation to any, merely for differing from me in speculations.” But it is an absurdity which I have nothing to do with ; for it never yet entered into my thoughts.

2. I rejoice likewise in your allowing that my “speculations, though false, yea, and leading to a deviation from order, may yet possibly be neither wilful nor sinful ;” and much more in that which follows : “I question not but God’s mercy may both forgive and reward,” even that zeal which is not according to knowledge.

3. Yet “such deviation,” you think, “may open a door to much disorder and error.” I grant it may ; but I still insist, (1.) That accidental ill consequences may flow from a good thing. (2.) That the good consequences, in the present case, overbalance the evil beyond all possible degrees of comparison. The same I believe of Mr. Whitefield’s public preaching, (which was not the consequence, but the cause, of mine,) whose doctrine in general (though he is mistaken in some points) I believe to be the truth of the Gospel.

4. I never did censure the whole body of Clergy ; and God forbid that I ever should. I do not willingly censure

any, even the grossly immoral. But you advise to "complain of these to the Bishop of the diocese." In what way? "Be so public spirited as to present them." Much may be said on that question. I should ask, (1.) Have I a right to present them? I apprehend not. The Churchwardens of each parish are to do this; which they will hardly do, at my instance. (2.) If I could do it myself, the presenting them to the Court is not presenting them to the Bishop: The Bishop, you cannot but know, has no more authority in what is called the Bishop's Court, than the Pope of Rome. (3.) I cannot present, suppose, thirty persons in as many counties, to the Lay Chancellors or Officials, (men whom I apprehend to have just as much authority from Scripture to administer the sacraments, as to try ecclesiastical causes,) without such an expense both of labour, and money, and time, as I am by no means able to sustain. And what would be the fruit, if I could sustain it? if I was the informer-general against the immoral Clergy of England? O Sir, can you imagine, or dare you say, that I should "have the thanks of the Bishops, and of all good men, both Clergy and laity?" If you allow only those to be good men who would thank me for this, I fear you would not find seven thousand good men in all our Israel.

5. But you have been "assured there are proofs about to be produced of very shocking things among us also." It is very possible you may. And, to say the truth, I expected such things long ago. In such a body of people, must there not be some hypocrites, and some who did for a time serve God in sincerity, and yet afterwards turn back from the holy commandment once delivered to them? I am amazed there have been so few instances of this, and look for more every day. The melancholy case of that unhappy man, Mr. Hall, I do not rank among these; for he had renounced us long ago, and that over and over, both by word and writing. And though he called upon me once or twice a year, and lately made some little overtures of friendship, yet I have it under his own hand, he could have no fellowship with us, because we would not leave the Church. But *quia intellexi minus, protrusit foras*.\* To make it quite plain and clear how close a connexion there was between him and me, when

\* But, because I seemed reluctant to entertain his views, he expelled me from his dwelling.—EDIT.

I lately called on his poor wife at Salisbury, he fairly turned me out of doors, and my sister after me.

6. My father did not die unacquainted with the faith of the Gospel, of the primitive Christians, or of our first Reformers; the same which, by the grace of God, I preach, and which is just as new as Christianity. What he experienced before, I know not; but I know that during his last illness, which continued eight months, he enjoyed a clear sense of his acceptance with God. I heard him express it more than once, although at that time I understood him not. "The inward witness, son, the inward witness," said he to me, "that is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity." And when I asked him, (the time of his change drawing nigh,) "Sir, are you in much pain?" he answered aloud with a smile, "God does chasten me with pain, yea, all my bones with strong pain; but I thank Him for all, I bless Him for all, I love Him for all!" I think the last words he spoke, when I had just commended his soul to God, were, "Now you have done all." And with the same serene, cheerful countenance he fell asleep, without one struggle, or sigh, or groan. I cannot therefore doubt but the Spirit of God bore an inward witness with his spirit, that he was a child of God.

7. That "God blesses a doctrine preached (new or old) to the saving of souls from death, does not prove that every circumstance of it is true; for a Predestinarian Preacher may save souls." But it undoubtedly proves, that the main of what is preached is the truth as it is in Jesus; for it is only the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is the power of God unto salvation. Human wisdom, as human laws, may restrain from outward sin; but they cannot avail to the saving of the soul. If God gives this blessing to what is preached, it is a sufficient "proof of His approbation." But I will not contend about words, or, when his blessing is allowed, dispute whether it has His approbation or not.

8. But to argue on your own supposition: You say, "It only shows, that novelty, which has a natural tendency to awakening, may, when God pleases, have an efficacious tendency to amending." Well, then, if the novelty of an indifferent circumstance, such as place, has a natural tendency to awakening, surely we may use it according to its natural tendency, in order to awaken those that sleep in sin! And

if God has, in fact, been pleased to use it beyond its natural tendency, to make it efficacious for amending as well as awakening, ought we not to acquiesce, yea, and rejoice therein?

9. But are sinners amended? Are they saved from their sins? Are they truly converted to God? Here is, what always must be, the main question. That many are in some sort converted, is owned. But to what are they converted? "to the belief of such proofless, incredible stuff as transubstantiation? or to the Popish severities of flesh-fasting, celibacies, and other monkeries?" Not so. If they are converted at all, they are converted from all manner of wickedness, "to a sober, righteous, and godly life." Such an uniform practice is true outward holiness. And wherever this is undeniably found, we ought to believe there is holiness of heart; seeing the tree is known by its fruits.

10. That "the conversion of sinners to this holiness is no miracle at all," is new doctrine indeed! So new to me, that I never heard it before, either among Protestants or Papists. I think a miracle is a work of omnipotence, wrought by the supernatural power of God. Now, if the conversion of sinners to holiness is not such a work, I cannot tell what is. I apprehend our Lord accounts it a greater work than giving sight to the blind, yea, or raising the dead; for it was after he had raised Lazarus from the dead, that he told his Apostles, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also. And greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." Greater outward works they could not do. It remains, therefore, that we understand those solemn words, of converting souls to God; which is indeed a greater work than any that can be wrought on the body.

11. I am glad you do "not demand miracles in proof of doctrines." Thus far, then, we are agreed. But you demand them, (1.) "As things to which I lay claim;" and in order to show that claim cannot be supported. (2.) As necessary to give me "a right to be implicitly believed." And, (3.) To justify my "assuming the Apostolate of England."

If this be all, your demand must soon fall to the ground, since the whole foundation sinks beneath it. For, (1.) I lay no claim (in your sense) to miracles; for the clearing of which, suffer me to refer you once more (that I may not

be surfeited with *crambe decies repetita*\*) to the Second Letter to Mr. Church. (2.) I claim no implicit faith: I neither pay it to, nor expect it from, any man living. (3.) I no otherwise assume the Apostolate of England, (if you choose to use the phrase,) than I assume the Apostolate of all Europe, or, rather, of all the world; that is, in plain terms, wherever I see one or a thousand men running into hell, be it in England, Ireland, or France, yea, in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, I will stop them if I can: As a Minister of Christ, I will beseech them, in His name, to turn back, and be reconciled to God. Were I to do otherwise, were I to let any soul drop into the pit, whom I might have saved from everlasting burnings, I am not satisfied God would accept my plea, "Lord, he was not of my parish."

12. If a single parish takes up your whole time and care, and you spend and are spent upon it, well. And yet I will be bold to say, that no blessing from God will accompany your ministry, but the drunkard will be a drunkard still, (and so the covetous, the brawler, the adulterer,) unless you both believe and teach, what you love to call, my "new notions of inspiration:" I mean as to the substance, not the particular manner of explication. You will all the day long stretch out your hands in vain, unless you teach them to pray, that the Spirit of God may inwardly witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God. I apprehend you are the person that "wriggle on this head," because the argument pinches: You appear to me to twist and wind to and fro, because I "distinguish away," not my doctrines, but your objections;—unravelling the fallacies, showing what part is false, and what part true, but nothing to the purpose. Since you move it again, I will resume the point once more. You will pardon me if I speak home, that it may be seen which of us two it is, that has hitherto given the "evasive answers."

13. You say, "Notwithstanding all your pains to distort that text, for anything which has yet been said to the contrary, it may be understood of the Spirit's witness by miracles, by prophecy, or by the imperceptibly wrought assurances of the Holy Ghost." This (unless it gives up the

\* Saying the same things ten times over.—EDIT.

whole cause, as indeed it must, if it does not imply a contradiction; seeing imperceptible assurance is no assurance at all) is neither an evasive nor an unevasive answer. It is just no answer at all. Instead of refuting my arguments, you reply, "You distort the text. *Ipsse dixi.*"

"The Quakers maintain divine illapses, and sensible communications always; you only sometimes." If you speak to the purpose, if you mean the inward witness of God's Spirit, I maintain it always as well as they.

"The Methodist writings abound with intimations of divine communications, prophetic whispers, and special guidances." Perhaps so; but that is another question. We are now speaking of the inward witness of the Spirit.

14. "They teach the notification of justification to be as perceptible as the sun at noon-day." Now you come to the point, and I allow the charge. From the beginning of our correspondence to this day, I have, without any shifting or evasion at all, maintained flatly and plainly: (1.) A man feels the testimony of God's Spirit, and cannot then deny or doubt his being a child of God. (2.) After a time this testimony is withdrawn. (Not from every child of God: Many retain the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end.) (3.) Then he may doubt whether this testimony was of God; and perhaps at length deny that it was.

There is no shadow of contradiction between this and the case of H. R. For, (1.) She felt the testimony of God's Spirit, and could not then deny or doubt her being a child of God. (2.) After a time this testimony was withdrawn. (3.) Then she doubted whether it was of God. Observe: She never forgot or denied that she had such a testimony; but she then doubted whether it was of God.

But you have still more to remark upon this head: So I attend you step by step.

15. "The instances produced" (it should be "instance," for you cite but one) "in support of these high claims, instead of supporting, utterly subvert them. Thus H. R. had her justification notified; and yet she denied that her sins were forgiven." You should say, She doubted of it, after a time, when the testimony of God's Spirit was withdrawn. "Now, either this notification was not so distinct as is pretended, or, if distinct, was notified by one of suspected credit, whom she could not believe. Or if it was both

distinct and credible, she was not of sound understanding if she disbelieved it, nor of sound memory if she" (afterwards, it should be) "doubted or denied that she had ever received such a message."

You say, (1.) "Either that notification was not so distinct." It was so distinct that she could not then doubt. "Or, (2.) Was notified to her by one of suspected credit, whom she could not believe." Yes, she then believed, and knew it was the voice of God. "Or, (3.) She was not of sound understanding, if she disbelieved it." When she disbelieved it, she was not. For as the serpent deceived Eve, so he then deceived her, *φθειρων το νοημα αυτης*.\*

"But could she possibly deny a plain matter of fact?" You add, as if I have said so, "Yes, in process of time she might, particularly if she drew back to perdition;" and then subjoin, "But what is this evasive answer to the case of H. R.?" I think, nothing at all. I never applied it to her case. She never denied her having had such a testimony. But after a time she doubted (as I said before) whether that testimony was true.

16. I presume, Eve in paradise was at least equal in understanding with any of her posterity. Now, unto her God said, "In the day that thou eatest of the tree of knowledge thou shalt surely die." And doubtless "this notification was as distinct and perceptible to her as the sun at noon-day." Yet after a time (perhaps only a few days) she utterly disbelieved it.

You exclaim, "Absurd! Impossible! There could be no such thing; as I shall prove immediately."

"Either this notification was not so distinct as is pretended, or, if distinct, was notified by one of suspected credit, whom she could not believe. Or else, if it was both distinct and credible, she was not of sound understanding if she disbelieved it, nor of sound memory if she doubted of it." Therefore the whole story is absurd, and a self-inconsistent (not a cunningly-devised) fable.

Is not the plain answer this? This notification was as distinct as [is] pretended; and it was not notified by one of suspected credit, whom she did then firmly believe. But afterwards Satan deceived her by his subtlety, *φθειρων το*

\* See in the next page Mr. Wesley's translation of this allusion to 2 Cor xi. 3.—EDIT.

νοημα αυτης,—“corrupting, spoiling, destroying, the soundness of her understanding,” and of her memory too; and then she disbelieved God, and believed him who said, “Ye shall not surely die.” How much more is he able, by the same subtlety, to deceive any of the fallen children of men!

17. What follows you did not design for argument, but wit. “I cannot help thinking that Paul, with all his infirmities, might more reasonably be looked upon as an inspired Prophet than Mr. Wesley, though arrived, in his own imagination, to a sinless perfection.” I never told you so, nor any one else. I no more imagine that I have already attained, that I already love God with all my heart, soul, and strength, than that I am in the third heavens.

But you make me abundant amends for this by your charitable belief, that though I may now imagine things that are not, and be mistaken in many points, yet He who remembers I am but dust, will at last “forgive and reward me.” It is enough: The time of error and sin is short; for eternity is at hand.

Strangers and pilgrims here below,  
This earth, we know, is not our place;  
And hasten through the vale of woe,  
And, restless to behold thy face,  
Swift to our heavenly country move,  
Our everlasting home above.

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XLIV.—*To his Brother Charles.*

SAVANNAH, *April 20, 1736.*

I STILL extremely pity poor Mrs. Hawkins; but what can I do more, till God show me who it is that continually exasperates her against me? Then I may perhaps be of some service to her. There is surely some one who does not play us fair; but I marvel not at the matter. He that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there is that is mightier than they. Yet a little while, and God will declare who is sincere. Tarry thou the Lord's leisure and be strong, and he shall comfort thy heart.

XLV.—*To the Same.*

DEAR BROTHER,

BRISTOL, *June 23, 1739.*

MY answer to them which trouble me is this: God commands me to do good unto all men; to instruct the